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Jesus Prays for All Believers

John 17: 20-26

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

Jesus prays for all believers DIG: If believers in Yeshua Messiah all have the same spiritual DNA why is there so much disunity in the Church today? But what is an even greater schism? What was the glory of Jesus? Why did God adopt you? Why are there only two families in the world? How does our adoption into the family of YHVH affect our eternal security? What are the three fundamental truths about the relationship between prayer and ministry?

REFLECT: Do you ever think of ADONAI feeling pleasure about having you as His child? How might this truth impact the way you feel? The way you live? If a loving human father wants his children to be secure in their relationship with him, how much more does our perfect heavenly Father want it? How can prayer affect our lives and the lives of those around us? How can I be more involved in the ministry of prayer?



And thirdly, Messiah prayed for all future believers. I pray not only for these eleven shlichim (emissaries), but also for those who will trust in Me because of their word (Yochanan 17:20 CJB). Here Jesus prayed for the untold millions down through the centuries who have come to trust in . . . believe in . . . have faith in . . . Him because of

these **apostles** (twelve after the addition of **Matthias** in **Acts 1:12-26**). Do you see the words **also for those**? That's where your name belongs. If you have believed in **Yeshua Messiah, He** prayed for you. Having prayed for **Himself** and the success of **His** mission (**to see link click Ky - Father, The Hour Has Come**), and interceded for the protection of **His talmidim** (see **Kz - Your Word Is Truth**), **the Lord** petitioned **His Father** for the generations of believers who would come to faith either directly or indirectly through the ministry of **His shlichim (messengers)**. This included believing Jews in Tzion as well as believing Gentiles not of the Hebrew fold (**John 10:16**). Note the expression **because of their word**. It is no longer just "the Word of God," or even "My Word." By being adopted into the family of **God, the apostles** now possess the truth and can rightfully claim it as **their** own. The truth is ours, in that **He** has filled us with divine truth in the person of **the Ruach Ha'Kodesh**.¹⁴⁷⁹

The Lord first asked for unity among the body of believers: I pray that they may all be one. Just as You, Father, are in Me and I AM in You, I pray that they may be united in Us (for more on the doctrine of the "union in Christ" see **Kt - I AM the True Vine**). The history of the Christian Church offers all too much proof that this prayer was needed. Most Jewish people are at least confused, if not stumbled, by the various distinctions between various kinds of Christians that seem to divide more than **unite**. Eastern Orthodox versus Western, Roman Catholic versus Protestant, hundreds Protestant denominations, and thousands of one-church "denominations" with no structural affiliation. How many lives have been sacrificed over the centuries in wars between Christians? How often does the media report loveless accusations of one Christian group by another?

Jewish people look on this display of disunity with disgust or disdain, while the less hostile expression may provoke mild amusement; for the Jewish community functions rather differently. It has a built-in unity partly based, like that of the messianic community, on **God's** having chosen them for **Himself**. But the Jewish **unity** is also based on a common history involving common social patterns, religious practices, persecution by outsiders (both Christian and non-Christian), and the biological element of descent from a common ancestor.

A common expression is the feeling among many Jews, "We're all family to each other." I asked a Jewish woman that I once worked with if she knew what tribe she was from (before I knew any better), and she replied, "I'm a M.O.T. - a member of the tribe! While there are Jewish denominations . . . three major ones and several minor . . . and even some friction between them, this does not prevent unified community action when basic issues are concerned, such as support for the survival of the nation of Isra'el or opposition to anti-

Semitism. Only the Hasidic sects seem to produce the sort of discord between themselves that other Jews can regard as slightly ridiculous (but only rarely vicious). So Jews consider themselves largely immune from the kinds of divisions that seem endemic to the Christian Church, with such unpleasant consequences for both themselves and the rest of humanity.

It is no wonder, then, that **Yeshua** prayed as **He** did. While Scripture declares that there already exists a spiritual unity between believers **in Messiah (Romans 12:4-8; First Corinthians 12:12-27)**, what we see is, to put it mildly, a very imperfect reflection of it. The modern ecumenical movement is a cross-denominational effort to create unity, although anxiety to achieve the goal can lead to generating an appearance of unity at the institutional level that glosses over the real differences in doctrine and practice as well as unhealed relationships between people. On the other hand, opposition to ecumenism is sometimes voiced by those who, in the name of doctrinal purity, refuse to work through the crises of resolving differences with their brothers and sisters in **the Lord**.

