

John 17:24-18:9

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.

24 Does this mean that Jesus wants the disciples to be in heaven and see the splendor of His majesty or does it mean He wants them to follow His Holy Spirit in this world and see His glory working through their lives? I think both perspectives are true. Certainly, Jesus has gone to prepare a place for us and will come and take us to be with Him forever (John 14:2,3). That encourages us to endure through the difficulties of this life. But the context seems to emphasize the second meaning.

26 If anyone serves me, he must follow me; and where I am, there will my servant be also. If anyone serves me, the Father will honor him. John 14:26 That is the terminology Jesus just used in prayer. We follow Jesus in this life. We cannot really serve without being with Him. Many try to serve in their own strength and whims, but true service is only possible when we follow Him. And when we follow and serve, we see His glory.

“See” represents the Greek word *theōreō*, “to observe with sustained attention,” and includes the idea of entering into and experiencing something. The old nature in us fights hard to have us serve it and live for a lie rather than to follow and serve our Lord and observe Him with sustained attention while entering into His life (Galatians 5:17).

25 O righteous Father, even though the world does not know you, I know you, and these know that you have sent me.

25 This prayer is based on the righteousness of the Father. Jesus can ask these things for us because of the work He was about to do on Calvary. The world does not know the Father. If they did, they would bow before Him. To know Him is to love Him and His Son, and that is eternal life (John 17:3). The disciples were the only ones who believed Jesus was the sent One. They had become convinced that Jesus is God’s Word revealed in flesh. They knew His words were the words of life (John 6:68).

26 I made known to them your name, and I will continue to make it known, that the love with which you have loved me may be in them, and I in them."

26 Jesus revealed God to the disciples, and through their Gospels we have come to know God too. But Jesus was not finished with them or with us. The revelation continues to unfold. My belief is that it will continue to unfold throughout eternity. There will always be more wonders of God to see, and the more we see the more we love Him!

Jesus continues to reveal God to us because He wants to see the Father’s love for Himself in us. The more we see of God, the more we love Jesus. Here is how that works. We see the beauty of God’s attributes and we marvel at their perfections. Only that which is evil would not appreciate those glorious attributes. We realize those attributes were demonstrated for us in the life of Jesus, so that we can relate to God (John 14:9). We realize someone came from glory to take on a human body that we might know God.

Jesus vowed to continue to reveal God to us because He wants to live in us. The more we appreciate the attributes of God, the more we want those same attributes to be in us. What makes that possible is Jesus living in us. We desire to yield to His life.

The phrase, “I myself may be in them” will remind these Jewish disciples of the covenant promises of being in their midst (Exodus 29:45,46; Deuteronomy 7:21; 23:14). This time it is the reality rather than the shadow. He is no longer a cloud that leads by day or the

Shekinah in the tabernacle, but Emmanuel, God with us. Jesus is speaking of the new covenant (Ezekiel 36:25,27).

Jesus has entrusted the disciples to the Father. He will go from the temple, across the Kidron, to the Garden of Gethsemane. He will have His final private prayer time preparing His heart for the cross. Then comes the arrest, trial, and crucifixion. This is Jesus' prayer that fateful night. These are still our needs today to be effective in this world: sanctification and unity. Will we cooperate with the Spirit as God moves us to conform our lives to Jesus' prayer?

18:1 When Jesus had spoken these words, he went out with his disciples across the Kidron Valley, where there was a garden, which he and his disciples entered.

18:1 Jesus knew what would happen that night. He had prepared His own heart and tried to prepare the disciples with warnings, encouragement, and prayer (Luke 18:32,33)). The other Gospel writers tell us about Jesus continuing in prayer at Gethsemane (Luke 22:41). He asked Peter, James and John to keep watch with Him, but they kept falling asleep (Luke 22:45). The way that Jesus prayed shows His humanity, but also His sinless nature. He was willing to follow the Father's direction regardless of the cost (Luke 22:42). Verse 4 tells us He knew exactly what was coming and yet He did not flee. In fact, He had chosen His place of prayer as the place of His arrest. When difficulties are coming our way, we would be wise to let them meet us in our place of prayer. That is an example to follow (Matthew 6:6).

2 Now Judas, who betrayed him, also knew the place, for Jesus often met there with his disciples.

2 What a sad verse! The ones who are closest can be the ones who hurt us the most deeply. Judas knew Jesus was there because Jesus had made him a close friend and disciple. They often spent their nights in Jerusalem in the Gethsemane cave. Jesus trusted Him to be their treasurer. He washed his feet, but Judas turned his back on Jesus. He betrayed Jesus' love for thirty silver coins, a month's wages (Matthew 26:15).

I imagine the sorrow and pain in Jesus' eyes as Judas sealed his own fate with a kiss on Jesus' cheek (John 17:12). I can see the pain in Jesus' eyes when we choose to try to fill our hearts with some physical things that He created for our good instead of Him. We can so easily embrace the gift rather than the Giver. It is usually because we desire to distort a thing's intended purpose for a selfish thrill. We come to church and kiss Jesus with a song, while our heart is set on something else. That is a kind of betrayal as well. May God give us a real love for the One who loves us and has our best interests at heart (John 10:10).

3 So Judas, having procured a band of soldiers and some officers from the chief priests and the Pharisees, went there with lanterns and torches and weapons.

