

OpenTheo

Jesus Prayer for the Church (Part 1)



The Life and Teachings of Christ - Steve Gregg

In this prayer for the Church, Jesus asks the Father to keep the name of His disciples and sanctify them in truth. He also asks that His disciples and all believers may be one with Him and the Father, so that the world may believe that the Father has sent Him. Jesus' authority over people is seen in His humble servanthood, and He came to establish the Kingdom of God through His obedience to God's will. Ultimately, eternal life consists of knowing God and knowing Jesus, which starts in the present and continues into eternity.

Transcript

Let's turn to John Chapter 17, which is probably a familiar chapter to many. I don't know that it is to everybody, but there are certain chapters that when you mention them by number, the subject matter immediately comes to mind. Like 1 Corinthians 13, or 1 Corinthians 15 possibly for some of you, depending on what the emphasis I suppose has been in your background.

With me, Matthew 5 through 7 are pretty immediately content to mind. But John 17 is one of those chapters that I would expect you would instantly know what it's about, some of you, maybe not all of you. And it is, in fact, about a prayer.

It is, with the exception of the first few words of the chapter, it is entirely a prayer. A prayer that Jesus prayed. It's the case that we don't have very many prayers of Jesus actually recorded, although it is recorded that he prayed frequently.

We're told that he went out sometimes a great deal before day to be away from it all and to pray, no doubt for hours, just to commune with his Father. Sometimes, as for instance the night before he chose the twelve, he would spend the whole night in prayer in advance of something like that. And so, Jesus was a prayerful person, though as far as the actual record of precise prayers, we don't have an awful lot there.

We have in the Gospel of John, prior to this, occasions where he'd sort of shoot up a quick prayer, like Father glorify thy name, or something like that. And he would even get a response back. But this is certainly the lengthiest prayer of Jesus ever recorded, and one of few prayers altogether.

Now, that makes it a very precious prayer for many Christians, and rightly so. It is sometimes called the high priestly prayer of Christ, although Christ's role as high priest is not mentioned anywhere in the Bible, or in the New Testament I should say, except for in the Book of Hebrews. He doesn't identify himself as a high priest in this prayer, but what he is doing is interceding for his people, which is what high priests do.

And what we're told in both Romans 8 and in Hebrews, that Jesus does for us, he intercedes for us continuously at the right hand of God. Well, he had not yet, at this point, ascended unto his Father, but he nonetheless prayed for the Church. And that's what we have in this prayer.

His intercessory prayer for his people, that has been going on ever since his enthronement at the right hand of God, since his ascension, was also going on before he died or arose again. Not only in this prayer, but prior to this, for example, in the upper room, Peter had told him that he would never deny him. And Jesus said, Peter, the devil has desired that he might sift you as wheat, but I have prayed for you, that you might not fall.

And when you repent, he told him he was going to deny him, so when you repent, strengthen your brethren. But Jesus had already, on some previous occasion to this, prayed for Peter specifically, that he would make it through this particular trial of sifting that the devil was bringing upon him. So, we see that Jesus is doing the same here.

He initially talks about himself, but in his prayer, and his relationship to the Father, but he also prays throughout the prayer for his disciples. And this prayer has many things worthy of note, so we'll read it. I'd like to read it in its entirety first.

It's not extremely long, though I said it's the longest prayer of Jesus in the Bible. It's still one of the shorter chapters in the Gospel of John, only 26 verses. So, we'll read the entire chapter, and then we'll go back and look at things that I'd like to comment about.

Jesus spoke these words, lifted up his eyes to heaven, and said, Father, the hour has come. Glorify your Son, that your Son also may glorify you. As you have given him authority over all flesh, that he should give eternal life to as many as you have given him.

And this is eternal life, that they may know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom you have sent. I have glorified you on the earth. I have finished the work which you have given me to do.

And now, O Father, glorify me together with yourself, with the glory which I had with you before the world was. I have manifested your name to the men whom you have given me out of the world. They were yours, you gave them to me.

And they have kept your word. Now, they have known that all things which you have

given me are from you. For I have given to them the words which you have given me, and they have received them and have known surely that I came forth from you, and they have believed that you sent me.

I pray for them, I do not pray for the world, but for those whom you have given me, for they are yours. And all mine are yours, and yours are mine, and I am glorified in them. Now, I am no longer in the world, but these are in the world, and I come to you.

