

Christ laid aside His glory, emptied Himself, came to this earth of death and dust in His humiliation. Now He calls to the Father to return to "the glory which I had with thee before the world was." From now on it will be all glory — His own glorious body in His resurrection, His glorious return in the clouds of heaven and, as He said in Isaiah 750 years before, "I will make the place of my feet glorious" when He returns to Jerusalem (Isa. 60:13). And so the Lord explains, "And the glory which thou gavest me I have given them; that they may be one, even as we are one."

How could this possibly have anything to do with the Babylon visible church on this earth, with a pope in Rome to be recognized the first among brethren telling the nations what they should do?

As Christ ended his prayer with glory, so He opened His prayer with glory; and that there be no possibility of any true saint being deceived, He defined eternal life, placing it at the opening of His prayer. This is His gift. He announced, "As thou hast given him power over all flesh, that he should give eternal life to as many as thou hast given him. And this is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent" (17:2, 3).

These ecumenical leaders are blinded, they walk in darkness; all from the dreadful pit, came their dream that John 17 was designed to produce their one-world superchurch on a cursed and condemned earth. This, their dream of power and glory, came from the great deceiver, not the glorious Redeemer the Holy One of Israel.

Every word of this glorious prayer refutes every use the ecumenists ever made of it. It is the duty of every faithful saint to repudiate Satan's mischief with this precious prayer of Jesus Christ for His beloved.

III. THE WORD

The emphasis of John 17, however, is not on being one, glorious as that is, but upon the Word of God which brings that glorious result of unity in Christ by faith, by grace, for all eternity.

So Christ declares, "I have given them thy word," and then emphasized "sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth." He continued, "for their sakes I sanctify myself, that they also might be sanctified through the truth." This emphasis dominates the prayer. There is no hope without the truth, without the Word. The saints were given to Christ out of the world. "Thine they were, and thou gavest them me; and they have kept thy word" (v. 6).

Here the Word of God is "thy word"; it is the fullness of the revelation by the prophets and apostles. But Christ does not leave it there as one glorious revelation from heaven extending over the 16th century in which the Bible as produced by the Holy Spirit. Christ declares, "For I have given unto them the words which thou gavest me." Everything is broken down to each individual word. "Words," as He uses the term, is plural. The inspiration extends to everything, God breathed its every jot and tittle. "Heaven and earth shall pass away; but my words shall not pass away," Christ said. He alone could speak like this for it was His Word that made the heavens and earth out of nothing.

The doctrines of infallibility and inerrancy, the first of all the doctrines of Scripture, rests fully and finally on Christ's own words. John 17 exalts it all, makes it final and leaves it supreme.

"Had ye believed Moses, ye would have believed me: for he wrote of me," he told the Jews. After His resurrection He told His disciples on the road to Emmaus, "O fools, and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken. . . . beginning at Moses and all the prophets, he expounded unto them in all the scriptures the things concerning himself." The hatred that Satan has for the Word is in this very Word that he is bringing into the world church. Christ characterizes, "I have given them thy word; and the world hath hated them." He told the disciples, "If the world hate you, ye know that it hateth me before it hated you." These realities from the Scripture forbid the use of John 17 as a weapon in the hands of Satan to deceive the churches, the remnant of the last days.