

Exposition of the Gospel of John CHAPTER 57

CHRIST INTERCEDING

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Transcript

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John 17:1-5

The following is an Analysis of the first section of John 17: 1. The Son praying, verse 1. 2. His desire for the Father's glory, verse 1. 3. His own glory subsidiary, verse 1. 4. The consequences of His glorification, verse 2. 5. The way to and means of eternal life, verse 3. 6. The Son rendering an account of His stewardship, verse 4. 7. His reward, verse 5. The seventeenth of John contains the longest recorded prayer which our Lord offered during His public ministry on earth, and has been justly designated His High Priestly Prayer. It was offered in the presence of His apostles, after the institution and celebration of the Lord's Supper, and immediately following the Paschal discourse recorded in 14 to 16. It has been appropriately said, "The most remarkable prayer followed the most full and consoling discourse ever uttered on earth" (Matthew Henry). It differs from the prayer which Christ "taught his disciples," for in that there are petitions which the Savior could not offer for Himself, while in this there are petitions which none else but Christ could present. In this wonderful prayer there is a solemnity and elevation of thought, a condensed power of expression, and a comprehensiveness of meaning, which have affected the minds and drawn out the hearts of the most devoted of God's children to a degree that few portions of Scripture have done. In John 17 the veil is drawn aside, and we are admitted with our great High Priest into "the holiest of all." Here we approach the secret place of the tabernacle of the Most High, therefore it behoves us to put off our shoes from off our feet, listening with humble, reverent and prepared hearts, for the place whereon we now stand is indeed holy ground. We give below a few brief impressions of other writers. "This is truly, beyond measure, a warm and hearty prayer. He opens the depths of His heart, both in reference to us and to His Father, and He pours them all out. It sounds so honest, so simple; it is so deep, so rich, so wide, no one can fathom it" (Martin Luther). Melancthon, another of the Reformers, when giving his last lecture before his death, said on John 17: "There is no voice which has ever been heard, either in heaven or in earth, more exalted, more holy, more fruitful, more sublime, than the prayer offered up by the Son to God Himself." The eminent Scottish Reformer, John Knox, had this chapter read to him every day during his last illness, and in the closing scene, the verses that were read from it consoled and

