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John 17:22-26

John 17:22

22 And the glory which thou gavest me I have given them; that they may be one, even as we are one: **(working together in one purpose)**

23 I in them, and thou in me, that they may be made perfect in one; and that the world may know that thou hast sent me, and hast loved them, as thou hast loved me. **(That the world may know these are true messengers sent from God)**

22. Also, the glory which you gave me I have given to them, *gl, > Shared:*
that they might be completely initiated to one body (tetelomenoi) eis HEN)
That so the world might recognize that thou hast sent me,
(why is that so important?) Ans.: and hast loved them, even as thou
hast loved me. *r I love r Son r same love he bestows = all children*

In v 22 you can say: "The glory which thou hast endowed me, I have also endowed them". Notice Nibley used the word, *initiated*. Before we leave today, I will show some texts from extra-Biblical sources that imply that this intercessory prayer might also be one that the Apostles repeat in a certain place.

24 Father, I will that they also, whom thou hast given me, be with me where I am; that they may behold my glory, which thou hast given me: for thou lovedst me before the foundation of the world.

24. Father, concerning what you have given me, I want them to be with me wherever I am, that they might see the glory you gave me when you loved me before the creation (foundation) of the World.

Jesus desires that where He is going, He wants the Apostles and believers to be able to pass through the veil and behold the glory which the Father has given Him. D&C 84:23-24 indicates that entering to the rest of the Lord is to enter into the fullness of His glory.

23 Now this Moses plainly taught to the children of Israel in the wilderness, and sought diligently to sanctify his people that they might behold the face of God;
24 But they hardened their hearts and could not endure his presence; therefore, the Lord in his wrath, for his anger was kindled against them, swore that they should **not enter into his rest while in the wilderness, which rest is the fulness of his glory.**

Jesus is praying that the Apostles and all believers might behold the same glory He has received. Moses sought to endow the Children of Israel with the Melchizedek authority so that they, too, could enter the presence of God and behold His glory. He sought diligently to prepare the people for their endowment. Moses had already received that glory, and he sought to prepare the Israelites to receive the same. The fullness of the atonement is to become one with God. Becoming one with God is what the word, "embrace", means in all the mid-eastern languages. When you embrace God, He bestows upon you the power that makes God *God*. Then you enter His presence, becoming a son or daughter of God, receiving all that the Father hath, becoming an heir and joint-heir with Jesus Christ. (Romans 8:17)

25 O righteous Father, the world hath not known thee: but I have known thee, and these have known that thou hast sent me.

25. **Just Father (dikaie), though the World has not known thee, yet I have known thee, and they (the Discs) have recognized that thou hast sent me.**

Jesus explains that He has prepared His Apostles to receive the same glory He has received from His Father. He explains also He has prepared them to not only be leaders on earth, but also leaders in the Church of the Firstborn. There are two churches: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints (which is the “All Y’all Come Church”), and there is the Church of the Firstborn (Temple), which is for those who are seeking greater light and knowledge and are willing to live according to higher laws and obligations.

If you look at these 4 or 5 verses Jesus maintains He has prepared His Apostles and believers to learn how to come where He will be, and they also know the Plan has come from the Father and that Jesus has been sent by the Father.

Question: *Would you mind explaining a little more about the Church of the Firstborn? I have not heard that distinction in this context before.*

It was President Lee who made that distinction. The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints at the local level is presided over by Bishop, who is the President of the Aaronic Priesthood. This ‘All Y’all Come Church’ has an Aaronic authority who is responsible for the temporal needs of the members within the ward. He assists the stake president who is responsible for the spiritual welfare of the quorums within the stake. Anyone can come through the doors of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. No one needs a recommend in order to participate in this church.