Holy Father, keep through your name those whom you have given me, that they may be one as we are. While I was with them in the world, I kept them in your name. Those whom you gave me I have kept, and none of them is lost except the son of perdition, that the scripture might be fulfilled.

But now I come to you, and these things I speak in the world, that they may have my joy fulfilled in themselves. I have given them your word, and the world has hated them because they are not of the world, just as I am not of the world. I do not pray that you should take them out of the world, but that you should keep them from the evil one.

They are not of the world, just as I am not of the world. Sanctify them by your truth. Your word is truth.

As you sent me into the world, I also have sent them into the world. And for their sakes, I sanctify myself, that they also may be sanctified by the truth. I do not pray for these alone, but also for those who will believe in me through their word.

That they all may be one as you, Father, are in me, and I in you. That they also may be one in us, that the world may believe that you sent me. And the glory which you gave me I have given them, that they may be one just as we are one.

I in them, and you in me, that they may be made perfect in one, and that the world may know that you have sent me, and have loved them as you have loved me. Father, I desire that they also, whom you gave me, may be with me where I am. That they may behold my glory which you have given me.

For you loved me before the foundation of the world. O righteous Father, the world has not known you, but I have known you, and these have known that you sent me. And I have declared to them your name, and will declare it, that the love with which you have loved me may be in them, and I in them.

Okay, now there's a lot here really, quite a lot. He begins his prayer, Father, the hour has come. Now, for a number of times earlier in the gospel of John, it was referred to the fact that his hour had not yet come.

In fact, when his mother approached him about turning water into wine, or not, she didn't really approach him about that specific thing, she just told him that the wine was

gone. She had no way of knowing, perhaps, that he would turn water into wine, but he said, woman, what is that to me? What have I got to do with you? My hour has not yet come. And throughout the gospel of John, we read about his hour not yet.

His hour was not yet, his hour is not yet. However, in chapter 13, it said, in the opening verses, now before the Feast of the Passover, when Jesus knew that his hour had come, that he should depart from this world to the Father. Having loved his own who were in the world, he loved them to the end, and then it goes on telling about his foot washing ceremony.

Now, from that point on, up to the point we've come to, has been the upper room experience. The meal, the foot washing, and the upper room discourse. So, at the beginning of the upper room events, we're told that his hour had come.

And now, of course, we've just finished the upper room discourse at the end of chapter 16, and the first thing that Jesus mentions in his prayer is, Father, the hour has come. And he says, glorify your son, that your son may also glorify you. Now, the reference to being glorified, of course, we would probably think in terms largely of his resurrection.

I think it's fitting that his resurrection is referred to as a glorification. It says earlier in chapter 7, that when Jesus spoke about the living water, that he spoke thus about the Holy Spirit, who is not yet given. For the Holy Spirit had not yet been given, it says in John 7 through 9, because Jesus was not yet glorified.

Now, it doesn't indicate exactly what point in time Jesus was glorified, but we find that the disciples were not given the Holy Spirit until the day of Jesus' resurrection, when he appeared in the upper room with them. In John chapter 20, he breathed on them and said, receive the Holy Spirit. Therefore, his glorification, perhaps we'd say, is associated with his resurrection.

Some have suggested his glorification is actually a reference to the cross, his death, and not just his resurrection. I suppose it's probable that the Bible does not separate the death and resurrection of Christ as two separate things, although, of course, in terms of history and chronology, one happened before the other. That is the redemption event, that is the salvation event, Jesus' death and resurrection.

When Paul spoke about this in Romans, he indicated that both parts, Jesus' death and his resurrection, were very clearly part of our salvation. Because, he says in Romans 4, of Jesus, the last verse in Romans 4, Romans 4, 25. He said of Jesus, he was delivered up, meaning crucified, because of our offenses, and was raised because of our justification.

Our justification for our offenses is related both to his being delivered up to die and to his being raised. Now, the case, of course, is such that Jesus was not glorified before men at the time of his crucifixion, but only in his resurrection. He had a glorified body.

We're told in Philippians 3, 21, that when Jesus comes back, he'll change our vile body into the likeness of his glorious body, meaning the body he received upon being resurrected. He is the first fruit of the resurrection, and what he received in terms of a resurrection body is like what we will receive. In 1 Corinthians 15, Paul says our bodies in resurrection will be different from our present bodies, because our body is sown in dishonor, actually in disgrace and shame, but it is raised in glory, he says.

