

They Kept the Father's Word

International Bible Lesson

John 17:1-26

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"I have manifested thy name unto the men which thou gavest me out of the world: thine they were, and thou gavest them me; and they have kept thy word"
(John 17:6—KJV).

"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"
(John 17:6—NRSV).

When Jesus prayed aloud to His Father, He made certain that His prayer was recorded by John for the benefit of all who believed and would come to believe in Him. His prayer included a brief report on what He had done in the world according to His Father's will. He had revealed the character and nature of God to all who met Him, and especially to His disciples. Jesus said that the disciples He chose to spread the good news of salvation had belonged to the Father: these men had served and worshiped the true God up to the limits of their understanding, and His Father had given them to Jesus so He could teach them more about God and give them words from God that they could teach others. Jesus reported that these disciples had done what the Father had intended: "they have kept your word." They kept God's word by listening, learning, obeying, practicing, and remembering what Jesus taught them, and after Jesus sent the Holy Spirit to them they remembered and taught even more from Him. Because of their loyalty to Jesus and obedience to God, Jesus reported that they did not belong to the world and as a result the world hated them. In spite of the world's hatred and persecution, however, Jesus' disciples spread the teachings about and from Jesus to others, and over the last 2,000 years many more have come to believe that God the Father sent Jesus into the world to give eternal life to all who would believe in Him.

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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?