

Your Word Is Truth

John 17: 6-19

On the walk to Gethsemane, close to midnight,
the fifteenth of Nisan

DIG: What significance does the name of God play in Christ's prayer? How is Yeshua glorified in His apostles? What does Yeshua desire for His talmidim? Jesus had protected His talmidim with the exception of Judas. Why wasn't he protected? What gift did the Lord give the Eleven? Why were they in danger? Who hated them? Why? What does sanctified mean? What does it not mean? How can it be misused? How and why are we separated for holiness? What is the result? What spiritual battle is described in Jesus' prayer? How are the apostles equipped for this spiritual battle?

REFLECT: What are some of the daily pressures you face? How does Christ's prayer encourage you to face those pressures? What interferes with your prayer life? How can we overcome feelings of discouragement when our prayers seem to go unanswered?

Secondly, the Lord prayed for His apostles that were with Him at that time: **I have made Your name known to the people You gave me out of the world (John 17:6a CJB).** At that time one's name represented one's character and attributes. To reveal the name of God is to display His essential nature to mankind. Again, later, Jesus says that He has made the Father's name known (John 17:26), and twice in between the Lord refers to the talmidim as kept in the Father's name (John 17: 11-12). So clearly the name is an important concept for the understanding of this prayer.¹⁴⁷²

The point here is that the revelation was not made indiscriminately. It was made to those who the Father gave to the Son out of the world. They were Yours; You gave them to Me and they have obeyed Your TaNaKh. Jesus praised His apostles for responding to the message of ADONAI in Messiah. The Eleven were not perfect, but they had the right commitment. Now they know that everything You have given Me comes from You. For I gave them the words You gave me and they accepted them. Their faith in Yeshua was a trust in His union with the Father. They have really come to know that I came from You, and they have come to believe that You sent Me (John 17:6b-8). This faith in Him was demonstrated in their obedience to His words because they believed in His divine mission.

Yochanan request begins with the phrase: **I pray for them . . .** and then abruptly shifts to a parenthetical digression before resuming in **verse 11** with **keep them by the power of Your name**. This parenthetical aside specifies whom **Chief Shepherd** intends **YHVH** to **keep**. The verb translated **keep** is a term that describes the primary duty of a shepherd; it means *to guard* or *protect*. **I AM not praying for the world, but for those You have given Me** – the context here is **the eleven apostles (John 17:9)**. The idea is to **keep them** separated from the dangers of **the world**, even as **He** was sending **them out like lambs among wolves**. **They** would need to trust **Him** for protection (**Luke 10:3 CJB**).

For they are Yours. All I have is Yours, and all You have is Mine. And glory has come to Me through them (Yochanan 17:10). It is worth noting that **Yeshua** now returns to the thought of **glory** that we saw earlier in this chapter (see **Ky – Father, The Hour Has Come**). But now **the Good Shepherd** says that **He** has been **glorified** in **His talmidim**. This is very similar to **Messiah's** attitude to **the glory** seen in the cross. Outwardly **the little group** was not very distinguished. Jewish society saw nothing extraordinary about **them**. **They** were not well respected. Galileans at that! However, just as **the world's** values were all wrong about the cross, so were **the world's** values all wrong about **the Eleven**. In **them the Son of YHVH**, no less, would actually be **glorified**.

God is in the business of changing the face of **the world**. To be very clear, this is **His** job and not ours. Our goal is not to make our faces radiant. Not even **Yeshua** did that. **Mattityahu** said, "**Jesus** appearance changed" not "**Jesus** changed **His** appearance." Moshe didn't even know his face was shining (**Exodus 34:29**). Our goal is not to conjure up some fake, frozen expression. Our goal is simply to stand before **ADONAI** with a prepared and willing heart and then let **God** do **His** work. And **He** does. **He** wipes away the tears. **He** mops away the perspiration. **He** softens our furrowed brows. **He** touches our cheeks. **He** changes our faces as we worship.¹⁴⁷³

Since **the apostles** would be **in the world**, **Messiah** prayed for **their** protection. The hatred against **God** that fell on **Jesus** would now fall on **the Eleven** and subsequently on followers of **the Way (Acts 9:2 and 22:4)**. **I will remain in the world no longer, but they are still in the world, and I AM coming to You. Holy Father, keep them by the power of Your name, the name You gave Me**. Believers are to pattern their unity after the unity of **the Father** and **the Son so that they may be one as We are one (Yochanan 17:11)**. The unity here seems to be one of will and purpose. By being protected from the world they would be unified in their desires to serve and glorify the Son.¹⁴⁷⁴

