

**1135 Glory, words of Lord and His prayer, joy and unity – John(17)1-26
(Verses refer to those in NASB95 unless otherwise specified, and by Whirlwind.)**

First, we will communicate the glory of God and the glory of Jesus Christ. Second, we talked about the source of the Lord's words and His prayers for apostles. Third, the apostles will see the Lord resurrected from the dead and will be filled with the joy that the Lord has given and cannot be taken away. Finally, we saw that He prayed for those who believe in Him, so that they may be united in Him. What we need to do is to demonstrate the unity He has given. We also discussed a related issue, which is that according to the Bible, there is a time period when the Holy Spirit and evil spirits will exist in Christians at the same time.

1. Glorious God the Father and Jesus Christ

"Jesus spoke these things; and lifting up His eyes to heaven, He said, "Father, the hour has come; glorify Your Son, that the Son may glorify You, even as You gave Him authority over all flesh, that to all whom You have given Him, He may give eternal life. This is eternal life, that they may know You, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom You have sent. I glorified You on the earth, having accomplished the work which You have given Me to do. Now, Father, glorify Me together with Yourself, with the glory which I had with You before the world was."(John 17:1-5)

Regarding glory, this is so different from what the world thinks. Let's see what Jesus said after his resurrection. Jesus said to them (the two disciples on the way to Emmaus), "...O foolish men and slow of heart to believe in all that the prophets have spoken! Was it not necessary for the Christ to suffer these things and to enter into His glory?"(Luke 24:25-26) This refers to Jesus glorifying God the Father through his crucifixion, "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 2:6-8) So Jesus was equal with God before His incarnation. Let us look at this verse then, "Now, Father, glorify Me together with Yourself, with the glory which I had with You before the world was."(John 17:5) Is it obvious that before time He was equal in dignity and honor with God the Father?

Because He was a complete man during His incarnation, He said, "'Now My soul has become troubled; and what shall I say, 'Father, save Me from this hour'? But for this purpose I came to this hour. Father, glorify Your name.'" Then a voice came out of heaven: "I have both glorified it, and will glorify it again.'"(John 12:27-28). If He used His divinity during His incarnation, how could He be troubled? Yes, He knew He had come for this time, and therefore He willingly died in this way, glorifying the Father's name. He obeyed God all His life, as the Scripture says, "...I do exactly as the Father commanded Me. ..." (John 14:31) Wasn't that what He said when He fell on His face in prayer in the Garden of Gethsemane before He was crucified. "...My Father, if it is possible, let this cup pass from Me; yet not as I will, but as You will."(Matthew 26:39)

We must emphasize that during the time of His incarnation, He was the Son of Man, "and He gave Him authority to execute judgment, ..." (John 5:27) "For this reason also, God highly exalted Him, and bestowed on Him the name which is above every name, so that at the name of Jesus every knee will bow, of those who are in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and that every tongue will confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father." (Philippians 2:9-11) God is sovereign. It is determined that when we call Jesus Christ Lord, the glory goes to God the Father! The Bible is inspired by God. We should not force our interpretation of the Bible but should follow its teachings.

Jesus also had the glory given to Him by the Father when He was on earth. We can see this by looking at what He did. He Himself said, "Jesus answered and said to them, "Go and report to John what you hear and see: the blind receive sight and the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed and the deaf hear, the dead are raised up, and the poor have the gospel preached to them." (Matthew 11:4-5) Not only that, He also performed various miracles such as the five loaves and two fishes, and some of these things were even explicitly stated to be for His glory. For example, before Jesus raised Lazarus from the dead, He said, "...This sickness is not to end in death, but for the glory of God, so that the Son of God may be glorified by it." (John 11:4) His life would not change because of the glory He received in the world. He was still "...gentle and humble in heart, ..." (Matthew 11:29) Usually it is easy for a person to become proud when he receives such great glory in the world, but He was not like that. It was because His life is always life. Our goal is to be conformed to His image (see Romans 8:29).

