

International Bible Lessons Commentary

John 17:1-26

New Revised Standard Version

International Bible Lessons

Sunday, January 11, 2015

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The **[International Bible Lesson](#)** (*Uniform Sunday School Lessons Series*) for **Sunday, January 11, 2015**, is from **John 17:1-26**. Please Note: Some churches will only study **John 17:6-21**. **Questions for Discussion and Thinking Further** follow the verse-by-verse *International Bible Lesson Commentary*. **Study Hints for Discussion and Thinking Further** discusses the questions below to help with class preparation and in conducting class discussion: these hints are available on the **[International Bible Lessons Commentary](#)** website along with the *International Bible Lesson* that you may want to read to your class as part of your Bible study.

International Bible Lesson Commentary

John 17:1-26

(John 17:1) After Jesus had spoken these words, he looked up to heaven and said, “Father, the hour has come; glorify your Son so that the Son may glorify you,

After Jesus spoke words of encouragement and peace to His disciples about the future and their need to keep trusting that He came from God, Jesus began a prayer to His Father that the Holy Spirit later helped John to remember and record. Jesus prayed about His coming death, resurrection, and ascension into heaven (see John 16:28). Jesus prayed that through these events the Father and the Son would glorify one another.

(John 17:2) since you have given him authority over all people, to give eternal life to all whom you have given him.

The Father gave the Son authority over all people; that would include those who plotted His death. Jesus did not use His authority to stop His persecutors, because He came to die as a substitute for all He came to save. Jesus, who died and rose again to save sinners, became the object of faith in order for believers to receive eternal life (see John 3:16). The Father gave to Jesus all those who would be saved by grace through faith in Him as Lord and Savior.

(John 17:3) And this is eternal life, that they may know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom you have sent.

Jesus defined the meaning of “eternal life” in His prayer. Eternal life involves knowing the Father: the only true God and Jesus Christ, the One the Father sent. Eternal life involves and depends on knowing both the Father and the Son. Knowing the truth about them will fill the believer with true love for them.

(John 17:4) I glorified you on earth by finishing the work that you gave me to do.

Jesus taught, healed, cast out demons, raised the dead, fed the multitudes, calmed the stormy sea, and did other things that were part of the work God intended for Him to do. Jesus looked forward to glorifying His Father and finishing His work by obeying Him and dying in our behalf to save us from our sins and their eternal consequences. Jesus said and did what would glorify and point people to the true God. And the Father glorified the Son by pointing people to Him in ways that would lead people to trust in Jesus as their Lord and Savior.

(John 17:5) So now, Father, glorify me in your own presence with the glory that I had in your presence before the world existed.

Jesus did not take His Father’s love for Him and His plans for Him as simple matters of course. Jesus prayed for His Father to keep His promise to Him fully while knowing that the Father would do what He promised and answer Jesus’ prayers. Jesus wanted to return to His place on the throne of God where He sat before the Father created the world through Him, the Word of God (see John 1:1-18).

(John 17:6) “I have made your name known to those whom you gave me from the world. They were yours, and you gave them to me, and they have kept your word.

Jesus prayed primarily for His disciples and other close followers (see Acts 1:15). The Father gave Jesus’ followers to Him by taking them out of the world that they might enter the Kingdom of God under the rule of Jesus the King (the Messiah). Jesus reported in His prayer that He had made the Father’s true character and nature known to them and they had believed and obeyed the Word of God that Jesus taught them and the crowds. Jesus believed that it was important for His disciples to hear His report in prayer and believe that God, His Father and their Father, accepted His report and work.

(John 17:7) Now they know that everything you have given me is from you;

Jesus taught in a way that always pointed people to the true God, the Father and the Son. Jesus taught and acted in such a way that people could hear with their ears and see

with their eyes that everything Jesus said and did was consistent with the express will of His Father, and the Father blessed and enabled His incarnate Son to do everything Jesus did and all that He taught.

(John 17:8) for the words that you gave to me I have given to them, and they have received them and know in truth that I came from you; and they have believed that you sent me.

Jesus always made it clear that He did not speak only on His own authority, even when He spoke with authority. Jesus' words and deeds convinced His followers that He came from God and He was sent by God to them for their benefit and the benefit of all who would hear and believe the good news about and from Jesus.

(John 17:9) I am asking on their behalf; I am not asking on behalf of the world, but on behalf of those whom you gave me, because they are yours.