While I was with them, I protected them and kept them safe by that name You gave me. The Savior lamented leaving His apostles in the world, but He also acknowledged that HaShem's plan was best for all. He had carefully and faithfully kept them from evil and preserved them to this point; now He placed them in the capable hands of the Father. Only Judas had surrendered to Satan. The betrayer had not been lost because he never truly believed (1 John 2:19). None has been lost except the one doomed to destruction so the TaNaKh would be fulfilled. Even people's willingly free acts fit into ADONAI's sovereign plan (Psalms 109:8). I AM coming to You now, but I say these things while I AM still in the world, so that they may have the full measure of My joy within them (John 17:12-13). Much of the Lord's teaching on this evening with His talmidim would have little meaning for them at the time. But once the Lord had risen and stood before them in the glory of His resurrection body, they would be filled with immeasurable hope and joy.¹⁴⁷⁵

Jesus' gift to them was God's word. The word of the Father cannot come from human reasoning. Only Christ gives it. But they were in danger because the satanic world system hated them. As believers share Yeshua Messiah everything in the world - the lust of the flesh, the lust of their eyes, and the pride of life (First Yochanan 2:16) loses its attractiveness. Here, the world hated the apostles for they were not a part of it any more than Yeshua was (John 17:14). Everyone who does evil hates the light, and will not come into the light for fear that their sinful deeds will be exposed (John 3:20).

Christ declared: My prayer is not that You take them out of the world but that you protect them in the midst of the conflict between light and darkness from the evil one (Yochanan 17:15). Although the Lord would soon be taken out of the world (17:11), the Eleven were to remain in it. Like Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego in the blazing furnace (Dan 3:23); Daniel in the lion's den (Dan 6:1-23); and the believers in Caesar's household (Phil 4:22), God intended for them to be witnesses to the truth in the midst of the world.

They are not of the world, even as I AM not of it. Sanctify them by the truth; Your word is truth. The means of this sanctifying work is God's truth, and the Word communicates the truth. As the Gospel is heard, understood and believed, people's hearts and minds are captured. This change in their thinking results in changes in their lives.¹⁴⁷⁶ As You sent Me into the world, I have sent them into the world. For them I sanctify Myself, that they too may be truly sanctified (John 17:16-19). To be sanctified means to be set apart, specifically for the holy uses and purposes of God. However, the word sanctify is archaic and removed from most people's vocabulary today so I will use the phrase separated for holiness. This separateness is not a physical removal from other people or their concerns but a spiritual relocation into ADONAI's sphere of being.¹⁴⁷⁷

Separated for holiness does *not* mean achieving a state of sinlessness. In addition, this **separation** isn't brought about by a deep emotional experience that cannot be substituted from the teachings of the Word of **God**. It is the function of the Bible to interpret experience, not the function of experience to interpret the Bible. Every experience that is directed by **ADONAI** will be found to be in agreement with the Scriptures.

Separated for holiness can be misused. Charles Finney and John Wesley taught that perfection could be attained in this life. Perfectionism teaches either complete freedom from known sin or sometime actual sinlessness. A good book that refutes the "holiness movement" is *Perfectionism*, by Benjamin B. Warfield. (However, it probably would have been easier to know if these guys were really sinless by just asking their wives!) Perfectionism is impossible for two reasons. First, **Yeshua** said that the two greatest commandments are to **love ADONAI your God with all your heart and love your neighbor as yourself (Matthew 22:37-39)**. True perfection, true sinlessness would mean that you would be observing both of these every moment of every day. Which only **Jesus** achieved. Secondly, to be free of any known sin, or actually become sinless, you must re-define sin to maintain that state.

Separated for holiness *does* mean that you have already been *set apart* for the purposes of **ADONAI**. This is true of the weakest and the youngest believer in **the Lord**. This does not depend upon your spiritual maturity, your knowledge of the Bible, your practice of godliness, or your feelings. This is a divine work in which **YHVH** sets us apart to **Himself**. But the degree to which we can *set apart* is a result of our yieldedness to **God**. We work with **HaShem** in fear and trembling. **God** desires to work through us so that **He** can be glorified. Who **separates** us for holiness? **The Trinity separates** us (First Thessalonians 4:3 and 5:23; Exodus 31:13): The Father (Jude 1); the Son (Ephesians 5:26; Hebrews 13:12); and the Holy Spirit (Romans 15:16; First Peter 1:2).

How are we **separated for holiness**? We are **separated** by faith. It is the means by which we are **separated** and appointed (Acts 26:18). Our **separation for holiness** has its basis in **the blood** of **Messiah** because **His blood** is that which cleanses our sins (Hebrews 10:10 and 13:12). The phrase in **Jesus Christ** gives us the sphere of our **separation**. We are *set apart* because of our "union with **Messiah**" (for me details on our "union with **Christ**" see Kt - **I AM the True Vine**). The cross is the place where our **separation for holiness** was made possible through the death of our **Savior**. The cross prevents you from ever going back into that from which you have been *set apart* by **ADONAI**. The Word of **God** is the channel through which our **separation** comes. Without the spiritual facts, there would be nothing upon which we could base our faith (John 17:17; Ephesians 5:25-26). Finally, it is by the truth that **the Ruach HaKodesh** carries out **His** ministry (John 16:13).

