

JOHN 17:1-5
JESUS PRAYS FOR HIMSELF!

Please turn in your Bibles this morning to John chapter 17 as we continue our in-depth study of the Gospel of John.

Over the last several weeks we have been studying John chapters 13 through 16, and now, as we come to John chapter 17 we are just hours away from Jesus being arrested in the Garden of Gethsemane and his crucifixion!

And we continue to see Jesus teach His men, to instill in His men the things of God so that they could carry on after His departure!

Remember, Jesus and His men, except for Judas, finished the Passover meal together, they have left the upper room where they had the meal, and they were making their way through the streets of Jerusalem, past the Temple and towards the Mount of Olives to the Garden of Gethsemane.

And at one point in their journey to the Garden of Gethsemane, Jesus stops and begins to pray.

Now I realize that some feel that the teaching of Jesus is over now as He begins this prayer. I don't see it that way. I think He is showing His men what prayer is all about.

Now, to put this in context, remember what we closed with last week, what Jesus said, “**. . I have overcome the world.**” John 16:33.

How did Jesus overcome the world?

I think those words that He spoke were in anticipation of His death on the cross of Calvary and then His resurrection three days later. In doing so He showed that he conquered the fallen world system that the devil was controlling and over death. He took away the sting of death!

And now, in anticipation of that coming victory, He is praying to the Father for Himself, for His men and for us. And specifically for His men and for us, that we too might be overcomers of this world just as He had overcome this world!

And some of you might not believe that we are overcomers, or you don't believe that you are an overcomer, but if you are in Christ, you are!

John tells us in I John 4:4, "**You are of God, little children, and have overcome them, because He who is in you is greater than he who is in the world.**"

Did you hear that?

The secret for a victorious Christian life whether it is dealing with heresy or anything else, is for us to rely on God, that we trust in Him.

We don't stand strong in the power of our might, but in the power of His might!

John put it this way in I John 5:4-5, "**For whatever is born of God overcomes the world. And this is the victory that has overcome the world - our faith. Who is he who overcomes the world, but he who believes that Jesus is the Son of God?**"

It is not complicated, but are we willing to believe it and walk by faith?

We have overcome the world because we are in Christ, that is where our victory is found, our faith in Him!

So what we have here in John chapter 17 is the Lord's prayer.

I realize that shocks some people.

Why are they shocked by that statement?

Because, when we think of the Lord's prayer most people go to Matthew 6:9-13 as Jesus said, **"In this manner, therefore, pray: Our Father in heaven, Hallowed be Your name. Your kingdom come. Your will be done On earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our debts, As we forgive our debtors. And do not lead us into temptation, But deliver us from the evil one. For Yours is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever. Amen."**

Please understand that this is not the Lord's prayer, it is a pattern to pray by.

It is also not a formula to pray, but a pattern to pray by! And you can look at our Matthew chapter 6 study if you want more information on that.

As we come to John chapter 17, this is really the Lord's prayer, as we shall see.

Make no mistake about it, there are some great prayers in the Bible.

We see the prayer of Abraham in Genesis chapter 18 as he intercedes for Sodom.

In Exodus chapter 32 we see the prayer of Moses as he intercedes for the children of Israel.

In I Kings chapter 8 we see the prayer of Solomon as the Temple is dedicated.

We see the prayer of Nehemiah in Nehemiah chapter 1 as he too is interceding for his people, the Jews and as they have been home from their captivity for years and yet, the walls of the city were not built! Things were a mess. And Nehemiah is praying for wisdom in dealing with this situation before he even went to Jerusalem.

And Daniel chapter 9 as Daniel is also interceding for the Jewish people and their return home from captivity!

Make no mistake about it, these are all very powerful prayers by godly men, but, by far, the greatest prayer ever recorded in the Bible has to be the one here in John chapter 17, the prayer of Jesus.

It is the *holy of holies* of prayers you might say as our Great High Priest makes intercession for His people, you and me!

To give you an idea of how great this prayer is, Marcus Rainsford, who worked closely with D. L. Moody, wrote,

The whole prayer is a beautiful illustration of our blessed Lord's intercession at the right hand of God. Not a word against His people; no reference to their failings, or their shortcomings. . . . No.

He speaks of them only as they were in the Father's purpose, as in association with Himself, and as the recipients of the fulness He came down from heaven to bestow upon them. . . . All the Lord's particular petitions for His people relate to spiritual things; all have reference to heavenly blessings.