The Church of the Firstborn is described in [D&C 76 and elsewhere](#). In speaking of those in the Celestial Kingdom: “These are they who are the Church of the Firstborn” (D&C 76:54). It says nothing about the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints — it is not the Celestial Kingdom. Therefore, President Lee said there were two Churches. Members of the Church of the Firstborn are those who have been endowed with knowledge and ordinances and have been true and faithful in all things and are worthy to enter the presence of God and can then receive **all that the Father hath**. To become an heir and joint-heir with Jesus Christ means you are a Firstborn; you have received the ordinances and covenants of the Firstborn. D&C 84 below:

36 For he that receiveth my servants

receiveth me;

37 And he that receiveth me

receiveth my Father;

38 And he that receiveth my Father

receiveth my Father’s kingdom;

therefore, all that my Father hath shall be given unto him.

39 And this is according to the oath and covenant which belongeth to the priesthood.

40 Therefore, all those who receive the priesthood, receive this oath and covenant of my Father, which he cannot break, neither can it be moved.

D&C 107:18-19

18 The power and authority of the higher, or Melchizedek Priesthood, is to hold the keys of all the spiritual blessings of the church—

19 To have the privilege of receiving the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven, to have the heavens opened unto them, to commune with the general assembly and **church of the Firstborn**, and to enjoy the communion and presence of God the Father, and Jesus the mediator of the new covenant.

This is what Christ is talking about. “Father, I will that they also, . . . , be with me where I am; that they may behold my glory.” “That they may be one as we are one”.

John 17:26

26 And I have declared unto them thy name, and will declare *it*: that the love wherewith thou hast loved me may be in them, and I in them.

26. And I have made your name known to them, and shall continue to do so, that the love you had for me may be among them as I am among them, A . I.

This is all coming back to the fact that we are to develop the nature and character of God. Joseph Smith taught that we cannot dwell with God until we have the same character as God. Submitting our will to God is not good enough — our exaltation is depending on our will becoming *the same as* God’s will. In order to develop our will to be the same as God’s will, we will have to separate ourselves from the world as Jesus taught.

Brother Nibley asks the following questions about John 17:

- What is the meaning of all this?
- Why the Intercessory Prayer?
- Why do we need to know these things?
- Why the **Hundreds** of personal pronouns connected by prepositions?
[So that we cannot mistake our relationship with the 6 different entities mentioned.]
- Isn’t man’s relationship to God supposed to be very simple, direct, and uncomplicated?
[That’s Satan’s Plan—all you have to say is, “I believe”, and you’ll have no more worries.]
- Why this apparently laborious discourse on what most people think should be perfectly obvious?
- What is our relationship to the Savior?

Jesus is praying to the Father that we will establish that relationship with **Him**. Jesus is our advocate with the Father. He is *our* Redeemer. He is not only praying for the Apostles, but He is also praying for *us* — for those who come unto Christ and believe on His name. Jesus is NOT praying for anyone else! It is scary when you look at, but He is only praying for those who are seeking to separate themselves from the world — not for anyone else!

Remember, the connection to this entire discourse is the introduction of the sacrament. In Luke 22 (and in John 13), Jesus introduces the emblems of the bread and the wine, and then we get this entire discourse. It is all connected.

Question: *Aren't these personal pronouns a result of the witness of John the Beloved as he personally saw and heard these things as Jesus prayed?*

I do believe John was there as a witness. The personal pronouns are used so that we may see our relationship with the Father, the Son and the Holy Ghost as distinct entities. They are also given that we may see the relationships between ourselves, the Apostles, the Church and the world from which we need to separate ourselves. At the beginning of this discourse Jesus tells all of them that the Holy Ghost will enable them to remember all things, even 60 years after the fact. (The Book of John was written in about 90 A.D., and the Book of Revelation in about 60 A.D..)

“But the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you.” (John 14:26).

Question: *Would you say then that chapter 17 is critical in our understanding of the true nature of God?*

It is when you combine it with section 93 of our Doctrine and Covenants. John 17:3 says, “And this is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent.” Our eternal life is dependent upon our knowledge of God and Jesus Christ who He hath sent. D&C 93:19 instructs us further concerning our relationship with the Father and the Son:

19 I give unto you these sayings that you may understand and know how to worship, and know what you worship, that you may come unto the Father in my name, and in due time receive of his fulness.

The first third of Section 93 is an expansion of John's record and that of John the Baptist.