Then he talked about His mission when He was sent to the world: "This is eternal life, that they may know You, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom You have sent." (John 17:3) We have shared that during the period of His incarnation there is a sequence: the Father sends the Son, and the Holy Spirit does not come until the Son goes away. He also said very clearly, "I glorified You on the earth, having accomplished the work which You have given Me to do." (John 17:4) He also explained that He was indeed emptying Himself during His incarnation, because He is one of the Trinity and was equal in honor and glory with God before the creation of the world.

2. The source of Jesus' words and His prayers

"I have manifested Your name to the men whom You gave Me out of the world; they were Yours and You gave them to Me, and they have kept Your word. Now they have come to know that everything You have given Me is from You; for the words which You gave Me I have given to them; and they received them and truly understood that I came forth from You, and they believed that You sent Me. I ask on their behalf; I do not ask on behalf of the world, but of those whom You have given Me; for they are Yours; and all things that are Mine are Yours, and Yours are Mine; and I have been glorified in them. I am no longer in the world; and yet they themselves are in the world, and I come to You. Holy Father, keep them in Your name, the name which You have given Me, that they may be one even as We are. While I was with them, I was keeping them in Your name which You have given Me;

and I guarded them and not one of them perished but the son of perdition, so that the Scripture would be fulfilled."(John 17:6-12)

He clearly said that He had completed the mission, and none of the people of God who were given to Him were lost, and they kept His Word, the Word of God that was given to them, and truly knew and believed that Jesus Christ was sent by God. Here we need to emphasize that knowing and believing are two different things. The scripture says, "So faith comes from hearing, and hearing by the word of Christ."(Romans 10:17) One can know the word by hearing it but not obey it. Only those who obey the word are the true believers.

Here He prays for them, but not for them to leave the world. Instead, He wants to keep them and let them be His witnesses on earth, just as the scripture says, "but you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be My witnesses both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and even to the remotest part of the earth."(Acts 1:8) They knew that this would cost them their lives, but they still kept moving forward. Take Peter for example. Jesus had told him, "Truly, truly, I say to you, when you were younger, you used to gird yourself and walk wherever you wished; but when you grow old, you will stretch out your hands and someone else will gird you, and bring you where you do not wish to go."(John 21:18)

"Now this He said, signifying by what kind of death he would glorify God. ..." (John 21:19)

These are some of the words spoken to the eleven apostles during the separation prayer at the Last Supper, after Judas, the betrayer, went out (see John 13:30). Let us see how they were chosen. "It was at this time that He went off to the mountain to pray, and He spent the whole night in prayer to God. And when day came, He called His disciples to Him and chose twelve of them, whom He also named as apostles."(Luke 6:12-13) This includes Judas, the betrayer. He knew that Judas would betray Him, and as a human being, He could only pray all night to make sure it would happen and it was God's will. In the end, he obeyed God and said, "While I was with them, I was keeping them in Your name which You have given Me; and I guarded them and not one of them perished but the son of perdition, so that the Scripture would be fulfilled."(John 17:12)

When the words of the Scripture are fulfilled, the plan of salvation begins to be accomplished, so on the cross "...He said, "It is finished!" And He bowed His head and gave up His spirit."(John 19:30) The resurrection on the third day completed salvation. "He who was delivered over because of our transgressions, and was raised because of our justification."(Romans 4:25) "Therefore we have been buried with Him through baptism into death, so that as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, so we too might walk in newness of life. For if we have become united with Him in the likeness of His death, certainly we shall also be in the likeness of His resurrection."(Romans 6:4-5)

This is the meaning of baptism. We have shared that under normal circumstances, we should be baptized as stated in the Great Commission, "having gone, then, disciple all the nations, (baptizing them -- to the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit."(Matthew 28:19, YLT) Jesus also set an example for us, "But Jesus answering said

to him (John the Baptist), "Permit it at this time; for in this way it is fitting for us to fulfill all righteousness." Then he permitted Him. After being baptized, Jesus came up immediately from the water; ..." (Matthew 3:15-16) But there are exceptions. The criminal who was crucified with Jesus did believe, but he did not have the opportunity to be baptized. "And He said to him, "Truly I say to you, today you shall be with Me in Paradise."" (Luke 23:43) The criminal went to Paradise after his death, but the Bible never says, as some people believe, that every Christian goes to Paradise after death to await the judgment of the great white throne.