The Lord does not ask riches for them, or honours, or worldly influence, or great preferments, but He does most earnestly pray that they may be kept from evil, separated from the world, qualified for duty, and brought home safely to heaven. Soul prosperity is the best prosperity; it is the index of true prosperity.

- Marcus Rainsford

And J. Vernon McGee had this to say as he quotes some famous Christians about this chapter in the Gospel of John and then gives some of his insights of this chapter.

He wrote,

Matthew Henry: *“It is the most remarkable prayer following the most full and consoling discourse ever uttered on the earth.”*

Martin Luther: *“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.”*

Philip Melanchthon, another of the reformers: *“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.”*

This is the prayer which John Knox read over and over in his lifetime. When he was on his deathbed, his wife asked him. *“Where do you want me to read?”*

He replied, *“Read where I first put my anchor down, in the seventeenth chapter of John.”*

We have the record of many others who have read it over and over. Dr. Fisher, who was bishop of Rochester under Henry VIII, had this read as the last portion of Scripture just before his martyrdom.

This is a great portion of Scripture. I feel wholly and totally inadequate to deal with this prayer. It is His high priestly intercession for us. It is a revelation to us of the communication which, I think, constantly passes between the Lord Jesus and the Father in heaven.

His entire life was a life of prayer. He began His ministry by going into a solitary place to pray.

Often He went up into a mountain to pray and spent the night in prayer.

He is our great Intercessor. He prays for you and for me. If you forgot to pray this morning, He didn't. He prayed for you this morning.

- J. Vernon McGee, Thru the Bible Vol. IV, p. 477

I think we need to put things into perspective here. Jesus knows what is ahead for Him. He is going to go to the cross of Calvary and He will be crucified for the sins of the world. The Father will break fellowship with the Son as the sins of the world are placed upon Him.

So, not only the intense pain of the crucifixion, but this separation that Jesus never experienced in eternity past and will never experience again in eternity future.

All this is going on and He takes the time to pray. What an example for us. We can never be too busy to pray!

This chapter can be divided up for us as follows.

Jesus prays for Himself and as He prays for Himself, He told God the Father that His work on earth had been finished. And we see that in John 17:1-5.

Then we see that *Jesus prays for His disciples*, and as he prays, He asks God the Father that He would keep them and sanctify them. And we see that in John 17:6-19.

And Jesus closes His prayer to God the Father, and we see *Jesus prays for all believers!* And in this prayer we see Jesus praying for you and me, for the whole church throughout church history. And what is the focus of His prayer? That we might be unified in Him and one day share His glory! And we see that in John 17:20-26.

So this morning, as we begin looking at this prayer of Jesus, we will look at Jesus praying for Himself. I have broken these verses down into the following main points.

They are,

THE HOUR HAS COME – JOHN 17:1

HE SHOULD GIVE ETERNAL LIFE – JOHN 17:2

WHAT IS ETERNAL LIFE – JOHN 17:3

RECEIVED BACK TO GLORY – JOHN 17:4-5

With that as our background, let's begin reading in John chapter 17, beginning in verse 1 and let's see what the Lord has for us as we study through His Word this morning and we look at this topic – ***JESUS PRAYS FOR HIMSELF!***

JOHN 17

VERSE 1

Notice how Jesus starts out His prayer to God the Father. He says, “**... ‘Father, the hour has come...’**” John 17:1.

Please understand that the life of Jesus was lived according to a divine time clock! There was a plan, there was a schedule that He followed.

And we see this played out throughout the Gospel of John. Remember when Jesus met that Samaritan woman at the well there in Samaria. Prior to that meeting we see Jesus tell His men, “**But He needed to go through Samaria.**” John 4:4.

No, He didn't! He did not have to go through Samaria.

What do I mean by that?

Keep in mind that Samaria was located in the middle of the land, between Judea in the south and Galilee in the north.

During the time of Jesus, if the Jews were traveling to Galilee from Judea or visa-a-versa, they would not go through Samaria, which was the shortest route. They instead would go east of the Jordan River along the desert strip called the Trans Jordan or Perea and then cross over again, going twice as far as if they would just go through Samaria.

They would bypass Samaria completely.

Then why in the world did He go through Samaria?

I believe it was because He had an appointment to meet someone there, an appointment that was made before the foundations of the world were created, and thus, Jesus is going to a place that very few Jews would go, Samaria! And it is there He not only meets this Samaritan woman, but she comes to saving faith, as well as many of the men of the city!