In this prayer, Jesus prayed for His followers. He knew what the future would hold in store for each of them. Jesus prayed for them because they were more than His; they also belonged to God the Father. Jesus prayed consistent with what the Father would want for those Jesus would leave behind after He ascended into heaven.

(John 17:10) All mine are yours, and yours are mine; and I have been glorified in them.

Because both the Father and the Son are the one true God, the followers of Jesus belong to both of them. What Jesus' followers did and would do in the future would glorify Jesus, would express the fact that they were Jesus' followers, and that fact would explain their actions and words (see Acts 4:13).

(John 17:11) And now I am no longer in the world, but they are in the world, and I am coming to you. Holy Father, protect them in your name that you have given me, so that they may be one, as we are one.

Jesus prayed from the future perspective that He had ascended into heaven. Spiritually speaking, Jesus did not live or abide in the world with a worldly perspective. Jesus lived on earth as the King in the Kingdom of God on earth, but He would soon ascend into heaven. Jesus prayed for their spiritual protection and safety from Satan, because many of His followers would die physically for their faithful obedience to Him. Jesus prayed that His followers would be one in heart, mind, and purpose according to the Word of God, the Truth, even as the Father and He were one in what they taught and did.

(John 17:12) While I was with them, I protected them in your name that you have given me. I guarded them, and not one of them was lost except the one destined to be lost, so that the scripture might be fulfilled.

The one destined to be lost among the disciples was the one who betrayed Jesus in order to fulfill the Scriptures (see John 13:18; Psalms 41:9). Because Jesus is God, the Son of God, He could protect all of His followers from Satan and the world. Jesus' prayer protected Simon Peter from losing his faith in Jesus even though he denied Jesus (see Luke 22:31-34). Because Judas decided to betray Jesus, Satan entered into Judas and helped him betray Jesus (Luke 22:1-6).

(John 17:13) But now I am coming to you, and I speak these things in the world so that they may have my joy made complete in themselves.

Jesus intended that His prayer give confidence and joy to His disciples as they heard Him pray, because they knew that His Father always answered His prayers and fulfilled all of His requests. Jesus wanted the truth that He taught and prayed to give them complete joy when they heard Him and remembered what He prayed (John 14:15-17; 16:22-24; Galatians 5:22-25).

(John 17:14) I have given them your word, and the world has hated them because they do not belong to the world, just as I do not belong to the world.

Jesus distinguished between the Kingdom of God where He ruled as King and the world that is Satan's domain spiritually. Jesus is Lord of heaven and earth, so "the world" is the system that opposes Jesus and all of His followers. Jesus and His followers do not belong to the world as adherents of the world system, but live in the Kingdom of God; therefore, Satan and those who belong to him in this world system hate Jesus and His followers. Jesus' followers have the Word of God, the Word made flesh and the Holy Scriptures, to defeat Satan spiritually and live forevermore.

(John 17:15) I am not asking you to take them out of the world, but I ask you to protect them from the evil one.

The followers of Jesus must remain in the world system without being adherents of or members of the world system in order to share the good news of Jesus Christ and save some from the world, the flesh, the devil, and slavery to sin. Jesus has prayed for and continues to intercede from heaven for His followers to be protected from the evil one, which describes Satan, the demons, and those under the power of Satan to do the devil's will. Jesus' prayer in the Gospel of John and His continual praying at the right hand of God has protected millions of Christians for almost 2000 years. Though many Christians have suffered and died as martyrs, Jesus has protected them spiritually, blessed their work on earth, and granted them eternal life.

(John 17:16) They do not belong to the world, just as I do not belong to the world.

Neither Jesus nor His followers belong to the world. His followers have left the world system and now belong to Jesus and He belongs to them. They live in the Kingdom of God and their membership or citizenship or stewardship is now in God's Kingdom, where they pray for God's will to be done on earth as it is in heaven. The King has committed himself to protecting all of His subjects and He will always succeed in doing so spiritually in order to grant them eternal life.

(John 17:17) Sanctify them in the truth; your word is truth.

To "sanctify" means "to set apart for a holy use or God's use." When believers hear and receive the truth of God in Jesus Christ, Jesus sets them apart for holy use by God. Jesus forgives them and cleanses them from all sin. As righteous in Christ Jesus, Jesus has made them fit for God's service. God's word is truth and following the truth is the way of holy service for God and others.

(John 17:18) As you have sent me into the world, so I have sent them into the world.