3. Joy, God's Word of truth, and being sent

"But now I come to You; and these things I speak in the world so that they may have My joy made full in themselves. I have given them Your word; and the world has hated them, because they are not of the world, even as I am not of the world. I do not ask You to take them out of the world, but to keep them from the evil one. They are not of the world, even as I am not of the world. Sanctify them in the truth; Your word is truth. As You sent Me into the world, I also have sent them into the world. For their sakes I sanctify Myself, that they themselves also may be sanctified in truth." (John 17:13-19)

Now it was Jesus who told them what was about to happen, so they knew that all the prophecies about Him were true, and their hearts were filled with joy, "...and no one will take your joy away from you." (John 16:22) He went to the cross because the world hated Him, and of course Jews also hated those who followed Him and thus did not belong to the world. When His time had come and He was about to leave, He sent them, knowing that they must remain in the world as witnesses for Him, and therefore He only prayed that God would keep them from the evil one, Satan, until their time came.

We need to emphasize the point that the time has come, because people in the world usually think that longevity means God's protection, but this is not the case! The New Testament clearly tells us that the apostle James died at a relatively young age. It says, "Now about that time Herod the king laid hands on some who belonged to the church in order to mistreat them. And he had James the brother of John put to death with a sword." (Acts 12:1-2) But "Precious in the sight of the LORD Is the death of His godly ones." (Psalm 116:15) Did Jesus' prayer go unanswered? No, it was Jacob's time. Why do I say so? In Revelation 21:2 we see the holy city, the New Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, "And the wall of the city had twelve foundation stones, and on them were the twelve names of the twelve apostles of the Lamb." (Revelation 21:14) Jacob's name is very glorious in there. This also explains that it is God who arranges the time when we will die. God's view on death is very different from that of the world.

There is such an example in the Old Testament. After Josiah did many good things to obey God (see 2 Kings 22), the Lord also told him, "...you will be gathered to your grave in peace, ..." (2 Kings 22:20) But in the end, "In his days Pharaoh Neco king of Egypt went up to the king of Assyria to the river Euphrates. And King Josiah went to meet him, and when Pharaoh Neco saw him he killed him at Megiddo." (2 Kings 23:29) It definitely was not a

peaceful death, could it be that what Jehovah told him was false? No! Let's see what Josiah did in the end, "However, Josiah would not turn away from him (Neco king of Egypt), but disguised himself in order to make war with him; nor did he listen to the words of Neco from the mouth of God, but came to make war on the plain of Megiddo."(2 Chronicles 35:22) The battle that Neco originally wanted had nothing to do with him, and God had warned him, but he still wanted to stand out. God used a feedback strategy, as the scripture says, "When a righteous man turns away from his righteousness, commits iniquity and dies because of it, for his iniquity which he has committed he will die. Again, when a wicked man turns away from his wickedness which he has committed and practices justice and righteousness, he will save his life."(Ezekiel 18:26-27) Jehovah did give Josiah a chance and he chose not to take it. Can God be blamed for this?