Make no mistake about it, Jesus' whole life was planned in eternity past. The places He went to. The people He encountered. The timeframe He would get there. The miracles that He did! Jesus had a divine schedule, and He never missed an appointment!

In Galatians 4:4-5 Paul tells us, **“But when the fullness of the time had come, God sent forth His Son, born of a woman, born under the law, to redeem those who were under the law, that we might receive the adoption as sons.”**

Make no mistake about it, God's timing is perfect!

Think about it, God's timing was the perfect time *politically speaking*.

What do I mean by that? Listen carefully.

“It was a time when the *pax Romana* extended over most of the civilized earth and when travel and commerce were therefore possible in a way that had formerly been impossible. Great roads linked the empire of the Caesars, and its diverse regions were linked far more significantly by the all-pervasive language of the Greeks. Add the fact that the world was sunk in a moral abyss so low that even the pagan cried out against it and that spiritual hunger was everywhere evident, and one has a perfect time for the coming of Christ and for the early expansion of the Christian gospel.” (Boice)

Not only that, but it was the right time *prophetically speaking*.

Remember that in Daniel we are told that it would be 483 years until the Messiah came and if you counted off 173,880 days from the going forth to restore and rebuild Jerusalem until the coming Messiah, you would come to March 14, 445 B. C.

It is a day we call Palm Sunday, the only time that Jesus came as Messiah the King into Jerusalem, just as Daniel was told!

And listen to what Paul tells us here, that at this appointed time, “**God sent forth His Son**” to redeem sinful man who was under the curse of the Law!

Jesus came to “**redeem**” us; EXAGORAZO, (ex-ag-or-ad'-zo) in the Greek, and it speaks of buying back or buying out and was often used of slaves whose freedom was purchased.

Think about that, we were slaves to sin under the Law, but Christ bought us out by His sacrifice and now, instead of being a slave to sin we are an heir of God, sons of God!

Paul also tells us that Jesus was “**born of a woman**” which speaks of His humanity and the virgin birth.

He was fully God, and He was fully man in the Incarnation!

He was born into a society that was in bondage to the Law and yet He kept it perfectly, and only He could, as He said in Matthew 5:17, **“Do not think that I came to destroy the Law or the Prophets. I did not come to destroy but to fulfill.”**

But now, as we are told here in John, His hour has come!

As we have seen in the Gospel of John, Jesus said many times that His hour had not come!

We see that in John 2:4 at the wedding feast in Cana of Galilee as Jesus spoke to Mary, His mother and said, **“... ‘Woman, what does your concern have to do with Me? My hour has not yet come.’”** Again, His hour had not come yet!

As the Fest of Tabernacles was upon them, and they were supposed to go to Jerusalem for this feast, Jesus said to His men, **“You go up to this feast. I am not yet going up to this feast, for My time has not yet fully come.”**

When the Jews sought to kill Jesus, to take Him by force, John tells us in John 7:30, **“Therefore they sought to take Him; but no one laid a hand on Him, because His hour had not yet come.”** It was not time for Jesus to be put to death, not yet!

And in John 8:20 we are told once again how they sought to take Jesus and lay hands on Him, **“These words Jesus spoke in the treasury, as He taught in the temple; and no one laid hands on Him, for His hour had not yet come.”**

But then in John 12:23 we are told, **“But Jesus answered them, saying, ‘The hour has come that the Son of Man should be glorified.’”**

And that is what Jesus is saying here. That the hour has come. You see, we are coming to the reason that God became flesh and dwelt among us, to pay the debt of our sin, something we could never pay. And not only pay it, but pay it in full, the work will be completed. ***The hour had come!***

And as you read through this prayer, please understand that this is not a prayer from man to God.

This is a prayer from the God-Man, Jesus Christ, to the Father. They are equals. One writer put it like this, ***“The request of our Lord thus given in John’s seventeenth chapter is clearly no prayer of an inferior to a superior: constantly there is seen in it the co-equality of the Speaker with The Father. The Two have but one mind. . . . Where the Son speaks He is not seeking to bend The Father to Him: rather is He voicing the purpose of the Godhead.”***

(Trench)

And what will happen?

Jesus said, **“ . . . ‘glorify Your Son, that Your Son also may glorify You.’ ”** John 17:1.

Again, the focus of Jesus here is the cross, which was a symbol of humiliation to the world but by it the Son is glorified.

How?