animated him in the final conflict. "The seventeenth chapter of the Gospel by John, is, without doubt, the most remarkable portion of the most remarkable book in the world. The Scripture of truth, given by inspiration of God, contains many wonderful passages, but none more wonderful than this—none so wonderful. It is the utterance of the mind and heart of the Godman, in the very crisis of His great undertaking, in the immediate prospect of completing, by the sacrifice of Himself, the work which had been given Him to do, and for the accomplishment of which He had become incarnate. It is the utterance of these to the Father who had sent Him. What a concentration of thought and affection is there in these few sentences! How 'full of grace,' how 'full of truth.' How condensed, and yet how clear the thoughts,—how deep, yet how calm, the feelings which are here, so far as the capabilities of human language permit, worthily expressed! All is natural and simple in thought and expression—nothing intricate or elaborate, but there is a width in the conceptions which the human understanding cannot measure—a depth which it cannot fathom. There is no bringing out of these plain words all that is seen and felt to be in them" (Mr. John Brown). "The chapter we have now begun is the most remarkable in the Bible. It stands alone, and there is nothing like it" (Bishop Ryle). Even Mr. W. Kelly with his caution and conservatism writes, "Next follows a chapter which one may perhaps characterise truly as unequalled for depth and scope in all the Scriptures." This prayer of our Lord is wonderful as a specimen of the communications which constantly passed between the Son and His Father while He was here on earth. Vocal prayer seems to have been habitual with our Savior. While being baptised He was engaged in prayer (Luke 3:21). Immediately on the commencement of His public ministry we find that, after a short repose, following a day of unremitting labor, "He rose up a great while before day, and went out, and departed into a solitary place, and there prayed" (Mark 1:35). On the eve of selecting the twelve apostles He "went out into a mountain to pray, and continued all night in prayer to God" (Luke 6:12). It was while engaged in the act of prayer that He was transfigured (Luke 9:29). And it was while praying that He ceased to breathe (Luke 23:46). Only the briefest mention is made as to the substance of these prayers—in most instances none at all. But here in John 17, the Holy Spirit has been pleased to record at length His prayer in the upper room. How thankful we should be for this! Perhaps the most interesting way to view this prayer is as a model of His high priestly intercession for us, which He continually makes in the immediate presence of God, on the ground of His completed and accepted sacrifice. The first intimation of this is found in the fact that the Lord Jesus here prayed audibly in the presence of His disciples. He prayed that their interests might be secured, but He prayed audibly that they should be aware of this, that they might know what a wondrous place they had in His affections, that they might be assured that all His influence with the Father would be employed for their advantage. More plainly still is this intimated in John 17:13: "And now come I to thee and these things I speak in the world, that they might have my joy fulfilled in themselves"—q.d. "These are intercessions which in heaven I will never cease to make before God; but I make them now in the world, in your hearing that you may more distinctly understand how I am there to be employed in promoting your welfare, so that you may be made in large measure, partakers of My happiness." "The petitions for Himself are much briefer than those which He presents for His people—the former being only two, or, rather, but one, variously expressed; while the latter are quite a number, earnestly urged with a variety of pleas. This arrangement and division of the matter of the prayer justifies the view which has not unfrequently been taken of it: that it was throughout intercessory and the substance and model of that intercession which He constantly makes in heaven as our great High Priest" (Mr. T. Houston). It is in His mediatorial character that the Savior here prays: as the eternal Son, now in the form of a Servant. The office of a mediator or day's-man is "to lay his hand upon both" (Job 9:33); to treat with each party, in the previous chapters we have beheld Christ dealing with believers in the name of the Father, opening His counsels to them; now we find Him dealing with the Father on behalf of believers, presenting their cause to Him, just as Moses,