So, Jesus, in a sense, was glorified only at his resurrection, in the sense that he was glorified before men. He received a glorious body that was visible for people to behold. However, the most glorious thing about Christ was his perfect obedience to his Father.

Certainly, the thing most remembered about Abraham, for which he is honored and glorified in our memories, was that he offered his son Isaac upon the altar when God told him to do so, the ultimate sacrifice. He did not shrink back, but he just moved forward. Also, with Jesus, it is certainly his glory in retrospect that he obeyed his Father perfectly, and he did so in order not to glorify himself, but to glorify his Father.

A person's glory is most found in their glorifying God, not in their personal vindication. The resurrection was the public vindication of Christ's innocence and righteousness, and his glory was put on display for certain persons to see in his glorified body. But, prior to his vindication, his actual glory was in that he surrendered himself to the glory of God.

We are most glorious when surrendered to God. Even if we are defamed, or if we are hated, or if we are humiliated before men, but it is for the cause of Christ that this is so, then this is a glory to us. St. Peter brings this up in 1 Peter 4, in verse 14.

If you are reproached for the name of Christ, blessed are you, for the Spirit of glory and of God rests upon you. The Spirit of glory rests upon you when you are being humiliated and reproached. Why? It says, on their part, that is those who are persecuting you, he is blasphemed, but on your part he is glorified.

He is glorified by your faithfulness and enduring reproach and persecution for his sake, in your obedience to him even at the expense of your reputation. By you becoming a fool for Christ, God is glorified in you, and that is your glory. The Spirit of glory rests upon you at a time like that.

And he goes on, in verse 15, let none of you suffer as a murderer, a thief, or an evildoer, or as a busybody in other men's matters. Yet if anyone suffers as a Christian, let him not be ashamed, but let him glorify God in this manner. Let this trial, this affliction, this persecution, redound unto glory.

In 1 Peter 1, verse 6 and 7, he says, in this you greatly rejoice, though now for a little while, if need be, you have been grieved by various trials. That the genuineness of your faith, being much more precious than of gold that perishes, though it be tested by fire,

may be found to praise, honor, and glory at the revelation of Jesus Christ. Now your obedience to God is like, and your suffering for your obedience, is like the refining of fire.

It is the process of bringing out the glory in you. It may not appear before men until the revelation of Jesus Christ. The product of your faith, the residue of it, will be found to praise, honor, and glory at the revelation of Jesus Christ.

When he comes, the gloriousness of your life will then be recognized, glory will be found in it. In the meantime, the world may not see any glory in it, but you are glorifying God, and that is the chief end of man, the chief glory of a man, is that he does this. And so, yes, Jesus was glorified in his resurrection, vindicated.

Further, he was restored to the glory that he formerly possessed. In verse 5 he says, and now, O Father, glorify me together with yourself with the glory which I had with you before the world was. Now we know that Jesus, in becoming a man, emptied himself, according to Philippians chapter 2. He emptied himself of reputation, and of honor and glory, and he took a humble, inglorious role.

He took upon himself the form of a servant. But, it says in the following verses in Philippians 2, therefore God has highly exalted him, and given him a name above every name, that everyone is going to bow and confess that Jesus is Lord, to the glory of God the Father. Jesus, even his suffering results in the glory of God the Father.

Jesus in the Sermon on the Mount said, let men see your good works, so they may glorify your Father. It is the chief end of man, and it was the chief end of Christ, not to glorify himself, but to glorify God. But that is a man's glory.

That is our glory. Jesus gave up that glory, the glory he had with God, that he shared with God prior to his incarnation. He gave that up to become a humble, and servant-like, and unexalted person, to go through the reproach, even of death to the cross.

But, he prayed here that he might now be restored to the former glory that he once had. This would perhaps answer the question that is sometimes asked. I'm not sure that it answers it.

But many have wondered, you know, Jesus, since he had a resurrection body after his resurrection, seemed to be confined to a body. Does that mean that he is forever confined to a body, and that he has given up forever the original state he possessed before he became a man? That he is, although glorified, he is still in a body, and he is therefore not as God is, and as Jesus himself was before his coming to the earth, a disembodied spirit being? Well, it is a hard one to answer. I do believe that the glorified body of Jesus is eternal.

I do believe, at the same time, it has, you know, there's a mystery about it as to its material nature. I do believe that whether Jesus is confined to a body for all eternity or

not, this has not affected negatively the degree of glory that he receives. He shared the glory of his father before coming to earth.