John chapters 13 through 17 are Christ's discussion on the atonement, and the intercessory prayer in chapter 17 is the culmination of that discussion. He has taught them about the atonement and their contribution to that atonement. He has explained to the Apostles and to us what we need to do to make the atonement effective in our lives. John chapter one (1), and John chapter three (3) are both connected to our understanding of the true nature of God and His Only Begotten. We need to see them all in the context in which they are written. Even Nephi, in 1 Nephi 14, informs us that “the apostle of the Lamb of God” (John) will be writing the things Nephi was forbidden to write. (See 1 Ne 14:24-27). The scriptures become the best commentary on the scriptures.

This concludes chapter 17. For many of you who may not have attended all these discussions, we will now take some time to review chapters 13-17, and touch on the key verses in each of these chapters. Below are a few verses to get us started toward our review.

42 But, behold, I say unto you that I, the Lord God, gave unto Adam and unto his seed, that they should not die as to the temporal death, **until** I, the Lord God, should send forth angels to declare unto them repentance and redemption, through faith on the name of mine Only Begotten Son.

This verse is very insightful. Neither Adam nor his posterity could die a temporal death until they were taught the Gospel. Therefore, the Lord God sent angels to teach Adam the Gospel.

43 And thus did I, the Lord God, appoint unto man the days of his probation— that by his natural death he might be raised in immortality unto eternal life, **even as many as would believe;** (D&C 29:42-43)

We're being told in another way that we all will become immortal, which is unconditional. And to those who believe, we might be raised unto eternal life, or the lifestyle God lives, but it is conditional upon our belief in Christ and in the Gospel. Receiving eternal life is conditional, whereas becoming immortal is unconditional; everyone is going to be resurrected and will be immortal, but our agency is needed to receive eternal life.

Alma 12:27-30

27 But . . . it was appointed unto men that they must die; and after death, they must come to judgment, even that same judgment of which we have spoken, which is the end.

28 And after God had appointed that these things should come unto man, behold, then he saw that it was expedient that man should know concerning the things whereof he had appointed unto them;

29 Therefore **he sent angels to converse with them**, who caused men to behold of his glory.

30 And they began from that time forth to call on his name; therefore God conversed with men, and made known unto them the plan of redemption, which had been prepared from the foundation of the world;

This is part of the Plan of salvation — that men would come to earth and die; they would have to use their agency, and then they would come to judgment — but God thought it necessary that man should know about these things and therefore, He sent angels to speak with man and teach them the Gospel.

For three generations of Adam's posterity, there was no death and there was no sin. They did not have the Gospel; thus, they were not accountable. However, once the angel(s) came and taught Adam the Gospel, and he and Eve taught to their posterity, they now had choice. Satan came among them, and the record says, "And they loved Satan more than God, and from that forth they became carnal, sensual, and devilish" (Moses 5:12-13). Agency requires knowledge. Until they were taught, they could not sin, and there would be no death among those first three generations. You cannot be good unless you can be bad, and you cannot be bad unless you can be good.

D&C 29:44-45

44 And they that believe not unto eternal damnation; for they cannot be redeemed from their spiritual fall, because they repent not;

45 For they love darkness rather than light, and their deeds are evil, and they receive their wages of whom they list to obey.

Remember, to repent is to change your character. We can change our character, or we can receive the wages of whom we list to obey.

JST John 1:4-5

4 In him was *the gospel*, and *the gospel was the life*, and the life was the light of men;

5 And the light shineth *in the world*, and *the world perceiveth* it not.

And why did the world perceive it not? As we just read in D&C 29:45, “For they love darkness rather than light, and their deeds are evil, and they receive their wages of whom they list to obey. It’s like we read in Mosiah 26:25-26:

“... they that never knew me come forth and shall stand before me.

26 And then shall they know that I am the Lord their God, that I am their Redeemer; but they would not be redeemed.

You have heard me say before — Hell is where you don’t belong, and Heaven is where you do. Mormon provides this insight about those who choose darkness rather than light:

3 Then will ye longer deny the Christ, or can ye behold the Lamb of God? Do ye suppose that ye shall dwell with him under a consciousness of your guilt? Do ye suppose that ye could be happy to dwell with that holy Being, when your souls are racked with a consciousness of guilt that ye have ever abused his laws?