the typical mediator, spoke to God (Ex. 19:19) and from God (Ex. 20:19), so did our blessed Savior speak from God and to God. And He is still performing the same office and work: speaking to us in the Word, speaking for us in His intercession on High. The prayer that we are now about to meditate upon is a standing monument of Christ's affection for the Church. In it we are permitted to hear the desires of His heart as He spreads them before the Father, seeking the temporal, spiritual and eternal welfare of those who are His own. This prayer did not pass away as soon as its words were uttered, or when Christ ascended to heaven, but retains a perpetual efficacy. "Just as the words of creation hath retained their vigor these six thousand years: 'Increase and multiply: Let the earth bring forth after its kind,' so this prayer of Christ's retains its force, as if but newly spoken" (Mr. T. Manton). Let us remember our Lord's words, "Father, I thank thee that thou hast heard me. And I knew that thou hearest me always" (John 11:41, 42) as we ponder this prayer together. "These words spake Jesus, and lifted up his eyes to heaven" (John 17:1). The first four words look backwards and their meaning is fixed by the opening clause in John 16:33. They refer to the whole consolatory discourse recorded in the three preceding chapters. Having completed His address to the disciples, He now lifted up His eyes and heart to the Father. The connection is emphasized by the Spirit: "These words spoke Jesus, and lifted up his eyes to heaven, and said." What an example for all of His servants! He had said everything to the apostles which a wise kindness could dictate in order to sustain them in the supremely trying circumstances in which they were about to be placed, and as the hour was at hand when they were to be separated from Him, He employs the few moments now remaining in commending them to the care of the Father—His Father and their Father. From preaching He passed to prayer! Thereby He teaches us that after we have done all we can to promote the holiness and comfort of those with whom we are connected, we should in prayer and supplication beseech Him, who is the author of all good, to bless the objects of our care and the means which we have employed for their welfare. "Doctrine has no power, unless efficacy is imparted to it from above. Christ holds out an example to teach them, not to employ themselves only in sowing the Word, but by mingling prayers with it, to implore the assistance of God, that His blessing may render their labors fruitful" (John Calvin). "And lifted up his eyes to heaven." While delivering the discourse recorded in the previous chapters His eyes, no doubt, had been fixed with tender solicitude upon His disciples. But now as a token that He was about to engage in prayer, He lifts up His eyes toward heaven. "This shows that bodily gestures in prayer and worship of God are not altogether to be overlooked as unmeaning" (Bishop Ryle). The gesture naturally expresses withdrawal of the thoughts and the affections from earthly things, deep veneration, and holy confidence. It denoted the elevation of His heart to God. Said David, "Unto thee O Lord, do I lift up my soul" (Ps. 25:1). In true prayer the affections go out to God. Our Lord's action also teaches us the spiritual reverence which is due God: the heaven of heavens is His dwelling-place, and the turning of the eyes toward His Throne expresses a recognition of God's majesty and excellence. "Unto thee lift I up mine eyes, O thou that dwellest in the heavens" (Ps. 123:1). Again, such a posture signifies confidence in God. There can be no real prayer until there is a turning away from all creature dependencies: "I will lift up mine eyes unto the hills. From whence cometh my help? My help cometh from the Lord, which made heaven and earth" (Ps. 121:1, 2) The believer looks around, and finds no ground for help; his relief must come from God above. "And said, Father." The Mediator here addresses God as Father. He was His "Father" in a threefold sense. First, by virtue of His human nature, miraculously produced. His body was "prepared" for Him by God (Heb. 10:5). Just as in the human realm the begetter of the child is its father, so the One who made the body of Christ, became the Father of His human nature: "And the angel answered and said unto her [Mary], the Holy Spirit shall come upon thee, and the power of the Highest shall overshadow thee: therefore also that holy thing which shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God" (Luke 1:35). The man Christ Jesus is thus in a peculiar sense, the Son of God. In