It may be that he continues to exist in another form now, since his resurrection, than he did before he came to earth, since he was apparently not in a body before then. But whatever the state, whatever his physical state, I guess we'd say, he has returned to the glory that he once had. But that glory is found through humiliation, through suffering.

So he says, glorify your son, that your son may also glorify you. There's no way you can glorify God and not at the same time receive, in a sense, in God's eyes, honor and glory. God said in the Old Testament, those who honor me, I will honor.

If we substitute the word honor for glory or glorify, those who glorify me, I will glorify. I'll give them honor. If they give me honor and glory, I'll give them honor and glory.

And so, this is what Jesus, Jesus the forerunner, is the first to be glorified in this way. But we shall have our bodies changed into the likeness of his glorious body sometime according to Philippians 3.21, when Jesus returns. Now, he hasn't really finished his thought or his sentence.

In verse 2 he says, As you have given him, meaning Jesus, the Son, authority over all flesh, that he should give eternal life to as many as you have given him. Now, here's a couple of ideas. Jesus has been given authority over all flesh.

Now, it certainly didn't appear to be the case. In fact, to the disciples' eyes, it looked like he didn't have the authority they thought he'd have over Jerusalem. They thought he was going to be the king of Israel, and it was looking not too promising at the moment.

He appeared to have no authority whatsoever. Now, authority means rulership. And yet, Jesus did not, for all natural appearances, appear to be ruling anything, ruling anyone.

Maybe the few disciples that were left, but no one else was being ruled by him, and yet he had authority over all flesh. Once again, going back to John 13, one of the things that it says Jesus knew at the time that he washed his disciples' feet in John 13.3, it said, Jesus, knowing that the Father had given all things into his hands, and that he had come from God and was going to God. Jesus, upon the occasion of washing the disciples' feet, didn't do so because he thought all was lost.

He did so knowing that everything had been given to him. He was the supreme sovereign of the universe. And as, with that self-image, he bowed down and humbled himself and served his disciples.

Which was sort of a mimicking of his incarnation in the first place, because, of course, he was the sovereign of the universe before coming to earth, and he bowed down and took the form of man and served his people. But now we're told he has authority over all

people. Jesus himself says it.

He declares it otherwise, of course, in Matthew 28.18, where he says, All authority in heaven and earth has been given to me. He's probably saying this at this point as sort of a prophetic perfect tense. I could be wrong.

We could take him at his word just as it is and say that even there in the upper room, all things have been given into his hand. But it's hard to say how, in the upper room, prior to his death, things were more in his hands than they were before, during his lifetime. But certainly, by way of anticipation of his death and resurrection, he said, you have given everything into my hands.

After all, he said, the prince of this world is cast down. The prince of the world is judged. He was saying it as if it's accomplished.

Now is the judgment of this world, he said. But it hadn't happened yet. It was immediately to happen.

And so I would say that it's in anticipation of what was to happen in the next few hours and days that this is actually fulfilled. That God was giving him authority over all flesh. Why? So that Jesus could give eternal life.

That's what authority is for. Authority is not for domination. Authority is not for exploitation and oppression.

When God gives authority, it is so that life may be enhanced. When God gave Jesus authority, it wasn't so that we could have a taskmaster. We already had one of those in the devil.

He gave Jesus authority so that through submission to him and his lordship, to his authority, we might experience life. And, of course, this is the turning of everything on its head. In the kingdom of God, the values are all upside down compared to that in the world.

That the authority among the Gentiles receives his life from his subjects. They pay taxes. They support him.

He's more of a symbolic figure and he gives orders and everyone does what he says. Jesus also, of course, is to be obeyed, but he is given authority to give to others. To give his life and to give them life.

To as many as you have given him, the last line in verse 2 says. Now, the idea of God giving people to Jesus, this is the idea at the end of verse 2. I'll give eternal life to as many as you have given me. Now, the idea of God giving people to Jesus has come up earlier, actually, in the gospel of John than this.

Though not frequently. We have it as far back as chapter 6. And there are several references there. In John chapter 6, by the way, this concept is closely tied to many of the proof texts of Calvinism.

In John 6, verses 37 and 39, we find this concept. John 6, 37 says, all that the father gives me will come to me. And the one who comes to me I will by no means cast out.

And then, in verse 39, this is the will of the father who sent me. That of all that he has given me, I should lose nothing, but should raise it up at the last day. Now, in both cases, he refers to those who have been given to Jesus.

