



# FINDING THE MESSIAH

## THE GOSPEL OF JOHN

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### John 17:20-26

### Experiencing Unity in Christ

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#### DAY ONE Observation

John 1-12 record the public ministry of Jesus to the nation, while chapters 13-17 record the private ministry of Jesus with His disciples. Those who find the Messiah are taught what it means to follow Him.

*Unity prevails wherever there is a deep and genuine experience of Christ, for the fellowship of the new birth transcends all historical and denominational boundaries. ...Jesus did not pray for absolute unanimity of mind, nor for uniformity of practice, nor for union of visible organization, but for the underlying unity of spiritual nature and devotion which would enable His people to bear a convincing testimony before the world.*

—Merrill Tenney

**Pray and ask God to speak to your heart as you read John 17:20-26. Mark words or phrases that stand out to you. Record the main message or your thoughts next to each paragraph.**

<sup>20</sup>“I do not pray for these alone, but also for those who will believe in Me through their word; <sup>21</sup> that they all may be one, as You, Father, *are* in Me, and I in You; that they also may be one in Us, that the world may believe that You sent Me. <sup>22</sup> And the glory which You gave Me I have given them, that they may be one just as We are one: <sup>23</sup> I in them, and You in Me; that they may be made perfect in one, and that the world may know that You have sent Me, and have loved them as You have loved Me.

<sup>24</sup>“Father, I desire that they also whom You gave Me may be with Me where I am, that they may behold My glory which You have given Me; for You loved Me before the foundation of the world. <sup>25</sup> O righteous Father! The world has not known You, but I have known You; and these have known that You sent Me.

<sup>26</sup> And I have declared to them Your name, and will declare *it*, that the love with which You loved Me may be in them, and I in them.” (NKJV)

**Who is Jesus praying for in this part of His prayer? (17:20)**

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**What is Jesus' specific request and/or desire for His disciples in each of the following verses? (Hint: The word "that" or "so that" indicates a reason and purpose for His request.)**

17:21 \_\_\_\_\_

17:22 \_\_\_\_\_

17:23 \_\_\_\_\_

17:24 \_\_\_\_\_

17:26 \_\_\_\_\_

**What is the potential response of those in the world (i.e., those who are not believers) if Jesus' disciples live out His requests?**

17:21 \_\_\_\_\_

17:23 \_\_\_\_\_

**Write down three things that you learn about the Father from these verses.**

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**Write down three things that you learn about Jesus from these verses.**

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**Based on these verses, how would you describe the relationship of the Father and the Son?**

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**DAY THREE**  
**Interpretation**

In interpretation, you are digging deeper into the passage in order to better understand its meaning. A word study on a key word and/or looking up parallel passages can help you in your understanding.

**Go to [blueletterbible.org](http://blueletterbible.org) and type “John 17:22” into the “Search the Bible” box. Next click on John 17:22 to bring up the verse in the Greek (or select “Interlinear” from the Tools menu). Find the word translated as “glory” and click on the Strong’s number (G1391) to bring up the Greek word, its definition, and its usage in other passages in the New Testament.**

What is the Greek word for “glory”? \_\_\_\_\_ (Use the transliteration.)

How many times is it used in the New Testament? \_\_\_\_\_ (See KJV Translation Count.)

Summarize its meaning and definition. (See particularly III. under Outline of Biblical Usage.)

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**“Glory” is a key theme in the gospel of John. In John 17:22, Jesus says that the glory, which He has, has been given to us in some capacity. Look up the following passages and write down what you learn about the glory of Jesus and/or about our own glory as His disciples.**

John 1:14 \_\_\_\_\_

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Romans 8:16-18 \_\_\_\_\_

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1 Corinthians 15:42-43 \_\_\_\_\_

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2 Corinthians 3:18 \_\_\_\_\_

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2 Corinthians 4:3-7 \_\_\_\_\_

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Ephesians 1:16-19 \_\_\_\_\_

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Colossians 1:27 \_\_\_\_\_

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Based on what you have learned, what “glory” do you think we have been given in Christ?

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**DAY FOUR**  
**Devotion**

Read the following excerpt from J.C. Ryle’s *Expository Thoughts on John*.

