

Jn.17, The Greatest Prayer, is a living, organic whole. There are 3 sections, very closely linked. Jesus prays:

17v1-5, part 1: for himself – his 1^o mission: to come, die, rise again, and return to glory.

17v6-19, part 2: for his apostles – his 2^o mission: to call & equip apostles, the foundation of the church for his glory.

17v20-26, part 3: for all believers – his 3^o mission: to unite and perfect all the redeemed and bring them to glory.

The middle section makes up over half. The apostles have a special role – to lay the foundation, to give us his written word, the NT scriptures. However, the things he prays for apostles, he would doubtless pray for us also.

Jesus prays for the apostles – the central section of the greatest prayer:

- **the grounds on which his prayer is based:** v6-11a, the springboard, reaches a climax with these startling words: *'I am glorified in them'* v10. A deep work has taken place within them – regeneration.
 - Is it true of us, 'I am glorified in them'? Yes! Could it be more true? Yes! 1Cor.10v31.
- **petitions:** v11b-19, two petitions, both vital to their role as apostles. *'keep them'* v11b-15, consequence = unity v11, joy v13; *'sanctify them'* v16-19. The prayer was answered. They were kept, they were sanctified. Eph.2v20.

Two key words that take us to the heart of the greatest prayer:

- **glory:** returning to this because it's so vital. **The glory of Christ** is the theme that binds entire prayer together, v1,1,4,5,5,10,22,24. Indeed 'glory' is a theme of whole gospel, 36x, from 1v14 to 21v19. The glory of Jesus Christ is the grand aim of all God's purposes in heaven & earth, and it should be ours too. This is not self-absorbed praying. As God, glory is rightfully his. And his glory is intertwined with the Father's. Plus his glory inextricably bound up with our salvation, Jn.17v1b-2, Rev.5v9,12.
 - Given that the glory of Jesus Christ is the grand aim of all God's purposes, and should be ours too, how does that work out in our prayer times together? Or alone? Or are we too wrapped up in our own concerns?
- **given:** 'gave'/'given' 17x in chapter. A lot of giving! One-way traffic! (See diagram.) The Father's gift to the Son was the entirety of his mission. He gives him authority, the elect, his work, the apostles, everything, words, glory. The Son's response was glad and willing obedience. He died to secure the salvation of all those the Father had given him. Yet we must preach the free offer of the gospel, Jn.6v35-40. The Son's gift to us is eternal life, his words (via the apostles), & glory. Our response is to receive, to worship, to follow. All the glory is God's. Which is why the angels sang, Lk.2v14a.
 - As we listen to our Saviour may we see afresh that his (& our) supreme purpose is to glorify God in all things.