And it says in John 6, 37, that all that the father gives me will come to me. This is used as a proof text of irresistible grace. If God has so decreed that Jesus should have such and such a person, well, they'll come to him.

And that's just inevitable. They're going to come to him because God has so decreed it by his eternal decrees. And also, the one who comes to me I will by no means cast out.

Obviously, since he's just said the ones the father gave me will come to me, then the one who comes to him is the same ones that God gave him. Those who have been given to Jesus by God will not be cast out. I will in no wise cast out.

So there's your eternal security or your perseverance. And likewise, on the subject of eternal security or perseverance, verse 39 is quoted, this is the will of the father who sent me, that of all that he has given me, I should lose nothing but should raise it up at the last day. So, the idea would appear in the idea of God giving people to Jesus that it's just God who arbitrarily gave certain people to Jesus.

This is how the Calvinist understanding of it is, that God has, you know, not based upon any conditions or any qualifications or any actions or thoughts or decisions on the part of the believer prior to his conversion. God has just given Jesus a portion of the human population. These are the ones that are said to be elect or chosen, and they are elected even before they're saved.

They're not saved before they're saved, but they're elect. They've been chosen in advance, and they've been chosen out of the human race, so that only those that have been chosen have been picked out by God to be given to Jesus Christ. And because of this, it is thought that, this is teaching that God has made a selection before time began, and he gave those that he selected to Jesus, and they will inevitably come to him.

They will inevitably stay with him. They will not be cast out. It's not God's will for him to lose any.

Now, as far as verse 39 that we just read a moment ago, John 6, 39, is concerned, to say it's not the Father's will that he should lose any doesn't mean it won't happen. Verse 37

is considerably stronger, it would seem. I will not cast any of these out.

Although, of course, one could argue, and I do, that to say that Jesus will not cast them out is agreeable with my beliefs as a non-Calvinist. But that doesn't mean they won't ever go out. Jesus doesn't cast out any of his sheep, but many of his sheep have wandered, and even God's sheep in the Old Testament wandered, ones who were actually in his fold.

He didn't cast them out, he didn't rid himself of them, but they rid themselves of him. That's the problem. The problem is that though Jesus doesn't cast out anyone who comes to him on his terms, he doesn't reject anyone.

Yet, some have made the folly of rejecting him. Therefore, those verses do not necessarily, in the way they're worded, have to be construed in the sense of eternal security, but it certainly means that Jesus is not the one who will do any casting out or rejecting of people who actually come to him, though they may depart from him, it may be. Now, we come to chapter 17, and we have a repeated reference to the ones that have been given to Jesus in this chapter also.

Not only in verse 2, which we looked at, but also in verse 6. Jesus says, I have manifested your name to the men whom you have given me out of the world. Now, that sounds like election. Out of the world, God has given him some.

They were yours, and you gave them to me, and they have kept your word. Now, this statement, they were yours, and you gave them to me, is very helpful in understanding the concept of God giving people to Jesus, because the people that God gave to Jesus were people that were already God's people. In other words, he didn't take some of the people that were the devil's people in the context here and give them to Jesus.

Jesus indicates that the ones that he had received as a gift from his father were the ones who were already God's people. Now, how this affects later generations after those are the disciples is perhaps open to question, but let me just say this. Jesus is speaking specifically about his disciples here.

He's not talking about those that will later be given to him, not at this point. Later, he talks about such things, but at this point, he's referring to the ones who are with him right there, listening to him pray, his disciples. And he says, you've given me these ones.

And he says, they were yours, meaning that the people who were now his disciples, those Jewish believers who were still faithful to him at that moment, even before they knew Jesus, they were already committed to God. They were already men of honest heart. Remember when Jesus saw Nathanael coming for the first time? He said, there's an Israelite indeed, in whom is no guile.

There's an honest man of God, a true Israelite, one who really is worthy of God. He's part

of the true Israel. He's already one of God's people.

And what happened, of course, that was a transitional generation because God's people prior to that did not have to know Jesus because he hadn't come yet. Forever after that, everyone to know God has to know Jesus. And Jesus' lifetime was that period of transition where those who knew God but had not known Jesus had to come to the point of knowing Jesus so they could know God through Jesus.

Forever afterwards, things were going to be different. And those disciples who were followers of Jesus at the time had been of the faithful remnant previously. And Jesus simply called them.