3 The Greek terms describe a minimum of 100 people. This shows how fearful the chief priests were of an uprising. Under the light of the full Passover moon, this band of soldiers would have exited the temple through the same eastern gate that Jesus had recently passed. With those numbers, their torches and lanterns would have been readily visible from where Jesus was praying. He could have seen them make the entire trip across the bridge over Kidron Valley and over to the Gethsemane grove. The gatekeeper would have fled. Jesus or Peter most likely went to the cave to wake the other disciples before the troops arrived.

4 Then Jesus, knowing all that would happen to him, came forward and said to them, "Whom do you seek?"

4 “Came forward” is the Greek word *exelthen* which is better translated as “went out”. He went out not from the garden but from the cave. Jesus had time to flee. He could have simply left the garden and gone to Bethany when He saw the troops coming out of the temple grounds. Instead, He went out to meet them.

The world has always tried to water down what Jesus did, because if you recognize what He really did, it will break your heart or harden it. You will surrender your life; or you will kiss Him in betrayal. The kiss of betrayal in academia today is the teaching that this nice, insightful man was misunderstood, captured, and unjustly killed. But Jesus claimed to be much more than that (John 14:6). He was not captured. He went out and met the army because He knew He was the Lamb of God who was to be sacrificed on Passover for the sins of all mankind (John 1:29). He went out and met them because He loves you and me.

5 They answered him, "Jesus of Nazareth." Jesus said to them, "I am he." Judas, who betrayed him, was standing with them.

5 In the chaos of the moment they probably missed Judas’ sign. (Luke 22:47,48). The disciples would have been up and out of the cave. They had two swords among them (Luke 22:38). There was probably some posturing, but what could you do against such an army? Jesus just asked who they want because it will force them to say “Jesus of Nazareth” which means “The salvation of God, the branch of David!” The Jews in the crowd knew all that name meant. They were seeking to take into custody the salvation of God, the promised Messiah! I wonder if a tingle went down the back of the religious leaders when they heard the temple guard answer, “The salvation of YHWH, the Branch”?

6 When Jesus said to them, "I am he," they drew back and fell to the ground.

6 Jesus had answered, “I AM” (*ego eimi*), the divine name of God (John 8:58)! The roar of the lion of the tribe of Judah fell the men like trees before a volcanic blast (Isaiah 11:4)! Well, if they did not get a tingle before, they got a 2x4 across the head now! Can you envision this army, lanterns, torches, weapons, Roman soldiers, temple guards, and royally dressed elites all falling backward like dominoes? You could have put all the armies on the planet and all the spiritual armies of demons in that olive grove and they all would have fallen on their backsides when He declared that He is the I AM (Exodus 3:14). Jesus was not just some nice guy that was captured by the bad guys that misunderstood Him. He is the eternal God, and He has all authority in heaven and on earth. He could have said, “OK, game’s over!” and all of matter, time and space would be gone (Hebrews 1:3)!

Here are these pathetic little humans clinging to little swords and torches addressing their Creator. Who is in control of this scenario? Jesus was going to die for you and me of His own free will. He just wants us all to understand that no one made Him do it (John 10:17,18). The idea that someone forced Him is laughable.

*7 So he asked them again, "Whom do you seek?" And they said, "Jesus of Nazareth."
8 Jesus answered, "I told you that I am he. So, if you seek me, let these men go."*

7,8 Why did that small army let all of Jesus’ disciples leave? Imagine finding Bin Laden in a cave and letting everyone else in the cave walk away. Was the original intent to arrest and crucify them all? Jesus commands that they leave the disciples alone, and after a demonstration of the power in His little finger, they did just as He commanded (Jeremiah 23:29). They had just picked themselves up off the grass and all they could probably think was, “Yes, sir! Just please do not say, “I AM” with the force with which you said it before.”

Satan comes before the child of God and Jesus commands, *"If you are looking for me, then let (this one) go."* Satan accuses us, points to all our failures, and Jesus stands in the gap. Our iniquities have fallen on Him (Isaiah 53:11) The Good Shepherd guards His own.

⁹ This was to fulfill the word that he had spoken: "Of those whom you gave me I have lost not one."

9 Oh what comforting phrase! The Great Shepherd loses none. And He will never lose one. Charles Spurgeon penned a sermon on this passage. I think you will enjoy the way he pictured this. (I paraphrased below a paragraph from the sermon *The Captive Savior Freeing His People*) Spurgeon imagined Jesus leading all His sheep to the gates of heaven and declaring, "Here I am and the children you have given me." The Father asks, "Is everyone safely home?" The Son answers, "Of all those you have given me, I have lost none." "But what of Peter who cursed and denied three times that he ever knew You." The Great Shepherd answers, "Yes, but I caused him to go out and weep bitterly, and then I washed him in my blood, and here he is." The Father will answer, "But what of the very least of all the saints?" Listener, you may think you are the weakest, most undeserving, most stubborn of all Jesus' sheep, but Jesus will answer, "He is here. *I have lost not one.*" Let that sink in a minute. He will not lose you to the wolves!

Questions:

What are the two possible interpretations of "be with me where I am"?

What is implied by the word "see" in verse 24?

How can the Father's love for Jesus be in us?

What OT promises would "I in them" bring to mind?

How can we cooperate with this prayer?

How do we betray Jesus in lesser ways than Judas?

Who came to arrest Jesus?

Why did they all fall backward?

Why were the disciples allowed to leave? Relate.

Recall Spurgeon's insight.