4 Behold, I say unto you that ye would be more miserable to dwell with a holy and just God, under a consciousness of your filthiness before him, than ye would to dwell with the damned souls in hell. (Mormon 9:3-4)

Hell is where you *don’t* belong — and that could be in the Celestial Kingdom.

Question: *Are members in the Church of the Firstborn constantly repenting? I’m trying to visualize what that looks like in the real world.*

The best way to distinguish it is to see the complex of the Gilbert Stake Center next to the Temple across the street. On one corner you have the “All Y’all Come Church”, and on the other corner you have the Church of the Firstborn (Temple). On one corner is the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, and on the other corner is the Church of the Firstborn. Any person with their beliefs can come in through the doors of the “All Y’all Come Church”, but to enter the Temple (The Church of the Firstborn), you have to be found true and faithful in order to receive further light and knowledge; you have to be willing to enter into greater covenants and greater obligations and participate in the ordinances that make you a ‘firstborn’ unto God. The ordinances are of Christ’s life — His washing and His atonement and coming forth in that first resurrection. All of this leads to the change of your character enabling you to stand before God and be embraced by God, which is another definition of atonement.

The reality of activity in the “All Y’all Come Church” is performances and ordinances, and the reality of activity in the Church of the Firstborn is character change. “Character is doing the right thing when no one is looking”. This is what repentance means — the process of changing your character.

I can attend the Temple every day and participate in every single session, but if I am not changing my character, it does me not a bit of good; I am only doing work for the dead.

If you look at the boxes that God requires for Celestial exaltation, you see they are much different than the boxes of outward performances and ordinances.

The Celestial Boxes — For Inward Activity and Character Change

Exodus 20

No other gods before me,
No graven image or any likeness,
Not take the name of the Lord in vain,

Matthew 5:2 — Blessed are those who are:

Poor in spirit,
Meek,
Hunger and thirst after righteousness,
Merciful,
Pure in heart,
Peacemakers,
Persecuted for righteousness sake,
Love your enemies,
Do good to them that hate you,
Bless them that curse you,
Pray for them which despitefully use you and persecute you,

Matthew 22:36-40

Love God with all thy heart, and with all thy
soul, and with all thy mind,
Love thy Neighbor as thyself,

John 13:34-35

Love one another as Christ loved you,

Doctrine and Covenants 82:19

Every man seeking the interest of his neighbor,
Doing all things with an eye single to the glory
of God,

2 Nephi 25: 26-27

Rejoice in Christ,
Preach of Christ,

Moroni 7:48-49

Charity is the pure love of Christ, and it endureth forever; and whoso is found possessed of it at the last day, it shall be well with him. Wherefore, my beloved brethren,
pray unto the Father with all the energy of heart,

that ye may be filled with this love, which he hath bestowed upon all who are true
followers of his Son, Jesus Christ;

that ye may become the sons of God;

that when he shall appear, we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is;

that we may have this hope;

that we may be purified even as he is pure. Amen.

Mosiah 3:19

Become a saint,
Submissive,
Meek,
Humble,
Patient,
Full of love,
Willing to submit to all things.

Mosiah 5:2

No more disposition to do evil,
Do good continually,

Mosiah 18:8-10

Mourn with those that mourn,
Comfort those that stand in need of comfort,
Stand as a witness of God; at all times, in all
things, in all places,

Alma 13:12

Cannot look upon sin save it were with
abhorrence,

Moroni 7:45-48 — Charity:

Suffereth long,
Is kind,
Envieth not,
Not puffed up,
Seeketh not her own,
Not easily provoked,
Thinketh no evil,
Rejoiceth not in iniquity but rejoiceth in the
truth,
Beareth all things,
Believeth all things,
Hopeth all things,
Endureth all things.