And God, who already owned that remnant, gave them to Jesus. This is not necessarily saying, when God gives someone to him, that God arbitrarily takes someone who's in rebellion against himself and says, well, even though you're in rebellion against yourself, I'm going to arbitrarily and against your will, I'm going to do the whole thing myself. I'm going to take you to my neighbor and give you to Jesus.

There's no evidence of that. Jesus indicates that the persons that God had given him were already God's people previous to that because it was possible before Jesus came for a person to be a man of God, a person of God, without knowing Jesus, simply because he hadn't come yet. A Jew who was a man of faith was one of God's people.

And at that point in time when Jesus came, God took all those men of faith among the Jewish people and gave them to Jesus because they were already looking for him anyway. As God's people, they were looking for the Messiah when they found him. So the Father transferred ownership, as it were, to those who had been vaguely the people of God just on the basis of faith in Old Testament.

They now became the special property of Jesus Christ for him to disciple, for him to care for as his sheep. And so that is helpful to see that, I think, additional point there in this chapter. Further on in the chapter in verse 9, he says, I pray for them.

I do not pray for the world, but for those whom you have given me, for they are yours. Now he says, I don't pray for the world. This is sometimes used as an argument against the universal atonement of Christ.

You know, the Calvinists believe in what they call limited atonement, which means that even though Jesus' death was sufficient to pay for the sins of the whole world, it is not efficient except to the elect. Now that's not a problem. I don't really have any problem with stating it that way.

But the way it's normally stated is Jesus didn't die for all the sins of the whole world. He only died for the church. And one of the arguments to support that notion is given from this verse, verse 9. I do not pray for the world.

I only pray for those whom you have given to me. The argument is this. If Jesus wouldn't even pray for the world, who were not those that God had given him, he certainly wouldn't die for the world.

I mean, it's much easier to pray for someone than to die for him. He says, I'm not even praying for the world, I'm not even dying for the whole world. Well, I mean, the problem with that argument is the Bible says he did die for the whole world.

Same language. John the Baptist, earlier in the same gospel, said there's the Lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world. And, of course, we're told in 1 John that Jesus died not only for our sins, he's the propitiation not only for our sins, but also the sins of the whole world.

Now, of course, in those other passages, the Calvinist says, well, the whole world in those places means the elect of all nations. Not just the Jewish elect, for instance, the international global company of the elect, he died for. But if you're going to make the world mean that there, then it should be in all consistency, since we've got the same author talking the same way, have it this way here.

Then the world here would be just the elect. But that wouldn't make sense. I don't pray for the world or the elect, I only pray for those who have given me.

Obviously, the world is in contrast to the elect. The world is the opposite of those who you've given me. And yet it is for the world that the Lamb of God shed his blood and is the propitiation for.

So the limited atonement, although it uses this in this particular verse in its favor, it doesn't really seem to really get the job done as they would need to to make their point. In fact, it may work against them. In verse 24 also, we have a reference to those that he's given him.

Father, I desire that they also whom you gave me may be with me where I am, that they may behold my glory which you have given me. We'll talk about that actually, we'll talk about that actually another time a little more in detail. Now, let's move on chronologically through the verses.

Now, he said that in verse 2, the father has given Jesus authority to give eternal life to those that the father has given to him, to his disciples. Verse 3 says, and this is eternal life. So here's what Jesus gives.

He gives eternal life. What is it? What is eternal life? Well, this is what it is. That they may know you, the only true God and Jesus Christ whom you have sent.

This is the privilege he's given us, that we might know God and know Jesus. And that's what eternal life is made up of. That's the stuff of eternal life, is knowing God.

This knowledge of God confers life upon us, the knowledge of Jesus Christ. But this is the thing that Jesus said, I came to give them. You've given me authority to bring them to me.

This is, of course, eternal life. But it is also a privilege that starts now. Eternal life, we may think of as something relevant to after this, after this life, when we go to heaven or whatever.

But in fact, eternal life, if it consists in knowing God and knowing Jesus, that's what happens when we get converted. We will, of course, do this forever. We'll know him forever.

But we already know God. We already know Jesus. And therefore, we already have eternal life, without reference to eternity, although we will enjoy it for eternity.

Verse 4, I have glorified you on the earth, that is, by his obedient conduct. I have finished the work which you gave me to do. Now, I know I'm always interacting with belief systems I don't agree with.

