

Jesus' High Priestly Prayer

When Jesus died on the cross, the curtain in front of the Holy of Holies, in the Temple, was torn from top to bottom (Matthew 27:51; Mark 15:38; Luke 23:45). The writer of Hebrews tells us that Jesus entered “the inner place behind the curtain” (Hebrews 6:19), referring to this moment. It may be that when Jesus miraculously entered the Holy of Holies in the Temple it caused the curtain to be torn from top to bottom. In Hebrews 9:12 we are told “he entered once for all into the holy places, not by means of the blood of goats and calves but by means of his own blood, thus securing an eternal redemption.” This refers to this same moment, after Jesus died on the cross, He miraculously entered the Temple and offered His own blood as a sacrifice. Jesus' sacrifice was similar to the sacrifice the high priests offered once a year, on the Day of Atonement (Leviticus 16:4). In fact, the sacrifice of the high priests on the Day of Atonement prefigured what Jesus did. It prepared God's people so that they could understand what Jesus did when He died and rose again, and that this would forgive the sins of those who believe in Him. The sacrifice of Jesus differed in one very important way from the other Day of Atonement sacrifices: Jesus did it once for all (Hebrews 7:27; 9:12; 9:26; 10:10). All previous sacrifices had to be repeated. Jesus did not need to repeat the sacrifice because it fully satisfied everything that was needed (Hebrews 9:26).

Last week we studied Hebrews chapter 8 and saw that Jesus was the Great High Priest. And, in Hebrews 7:25, we see that “he is able to save to the uttermost those who draw near to God through him.” By His sacrifice given in the Temple those who believe in Him are able to draw near to God.

One more detail from Hebrews 7:25, tells us that in His continuing role as the Great High Priest, Jesus intercedes for His people. We might wonder how Jesus does this. What does He ask God the Father to do for those who follow Him? After ascending into Heaven Jesus sat at the right hand of God the Father (Hebrews 1:3). He continues to sit at the right hand of the Father. In John 17 we can read Jesus' prayer for those who believe in Him. It is an example of Jesus interceding for believers. It gives us a pretty clear idea of the type of things Jesus is praying for His people now.

John 17:20

John 17:20 “I do not ask for these only, but also for those who will believe in me through their word,”

This is on the night before Jesus was crucified, and He knew what was about to happen. A short time later He would go to the Garden of Gethsemane, and when He prayed there He would sweat drops of blood (Luke 22:44). But before that took place He prayed for those who believed in Him at that time, and would later believe in Him. This is the part of His prayer where Jesus focuses on those who will believe in Him after the disciples.

- Jesus is not overwhelmed with self-concern and intercedes for those who believe in Him.
- Jesus prays for those who will believe by hearing the word.
- What Jesus says here applies to people today who believe in Him.

John 17:21

Jesus' first request is that God the Father will work in the hearts of believers so that they are united. As Jesus says it, “that they may all be one.” The unity of believers that Jesus requests will be like the unity shared by Jesus, the Son of God, and God the Father.

John 17:21 “that they may all be one, just as you, Father, are in me, and I in you, that they also may be in us, so that the world may believe that you have sent me.”

- There are many examples of disunity among Christians.

- When unity does occur, however, it is a gift from God.
 - We should acknowledge that it is something surprising and wonderful when it occurs.
- I experienced real revival in my church youth group when I was a teenager.
 - Teenagers shared the gospel in the hallways at school.
 - They carried their Bibles with them to classes.
 - Some even invited their parents to church, even though their parents had not gone to church before.
 - This kind of unity among Christians is contagious and the Gospel spreads when it happens.

John 17:22

John 17:22 “The glory that you have given me I have given to them, that they may be one even as we are one,”

Jesus doesn't pray that this unity will come from human effort. He prays that it will come from God the Father. He prays, “The glory that you have given to me I have given to them.” Another way of looking at the unity that does occur among Christians is that the unity is a supernatural gift from God. If there is disunity, that comes from the human beings involved. If there is unity remember that it comes from God.

- Many of us spend time trying to make a good impressions on other people, wanting them to respect us.
- Jesus is telling us that the “glory” that God will give us is something far more important, and far better for us.

John 17:23

John 17:23 “I in them and you in me, that they may become perfectly one, so that the world may know that you sent me and loved them even as you loved me.”