The same is true in the New Testament, "...God our Savior, who desires all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth."(1 Timothy 2:3-4) The plan of salvation gives people a chance, and people have free will and can choose to believe or not! It is really important not to harden your heart and go against God's will and seek your own death. The conclusion is that unless the Triune God is willing to tell us, we cannot know the timing of His arrangement, because "The secret things belong to the LORD our God, but the things revealed belong to us and to our sons forever, ..." (Deuteronomy 29:29)

4. To demonstrate the unity He has given us

"I do not ask on behalf of these alone, but for those also who believe in Me through their word; that they may all be one; even 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 sent Me. The glory which You have given Me I have given to them, that they may be one, just as We are one; I in them and You in Me, that they may be perfected in unity, so that the world may know that You sent Me, and loved them, even as You have loved Me. Father, I desire that they also, whom You have given Me, be with Me where I am, so that they may see My glory which You have given Me, for You loved Me before the foundation of the world. "O righteous Father, although the world has not known You, yet I have known You; and these have known that You sent Me; and I have made Your name known to them, and will make it known, so that the love with which You loved Me may be in them, and I in them."(John 17:20-26)

It clearly states here that He not only prayed for the apostles, but also for us, so He gave us a chance to be saved, but people have free will and can make their own choices. It also mentions here that He has given us His glory and unity, seeing that He was first united with God the Father, and then we can be united in Him. Yes, we must first believe that He is in us in the form of the Holy Spirit, which means that the body of a Christian is the temple of the Holy Spirit, as the scripture says, "Or do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit who is in you, whom you have from God, and that you are not your own? For you have been bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body."(1 Corinthians 6:19-20) What we should pursue is to be one with Jesus, to be conformed to the image of Jesus (see Romans 8:29), and to have the life of Jesus. But one thing to note is that just because others don't listen to you doesn't mean you have no life. Our lives will not exceed

Jesus'. Think about how many people listened to Jesus when He became flesh? What we need to do is to have an ear that can hear and discern. That is why the Bible often says, "He who has an ear, let him hear!" Like the seven churches mentioned in the Book of Revelation.

This brings up a common question: since the Holy Spirit dwells in Christians, are there also evil spirits in Christians at the same time? According to the Bible, the answer is yes. Why? Before we discuss this issue, we must point out that the evil spirits here do not refer to ghosts the unclean spirits. Ghosts are those that come from outside and enter the body, and there are ways to exorcise ghosts. This is what the scripture says, "They came to the other side of the sea, into the country of the Gerasenes. When He got out of the boat, immediately a man from the tombs with an unclean spirit met Him."(Mark 5:1-2) We see that Jesus was casting out demons at that time, "For He had been saying to him, "Come out of the man, you unclean spirit!"(Mark 5:8) It is true that demons are messengers of Satan. The evil spirits here refer to the messengers of Satan who live in us, not those from outside. By the way, the Bible describes the man who was possessed by an unclean spirit as "...he had his dwelling among the tombs. And no one was able to bind him anymore, even with a chain."(Mark 5:3) Even so, "Seeing Jesus from a distance, he ran up and bowed down before Him."(Mark 5:6) If this man was completely possessed by an evil spirit, he would not have done this, so we can see that this man still had free will and could make choices! This is the person who is most severely demon-possessed as described in the New Testament. Therefore, it is clear that humans cannot be completely possessed by demons. No wonder James said, "Submit therefore to God. Resist the devil and he will flee from you."(James 4:7)

Let's first look at how sin came about. It was because Satan successfully tempted Eve, and Adam chose to disobey God. Therefore, the scripture says, "...just as through one man (Adam) sin entered into the world, and death through sin, and so death spread to all men, because all sinned."(Romans 5:12) This shows that sin comes from Satan.

Satan cannot be omnipresent like God, so when "The LORD said to Satan, "From where do you come?" Then Satan answered the LORD and said, "From roaming about on the earth and walking around on it."(Job 1:7) On the other hand, Satan is not without servants, as the scripture says, "Therefore it is not surprising if his servants also disguise themselves as servants of righteousness, ..." (2 Corinthians 11:15) Since Satan cannot dwell in everyone, the sin in everyone comes from evil spirits in the old self. After we believe in the Lord, the Holy Spirit dwells in Christians, but I have never heard that Christians can completely put to death the old self as soon as they believe in the Lord. That is to say, for a period of time, Christians will have the Holy Spirit and evil spirits coexisting with them. Therefore, the scripture says, "For the good that I want, I do not do, but I practice the very evil that I do not want. But if I am doing the very thing I do not want, I am no longer the one doing it, but sin which dwells in me."(Romans 7:19-20)