It was an act of obedience unto the Father and through it the Father is also glorified. It shows the love, the compassion, the forgiveness of God towards man.

It is as Morris wrote, ***“To men the cross appeared an instrument of shame. To Christ it was the means of true glory.”***

Remember what Jesus said in Matthew 5:16, **“Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father in heaven.”**

You see, as we serve the Lord the world may shake their heads at us, they may see our work as unbecoming, but through it the Father is glorified as we walk in obedience to Him!

Now, how does Jesus glorify the Father?

We will deal with this more in the next verse, but we will see that Jesus glorifies the Father by giving eternal life to those who believe on Him. The Father sent Jesus to pay for the sins of man and with the completed work, as men come to Jesus, the Father is glorified! And as they come to the Lord, they are His representatives. And as we have seen, our good works will glorify our Father in heaven!

As one writer put it, *“The Son glorified the Father by revealing in this act [the cross] the sovereignty of God over evil, the compassion of God for men, and the finality of redemption for believers.”* (Tenney)

So we have seen here – ***THE HOUR HAS COME!***

As we read on, we will be looking at the reason for His coming more closely, that – ***HE SHOULD GIVE ETERNAL LIFE!***

VERSE 2

As you read these verses, who has authority over all flesh?

Jesus said that the Father has given Him, Jesus this authority over all flesh.

And not only does He have this authority over all flesh, but He has the ability to give eternal life to man.

What does that mean?

If Jesus has authority over all flesh and He can forgive sin, if He can give us eternal life, it means that He is Almighty God!

Why does that mean that Jesus is Almighty God?

Because only God can forgive sins and give eternal life to man. And because He is God He has authority over mankind, since He is the creator of all things!

Jesus Christ is not just a man. Even when He walked on the earth, He was not merely a man.

In the New Testament, He was referred to 88 times as the Son of Man and 47 times as the Son of God.

He was God in the form of man – God clothed in human flesh - born of a virgin, conceived by the Holy Spirit.

We see this in John 5:21-23 where Jesus said, **“For as the Father raises the dead and gives life to them, even so the Son gives life to whom He will. For the Father judges no one, but has committed all judgment to the Son, that all should honor the Son just as they honor the Father. He who does not honor the Son does not honor the Father who sent Him.”**

You see, what the Father can do so can the Son and it is through the Son that eternal life is given. Not only that, but all judgment has been given into the hands of the Son, into the hands of Jesus!

What is my point?

My point is simple – ***JESUS IS ALMIGHTY GOD!***

And we see this played out, that Jesus has authority over all men, saved and unsaved as Paul reminds us in Philippians 2:9-11 as he is speaking of Jesus.

He wrote, **“Therefore God also has highly exalted Him and given Him the name which is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of those in heaven, and of those on earth, and of those under the earth, and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.”**

You see, as the Son humbled Himself to the point of death, being obedient to the Father, the Father *“super exalted”* Him!

One writer summed this up for us like this. He wrote,

And here in Philippians Paul pulls out all the stops, using a word found nowhere else in the New Testament, as he says literally *“Therefore God super-exalted him”* (v. 9a) Christ received the highest exaltation. This is incomprehensible. It is in a class by itself.

The awesome retrospect is that Christ’s humiliation eventuated in his resurrection, his ascension, and now his super-exaltation and rule as he reigns forever. This is theological-historical fact.

- R. Kent Hughes, Philippians – the Fellowship of the Gospel, p. 91

Paul is telling us that He who humbled Himself, Jesus, was raised in glory and is now seated at the right hand of the Father, the place of power.

Now some take what Paul is saying here, that every knee should bow before Jesus as some kind of universal salvation, or all will be saved.

Is that what Paul is speaking of here, a universal salvation when he says that every knee shall bow, and every tongue confess that Jesus is Lord? Is everyone going to be saved?

Not at all!

You will either bow your knee willingly, out of love for Him as you submit your life to Jesus now or you will be compelled to bow your knee before Him if you reject Him now.

You see, what you believe or don't believe about Jesus doesn't change who He is and because He is King of kings and Lord of lords, all will bow before Him in reverence!

And here is the question.

When will you bow your knee to Him?

How much better it is to bow your knee before Him now than later, when you stand before Him, and you have never made that confession of faith!

Thus, all authority has been given to Jesus and, like I have said, He has given to us eternal life!