like manner, Adam, who was created by God in His own image and likeness, is called "the son of God" (Luke 3:38). Second, God stands in the relation of "Father" to our Lord as the Head and Representative of the holy family redeemed from among men. He is thus "The first born among many brethren" (Rom. 8:29). To this the apostle seems to refer when he applies to the Lord Jesus that Old Testament word "I will be to him a Father, and he shall be to me a Son" (Heb. 1:5). Third, the appellation "Father" given to the first person of the Trinity by our Savior, primarily, and usually refers to that essential relation which subsisted between the first and second persons of the God head from all eternity. Identity of nature is the chief idea suggested by the term. In Romans 8:32, Christ is spoken of as God's "own Son," intimating that He is a Son in a sense absolutely peculiar to Himself. "And said, Father." Two things were expressed. First, relationship: the relationship of sonship. This was His claim to be heard. It was as though He had said, "O thou with whom I have existed in unity of essence, perfection, and enjoyment from the unbegun eternity, and by whose will and operation I have been clothed miraculously with human nature and constituted the Head of all appointed unto salvation—I now come to thy throne of grace." Second, it indicated affection. It expressed love, veneration, confidence, submission. In whom should a son trust if not in his father? It was as though He had said, "I trust Thy power, Thy wisdom, Thy benignity, Thy faithfulness. Into Thy hands I commend Myself. I know that Thou wilt hear My prayer for Thou art My Father!" Previously Christ had commanded prayer: here, by His own blessed example He commends to us this holy exercise. "The hour is come." This is the seventh and last time that the Lord Jesus refers to this most momentous "hour"—see our remarks on John 2:4. This was the greatest "hour" of all—because most critical and pregnant with eternal issues—since hours began to be numbered. It was the hour when the Son of God was to terminate the labors of His important life by a death still more important and illustrious. It was the hour when the Lord of glory was to be made sin for His people, and bear the holy wrath of a sin-hating God. It was the hour for fulfilling and accomplishing many prophecies, types and symbols which for hundreds and thousands of years had pointed forward to it. It was the hour when events took place which the history of the entire universe can supply no parallel: when the Serpent was Permitted to bruise the heel of the woman's Seed; when the sword of Divine justice smote Jehovah's Fellow; when the sun refused to shine; when the earth rocked on its axis; but when the elect company were redeemed, when Heaven was gladdened, and which brought, and shall bring to all eternity, "glory to God in the highest." But why did the Savior begin His prayer by referring to this "hour"? As a plea to support the petitions that He was about to present. "In our Lord's prayer for Himself there is pleading as well as petition. Prayer is the expression of desire for benefit by one who needs it, to one who, in his estimation, is able and disposed to confer it. Request or petition is therefore its leading element; but in the expression of desire by one intelligent being to another, it is natural that the reasons why the desire is cherished, and the request presented, should be stated, and the grounds unfolded, on which the hope is founded, that the desire should be granted. Petitions and pleading are thus connected in prayer from man to man; and they are so, likewise, in prayer from men to God. Whoever reads carefully the prayers uttered by holy men, influenced and guided by the Spirit of God, recorded in Scripture, will be struck with the union of petition and pleading, by which they are distinguished. When they are brought 'near to God'—when they, as Job says, 'find him and come even to his seat,' how do 'they order their cause before him, and fill their mouths with arguments' (Job 23:3-4)2 They 'plead' with Him, as Jeremiah expresses it" (John 12:1). (Mr. John Brown). Christ's first plea was the intimate and endearing relation in which He stood to the object of worship: "Father... glorify thy Son." There is a powerful plea in each of these words. His second plea was "the hour is come"—the time appointed for granting this petition had arrived. Like so many of His words in these closing chapters, "the hour" here seems to have a double significance: referring not only to His sufferings, but also looking forward to the resurrection—side of the Cross—compare our remarks on John 13:31. "This is the

appointed period for the remarkable glorification of the Son by the Father in His sufferings, by His sufferings, for His sufferings under them, after them. 'The time, yea, the set time, is come,' and if the time be come shall not the event take place? It is a matter of Divine purpose, and when was a Divine purpose falsified! It is a matter of Divine promise, and when was a Divine promise frustrated!" (Mr. John Brown). "Glorify thy Son, that thy Son also may glorify thee" (John 17:1). This is so closely connected with what follows in the next two verses that it is difficult to treat of it separately. In John 17:2 and 3 Christ describes the particular mode of glorifying the Father on which His heart was set, and the aspect of the glorification of Himself which He here prays for, namely, to have power over all flesh and to give eternal life to as many as the Father had given Him. There was a double object of desire, a double subject of prayer; the glorification of the Father in the bestowal of eternal life upon the elect, and the glorification of the Son as subsidiary to this as the necessary and effectual means of accomplishing it. Thus we see the perfect disinterestedness of Christ. He prayed to be "glorified" not for His own sake, but that the Father might be glorified in our salvation! Here again we see Him loving us "unto the end!" "Glorify thy Son." This was the Savior requesting the Father to support Him on the Cross, afterwards to bring Him out of the grave and set Him at His own right hand, so as to bring to a triumphant completion the work given Him to do; and this in order that the glorious attributes of the Father—His justice, holiness, mercy and faithfulness—might be exhibited and magnified, for God is most "glorified" when the excellencies of His character are manifested to and acknowledged by His creatures. The glorification of the Son, in accord with the double meaning of the "hour" here, would mean Glorify Me in My sufferings, and glorify Me after My sufferings. In both of these aspects was His prayer answered. The angel sent to strengthen Him in the Garden, the testimony of Pilate—"I find no fault in him,"—the drawing of the dying thief to the Savior while He hung upon the Cross, the rending of the temple veil, the confession of the centurion, "Truly, this was the Son of God," were all so many responses of the Father to this petition. His resurrection and exaltation to the highest seat in Heaven, was His glorification following His sufferings. There is much for us to learn here. First, mark the connection: "the hour is come, glorify thy Son." "The true remedy of tribulation is to look to the succeeding glory, and to counterbalance future dangers with present hopes. This was comfort against that sad hour. So it must be our course: not to look at things which are seen, but to things which are not seen (2 Cor. 4:17); to defeat sense by faith. When the mind is in heaven it is fortified against the pains which the body feeleth on earth" (Mr. Thos. Manton-Puritan). Second, observe what Christ sought: to be "glorified" by the Father—not to be enriched by men, not to be honored by the world. This should be our desire too. Christ rebuked those who received honor one from another instead of seeking the honor that cometh from God (John 5:44), and because they loved the praise of men, more than the praise of God (John 12:43). We should not only seek for grace, but glory. Third, note that Christ asked for what He knew would be given Him. The Father had said "I have both glorified, and will glorify again" (John 12:28). Neither promises nor providence render prayer meaningless or useless. Fourth, Christ prayed for this glory in order that He might glorify the Father. Here too, He has left us an example. Whatsoever we do is to be done to the glory of God, and nothing should be asked from Him save for His glory. "As thou hast given him power over all flesh, that he should give eternal life to as many as thou hast given him" (John 17:2). "The Father is first of all to be glorified in the humanity of the God-man, who presents Himself to that end; then, through Him in His disciples, so that in this first word concerning the mutual glorification, that is already involved and included which follows in John 17:10. In John 17:2 we have a more specific development and explanation of the sense in which this glorification of the Father to and in fallen humanity is meant" (Stier). We regard the connecting "as" or "according as" as having a double force, supplying a reason for and describing the manner of the Father's glorification of Christ. Let us examine the verse in this order of thought. Verse 2 contains the third plea which the Savior presented to the Father: to glorify the Son was in accord with the

