

Yochanan ~ Part 32

In this chapter, we learn that **Yeshua** is our **Cohen Gadol** (High Priest) prays on our behalf to His Father. In this intercessory prayer we see deeply into the **Messiah's** heart - into the intimacy of the relationship between the **Son** and the **Father**, on the one hand, and between the **Son** and His **Talmidim**, on the other. The depth of this prayer exceeds that possible to any mere human; it presupposes that **Yeshua** came forth from **God**, had the **Father's** glory before the world existed (v. 5), shares all that belongs to the **Father** (v. 10), can give the **Father's** glory to **Believers** (v. 22), is eternal (vv. 5, 24) and has uniquely intimate knowledge of the **Father** (v. 25).

Yeshua Prays for Himself

17¹ After Yeshua had said these things, He looked up toward heaven and said, "Father, the time has come. Glorify your Son, so that the Son may glorify You - ² just as You gave Him authority over all mankind, so that He might give eternal life to all those whom You have given Him.

Yeshua has performed miracles and exorcisms, and He even demonstrated His power to raise someone from the dead. **God** also created the world through Him, which means He rules it (1:1-3). **Eternal life** occurs through His death and resurrection.

³ And eternal life is this: to know You, the one true God, and Him whom You sent, Yeshua the Messiah.

Eternal life is this: to know ... **Eternal life** is not merely survival after death, which everyone shares (3:16, 5:29; Daniel 12:2), but having intimate "**knowledge**" of the **Father** and the **Son**. The Hebrew word for "knowledge," "**da'at**," denotes not only the comprehending of the acts and circumstances of the world, but also the most intimate experiencing of the object of knowledge (hence its use in **Hebrew** to mean sexual intercourse in such expressions as, "*And Adam knew Chavah his wife*" (Genesis 4:1)). Here the word "**know**" is used exactly as in Jeremiah 31:33(34), in the passage promising **Isra'el** a new covenant: "*And no longer will each one teach his neighbor and his brother, 'Know Adonai,' for they will all know me.*"

⁴ "I glorified You on earth by finishing the work You gave Me to do. ⁵ Now, Father, glorify Me alongside yourself. Give Me the same glory I had with You before the world existed.

Verse 5 teaches the **Messiah's** pre-existence.

Yeshua Prays for His Talmidim

⁶ "I made your name known to the people you gave Me out of the world. They were Yours, You gave them to Me, and they have kept Your word. ⁷ Now they know that everything You have given Me is from You, ⁸ because the words You gave Me I have given to them, and they have received them. They have really come to know that I came from You, and they have come to trust that You sent Me. ⁹ "I am praying for them. I am not praying for the world, but for those you have given to Me, because they are Yours. ¹⁰ Indeed, all I have is Yours, and all You have is Mine, and in them I have been glorified. ¹¹ Now I am no longer in the world. They are in the world, but I am coming to You. Holy Father, guard them by the power of Your name, which You have given to Me, so that they may be one, just as We are. ¹² When I was with them, I guarded them by the power of Your name, which You have given to Me; yes, I kept watch over them; and not one of them was destroyed (except the one meant for destruction, so that the Tanakh might be fulfilled). ¹³ But now, I am coming to You; and I say these things while I am still in the world so that they

may have My joy made complete in themselves. ¹⁴ "I have given them Your word, and the world hated them, because they do not belong to the world - just as I myself do not belong to the world. ¹⁵ I don't ask you to take them out of the world, but to protect Them from the Evil One. ¹⁶ They do not belong to the world, just as I do not belong to the world. ¹⁷ Set them apart for holiness by means of the truth - Your word is truth. ¹⁸ Just as You sent Me into the world, I have sent them into the world. ¹⁹ On their behalf I am setting myself apart for holiness, so that they too may be set apart for holiness by means of the truth.

Yeshua Prays for All Believers

²⁰ "I pray not only for these, but also for those who will trust in Me because of their word,

*I pray not only for these twelve talmidim, my **shlichim** ("messengers," "emissaries," "apostles"), but also for those who trust in Me because of their word. Here **Yeshua** prays for the millions down through the centuries who have come to trust in Him because these twelve faithfully communicated the **Gospel**. The ensuing verses are **Yeshua's** one prayer specifically for us.*

*²¹ that they may all be one. Just as you, Father, are united with me and I with you, I pray that they may be united with us, so that the world may believe that you sent me. ²² The glory which you have given to me, I have given to them; so that they may be one, just as we are one - ²³ I united with them and you with me, so that they may be completely one, and the world thus realize that you sent me, and that you have loved them just as you have loved me. ²⁴ "Father, I want those you have given me to be with me where I am; so that they may see my glory, which you have given me because you loved me before the creation of the world. ²⁵ Righteous Father, the world has not known you, but I have known you, and these people have known that you sent me. ²⁶ I made your name known to them, and I will continue to make it known; so that the love with which you have loved me may be in them, and I myself may be united with them."*¹

Yeshua prays that the unity between **Believers** and **Himself**, between **Believers** and the **Father**, and between **Believers** and other **Believers** will have the same character as the unity between **Himself** and the **Father**.

What follows is David Sterns' commentary on his take of the **Christian Church**:

The history of the **Christian** church offers all too ample proof that his prayer was needed! Most **Jewish** people are at least confused, if not scandalized, by the distinctions between various kinds of **Christians** which seem to divide more than unite: **Eastern Orthodox** versus **Western, Roman Catholic** versus **Protestant**, hundreds or thousands of **Protestant** denominations (most of which are "versus" at least some of the others), and thousands of **one-church** "denominations" with no organizational affiliation. How many lives have been sacrificed over the centuries in wars between **Christians**? How often do the media report loveless castigations of one **Christian** group by another?

Jewish people look on this display of disunity with disgust or disdain, while the less virulent expressions 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 **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

¹ Yochanan 17:1- 26.

ancestor. A common expression is the feeling among many **Jews**, "We're all family to each other." 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 **State of Israel** or opposition to **antisemitism**. 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). Thus, **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 the **Messiah**, 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, but anxiety to achieve the goal can lead to an appearance of unity at the institutional level that glosses over 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 in the **Lord**.

However serious the schisms between the various **Christian** denominations, the greatest schism in the world is that between the **Jewish** people and the **Body of the Messiah**. The **Jews are God's people**, and so is the **Messianic Community** (the Church). It was never **God's** intent that there be two separated peoples of **God**; for the **Body of the Messiah**, consisting of saved **Jews and Gentiles**, 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. **Messianic Judaism**, by striving to be one hundred percent **Jewish** and one hundred percent **Messianic**, offers itself as one means to help heal this schism. If the schism between the **Jews** and the **Church** can be healed, how much more easily the schisms within the **Church**!

Finally, **Yeshua's** prayer gives these splits an evangelistic purpose: may they be one in us so that the unsaved world may believe that you (**God the Father**) sent me (**Yeshua**).

[My wife and I have been attending a non-denominational church that is aligned with the Great Commission Coalition. We helped plant a sister church in Ireland and have set a goal to plant five more congregations in northern Michigan's Lower Peninsula.]