

1032 Last supper (5) - The high priestly prayer (John 17)
(Verses refer to those in NASB unless otherwise specified, and by Whirlwind.)

The remaining events that happened in the last supper are only recorded in John 14 to John 17. We start from the end on John 17 so called the high priestly prayer. First, we mention in a short preface regarding when the prayer occurred. This time we use a different format of discussions. Basically, there are 26 verses and we discuss each of them. Secondly, we see the beginning verses as the manifestations of the glory of God. Thirdly, we mention the necessity of union in horizontal direction, not only in vertical direction with Holy Trinity. Fourthly, we see the reason why the foreknowledge of the betrayal of Judas was mentioned again. Fifthly, we can rejoice in the Lord always. And in the sixth, we see that the way to sanctification is passive. We can only be willing, since life can only come from God. So, He is active. Finally, we observe that we are in the highest school, the school of Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

1. Preface: when happened

The high priestly prayer happened before the event of the garden of Gethsemane and after the last supper as indicated clearly in John 18:1, "When Jesus had spoken these words, He went forth with His disciples over the ravine of the Kidron, where there was a garden, in which He entered with His disciples."

2. Manifestations of the glory of God

We state the verses first and then mention what we see briefly in parentheses.

(1) Jesus spoke these things; and lifting up His eyes to heaven, He said, "Father, the hour has come; glorify Your Son, that the Son may glorify You,

(The hour has come. "There is an appointed time for everything...." (Ecclesiastes 3:1) He knew that it was the time for Him to obey to death. Just like His prayer in the garden of Gethsemane, "...yet not as I will, but as You will."(Matthew 26:39) He glorified Father.)

(2) even as You gave Him authority over all flesh, that to all whom You have given Him, He may give eternal life.

(Indeed, before the Word becoming flesh, He is the Son Who manages the world since God uses H420 elôhîym, which is plural, Holy Trinity. At that time, man was the house keeper for God as indicated in Genesis 2:15, "Then the Lord God took the man (Adam) and put him into the garden of Eden to cultivate it and keep it.")

(3) This is eternal life, that they may know You, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom You have sent.

(This verse answers briefly the question what eternal life is.)

(4) I glorified You on the earth, having accomplished the work which You have given Me to do.

(His whole life is without sin as stated in Hebrews 4:15. He never quenched the Spirit, and obeyed to death since "...yet not as I will, but as You will."(Matthew 26:39) "For the wages of sin is death, . ."(Romans 6:23) He substituted us to die and died on the cross.)

(5) Now, Father, glorify Me together with Yourself, with the glory which I had with You before the world was.

(Before the world, that is before the Time we know is created, He and Father have the same honor and glory. This is different from the time that the Word became flesh. At that time, there is an order. The Father sends the Son, and the Holy Spirit won't come if the Son doesn't go first. This is consistent with other verses. The following two paragraphs can be used as examples.)

(In John 1:1-3, it says, "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. All things came into being through Him, and apart from Him nothing came into being that has come into being.")

(In Hebrews 1:2, it says, "in these last days has spoken to us in His Son, whom He appointed heir of all things, through whom also He made the world.")

(Here, someone may ask when the last day starts? In 1 Peter 1:20 it is answered, "For He was foreknown before the foundation of the world, but has appeared in these last times for the sake of you." The important thing is not when it started, it is we know that we're in the middle of it and how we behave. It is not meant the day when Jesus comes again.)

(6) "I have manifested Your name to the men whom You gave Me out of the world; they were Yours and You gave them to Me, and they have kept Your word.

(We can see John 17:12 consistently says, "While I was with them, I was keeping them in Your name which You have given Me; and I guarded them and not one of them perished but the son of perdition, so that the Scripture would be fulfilled." We talked about His long-time foreknowledge regarding Judas' betrayal and prayed all night to make sure that it's the will of Spirit (God).)