So we have seen here the work of Jesus, that – ***HE SHOULD GIVE ETERNAL LIFE!***

But what does that mean – ***WHAT IS ETERNAL LIFE?***

Now people have all kinds of ideas of what eternal life is. The big one for many Christians is that it is a never-ending amount of time. Kind of, but that is a really narrow view of what eternal life is all about.

Even unbelievers have their own beliefs about eternal life.

This one, ***The Cult of Eternal Life*** is interesting and kind of funny, but sad also. They tell us,

The cult of eternal life is a cult founded by a mystery person and worships the one-eyed triangle.

The cults' mission is to tell the people of the world that they were lied to and were hypnotized by the leaders of the world. So the world fights the leaders and makes the new world order.

Also to find the immortality potion the governments of the world made.

The one-eyed triangle is known as Bill Cipher, the king of nightmares and pain and chaos.

It is said that every 1000 years he chooses one person to spread his teachings and truth to the world.

A prophecy states that one day the world will end in something called Weridmagedon and ten people will survive and repopulate the world.

- <https://bit.ly/3W20syM>

Okay, that is a strange one. But – ***WHAT IS ETERNAL LIFE?***

That is what we will be looking at next.

VERSE 3

Jesus gives to us an answer to that question – ***WHAT IS ETERNAL LIFE!***

He says that eternal life is to know God the Father and Jesus! What does that mean?

Let me show you what eternal life is really all about.

In I John 5:20 we are told, “**And we know that the Son of God has come and has given us an understanding, that we may know Him who is true; and we are in Him who is true, in His Son Jesus Christ. This is the true God and eternal life.**”

The Amplified Bible puts this verse like this, “**And we know that the Son of God has come, and he has given us understanding so that we can know the true God. And now we live in fellowship with the true God because we live in fellowship with his Son, Jesus Christ. He is the only true God, and he is eternal life.**”

What is my point?

My point is this.

Eternal life is not just living forever, it is a person, it is Jesus Christ. Eternal life is found in Him, and He is eternal life!

And He not only is eternal life, but He is the One who gives eternal life to us.

Here's the thing. I can give physical life to another, I do need my wife to accomplish this as well, but neither my wife nor I can give spiritual life to another person.

Think about that for a minute. You can't take a Christian mom and a Christian dad and produce a Christian baby, that is not how it works.

And as cute and adorable as babies are, they are born sinners. And all you have to do to figure that out is to be a parent. They want food when they want food. They want to be changed when they want to be changed. As they get a little older what they want is theirs even though it may not be theirs. In other words, they are sinners, and they too need a Savior!

And my point is this. Spiritual life comes from just one Person and that is Jesus Christ!

Remember what Jesus said in John 14:6, "**... 'I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me.'**"

It is only through Jesus that this eternal life can be found, and it is only through Him because He is the only way to that eternal life, and it is the truth!

Isn't that just what we read in John 17:1-2, "**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.'**"

Look at how this is done. Eternal life is passed down from the Father to the Son and that means that all who come to Christ by faith will receive that eternal life. That is what the new birth is all about, being born again or that the spirit that was dead in sin is made alive in Christ!

Jesus put it like this in John 3:16-17, **“For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life. For God did not send His Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through Him might be saved.”**

Now some of you may be thinking, *“Wow, with all that is going on in this world and in my life, I can’t wait to get to heaven and begin this eternal life with Jesus!”*

Now I don’t want to disappoint you, but eternal life does not begin in heaven, it begins the moment we get saved!

Maybe you don’t agree with that, or you are hoping it is not true. If you are hoping that it is not true, you are missing out of this abundant life that we have in Christ right here and now, that eternal life that He has given to us.

You see, eternal life is not really a quantity of life but a quality of life.

Do I have Biblical support or Scriptures to support that?

You bet I do!

John tells us in John 3:36, **“He who believes in the Son has everlasting life; and he who does not believe the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God abides on him.”**

If you believe in Jesus, if He is your Lord and Savior, then Jesus says you **HAVE** everlasting life, not will have!

Also, in I John 5:11-13 John tells us, **“And this is the testimony: that God has given us eternal life, and this life is in His Son. He who has the Son has life; he who does not have the Son of God does not have life. These things I have written to you who believe in the name of the Son of God, that you may know that you have eternal life, and that you may continue to believe in the name of the Son of God.”**

Now what does John mean when he speaks of **“life”** in I John 5:12?

The Greek word that John does not use here is *BIOS*, from which we get our English word **“biology”** from. It is speaking of physical life.