However serious the schisms are between the various Christian denominations, the greatest schism in the world is the one between the Jewish people and the Body of Christ. The Jews are **God's** people, and so is the Church made up of both Jews and Gentiles: **For He Himself is our peace, who had made the two groups one and has destroyed the barrier, the dividing wall of hostility (Ephesians 2:14)**. It was never **ADONAI's** intent that there be two separated peoples of **God**; for **the Body of the Messiah** is built on a Jewish foundation. It springs from a Jewish root. And conversely, non-messianic Judaism is a broken-off branch, although one with enough life to flourish if grafted in again to the living tree **(Romans 11:17-26)**. However, messianic Judaism, by striving to keep a Jewish perspective hundred percent of the time and continuing to be messianic one hundred percent of the time, offers itself as one true means to help heal this schism.¹⁴⁸⁰

Finally, the healing of these splits is given an evangelistic purpose in **Messiah's** prayer: May **they** be **one in Us so that the unsaved world may believe that You (God the Father) sent Me (Jesus) (Yochanan 17:21 CJB)**. **Christ** was not praying for the unity of a single, worldwide, ecumenical church in which doctrinal heresy would be tolerated along with orthodoxy. No. Instead, **He** was praying for a unity of love, a unity of obedience to **God** and **His Word**, and a united commitment to **His** will. There are great differences between uniformity, union, and unity.¹⁴⁸¹

The Lord's second request was for believers to enjoy eternity in heaven with their Savior: The glory that You have given to Me, I have given to them (John 17:22a

CJB). What was the glory of **Jesus**? There are three ways in which **He** talked about it. First, the cross was **His glory**. **Messiah** didn't speak of being crucified; **He** spoke of being **glorified**. So first and foremost, a believer's **glory** is the cross that must be borne. It is an honor to suffer for **Christ**. We must never think of our cross as our penalty; we must think of it as our **glory**. Second, **Yeshua's** perfect obedience to the will of **the Father** was **His glory**. We find our **glory**, not in doing what we like, but in doing as **God** wills. **So that they may be one - just as We are one - I united with them and You with Me, so that they may be completely one**. Third, **the Lord's glory** lay in the fact that, from **His** life, people recognized **His** special relationship with **ADONAI**. They saw that no one could live as **He** did unless **He** was uniquely near to **YHVH**. As with **Christ**, it is our **glory** when others see in us the reflection of **God**. **And that the world would realize that You sent Me, and that You have loved them just as You have loved Me (Yochanan 17:22b-23 CJB).**¹⁴⁸²

In love He predestined us to be adopted as His [children] through Jesus Christ, in accordance with His pleasure and will (Ephesians 1:5; also see 2 Tim 1:8-9 and Psalm 139). We are **adopted** into **God's** family at the moment of faith (see **Bw - What God Does for Us at the Moment of Faith**). Notice the last phrase, which I will italicize for emphasis: ***In love he predestined us for adoption [as His children] through Jesus Christ, in accordance with His pleasure and will.*** An even more literal rendering would be, "in accordance with the good pleasure of **His** will." The point is that **ADONAI** planned to adopt us as **His children** because this gave **Him pleasure**. It made **Him** happy, to use casual language. Think of that! **YHVH** chose to **adopt** you because the thought of this gave **Him** joy. So, here's something upon which to reflect today. **Ha'Shem adopted** you, not only because **He** loves you, but also because the thought of having you as **His child** gives **Him** great pleasure.

There are only two families in the world. There is the family of **YHVH** and the family of Satan. There is no middle ground. Adoption expresses the grace of **God** and excludes works. When parents **adopt** a child, they don't look at the good works of the child. They **adopt** out of love. **Adoption** is an act of the parents, not of the child. Additionally, we are given full status with **Jesus Christ**, the natural **Son of God**, even though we are **adopted**. **ADONAI** is our perfect heavenly **Father** who can care for **His** own **children**. Everything that is true of **Him** is true of us, minus **His** deity. We are going to inherit what **the Messiah** inherits.

Our sonship or daughtership is our present tense possession. We are members of a new, eternal (see **Ms - The Eternal Security of the Believer**), glorious family. As firstborn of the family, **Yeshua** is our **Brother (Romans 8:29)**. What rights does **ADONAI** have? What does **God** own? Whatever **He** owns belongs to you because of your **adoption**. **God** is going

to give us the universe because **He** owns it. We are going to **rule** and **reign** with **Him** forever (**Second Timothy 2:12; Revelation 2:27**).