The purpose of unity, from Jesus' point of view, is so that non-believers will see the unity of believers and be drawn to accept Jesus as their Savior. We might selfishly think that the purpose of unity would be so that we have less stress in our lives.

Believers have a supernatural, Holy Spirit enabled, ability for love, joy, peace and oneness.

- This is not merely getting along with each other.
- This unity comes from being made into the likeness of Jesus Christ.
- This is not unity for its own sake, but unity for the sake of bringing glory to God.

John 17:24

John 17:24 “Father, I desire that they also, whom you have given me, may be with me where I am, to see my glory that you have given me because you loved me before the foundation of the world.”

- Jesus wants His people to be with Him for all eternity.
- He wants believers to be in His glorious presence to enjoy the same fellowship that He has had with the Heavenly Father.
- Again, bringing glory to God is the goal.
- Believers will share in the glory that comes from the fellowship of the Son of God and God the Father.
- Again, this glory does not come from human effort, but it is a gift from God when believers share in it.

Only Jesus was able to give believers the ability to “draw near to God” by forgiving their sins. He did this by sacrificing Himself, once and for all. As the Great High Priest who continues to be a high priest forever He continues to intercede for all who believe in Him.

What are you doing to help Christ in the work of unifying His people?

True unity is a gift from God. We need God’s intervention to make unity possible. We can work with Him or against Him. Which will you choose?

Pray that God will reveal how you can help to develop a greater unity among those who believe in Jesus.

Pray that God will reveal to you when you disrupt the unity of believers.

And, pray that God will bless you with the ability to see what He wants you to do for Him right where you are now.

The Glory of the New Jerusalem (Revelation 21:22–27)

H U E V E R E H T L C C
Y L N O F L T H G I N S
V R A H P S H U T G E B
H S O M I G Y Y R H V D
O E E L B A T S E T E D
N T C V G Y H E T E R M
O A B R I N G N N K B D
R G E E H G I I E D G G
P M A L S P M H T R A E
W V O G C L L S T K L E
A E N O Y N A T I O N S
L I N G N T U F R O N L
K G B U N M F D W B G P

And I saw no **temple** in the **city**, for its **temple** is the **Lord** God the **Almighty** and the **Lamb**. And the **city** has no **need** of sun or **moon** to **shine** on it, for the **glory** of God **gives** it **light**, and its **lamp** is the **Lamb**. By its **light** will the **nations** **walk**, and the **kings** of the **earth** will **bring** their **glory** into it, and its **gates** will **never** be **shut** by day—and **there** will be no **night** **there**. They will **bring** into it the **glory** and the **honor** of the **nations**. But **nothing** **unclean** will **ever** **enter** it, nor **anyone** who does what is **detestable** or **false**, but **only** those who are **written** in the **Lamb’s** **book** of life. ([ESV](#))

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The River of Life (Revelation 22:1–5)

Then the **angel showed** me the **river** of the **water** of **life**, **bright** as **crystal**, **flowing** from the **throne** of God and of the **Lamb** through the **middle** of the **street** of the **city**; **also**, on **either side** of the **river**, the **tree** of **life** with its **twelve kinds** of **fruit**, **yielding** its **fruit** **each month**. The **leaves** of the **tree** were for the **healing** of the **nations**. No **longer** will **there** be **anything accursed**, but the **throne** of God and of the **Lamb** will be in it, and his **servants** will **worship** him. They will see his **face**, and his **name** will be on their foreheads. And night will be no more. They will need no **light** of lamp or sun, for the Lord God will be their **light**, and they will reign forever and ever.

([ESV](#))

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A	T	R	R	E	T	A	W	T	H	E	R	E
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E	L	N	V	D	F	V	V	C	N	I	S	W
A	O	E	D	H	E	A	G	O	H	D	H	T
M	R	I	G	S	G	N	I	D	L	E	I	Y
S	M	D	E	N	I	T	E	S	A	I	P	T
Y	T	I	C	W	A	S	H	L	M	T	F	K
T	G	R	O	N	R	O	I	G	B	H	G	E
E	L	L	E	U	W	N	Y	L	I	E	E	M
E	F	A	C	E	G	E	T	I	U	R	F	A
R	O	C	D	G	T	H	R	O	N	E	B	N
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