(Someone may ask if He had to do anything at all since He knew ahead "they were Yours and You gave them to Me." Let us use an example in the Old Testament to illustrate this point. We know that God prepared Isaac's wife Rebekah for him, and promised him to have offspring. Even so, it is recorded in Genesis 25:21, "Isaac prayed to the Lord on behalf of his wife, because she was barren; and the Lord answered him and Rebekah his wife conceived." So even having promises we still have to pray. In fact, we have to "pray without ceasing" as said in 1 Thessalonians 5:17.)

(7) Now they have come to know that everything You have given Me is from You;

(8) for the words which You gave Me I have given to them; and they received them and truly understood that I came forth from You, and they believed that You sent Me.

(These two verses are pretty clear and are related to verse 6. Paul basically did the same as indicated in Acts 20:20, "how I did not shrink from declaring to you anything that was profitable, and teaching you publicly and from house to house." They did believe as indicated in John 6:68-69, "Simon Peter answered Him, "Lord, to whom shall we go? You have words of eternal life. We have believed and have come to know that You are the Holy One of God.""

(9) I ask on their behalf; I do not ask on behalf of the world, but of those whom You have given Me; for they are Yours;

(He knew that they had given to Him, but He still prayed for them as a coworker of God just like the example we talked about with Isaac.)

(Indeed, the glory of God is manifested by His willingness to obey to death, even on the cross.)

3. The necessity of the horizontal union

(10) and all things that are Mine are Yours, and Yours are Mine; and I have been glorified in them.

(Jesus and the Father are united vertically. One may ask why Jesus had been glorified in them? We can see that they can be feeble as indicated by the example when Jesus was nailed on the cross. The disciples were scattered around at that time, and John was the only man who came in front of the cross. But they tried their best to obey the words as said in verse 6.)

(11) I am no longer in the world; and yet they themselves are in the world, and I come to You. Holy Father, keep them in Your name, the name which You have given Me, that they may be one even as We are.

(Thus, brothers and sisters are required to be united. If all of us can be conformed into the image of Jesus and united with Him we are automatically united since there is only one Jesus. This is not a theory but a reality. A reality we can achieve if we are willing to hand everything over into His hands. Although He has absolute authority, and life comes from Him, I believe that He will work on us for sure in this case.)

(For the period of Word becoming flesh, Father sent Son, and now Son is going to be back to Father. He prayed that they could be united the same way. We must be "being diligent

to preserve the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace."(Ephesians 4:3) So we see that the unity has been given already.)

(We should mention in passing the full armor of God in Ephesians 6:11-17 are all defensive weapons which enable us to stand firm, except the sword of Spirit. We need to follow the mead of Spirit, to use the sword wisely, which is the word of God.)

4. Mentioned again the foreknowledge of Judas' betrayal

(12) While I was with them, I was keeping them in Your name which You have given Me; and I guarded them and not one of them perished but the son of perdition, so that the Scripture would be fulfilled.

(We see why this foreknowledge was mentioned again. Although Judas' betrayal must happen, but it is really due to the breaches in the wall he left so that Satan could enter into him. And he made a choice correspondingly. This can be in the following verses.)

(John 12:6: "Now he said this, not because he was concerned about the poor, but because he was a thief, and as he had the money box, he used to pilfer what was put into it." Luke 22:3-4: "And Satan entered into Judas who was called Iscariot, belonging to the number of the twelve. And he went away and discussed with the chief priests and officers how he might betray Him to them." Luke 22:47-48: "While He was still speaking, behold, a crowd came, and the one called Judas, one of the twelve, was preceding them; and he approached Jesus to kiss Him. But Jesus said to him, "Judas, are you betraying the Son of Man with a kiss?" In particular, kissing is supposed to be the mark of love and he used it to betray Him.)

(Jesus gave him plenty of chances to the extent to wash his feet in the last supper. But he was still stuck with wrong ideas. Not the Lord was the problem, but he had problems. Are we often in similar situations? It is the reason why we cannot follow the lead of Holy Spirit.)

5. Rejoice in the Lord always

(13) But now I come to You; and these things I speak in the world so that they may have My joy made full in themselves.