Our eternal destiny is an answer to **Christ's** prayer on our behalf, and we can be certain **the Son's** requests from **the Father** will be faithfully answered. **Father, I want those you have given Me to be with Me where I AM, so that they may see** (Greek: *theoreo*) **My glory, which You have given Me because You loved Me before the creation of the world (John 17:24)**. In translating **Yeshua's** Aramaic word: **see** into Greek, **Yochanan** could have chosen any of five Greek words, but he choose *theoreo*. This term typically describes spectators at a religious festival, who view with wonder, curiosity, or contemplation. The object of this **seeing** will be **ADONAI's glory** in heaven, where the Sh'khinah will not be shrouded in human flesh (see my commentary on **Revelation Fv -Nothing Impure Will Enter the New Jerusalem**). In **His** presence there will be no more night, no darkness at all (**Yochanan 1:5; First Yochanan 1:5**).¹⁴⁸³

The Lord's third request of the Father was for our mutual love - the same kind of love shared within the Trinity and demonstrated by the Father for the world in sending His Son: Righteous Father, the world has not known You, but I have known You, and these people have known that You sent Me. The significance of righteous here is that **Jesus** was praising **the Father** for **His** work of revelation (**Matthew 11:25-26**). **The Father** is **righteous** but **the world** had **not known Him. Christ**, however, **made His Name known to the world** by **His** impending death: **And I will continue to make it known.** And **the Father** made known **His love** for **the Son** by raising **Him** to **glory (Yochanan 17:25-26)**. **Messiah's** purpose in revealing **the Father** was that **believers** would continue to grow in that **love (that the Father's love for the Son may be in them)** and to enjoy the personal presence of **Yeshua** in **their** lives (**that I Myself may be in them**).¹⁴⁸⁴

Jesus prayer for **Himself, His apostles** and future generations of believers highlight **three fundamental truths** about the relationship between prayer and ministry.

First, prayer helps us keep God's glory as the first priority in every ministry. Yeshua began **His** prayer by acknowledging the primary purpose of **His** mission on earth. As **the Son of God, He** asked to be **glorified** - to be vindicated in the sight of all humanity as the embodiment of divine truth - not for **His** own sake, but that **He** might reflect this **glory** back to **the Father**. When we go to **the Father** through **the Son**, asking for anything to be accomplished, we are wise to acknowledge the **glory** of **ADONAI** as the primary goal in every human endeavor, whether directly associated with ministry or not.

Second, prayer helps us remember that any ministry will succeed only because of His power, not ours. Messiah acknowledged that people came to **Him** because they belonged to **God. The Father** drew them; **Jesus** kept them (**John 6:37, 39, 65, 12:32, 17:2, 6, 9, 24**); and **the Ruach ha-Kodesh** enlightened them. Of course it's pointless to ask whether **the Father** or **the Son** was responsible for the success because they are the same in essence. **They** are two **Persons** and one **God**. However, **the Son's** prayer is our example. When we pray, let us subordinate our desires to the greater design of **YHVH**. After all, we are a part of **His** redemptive plan, not the other way around!

Third, prayer causes us to look to God for success rather than to the world. The Lord acknowledged in **His** prayer that the desires of **the world** oppose those of **the Father** (**John 17:6, 9, 11, 14**). Our **Savior** prayed, in effect, "Lord, unify them, preserve them, set them apart, and work through them." **He** did not say, "Lord, may **the world** assist in accomplishing Your plan." **The world** is not a friend to grace; as a result, we should expect resistance in proclaiming the Good News. Prayer helps us remember whom to thank for success, even when the world appears to cooperate.¹⁴⁸⁵

If you are a believer in **Jesus Christ**, you are an answer to **His** long-ago prayer. You are one of those who have believed because of the faithfulness of others. There is an unbroken chain of witnesses from that Upper Room to your heart and mind, just as **He** expected in prayer. The faith is in your hands, in your life. Ironically, you keep it by giving it away. If you hold it privately and secretly, you haven't kept it. Pray for the people in your life, and then tell them about **Jesus**.

Father, Your Son showed us how to pray. **He** prayed in the morning, **He** prayed in the evening, **He** prayed alone, and **He** prayed with others. In hours of distress **He** retreated into times of prayer. In hours of joy **He** lifted **His** heart to **You**. Help us to pray in this way and to make prayer a priority in our daily lives.¹⁴⁸⁶