Why are we **separated for holiness**? We are called to live a life worthy of the calling [we] have received, worthy of the Gospel of Christ (Second Corinthians 4:2; Ephesians 4:1 and 17; Philippians 1:27; Colossians 1:10; First Thessalonians 2:12; First Timothy 6:12; Second Timothy 4:7; First John 2:6).

What is the difference between being justified and being **separated for holiness**? Justification is a *one-time act*, accomplished by **ADONAI** (see Bw - **What God Does for Us at the Moment of Faith**). It is always spoken of in the past tense because we already belong to **God**, paid for by **the blood** of **Christ**. However, **sanctification**, or being **separated for holiness** is a *process* that takes a whole lifetime. It is the work of **God** in which you cooperate (Romans 12:1-2; First Corinthians 10:13; Hebrews 12:3-4; First Peter 5:8-9); and is a process (Ephesians 4:11-16), trusting in **God**, apart from whom we can do nothing (John 15:5; Ephesians 3:16; Colossians 1:11; Hebrews 2:18 and 4:14). He who began a good work in you will carry it on to completion until the day of Christ Jesus (Phil 1:6).

But even Rabbi Sha'ul, as a mature believer, struggled with sin until the end of his life: For we know that the Torah is of the Spirit; but as for me, I am bound to the old nature, sold to sin as a slave. I don't understand my own behavior - I don't do what I want to do; instead, I do the very thing I hate! Now if I am doing what I don't want to do, I am agreeing that the Torah is good. But now it is no longer "the real me" doing it, but the sin housed inside me. For I know that there is nothing good housed inside me - that is, inside my old nature. I can want what is good, but I can't do it! For I don't do the good I want; instead, the evil I don't want is what I do! But if I am doing what "the real me" doesn't want, it is no longer "the real me" doing it but the sin housed inside me. So I find it to be the rule, a kind of perverse "torah," which is operating in my various parts. What a miserable creature I am! Who will rescue me from this body bound for death? Thanks be to God, [He will rescue me] through Yeshua the Messiah, our Lord (Romans 7:14-25 CJB).

What is the result of being **separated for holiness**? And we all, who in contrast to Moshe, with **unveiled faces** continually **contemplate the Lord's glory**, are being **transformed** (to change the inward reality into something new), into His image with **ever-increasing glory**, which comes from the Lord, who is the Spirit (Second Corinthians 3:18). Therefore, the inward result is **peace** (Isaiah 32:17); the outward result is **fruit** (Second Corinthians 9:8; Second Peter 1:5-11); and the upward result is to honor **ADONAI** (Matthew 5:16; Yochanan 15:8).

Therefore, the apostles were set apart for holiness by Jesus Christ to go as His representatives, as His ambassadors, to reveal the Son, so that the Ruach HaKodesh might continue to reveal the Father.

Why do **Jesus** and **His** angels rejoice over one repenting sinner? Can they see something we can't? Do they know something we don't? Absolutely. They know what heaven holds. They've seen the table, they've heard the music, and they can't wait to see your face when you arrive. Better still, they can't wait to see you.

When you arrive and enter the party, something wonderful will happen. A final transformation will occur. You will be just like **Jesus**. Drink deeply from the **Word of God**: **We have not yet been shown what we will be in the future. But we know that when Christ comes again, we will be like Him (First Yochanan 3:2 NCV).**

Of all the blessings of heaven, one of the greatest will be you! You will be **God's** work of art. The angels will gasp. **ADONAI's** work will be completed. At last, you will have **His** heart.

You will love with a perfect love.

You will worship with a radiant face.

You'll hear each word **God** speaks.

Your heart will be pure, your words will be like jewels, your thoughts will be like treasures.

You will be just like **Jesus**. You will, at long last, have a heart like **His**. Envision the heart of **Messiah** and you'll be envisioning your own. Guiltless. Fearless. Thrilled and joyous. Tirelessly worshiping. Flawlessly discerning. As the mountain stream is pristine and endless, so will be your heart. You **will be like Him**.

And if that were not enough, everyone else will be like **Him** as well . . .

Those who let **YHVH** change them populate Heaven. Arguments will cease for jealousy won't exist. Suspicions won't surface, for there will be no secrets. Every sin is gone. Every insecurity is forgotten. Every fear is past. Pure wheat. No weeds. Pure gold. No alloy. Pure love. No lust. Pure hope. No fear. No wonder the angels rejoice when one sinner repents; they know another work of art will soon grace the gallery of **ADONAI**. They know what heaven holds.¹⁴⁷⁸