place which the Father had destined Him to fill, and the work which He had appointed Him to perform: the glorification of the Son was necessary to His filling that place and executing that work. The place which God had destined Him to occupy was that of rightful authority over the whole human race, with complete control of all events in connection with them (see John 5:22; Ephesians 1:19-21, etc.). The work appointed Him was to give eternal life to all the elect. But in order to the accomplishment of this purpose the Son must be glorified in and by and for His sufferings. He must be glorified by expiating sin upon the Cross, by being raised from the dead, and by being set at God's right hand so as to be put into actual possession of this authority and power. How cogent then was His plea! Unless the Father glorified Him, He could not accomplish the ends of His mediatorial office. The Father, in His eternal counsels, had appointed the Son to save a portion of the human race; to conduct to glory many sons, who, like their brethren in the flesh, were going to destruction. These had been given Christ to save. By nature they were "dead in trespasses and sins": guilty, depraved, destitute of spiritual life, incapable of thinking, feeling, choosing, acting, or enjoying; communion with the all-holy, ever-blessed One. If ever they were to be saved they must have eternal life bestowed upon them by the Savior, and for Him to impart this inestimable boon, He must be exalted to the place of supreme dominion. This, then, was the Savior's "argument" or plea here: the Father's glory being the end in view. Verse 2 also describes the manner of the Father's glorification in and by the Son: let Thy Son glorify Thee by saving souls "according as" Thou hast appointed Him so to do. "As thou hast given" obviously means promised to give—see such scriptures as Psalm 89:27; Daniel 7:14, etc. The fact that this "power" or authority over all flesh is given to Christ, at once shows the character in which He here appears, namely, as Mediator. That Christ receives this "gift" shows us that free grace is no dis-honorable tenure. Why should haughty sinners disdain Divine charity, when the God-man was willing to accept a gift from the Father! "Power over all flesh" means, first, dominion over the whole human race. But it also means, most probably, authority over all creatures, for Christ "is gone into heaven, and is on the right hand of God; angels and authorities and powers being made subject unto him" (1 Pet. 3:22). "All power in heaven and earth" has been given to Him (Matthew 28:18). Not only is He the "head of every man" (1 Cor. 11:3), but the "head of all principality and power" (Col. 2:10). "As thou hast given him power over all flesh, that he should give eternal life to as many as thou hast given him." We must distinguish between Christ's universal authority and His narrower charge. Authority has been given Him over all; but out of this "all" is an elect company, committed to Him as a charge. This was typified by Joseph of old; authority over all Egypt was conveyed to him by the king, but his brethren had a special claim upon his affections. "The keys of heaven are in the hands of Christ; the salvation of every human soul is at His disposal" (Bishop Ryle). How blessed to rest upon this double truth—the universal dominion of Christ, His affection for His own. All has been put into the hands of our Savior, therefore the Devil himself cannot move except so far as Christ allows. This universal dominion has been bestowed upon Christ "that" (in order that) He may give eternal life to God's elect. The elect were given to Christ by way of reward (Isa. 53:10-12), and by way of charge (John 6:37; 18:9). "And this is life eternal that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent" (John 17:3). There has been considerable difference of opinion as to what is meant by "this is eternal life." We shall not canvass the various interpretations that have been given, rather shall we seek to indicate what we believe was our Lord's meaning here. "This is life eternal," more literally, "this is the eternal life—that," etc. A parallel form of speech is found in John 3:19: "And this is the condemnation—that," etc. In the words that follow in John 3:19 the ground and way of condemnation are stated—"light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil." This helps us to arrive at the first meaning here: "This is the eternal life—that they might know thee," etc.—this is the way to it. Again, in John 12:50 we read, "His commandment is—life everlasting" that is, the outward means of it. Once more, in 1 John 5:20,

