



MBS061

A MESSIANIC BIBLE STUDY FROM ARIEL MINISTRIES



# THE HIGH PRIESTLY PRAYER OF THE MESSIAH



By Dr. Arnold G. Fruchtenbaum



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### TABLE OF CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION .....	3
I. THE MESSIAH'S PRAYER CONCERNING HIMSELF: JOHN 17:1-8 .....	4
A. The First Request .....	4
B. The Reasons for the First Request .....	4
C. The Second Request .....	5
D. The Reasons for the Second Request .....	5
II. THE MESSIAH'S PRAYER CONCERNING THE ELEVEN APOSTLES: JOHN 17:9-19 .....	5
A. Their Preservation: John 17:9-14 .....	5
1. The Request .....	6
2. The Reasons for the Request .....	6
B. Their Protection: John 17:15-16 .....	6
1. The Request .....	7
2. The Reason for the Request .....	7
C. Their Sanctification: John 17:17-19 .....	7
1. The Request .....	7
2. The Areas of Sanctification .....	7
III. THE MESSIAH'S PRAYER CONCERNING ALL BELIEVERS: JOHN 17:20-26 .....	7
A. Their Unity: John 17:21-23 .....	8
1. The Request .....	8
2. The Reason for the Request .....	8
B. Their Glorification: John 17:24-26 .....	9
CONCLUSION .....	9

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Email: [Homeoffice@ariel.org](mailto:Homeoffice@ariel.org) • [www.ariel.org](http://www.ariel.org)



*These things spoke  
Jesus; and lifting up  
his eyes to heaven,  
he said, Father, the  
hour is come;  
glorify your Son,  
that the Son  
may glorify you  
John 17:1*

**T**his manuscript is a study of the High Priestly Prayer of the Messiah, recorded in John 17:1-26. This prayer of Yeshua (Jesus) teaches something about His prayer life and what He prayed about.

## INTRODUCTION

By way of introduction, it should be noted that Yeshua addressed God as Father six times throughout this prayer. The first time is in verse 1: *Father, the hour is come*. The second time is in verse 5: *And now, Father, glorify you me*. The third time is in verse 11: *Holy Father, keep them in your name*. The fourth time is in verse 21: *even as you, Father, art in me, and I in you*. The fifth time is in verse 24: *Father, I desire that they also whom you have given me be with me where I am, that they may behold my glory*. And the sixth time is in verse 25: *O righteous Father, the world knew you not, but I knew you*. Of these six times He addressed God, three times it was simply “Father” or, in some translations, once it was “O Father,” in some translations; once it was “Holy Father;” and once it was “O righteous Father.”

This is important, for when Yeshua taught believers to pray, He taught that all prayers should be addressed to God the Father. The Bible never says to address prayers to the Son nor to the Holy Spirit. All prayers are to be addressed to God the Father and in the name of Jesus the Messiah. The best example of this in action is the prayer that Yeshua Himself prayed, and He addressed this prayer to God the Father.

From the way Jesus prayed, certain principles should not be missed. First, Yeshua made a specific request. Indeed, through prayer we need to make our requests known unto God. But Jesus did not merely give a request and leave it at that. Secondly, He gave reasons for His petitions. When you pray, are you offering God reasons why you think

your prayer should be answered? If we follow the example of Yeshua, we should be doing exactly that, even though our reasons might be invalid. They were never invalid with Jesus, because He was the perfect God-Man. But we are imperfect sinners still; we are sinners saved by grace. We do not have the ability Yeshua had to see the end from the beginning. Our reasons for our requests may not be valid. When they are not valid, God will not grant them. But we should know and give reasons why we make the petitions we are making.

In this chapter of the Book of John, the prayer of Jesus can be divided into three main divisions. In the first division in verses 1-8, He prayed concerning Himself. In the second division of this prayer in verses 9-19, He prayed on behalf of the eleven apostles in particular. In the third section of His prayer in verses 10-26, He prayed for all believers throughout the Church Age.