Since there is a period of time when the Holy Spirit and evil spirits exist in a Christian at the same time, and the goal for Christians is to be conformed to the sinless image of Jesus and completely put to death the old self, that is, from the presence of evil spirits to the

absence of evil spirits, let us see how this gradual and continuous process occurs. In other words, a Christian must go from being a disbeliever to believing in the Lord, and then "...from faith to faith; ..." (Romans 1:17) Let your faith grow gradually, that is, slowly put your old self to death. We will use a certain sin and its related evil spirit to illustrate the process.

For that sin, the associated evil spirit can only be in us or leave us. When this evil spirit is in us, we will commit the same sin again and again, which is what Paul said, "...for the willing is present in me, but the doing of the good is not." (Romans 7:18) But when we draw toward the Lord and suppress this sin more and more day by day, which is commonly known as the Holy Spirit gradually growing in us, the evil spirit will become more and more uncomfortable in us until it can no longer bear it and has to leave. After the evil spirit leaves, we are freed from that sin. In this way, one sin after another will be freed from the Christian, that is, the related evil spirits will leave one by one, until there are no evil spirits left and we are completely conformed to the image of Jesus.

This is what is generally said, that in us there is a new life and an old life coexisting. This old life, that is, the old self, is under the power of Satan. To put the old self to death is to let the evil spirits within us leave us, and the old self dies slowly because not all evil spirits leave at once. Here we see another example of God being consistent in what He tells us through the Bible.

The remaining question is whether it is possible to completely put to death about the old self before I die? Some people say that Christians always have a new life and the life from old self dies until our physical body dies. This statement is logically impossible! Why? If the old self is defined as the part that carries sin, and the old self cannot die completely during one's lifetime, then it is impossible for a person to be completely conformed to the sinless Jesus during his lifetime. However, the Bible clearly states that there are examples of people being conformed to the image of Jesus during their lifetime. Take Stephen for example. He was a man full of the Holy Spirit (see Acts 6:5). When the Jews stoned him to death, he said, "...Lord, do not hold this sin against them! ..." (See Acts 7:59-60) This is essentially the same thing as what Jesus said on the cross, "...Father, forgive them; for they do not know what they are doing. ..." (Luke 23:34) It can be seen that Stephan was conformed to the image of Jesus before his death. He was also the first disciple to be martyred for the Lord and the only one whom the Lord welcomed by standing at the right hand of God in heaven. (See Acts 7:55-56)

Our spirit is dead like Adam (see Genesis 2:16-17, 5:5). When we believe in the Lord, we have a new sinless spirit from God, as the scripture says, "Moreover, I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit within you; and I will remove the heart of stone from your flesh and give you a heart of flesh. I will put My Spirit within you and cause you to walk in My statutes, and you will be careful to observe My ordinances." (Ezekiel 36:26-27) Although the Bible does not explicitly say that the Holy Spirit dwells in the new spirit, this is a new spirit that has nothing to do with sin. According to what God tells us through the Bible is consistent, the Holy Spirit can only dwell in the new spirit. As for the exact location of the new spirit, no one knows because the Bible does not say.

Jesus is in heaven now. Just as He said, "Father, I desire that they also, whom You have given Me, be with Me where I am, so that they may see My glory which You have given Me, ..." (John 17:24) When He comes again, we will finally be with Him in Heaven. Clearly the scripture is saying that they were united in love before the foundation of the world, "...for God is love." (1 John 4:8) But the Father is also absolutely a righteous Father. Doesn't the Psalm make this very clear? "Righteousness and justice are the foundation of Your throne; Lovingkindness and truth go before You." (Psalm 89:14) We should not only talk about God's love but also forget not God's righteousness!