we read, "This is the true God and eternal life"—Christ is the Author of it. Taken by themselves the words of this verse might be understood as speaking of the characteristics and manifestations of "eternal life," but the context would forbid this. Christ is here amplifying the plea of the previous verse. Thus: unless I am glorified, I cannot bestow eternal life; without My ascension the Holy Spirit will not come, and without Him there can be no knowledge of the Father and His Son, and so by consequence, no eternal life, for "knowing God" and "eternal life" are inseparable. Therefore "this is eternal life—that they might know thee" etc., obviously signifies, This is the way to, the means of eternal life, namely, by the knowledge of God imparted by Jesus Christ. "This is the eternal life, that they know thee" (literal rendering). The knowledge spoken of here is not speculative but practical, not theoretical but experimental, not intellectual but spiritual, not inactive but saving. That it is a saving knowledge, which is here in view is clear from the double object—God and Christ. He that knoweth God in Christ knoweth Him as His reconciled Father, and so resteth on and in Him. "And they that know thy name will put their trust in thee" (Ps. 9:10). The knowledge here spoken of presupposes a walk in harmony with it, produced by it: "Hereby we do know that we know him, if we keep his commandments" (1 John 2:3). How this strengthened the plea of the Savior here scarcely needs pointing out. What would bring more "glory" to the Father than that He should be known (trusted, loved, served) by those to whom the Son gave eternal life! "Eternal life" contains the essence of all blessing: "This is the promise that he hath promised us—eternal life" (1 John 2:25). Spiritual or eternal life consists in knowing, living on, having communion with, and enjoying endless satisfaction in the Triune God through the one Mediator. "Know thee, the only true God." Appeal is made to this by Unitarians in their horrible efforts to disprove the Godhead of the second and third persons of the Trinity. That Christ cannot be here denying the Deity of Himself and of the Spirit we well know from many other passages, but what did He mean by affirming that the Father is "the only true God"? We believe the answer is twofold:— First, Christ was here excluding the idols of the Gentiles—false gods, *el.*, 1 Thessalonians 1:9:—to denote that that Godhead is only true that is in the Father. The Son and the Spirit are not excluded because they are of the same essence with the Father. The Son and the Spirit are "true God," not without, but in the Father. "I and the Father are one" (John 10:30); "the Father is in me, and I in him" (John 10:38): not divided in essence, but distinguished in personality. In 1 John 5:20 the Son Himself is called "the only true God!" Which no more excludes the Father than John 17:3 excludes the Son. Many such exclusive statements are to be found in Scripture, that must be expounded by the analogy of faith. For example: "No one knoweth the Father, but the Son, and none knoweth the Son, but the Father" (Matthew 11:27); but this excludes not the Spirit, for He "searcheth the depths of God" (1 Cor. 2:10). One person of the Trinity does not exclude the others. When Scripture insists there is no God but one, it simply denies that all others who are "called gods" are such. Second, Christ was here speaking in view of the order and economy of salvation, for He had just mentioned the giving of "eternal life." In the economy of salvation the Father is ever represented as Supreme, the One in whom the sovereign majesty of Deity resideth. The Son sustains the office of Mediator, and in this character He could rightly say, "My Father is greater than I" (John 14:28) In like manner, during the present dispensation, the Holy Spirit is the Servant of the Godhead (see Luke 4:17-23 and *cf.* John 16:13 and our remarks thereon). In the order of redemption the Father is the principal party representing the whole Godhead, because He is the Originator and Fountain of it. "And Jesus Christ whom thou hast sent." The connecting "and" gives plain warning that the Father, "the only true God" cannot be "known" apart from "Jesus Christ"! Just as the "only true God" is opposed to the vanities of the Gentiles, so is "Jesus Christ whom thou hast sent" to the blindness of the Jews! "Sent" has a threefold intimation and signification. It points to His Deity: "We believe that thou camest forth from God" (John 16:30). It refers to His incarnation: "When the fullness of the time was come, God sent forth His Son made of a woman" (Gal. 4:4). It also signified His office of Mediator and