(In John 14:27, it says, "Peace I leave with you; My peace I give to you; not as the world gives do I give to you..." Both peace and joy are from God. Indeed, it says directly in Philippians 4:4, "Rejoice in the Lord always; again I will say, rejoice!" There are people saying that if you feel peace, it must from God. It is not true. We cannot substitute the leading of Holy Spirit by the feeling of peace. Remember that it says in 2 Corinthians 11:14-15 "No wonder, for even Satan disguises himself as an angel of light. Therefore it is not surprising if his servants also disguise themselves as servants of righteousness, ..." The

feeling of peace has to fulfill what the Bible says in its verses. I myself had such an experience. Maybe someday on the right time, I'll testify on this.)

("These things I (Jesus) have spoken to you, so that in Me you may have peace. In the world you have tribulation, but take courage; I have overcome the world." (John 16:33) And "No temptation has overtaken you but such as is common to man; and God is faithful, who will not allow you to be tempted beyond what you are able, but with the temptation will provide the way of escape also, so that you will be able to endure it."(1 Corinthians 10:13) Other than Jesus, who can say such things?)

(14) I have given them Your word; and the world has hated them, because they are not of the world, even as I am not of the world.

(It is said in John 1:4-11 "In Him was life, and the life was the Light of men. The Light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not comprehend it. ...There was the true Light which, coming into the world, enlightens every man. He was in the world, and the world was made through Him, and the world did not know Him. He came to His own, and those who were His own did not receive Him." During about the three and a half years of His preaching He performed many miracles. Despite these, how many indeed believed Him? He himself was nailed on the cross. We want to emphasize one more time. It is us who have the problems. Having ears that can hear is really difficult. No wonder it was said in all seven churches, "He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches.")

(15) I do not ask You to take them out of the world, but to keep them from the evil one.

(The Lord prayer says, "And do not lead us into temptation, but deliver us from evil."(Matthew 6:13) Bible is consistent in this example.

(16) They are not of the world, even as I am not of the world.

(The important fact is emphasized one more time. Christians have to be separated from the world, and walk the way to sanctification.)

6. The way to sanctification

(17) Sanctify them in the truth; Your word is truth.

(Life comes from God as said in 1 Corinthians 3:6-7 "I planted, Apollos watered, but God was causing the growth. So then neither the one who plants nor the one who waters is anything, but God who causes the growth." Thus, we can only be passive and are willing. God is active. Sanctification is passive.)

(If we are active, then we'll be as Romans 7:15 said, "For what I am doing, I do not understand; for I am not practicing what I would like to do, but I am doing the very thing I

hate." And only abiding in Jesus, we can possibly achieve what Romans 8:2 says, "...the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has set you free from the law of sin and of death."

(18) As You sent Me into the world, I also have sent them into the world.

(The Father sent his Son, and the Son sent His disciples to make them fishers of men. For example, it is just like what Peter did in the Pentecost described in Acts 2:40-41, "And with many other words he solemnly testified and kept on exhorting them, saying, "Be saved from this perverse generation!" So then, those who had received his word were baptized; and that day there were added about three thousand souls.")

(This is the great mission: "And Jesus came up and spoke to them, saying, "All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth. Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age."(Matthew 28:18-20) So, preaching the gospel is really the duty of Christians to achieve the great mission. Don't be like what I thought before, thinking that the purpose is only to convert unbelievers into believers. Now I know clearly that the goal is to make them disciples, and thus walk the way of sanctification.)

(19) For their sakes I sanctify Myself, that they themselves also may be sanctified in truth.

(Jesus Himself set an example for us. We need to believe that God will make those knowing the truth sanctified. Don't distort the Bible as said in 2 Peter 3:16, "as also in all his letters, speaking in them of these things, in which are some things hard to understand, which the untaught and unstable distort, as they do also the rest of the Scriptures, to their own destruction." You must understand the truth. It is said clearly in John 8:31-32, "So Jesus was saying to those Jews who had believed Him, "If you continue in My word, then you are truly disciples of Mine; and you will know the truth, and the truth will make you free.""

(Jesus Himself says: "You search the Scriptures because you think that in them you have eternal life; it is these that testify about Me; and you are unwilling to come to Me so that you may have life."(John 5:39-40) Therefore, the purpose of studying the Bible is to have life. When the Holy Trinity wants to give you life, we need an ear which can hear.)