Jesus is the way, the truth, and the life (John 14:6). Jesus is the Word of God (John 1:1-5). The Word of God became flesh and dwelt among us (John 1:14). God the Father sent Jesus into the world to save all who would believe in Him and give them eternal life (John 3:16). Jesus has sent all of His followers into the world to teach about Him so some will believe in Him and receive eternal life in the Kingdom of God.

(John 17:19) And for their sakes I sanctify myself, so that they also may be sanctified in truth.

Jesus did what He expected His followers to do in following Him. He went into the world and set himself apart from the world for holy use by God the Father. As He taught the truth in holiness of behavior and speech, those who believed His message and chose to follow Him Jesus cleansed and set apart for God's holy use in truth. Jesus did not lie or manipulate people to follow Him as those in this world system often do.

(John 17:20) "I ask not only on behalf of these, but also on behalf of those who will believe in me through their word,

Jesus prayed and predicted that others would believe in Him through the testimony of His first followers – those He set apart to tell the truth about Him. For almost 2000 years, those Jesus prayed for, including all those who teach this Bible Lesson in various parts of the world, have received all of the blessings that would flow from His prayer with more blessings yet to come and more people yet to believe. We believe in Him through the Word of God written, the Holy Bible, and His followers continue to share the truth about Him according to the Scriptures.

(John 17:21) that they may all be one. As you, Father, are in me and I am in you, may they also be in us, so that the world may believe that you have sent me.

Jesus prayed that we might be one, united in heart, mind, thoughts, beliefs, truth, and purpose based on the word of His disciples – that became the Bible. The Father and Jesus lived and served together in perfect harmony when Jesus came into the world; therefore, many believed that Jesus came from the true God. Jesus prayed for all of His followers to be in agreement according to God's Word in order to seek and save those who would believe in Him through them.

(John 17:22) The glory that you have given me I have given them, so that they may be one, as we are one,

God the Father gave Jesus the power to do the works He did to help people believe in Him and that the Father sent Him: the Father gave glory to Jesus. Jesus imparted glory to His disciples so they could work perfectly together as the Father and the Son had worked together so many would believe in Jesus and that Jesus' glory was working through them as God intended. Jesus gave them the glory of God so they could heal the sick and work miracles of compassion that would help people believe in Jesus.

(John 17:23) I in them and you in me, that they may become completely one, so that the world may know that you have sent me and have loved them even as you have loved me.

The Father and the Son are one divine essence: as divine Persons they have indwelt one another and had perfect love and communication for all eternity, which is truly beyond our human and finite comprehension, but according to the Bible. When Jesus sent (and still sends) His Holy Spirit into His true followers, they know the love of God within them, and some will see the love of God within them as they speak and behave as the true God inspires them; therefore, some will come to believe in Jesus too.

(John 17:24) Father, I desire that those also, whom you have given me, may be with me where I am, to see my glory, which you have given me because you loved me before the foundation of the world.

The Father will give Jesus all that He desires in His prayer because Jesus always prayed and prays according to the perfect will of God. Jesus had promised to prepare a place in heaven for all of His followers. Now He prays that they will be with Him in heaven when the time is right and they have finished the work He has for them in the world. Someday, all of Jesus' followers will see His glory in heaven; they will see the love and the glory He had from His Father before they created the universe.

(John 17:25) “Righteous Father, the world does not know you, but I know you; and these know that you have sent me.

The world situation in Jesus’ day and today is in spite of God the Father because God is righteous and always does what is perfectly right and loving. Because God is righteous and those in the world system are unrighteous, they do not know God the Father or His Son. However, all those the Father sent to Jesus know the true God. If we know God the Father, it is because the Father sent us to Jesus and we know Jesus.

(John 17:26) I made your name known to them, and I will make it known, so that the love with which you have loved me may be in them, and I in them.”

Jesus taught and teaches the truth so the love of God can be in us; therefore, the same love that the Father and the Son have for each other indwells everyone who trusts in Jesus with saving faith. Jesus has taught us God’s name “Father,” and what His name means; therefore, He and His love can abide in our lives, and we can do His work from love of God and others according to the Scriptures.

Questions for Discussion and Thinking Further

1. Where did Jesus’ first followers come from?
2. What did Jesus say His followers did?
3. What did Jesus do for His disciples?
4. What does it mean when a person says they sanctify themselves? Why did Jesus sanctify himself? What does a person need in order to become sanctified according to Jesus prayer?
5. Why does the world hate Jesus and His followers?

Begin or close your class by reading the short weekly *International Bible Lesson*.

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