Redeemer. For this reason He is called "The apostle and high priest of our profession" (Heb. 3:1), and apostle means the sent one. Jesus Christ is the great Ambassador to treat with us from God. It is worthy of note that this is the only place in the New Testament where our Lord called Himself "Jesus Christ." In so doing He affirmed that He, Jesus the Son of man, and Son of God was the only true Christ (Messiah): thereby He repudiated every false notion of the Messiah, as in the previous clause He had excluded every false god. It is very striking to observe how that in 1 John 5:1 we are told, "Whosoever believeth that Jesus is the Christ is born of God," while in 1 John 5:5 we read, "Who is he that overcometh the world, but he that believeth that Jesus is the Son of God?" Do you, dear reader, know the Father and the Son—the Father as revealed in and by Jesus Christ! If you do not, you have not eternal life. "I have glorified thee on the earth" (John 17:4). Here is the next plea of the Savior: I have glorified Thee, do Thou now glorify Me. God has been glorified in creation (Ps. 19:1) and by His providences (Ex. 15:6-7, etc.); but to a superlative degree, in an altogether unique way, He had been glorified by the Son. Christ has glorified the Father in His person (Heb. 1:3). He glorified Him by His miracles (Matthew 9:8, etc.). He glorified Him by His words, constantly ascribing all praise to Him (Matthew 11:25, etc.). But above all He had glorified Him by His holy life. The Savior was sent into the world as the Representative of His people, to render obedience to that law which they had violated (Gal. 4:4); and perfectly bad He in thought and word and deed discharged this duty. In Him—full of grace and truth—the disciples had beheld a moral glory possessed by none save Him who abode in the bosom of the Father. "I have glorified thee on the earth"—in the place where He had been so grievously dishonored. In view of having glorified the Father on earth, the Son said "glorify thou me." "The more we examine the Gospel of John, the more we shall see One who speaks and acts as a Divine Person—one with the Father—alone could do, but yet always as One who has taken the place of a servant, and takes nothing to Himself but receives all from His Father. 'I have glorified thee: now glorify me.' What language of equality of nature and love! But He does not say, 'And now I will glorify myself.' He has taken the place of man to receive all, though it be a glory He had with the Father before the world was. This is of exquisite beauty. I add, it was out of this the enemy sought to seduce Him, in vain, in the wilderness" (Mr. Darby). "I have finished the work which thou gavest me to do" (John 17:4). Here is the final plea of the Savior for His glorification. When He entered this world, He affirmed, "Lo, I come to do thy will, O God" (Heb. 10:7). At the age of twelve, He said, "Wist ye not that I must be about my Father's business?" (Luke 2:49). In John 4:34 He declared, "My meat is to do the will of him that sent me, and to finish his work." Now He says, "I have finished the work which thou gavest me to do." He anticipated by a few hours His cry from the Cross, "It is finished" (John 19:30). The Savior referred to His work on earth as though He had been already exalted to heaven. How evident it is all through His prayer that His heavenly mediation is in view—"Now I am no more in the world" (John 17:11)! "I have finished the work which thou gavest me to do." As the eternal Son He had, in the character of the faithful Servant, done what none other could do. He had performed the Father's will: He had delivered His message: He had not only taught but perfectly exemplified the truth. He had "finished transgression and brought in everlasting righteousness" (Dan. 9:24). He had put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself. He had "restored that which He took not away" (Ps. 69:4). Thus had He glorified the Father upon earth and finished the work given Him to do. There was every reason then why He should be "glorified." Every moral attribute of Deity required it. Having endured the Cross, He was fully entitled to enter "the joy set before Him." Having poured out His soul unto death, it was but meet that the Father should "divide him a portion with the great" (Isa. 53:12). Having glorified Him on earth, it was fitting that the Savior should be glorified in heaven. "And now, O Father, glorify thou me with thine own self, with the glory which I had with thee before the world was" (John 17:5). Having presented the various pleas suited to His glorification, the Son now returns to His petition. The verse before us conducts us to a height which we have no means of scaling. All that we can