7. The highest school: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit

We can see in Bible that we are in the highest school! All Father, Son, and Holy Spirit are working on us. Is there any higher school?

(20) "I do not ask on behalf of these alone, but for those also who believe in Me through their word;

(Jesus prays for all believers, and all we need is "Do not quench the Spirit."(1 Thessalonians 5:19) We need to make sure what we encountered is from the Holy Spirit, since it is said in 2 Corinthians 11:14-15, "No wonder, for even Satan disguises himself as an angel of light. Therefore it is not surprising if his servants also disguise themselves as servants of righteousness, ..." We need to side with God every time, and believe that we'll know for sure if God wants us to know something. For example, when Paul saw the big light, he knew that it was from Jesus.)

(21) that they may all be one; even as You, Father, are in Me (Son) and I in You, that they also may be in Us, so that the world may believe that You sent Me.

(There is a vertical union. Naturally, there's one in the horizontal direction.)

(22) The glory which You have given Me I have given to them, that they may be one, just as We are one;

(We can see that the one is already given, and we need to do what described in Ephesians 4:3, "being diligent to preserve the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.")

(23) I in them and You in Me, that they may be perfected in unity, so that the world may know that You (Father) sent Me, and loved them, even as You have loved Me.

(If we are indeed in faith, we'll not quench the Spirit, and walk the way to sanctification. As said in Romans 8:34, "...Christ Jesus is He who died, yes, rather who was raised, who is at the right hand of God, who also intercedes for us." Here, we see the involvement of the Father. They, Father Son, and Holy Spirit, never fail. If we abide in Jesus by faith, how can we in this highest school ever fail?)

(This is the horizontal union: "By this all men will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another."(John 13:35) If we are in faith, we must have the action described in the Book of James. The faith is the origin, and the action is caused by faith. Don't upside down.)

(In John 15:7-8 it says, "If you abide in Me, and My words abide in you, ask whatever you wish, and it will be done for you. My Father is glorified by this, that you bear much fruit, and so prove to be My disciples." We can see the necessary condition is to be one with Jesus. If we can be one with Jesus, whatever we pray is actually the same as what Jesus prays. How can such prayers not be granted? Talking about bearing much fruit, the deity of Holy Spirit is singular. There is only one fruit with nine different characteristics described in Galatians 5:22-23 "But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control; ..." Sometimes, we need to study the meaning of the original language using tool books. Here, if we are not careful enough and think that the fruit is multiple, the interpretation can be quite different.

(24) Father, I desire that they also, whom You have given Me, be with Me where I am, so that they may see My glory which You have given Me, for You loved Me before the foundation of the world.

(Before the foundation of the world, there is no time. The Holy Trinity is bounded by love with the same honor and glory.)

(In John 14:2-3, it is said in that place, "In My Father's house are many dwelling places; if it were not so, I would have told you; for I go to prepare a place for you. If I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you to Myself, that where I am, there you may be also.")

(25) "O righteous Father, although the world has not known You, yet I have known You; and these have known that You sent Me;

(We discussed this already. The apostles know that You send Me.)

(26) and I have made Your name known to them, and will make it known, so that the love with which You loved Me may be in them, and I in them."

(Here talks about union again. This really is our goal as said in Romans 8:29, "For those whom He foreknew, He also predestined to become conformed to the image of His Son, so that He would be the firstborn among many brethren." To be conformed in the image of the Son isn't an easy matter. For example, we know that there exists both foreknowledge and predestination. If we insist there is only predestination or foreknowledge, then both are wrong since it is contradictory to the Bible. There has been no conclusion in this dispute, as history shows. As an analogy, Copernicus describes the fact that the earth moves around the Sun. But science hadn't reached that point yet, and everyone thought that heaven was round and earth was square. And thought that he was wrong. Nowadays, we have satellites to prove that earth hangs on nothing. But the Bible described that long time ago in Job 26:7, "He stretches out the north over empty space. And hangs the earth on nothing." Bible is inspired by God. We need in every deed to use it as our absolute standard.)