Outward Activity of Performances

Attend your meetings
Pay a full tithing
Pay a generous Fast Offering
Family Home Evening
Attend the Temple
Personal and family prayer
Ministering / Teaching
Living the Word of Wisdom
Honest in your dealings
Living the Law of Chastity
Read the scriptures
Serve when called
Sustain all your leaders

The Two Conversions

A parable about the Pharisee and the Publican found in Luke 18 explains that there is a difference in the quality of conversion. The Pharisee, an active member of the Jewish religion, and the publican, considered a sinner by the same faith, also represent the members of the church in our day. The Pharisee foolishly thought that his salvation was based on his activity in the 'works' of the church (see **Luke 18**).

9 And he spake this parable unto certain which trusted in themselves that they were righteous, and despised others:

10 Two men went up into the temple to pray; the one a Pharisee, and the other a publican.

11 The Pharisee stood and prayed thus with himself, God, I thank thee, that I am not as other men are, extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even as this publican.

12 I fast twice in the week, I give tithes of all that I possess.

As evidence of personal righteousness, the Pharisee considering himself faithful and obedient, lists his outward actions that could be seen of men. With pride he boasts of his righteousness in his temple attendance, his fasting, and his comprehensive tithes and offerings. Perhaps he brought two dishes to every pot-luck. In typical Zoramite fashion (**Alma 31:12-18**), the Pharisee proudly gives thanks to God that he is not like all the other sinful people—as he is the shining example of righteousness!

13 And the publican, standing afar off, would not lift up so much as his eyes unto heaven, but smote upon his breast, saying, God be merciful to me a sinner.

14 I tell you, this man went down to his house justified rather than the other: for every one that exalteth himself shall be abased; and he that humbleth himself shall be exalted.

In clear and simple words, the Savior teaches that there is a difference between activity in the church and activity in the gospel of Jesus Christ. The Pharisee was active in the Jewish church of his day, but the publican (the sinner) was active in the gospel. According to Christ, this

sinner was more righteous than the Pharisee because he recognized the need for change and was actively trying to change his character.

Our exaltation is dependent upon being *active in* the Gospel of Jesus Christ. We are to “come unto Christ”. All our activity in the Church is meant to help us develop our relationship with God and develop the character that loves God and loves our fellowman. If not, then we are only checking the boxes of outward activity. Our religion facilitates the relationship. Hence, the invitation to “Come unto Christ”. He never said, “Go to Church”. He did say, “If you love me, keep my commandments”. “Upon these two commandments”, He said, “hang all the law and all the prophets”.

If Life is a probationary state (Alma 12:24; 42:4; Mormon 9:28), then all sin is a misuse of our time. In other words, the nitty-gritty definition of sin is: “Anything that distracts you from developing the character that loves God and loves your fellowman.”

Question: *Isn't that why it is critical that we have those higher ordinances?*

The ordinances are there for a reason, and that is they provide a hope of a future reality, so we can, as the D&C says, “act in futurity” (see D&C 101:78). In talking about ordinances, if I am true and faithful, I may come forth in the first resurrection; that gives me a hope to act in futurity for that blessing. It gives me a reason to act in the present with the hope for the fulfillment of that future blessing. My dog will roll over for a treat, but he has no concept of rolling over with the anticipation of a treat after he is dead. This is what the scripture means to “act in futurity”. That is what an ordinance is — a hope or anticipation of a future reality. The commandments help me develop the character that I need for the realization of those ordinances.

As we continue, keep in mind that John 1 and John 3 are also connected to our coming unto Christ. For example, this is from John 3:

14 And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up:

15 That whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have eternal life.

16 ¶ For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.

17 For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through him might be saved.

In the Intercessory Prayer, Jesus is only praying for those who believe in Him, and not anyone else. He is praying for those who are seeking for that further light and knowledge.

18 He that believeth on him is not condemned: but he that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God.

19 And this is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil.

20 For everyone that doeth evil hateth the light, neither cometh to the light, lest his deeds should be reproved.

People who love darkness more than light are not seeking to change their character. Nobody likes to be wrong, nor told they're wrong. You cannot teach anyone anything unless they really want to know.

21 But he that doeth truth cometh to the light, that his deeds may be made manifest, that they are wrought in God.

This is important. This is the purpose and reason for the commandments.

We will begin our review of these chapters after our break.