I am thankful that this does not speak of physical life being eternal because how would you like to live in these physical bodies, with all the problems that arise from them, for eternity!

That would not be appealing to me, and I bet it is not going to be appealing to you either.

John uses the Greek word *ZOE* here and this speaks of not just a quantity of life but a quality of life!

We can have a quality of life now with the Lord and then, when these bodies go back to the dust of the earth, we will spend eternity with the Lord! Think about that. Never ending life that is complete, it is full of richness, joy, blessing, peace, comfort, and on and on I can go!

Those who die outside of Christ will also spend eternity in the Lake of Fire, but it won't be a blessing to them, not even close!

Listen once again to what we read in I John 5:13, it is so important. He wrote, **“These things I have written to you who believe in the name of the Son of God, that you may know that you have eternal life, and that you may continue to believe in the name of the Son of God.”**

In other words, the last reason John wrote this letter was to let believers know that they can be assured of their salvation, that you can know if you are saved, that you have eternal life, but how?

Are you in the Son, Jesus Christ?

You see, like I have said. If you are not, then you don't have eternal life and if you are, you do have eternal life.

Thus, this eternal life that Jesus is and imparts to those who believe in Him happens at the moment a person opens their heart to Him and receives Him by faith. In other words, we're not waiting to enter into eternal life as Christians, we're living it right now!

Since eternal life is essentially God living His life in us, that means that when I received Jesus into my heart the Holy Spirit moved in and filled me with the life of God which I'm enjoying right now, not waiting for someday. I pray we understand that, and we live it!

And then, when these physical bodies die or as the Bible says, goes to sleep, all that happens is that our spirit and soul is released from all this sin, and I will get a new body for my spirit and soul to dwell in. I will be with Jesus, and it will be unspeakable joy, as I have said!

Paul put it like this in II Corinthians 5:1, "**For we know that if our earthly house, this tent, is destroyed, we have a building from God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens.**"

And in Romans 8:23 Paul wrote, "**Not only that, but we also who have the firstfruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, eagerly waiting for the adoption, the redemption of our body.**"

And for John, that is the whole purpose he wrote this Gospel as he tells us in John 20:31, **“but these are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing you may have life in His name.”**

That is why new believers and the unsaved should read the Gospel of John because his goal is that you would come to saving faith and know that you have eternal life that is found in Jesus!

In fact, this was so important that we see in this Gospel that John speaks of life that Jesus gives to us some fifty-four times! I think he wants us to understand that eternal life is only found in Jesus, and it is for us now!

Now I do need to touch on this once again and it can be a little tricky, and some get tripped up on this.

Jesus said in John 17:3, **“... that He should give eternal life to as many as You have given Him.”**

Does that mean God has predestined some people for heaven, those that He gave to Jesus to save, and some people for hell, those that He did not predestine for heaven.

Here's the thing. God knows who will be saved so the answer is simple. It is 100% God's sovereignty, predestination!

But I am not done. It is also 100% man's free will to choose the Lord!

You see, you can make a case for both and that is where people draw the line and separate to one side or the other. And I believe that is wrong. Let me show you just a few verses so you can see that man has a choice.

And if you think about it, if man did not have a choice in his salvation, then those that God predestined for hell could blame God for sending them there. Make no mistake about it, God does not send anyone to hell, man chooses to go there because he has a free will.

Also, if God made us do something, like go to heaven, then is there a love relationship there or are we being forced to do something that we do not want to do?

Let's look at these verses that deal with man's responsibility to choose.

In Revelation 3:20 we read **“Behold, I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears My voice and opens the door, I will come in to him and dine with him, and he with Me.”**

The picture here is God knocking and we have a choice to open the door of our heart and let Him in or reject Him. Man's free will to choose.

Now some may feel that is not fair. Well, you do have a choice to make. Come to Christ and you will see that you were predestined for heaven. God knows all but He does not force anyone to do anything. It is man's choice! He does not create us for hell, not at all!

Also, in Matthew 11:28-30 we are told, **“Come to Me, all you who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For My yoke is easy and My burden is light.”**

Once again we see a choice that each of us needs to make. Jesus gives an invitation to us, and we can come, or we can reject Him!

In John 7:37-38 we read, **“On the last day, that great day of the feast, Jesus stood and cried out, saying, ‘If anyone thirsts, let him come to Me and drink. He who believes in Me, as the Scripture has said, out of his heart will flow rivers of living water.’”**

Again, we see the invitation of God and a choice we have to make. You see, it is God's sovereign will and it is our free choice, we do play a part.