It's just the way I am. Someone's got to interact with these ideas. The dispensational view is that Jesus, in fact, did not accomplish what he was sent to earth to do.

The dispensational view is that Jesus came to offer the kingdom of God. John the Baptist denounced that Jesus offered it. And the kingdom of God means a political kingdom, just as the Jews expected, based on their misinterpretation of the Old Testament prophecies.

They thought it would be a political kingdom centered in Jerusalem. They hoped that the millennial bliss spoken of by the prophets would be theirs in political and physical terms. And he didn't do that.

But the dispensationalists, the Jews, felt like that's what Jesus did intend to do, but couldn't because they rejected him. And therefore he left, and with him he took the kingdom. He had brought it to them, but they rejected it, so he took it away again.

And it will not be until he returns that he'll bring again the kingdom and set it up in the millennial reign. Now, if this is true, then it cannot be said at this point in Jesus' life that he had accomplished and done the work that you got him to do. If it was part of his mission that he had not accomplished that, then how could he at this point say I've done everything I was sent to do, I've finished the work you've given me to do.

It would appear to me that Jesus must have in fact established the kingdom of God. He didn't take it away with him. He did not fail in his mission, nor will he fail in any other part of his mission.

He has finished the work. There's really no reason for him to stay around. Now, he was

only in the middle of his days.

He's only 30-something at this time. The prescribed length of life for a man in the Old Testament is 70 years. Jesus hadn't even reached half that probably.

Maybe, maybe about half. We don't know his exact age. But he was cut off in the midst of his days.

However, he could die knowing that there was nothing more that he was supposed to do. I have finished the work you gave me to do. Paul, in 1 Timothy chapter 4, looking back at his life and looking forward at imminent death, said I've run the good race, I've finished my course, I've fought the good fight.

And so forth. Now, when a man is facing death, whether he's an old man as Paul was when he said that in 2 Timothy, or a young man as Jesus was when he made this point, it's a great comfort at the time of death to be able to say I've done everything I needed to do. To be on your deathbed and to look back and say I left so much undone.

I missed so many opportunities. I was sent to this planet. I had a career of X number of years and it was so that I might accomplish what I left undone.

I can see how many opportunities I passed by. It must be a very galling thing. I hope that I shall not find myself with those kinds of reflections on my deathbed.

It would not make death a very sweet experience. But I would think it would make death very sweet if on the end of your, as you're laying in your bed and know you're dying or maybe standing before the firing squad or whatever the case may be, that you can say well, I've done everything that I knew to do. Everything that I felt God called me to do.

I haven't left anything undone. And in a sense, you can't die until you've done everything God at least insists on accomplishing through you. Though there may be more things he would like to accomplish through you.

If you are walking in his will, if you're in the process of doing what he wants you to do as Jesus did and Paul did and so forth, in which you certainly can do. If your life is in fact nothing else but a continuing doing the work of God, the will of God for your life, then you will not die until you have finished the work. God's not going to cut you off capriciously and say, I see you're going for the goal but I'm just not going to let you reach it.

Boom. And the goal is of course whatever God has in store for you. When you were born there was a purpose for your life.

There was something for you to accomplish. And if you pursue it with all your heart as Jesus did, as Paul did and Christians throughout history have, many of them, you've

accomplished all that God gave you to do. Now you might die today and you just have to assume that since you've been pursuing the will of God, you've accomplished all you're supposed to.

Especially if you die while you are doing the will of God because, I mean, if you're living in rebellion and die, there's no guarantees that God really got what he wanted out of you. You know, you're not doing his will. But if you're doing his will and there's something more for you to do that he wants done, he'll protect you, he won't let you die until then.

There's something more for me to do. I've done it faithfully. I've completed the task.

And now, oh Father, glorify me together with yourself with the glory which I had with you before the world was. We've talked about that. Verse 6, I have manifested your name to the men whom you have given me out of the world.

They were yours and you gave them to me and they have kept your word. Now, we talked about they were yours and you gave them to me already, but I've manifested your name to them and I will declare it. Now, this is an interesting statement since we don't know that Jesus ever gave a name for God.

And yet, even at the end of this prayer, he says in verse 26, I have declared to them your name and I will declare it. Now, the Jehovah's Witnesses actually believe this is proof that Jesus used the name of Jehovah since clearly that was the name of God in the Old Testament and Jesus said at the end of his life that he had declared the name of Jehovah to the word Jehovah. You see, we don't find the word Jehovah in the New Testament because it's not a Greek word and the New Testament is written in Greek.