do is to humbly ponder its words in the light of the context and parallel scriptures. When the Savior says, "glorify thou me" He speaks as the Mediator, as "Jesus Christ" (John 17:3). As Jesus Christ He had been humiliated; now, as Jesus Christ, He was to be glorified. The Father's answer to this is seen in Acts 2: "This Jesus hath God raised up... let all the house of Israel know assuredly, that God hath made that same Jesus, whom ye have crucified, both Lord and Christ" (verses 32, 36)—compare also Philippians 2:9-11. But the glorification here must not be confined to His humanity, as the remainder of the verse shows. As the eternal Son He has humbled Himself (Phil. 2:6), and as the Son He has been exalted and magnified see Psalm 21:1-6; 110:1; Ephesians 1:17-23; Revelation 5:11-14. That Christ asked to be "glorified," demonstrated His perfections: not even as risen did He glorify Himself. In addition to the fact that His glorification had been promised and earned by Him, three reasons may be given why He asked for it. First, for the comfort of His apostles who were troubled over His humiliation. Second, for our instruction: to teach us that suffering for God is the highway to glory. Third, for the benefit of His Church: Christ must be glorified before it could prosper. The example of the Savior here teaches that we should pray that the Father may be pleased to honor us by fitting and using us to lead men to a knowledge of the only true God through Jesus Christ, and to enable us, in our creature measure, to glorify Him on earth and to finish the work which He has given us to do. The following questions are to help the student on the next section: —

1. How many pleas does Christ here present on behalf of His own, verses 6,12?
2. Of whom is Christ speaking in verse 6?
3. In what senses were the elect "given" to Christ, verse 6?
4. What important truth is pointed in the "ands" of verse 8?
5. How harmonize verse 9 with Luke 23:34?
6. Why "Holy" Father, verse 11?
7. What is the unity of verse 12?

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