In Hebrews 2:9 Paul tells us, "**But we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels, for the suffering of death crowned with glory and honor, that He, by the grace of God, might taste death for everyone.**"

Who did Jesus die for? "**Everyone.**" I think that is clear. He did not just die for the elect or those He predestined!

In Acts 17:30 we are told, "**Truly, these times of ignorance God overlooked, but now commands all men everywhere to repent.**"

Who did God command to repent? The elect or those He predestined to save. No, the call is for all men to repent! That means every person has a choice to make, salvation is open to all!

Notice what Jesus says in John 5:40, "**But you are not willing to come to Me that you may have life.**"

Do you see that? "**you are not willing to come to Me**" and to me, that is a choice on our part. Man's free will!

Also, in I John 2:2 John tells us, "**And He Himself is the propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only but also for the whole world.**"

Is Jesus the propitiation for just the select few. No, "**the whole world.**"

And there are many more that speak of man's free will to choose.

It is a difficult concept, and it has been debated for years with both sides digging their heels into the sand to fight.

To me, it is simple.

God's sovereignty, He predestines us because He knows who will be saved.

And man's free will to choose.

Thus, there is no eternal life, or should I say abundant life, joyful eternal life outside of Christ. Those who reject Jesus will have eternal life apart from Him in the Lake of Fire!

And when Jesus says, **“that they may know You”** *“In the Greek the verb is in the present subjunctive indicating the ‘knowledge’ is a growing experience.”* (Tasker)

We grow in the Lord as we live out our lives. It is through our daily experiences that we come to know God more intimately!

So I hope you have a better understanding of – ***WHAT IS ETERNAL LIFE!***

As we finish up, we will see that Jesus was – ***RECEIVED BACK TO GLORY!***

VERSES 4-5

As we have seen as we have been going through these verses, the cross is in view. That is the work that Jesus came to finish. And yet, notice what Jesus said here. **“I have finished the work which You have given Me to do.”**

If the cross was before Him, how can He say He finished the work?

Because nothing is going to stop Him from completing the work that is before Him. What God says He is going to do, He will do!

In knowing that, there is a similar sense in which God sees our own work of transformation and perfection as already complete, before the fact.

Let me show you what I mean. In Romans 8:30 Paul tells us, **“Moreover whom He predestined, these He also called; whom He called, these He also justified; and whom He justified, these He also glorified.”**

Yes, God has called us, He has justified us and one day we will be taken up into glory. For most of us we see this as a future event, and it is.

The only problem with that kind of thinking is that Paul is speaking of this glorification in the past tense.

In fact, all of these points are spoken in the past tense, and some will say, “*Yes, I am called and justified because God foreknew me and predestined me. But in regard to this glorification, I don’t see that!*”

But it is true!

You see, Paul is speaking of something that hasn’t taken place yet with such certainty because this is not based upon man’s faithfulness to complete it but God’s faithfulness! God will complete the work He started because He foreknew us!

Or as Paul put it in Philippians 1:6, “**being confident of this very thing, that He who has begun a good work in you will complete it until the day of Jesus Christ.**” God will complete what He has started in us. In fact, He already sees the finished product!

And Jesus glorified the Father by showing what God is really like. The Jewish people had a warped concept of God and Jesus showed them the glory of God!

What does the glory of God mean?

Jesus showed through his life on earth the divine nature of God. He showed God’s love, God’s grace, God’s peace, God’s justice, God’s mercy and the list goes on. These things are only found in God and since Jesus is God, He can show these attributes.

Not only that but He finished the work that God the Father sent Him to do!

Now, in John 17:5 Jesus prays, “**And now, O Father, glorify Me together with Yourself, with the glory which I had with You before the world was.**”

When did Jesus empty Himself of His glory?

When He became flesh and dwelt among us.

Paul speaks of this in Philippians 2:6-11, as he speaks of Jesus, **“who, being in the form of God, did not consider it robbery to be equal with God, but made Himself of no reputation, taking the form of a bondservant, and coming in the likeness of men. And being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself and became obedient to the point of death, even the death of the cross. Therefore God also has highly exalted Him and given Him the name which is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of those in heaven, and of those on earth, and of those under the earth, and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.”**

In Philippians 2:7, that phrase, **“made Himself of no reputation”** speaks of the fact that Jesus **“emptied himself”** of all the rights He had as being deity and took on the body of not just a man, but a servant!