Therefore, when even translating something from the Old Testament, from a passage that uses, in the original Old Testament, that uses the name Jehovah, the Greek translation, kurios, is given, which means Lord. And so, the name Jehovah is translated into the Greek word for Lord consistently in the New Testament. Now, you might say, well, maybe not, but that's because of the Greek translation.

Actually, they say, in the original Greek translations, they did preserve the name Jehovah, but someone later changed that. There's no proof of that from any manuscript. But the point is, one could argue, I suppose, that Jesus did use the name Jehovah repeatedly, but when his words were translated into Greek, that name got translated out so we don't have that name in our New Testament.

To me, the issue is not God's label, God's title. It's more of our name, in the sense that they actually have said to me, I've heard it more than once, if you don't pray in the name of Jehovah, if you don't say Jehovah when you pray, God won't know who you're praying to. It's like if I say, hey, you, and I don't identify anyone, none of you are going to know

who I'm talking to.

So, I tell you, if you just say, God doesn't know who you're talking to, you haven't called him by name. That's literally what they say. Now, in other words, God's name to them is sort of like our name to us.

It's what we know we're talking about, it's what we know we're the ones being talked about. However, my view of God's omniscience is such that I personally believe God knows whether it's him or someone else that we're talking about, whether or not we use his name. In fact, I suspect the Jehovah's Witnesses who do use his name are not talking about the same God at all that we're talking about.

I don't think the God they're talking about is the God of the Bible, the Jehovah of the Bible, and therefore the use of the name proves nothing because if Jesus declared the name of God, namely Jehovah to the disciples, why would he have to do that? The Old Testament they were reading in the synagogues declared, that's not some new revelation. Why would Jesus declare, I want you to know God's name is Jehovah? They already knew that. That was common knowledge.

What he's saying, the name of God is something different than that. After all, God is called by many, many names in the Old Testament. I have a poster at home where I used to put that up.

God is known by many names and nicknames, but the names of God are simply descriptive of him. They're not the way that we must address him. They are descriptive of him.

When it says of Jesus, for example, his name shall be called Wonderful, Counselor, the Mighty God, the Everlasting Father, the Prince of Peace. Jesus was never called by any of those titles as far as we know when he was on earth, but nonetheless his name was called that because his name is descriptive of who he is. Names in the Old Testament, even of people, were often descriptive.

That's why God would change someone's name to give them a name more descriptive of what he intended to make of them in the future. So that Abram was an exalted father, so the name means that God intended to make him father of multitudes. Call yourself Abraham, father of a multitude.

And God was continually changing people's names in order to give them a name that was more descriptive of who they were or who they were going to be in his working when he had finished his work in their life. So a name in the Bible is more descriptive of a person's character or something like that than it is a title or a label or a handle as it is in our usage in human terms. When Moses said, God show me your glory, back in Exodus chapter 33 I think it was, God said, show me your glory.

God said, no one can see my face and live, but I'll tell you, I'll put you in the cleft of the rock, I'll hold my hand over and I'll pass by and I'll declare the name of the Lord. And in the next chapter this was fulfilled and God passed by and he declared his name. And what was it? He said, Jehovah, gracious and merciful.

And he goes on to give a description of his full of mercy and justice and all this stuff. And I mean, basically the name of the Lord that was revealed to Moses was the character of God, a description of him. So when Jesus says, I have declared your name to them, he doesn't mean he's told us God's handle.

It means he's demonstrated what God is like. Now he says, as I say in the final verse, I have declared your name unto them, but in verse 6 he says, I have manifested your name to the men whom you've given to me. Now manifest, it means revealed.

It could be of course revealed through what he said as declared in the last verse suggests, or it could also mean that in his own person he's revealed. If you've seen me, you've seen the Father, he said. In his own person he's revealed what God is like.

He has done the works of his Father. The works he did are like the Father. You should be able to look at Jesus and know that that's what the Father is like.

In fact, you should be able, in a sense, to look at a Christian and know that that's what Jesus is like because we bear his name. We are to make the name of Christ known to the world. Whosoever believeth in his name, some of the passage descriptions say.

Of course we read of believing in him, but we also read in places of believing on his name. In John 1.12, as many as received him, to them he gave the power to become the sons of God even to those who believed on his name. Jesus, believing in his name,