**17:20-26.** We should mark...in these verses, *how Jesus prays for the unity and oneness of His people*. “That they all may be one—that they may be one in Us—that they may be one even as We are one”—and “that so the world may believe and know that You have sent Me”—this is a leading petition in our Lord’s prayer to His Father.

We can ask no stronger proof of the value of unity among Christians, and the sinfulness of division, than the great prominence which our Master assigns to the subject in this passage. How painfully true it is that in every age divisions have been the scandal of religion, and the weakness of the Church of Christ! How often Christians have wasted their strength in contending against their brethren, instead of contending against sin and the devil! How repeatedly they have given occasion to the world to say, “When you have settled your own internal differences we will believe!” All this, we need not doubt, the Lord Jesus foresaw with prophetic eye. It was the foresight of it which made Him pray so earnestly that believers might be “one.”

Let the recollection of this part of Christ’s prayer abide in our minds, and exercise a constant influence on our behavior as Christians. Let no man think lightly, as some men seem to do, of schism, or count it a small thing to multiply sects, parties, and denominations. These very things, we may depend, only help the devil and damage the

cause of Christ. “If it be possible, as much as lies in us, let us live peaceably with all men.” (Rom. 12:18.) Let us *bear* much, *concede* much, and *put up with* much, before we plunge into secessions and separations. They are movements in which there is often much false fire. Let rabid zealots who delight in sect-making and party-forming, rail at us and denounce us if they please. We need not mind them. So long as we have Christ and a good conscience, let us patiently hold on our way, follow the things that make for peace, and strive to promote unity. It was not for nothing that our Lord prayed so fervently that His people might be “one.”

We should mark, finally, in these verses, *how Jesus prays that His people may at last be with Him and behold His glory*. “I will,” He says, “that those whom You have given Me, be with Me where I am—that they may behold my glory.”

This is a singularly beautiful and touching conclusion to our Lord’s remarkable prayer. We may well believe that it was meant to cheer and comfort those who heard it, and to strengthen them for the parting scene which was fast drawing near. But for all who read it even now, this part of his prayer is full of sweet and unspeakable comfort.

We do not see Christ now. We read of Him, hear of Him, believe in Him, and rest our souls in His finished work. But even the best of us, at our best, walk by faith and not by sight, and our poor halting faith often makes

us walk very feebly in the way to heaven. There shall be an end of all this state of things one day. We shall at length see Christ as He is, and know as we have been known. We shall behold Him face to face, and not through a glass darkly. We shall actually be in His presence and company, and go out no more. If *faith* has been pleasant, much more will *sight* be; and if *hope* has been sweet, much more will *certainty* be. No wonder that when Paul has written, "We shall ever be with the Lord," he adds, "Comfort one another with these words." (1 Th. 4:17, 18.)

We know little of heaven now. Our thoughts are all confounded, when we try to form an idea of a future state in which pardoned sinners shall be perfectly happy. "It does not yet appear what we shall be." (1 John 3:2.) But we may rest ourselves on the blessed thought, that after death we shall be "with Christ." Whether before the resurrection in

paradise, or after the resurrection in final glory, the prospect is still the same. True Christians shall be "with Christ." We need no more information. Where that blessed Person is who was born for us, died for us, and rose again, there can be no lack of anything. David might well say, "In Your presence is fullness of joy, and at Your right hand are pleasures forevermore." (Psalm 16:11.)

Let us leave this wonderful prayer with a solemn recollection of the three great petitions which it contains. Let holiness and unity by the way, and Christ's company in the end, be subjects never long out of our thoughts or distant from our minds. Happy is that Christian who cares for nothing so much as to be holy and loving like his Master, while he lives, and a companion of his Master when he dies.

**What stands out to you from Ryle's words? Why?**

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**DAY FIVE  
Application**

**Re-read John 17:20-26 and consider the truths that you have learned this week. Seek to apply the message of this passage to your daily life.**

What thought or truth impacted you this week from your study of John 17:6-19? Why?

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Unity among believers is a key theme throughout the New Testament. Yet it is often the most difficult thing to experience in our daily lives and in the local church. *Hurtful words. Neglected responsibilities. Real and perceived offenses. Misunderstandings. Cultural walls. Different convictions. Conflicting personalities. Stubborn wills. Short-sighted decisions. Self-centered actions.* All of these things work against our unity in the Spirit.