It was not that Jesus was 50% God and 50% man, but He was 100% God and 100% man in the incarnation and God alone can do that. I may not understand that, but it is what the Scriptures teach.

Then what did Jesus empty Himself of?

First of all, He emptied Himself of His divine glory, (John 17:1, 5).

Secondly, He emptied Himself of His divine authority, (John 5:30).

Thirdly, He emptied Himself of some of His divine attributes.

The fourth thing Jesus emptied Himself of was His eternal riches that are due Him, He became poor in the incarnation and a servant of all, (II Corinthians 8:9, Mark 10:45).

The fifth thing that Jesus emptied Himself of when He became flesh and blood was that He temporarily emptied Himself of His intimate relationship with the Father as He bore the sins of the world on the cross of Calvary, (Matthew 27:46).

Thus, Jesus is asking the Father to restore the glory that He had before the Incarnation. It is as Tenney wrote, *“He had one main petition: that the Father would receive him back to the glory he had relinquished to accomplish his task. This petition for a return to his pristine glory implies unmistakably his preexistence and equality with the Father. It confirms his claim that he and the Father are one (John 10:30).”*

Once again we see the deity of Jesus. How can I say that? Because Jesus speaks of receiving the glory that He once had with the Father and yet Isaiah 42:8 says, **“I am the LORD, that is My name; And My glory I will not give to another, Nor My praise to carved images.”**

And in Isaiah 48:11 we are told, **“For My own sake, for My own sake, I will do it; For how should My name be profaned? And I will not give My glory to another.”**

Make no mistake about it, if Jesus was not God, He could not ask for this glory. But since He is, He is just going to receive back that which He had before the Incarnation! You see, if the Father and the Son share this glory, they must be ***YAHWEH!***

It is as John 1:1-2 tells us in regard to the deity of Jesus, **“In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God.”**

Keep in mind that the whole purpose of John’s Gospel is that you would believe that Jesus is Almighty God, and He alone can save you from your sins.

Thus, John starts out with a bang you might say here in John 1:1-2

You see, when John says, “**In the beginning was the Word . . .**” he uses the Greek word *EIMI* and it expresses the idea of a “*continuous timeless existence.*”

What is my point?

My point is this. If Jesus always existed then He is eternal and only God is eternal, He has no beginnings and no endings!

Now people can try to argue that point, those who don't believe that Jesus is Almighty God, but when you look at John 1:3 and you see that word “**was**” there once again, that “**All things were made through Him, and without Him nothing was made that was made**” you might say that creation is not timeless. That is true.

But John uses the Greek word *EGENETO* for the word “**was**” here in John 1:3 and that means “*to come into existence*” or to “*begin to be.*”

I think you can clearly see that Jesus Christ, the Word, brought forth the physical creation and thus, the physical universe had a beginning!

But the One Who created all things, the Lord Jesus, already existed before everything in the physical realm was created.

So here is the prayer of Jesus.

THE HOUR HAS COME – it was time for Him to go to the cross and pay for the sins of the world!

HE SHOULD GIVE ETERNAL LIFE – that was what He came to do. To save man from his sin by paying in full the penalty for our sins on the cross of Calvary!

WHAT IS ETERNAL LIFE – and we saw that it is not just a lot of time. Eternal life is Jesus, our life in Him that begins the moment we get saved and continues on.

RECEIVED BACK TO GLORY – Jesus veiled His glory in a body of flesh in the Incarnation and now, when the work is finished, He will be taken back up into heaven and receive that glory that He had before!

Let me leave you with this to think about. We are told,

Thinking of the fullness and duration of this wonderful life, W. B. Hinson, a great preacher of a past generation, spoke from his own experience just before he died.

He said, “I remember a year ago when a doctor told me, ‘You have an illness from which you won’t recover.’ I walked out to where I live 5 miles from Portland, Oregon, and I looked across at that mountain that I love. I looked at the river in which I rejoice, and I looked at the stately trees that are always God’s own poetry to my soul. Then in the evening I looked up into the great sky where God was lighting His lamps, and I said, ‘I may not see you many more times, but Mountain, I shall be alive when you are gone; and River, I shall be alive when you cease running toward the sea; and Stars, I shall be alive when you have fallen from your sockets in the great down pulling of the material universe!’”

- W. B. Hinson.

May we not forget what is ahead for us. But until that time, may we finish the work that God has called us to do!