**Read the following verses and mark key attitudes or actions that are necessary for unity.**

*Be kindly affectionate to one another with brotherly love, in honor giving preference to one another; not lagging in diligence, fervent in spirit, serving the Lord; rejoicing in hope, patient in tribulation, continuing steadfastly in prayer; distributing to the needs of the saints, given to hospitality.*

*Bless those who persecute you; bless and do not curse. Rejoice with those who rejoice, and weep with those who weep. Be of the same mind toward one another. Do not set your mind on high things, but associate with the humble. Do not be wise in your own opinion. (Romans 12:10-16)*

*Let us therefore make every effort to do what leads to peace and to mutual edification. Do not destroy the work of God for the sake of food. All food is clean, but it is wrong for a person to eat anything that causes someone else to stumble. It is better not to eat meat or drink wine or to do anything else that will cause your brother or sister to fall. (Romans 14:19-21)*

*I, therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, beseech you to walk worthy of the calling with which you were called, with all lowliness and gentleness, with longsuffering, bearing with one another in love, endeavoring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.*

*There is one body and one Spirit, just as you were called in one hope of your calling; one Lord, one faith, one baptism; one God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all. (Eph. 4:1-6)*

*Therefore if there is any encouragement in Christ, if there is any consolation of love, if there is any fellowship of the Spirit, if any affection and compassion, make my joy complete by being of the same mind, maintaining the same love, united in spirit, intent on one purpose. Do nothing from selfishness or empty conceit, but with humility of mind regard one another as more important than yourselves; do not merely look out for your own personal interests, but also for the interests of others.*

*Have this attitude in yourselves which was also in Christ Jesus, who, although He existed in the form of God, did not regard equality with God a thing to be grasped, but emptied Himself, taking the form of a bond-servant, and being made in the likeness of men. Being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross. (Philippians 2:1-8)*

*Therefore, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, put on tender mercies, kindness, humility, meekness, longsuffering; bearing with one another, and forgiving one another, if anyone has a complaint against another; even as Christ forgave you, so you also must do. But above all these things put on love, which is the bond of perfection. And let the peace of God rule in your hearts, to which also you were called in one body; and be thankful. (Colossians 3:12-15)*

What attitudes or actions stand out to you as you read these verses? Why?

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Is there another believer in your life that you are currently in conflict with?  Yes  No

If so, have you done what you can to try to reconcile (cf. Rom. 12:18)?  Yes  No

Regardless of whether we are the one offended (Matt. 18:15) or the one who has potentially offended another believer (Matt. 5:23-24), we are to take initiative to seek reconciliation. Sometimes reconciliation is not possible (or safe) because of the other person. In such cases, we are still called to forgive and to not keep an account of wrongs (cf. 1 Cor. 13:4-7). THIS IS NOT EASY! If it were, then it would not require the grace of Christ and the power of the Spirit.

In most cases, we must decide to forgive long before we have any feelings of forgiveness. If you need help, seek out a godly Christian friend or counselor who can help walk you through the process. Forgiveness not only frees the other person but it also frees you!

Jesus prayed for unity among believers *so that the world may believe that You sent Me* (17:21). Why do you think that unity among believers is such a powerful witness to the world?

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Take time to pray the following prayer for CBC based on John 17:20-26.

*Heavenly Father, I pray for Community Bible Church that we may be one, as You, Father, are in Christ, and Christ is in You; that we also may be one in intimate union with You, that the world may believe that You sent Your Son as the Lamb of God, the Savior of the world.*

*May we know, individually and corporately, that the glory which You gave Your Son has been given to us in Him, that we may be one just as You, the triune God, are one: Christ in us, and You in Christ; that we may be made complete in oneness, that the world may know that You have sent Your Son.*

*May we know that we are beloved in Christ, that You have loved us as You have loved Your Son.*

*May we fix our hope on the day when we will behold the glory of Christ in all its fullness.*

*May the incomprehensible, unconditional, eternal, self-giving love between You and Your Son be in us, just as You are in us, through the power of Your Spirit. Amen.*