## I. THE MESSIAH'S PRAYER CONCERNING HIMSELF:

### JOHN 17:1-8

*These things spoke Jesus; and lifting up his eyes to heaven, he said, Father, the hour is 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 should give eternal life. And this is life eternal, that they should know you the only true God, and him whom you did send, even Jesus Christ. I glorified you on the earth, having accomplished the work which you have given me to do. And now, Father, glorify you me with your own self with the glory which I had with you before the world was. I manifested your name unto the men whom you gave me out of the world: yours they were, and you gave them to me; and they have kept your word. Now they know that all things whatsoever you have given me are from you: for the words which you gave me I have given unto them; and they received them, and knew of a truth that I came forth from you, and they believed that you did send me.*

#### A. The First Request

As Yeshua began His prayer in verse 1, He spoke while “lifting up his eyes to heaven.” In dealing with the subject of prayer, the Bible speaks of various postures in prayer. One thing it never, never mentions is that prayer should be made with the eyes closed. It is not wrong to pray with the eyes closed; sometimes it is a very good idea to close them in order to set our mind upon God and avoid being distracted by something else while our eyes are open. But while the Scriptures speak of people praying standing up, kneeling down, prostrated with their faces on the ground, their heads lifted up and their eyes open, it never mentions prayer with the eyes closed. But on this occasion, Jesus lifted up His eyes to Heaven, keeping His eyes open. He raised His head toward the heavens and began speaking to God the Father. The first specific request He made was for His own glorification.

#### B. The Reasons for the First Request

Yeshua gave two reasons for this request. First, so that the Son may glorify the Father, He should be glorified. In verses 2-3, He also pointed out that

the means by which the Son glorified the Father was by providing eternal life. Indeed, in all prayer life, the purpose and goal is to glorify God. In verse 4, the second reason He gave for His request for glorification is that His work was accomplished.

### **C. The Second Request**

In verse 5, Jesus then made a second request: for the restoration of the glory that had been veiled since the Incarnation. This is the unique glory that Jews like to call the Shechinah Glory, a bright, shining glory, a glory that Jesus had for all eternity past that was then veiled by His physical body. Now, He was going to leave the earth and return to Heaven, so He prayed for the restoration of that same Shechinah Glory that was veiled since the Incarnation.

### **D. The Reasons for the Second Request**

Once again, He gave reasons for His petition in verses 6-8: He had revealed the Father. Because He had revealed the Father to the apostles, He now requested the restoration of the Shechinah Glory which He had before the incarnation

So there were two requests Yeshua made: first, to be glorified. In the overall context of this passage, He was to be glorified by means of His Resurrection. The second request was also for the restoration of His previous glory that was veiled at the Incarnation. This would be granted at the Ascension. Just as Jesus prayed concerning Himself, it is right and proper for us to make requests concerning ourselves, spelling out our petitions before the Lord and giving reasons for those petitions.

## **II. THE MESSIAH'S PRAYER CONCERNING THE ELEVEN APOSTLES: JOHN 17:9-19**

In the second division of the High Priestly Prayer, Yeshua prayed specifically for the eleven apostles who were with Him and prayed for three things: for their preservation in verses 9-14, for their protection in verses 15-16, and for their sanctification in verses 17-19.

### **A. Their Preservation: John 17:9-14**

*I pray for them: I pray not for the world, but for those whom you have given me; for they are yours: and all things that are mine are yours, and yours are mine: and I am glorified in them. And I am no more in the world, and these are in the world, and I come to you. Holy Father, keep them in your name which you have given me, that they may be one, even as we are. While I was with them, I kept them in your name which you have given me: and I guarded them, and not one of them perished, but the son of perdition; that the scripture might be fulfilled. But now I come to you; and these things I speak in the world, that they may have my joy made full in themselves. I have given them your word; and the world hates them, because they are not of the world, even as I am not of the world.*

### 1. The Request

The them of verse 9 are the apostles of whom He spoke in verses 6-8, and it is limited to these eleven only. He prayed for their preservation.

### 2. The Reasons for the Request

As before, Yeshua again gave reasons for His petition. He gave a total of five reasons why God the Father should preserve them. The first reason is given in verse 10: *and all things that are mine are yours, and yours are mine: and I am glorified in them.*

The first reason is that these eleven apostles now belong to the Father. They belonged to Jesus, and that which belongs to Yeshua automatically belongs to God the Father. God the Father should preserve them, because they belong to God the Father, and God the Son is glorified in them.

The second reason that God the Father should preserve them is given in verse 11: *And I am no more in the world, and these are in the world, and I come to you.*

The second reason is that Yeshua was now leaving this world. He will no longer be physically present to preserve them. For that reason, God the Father should take on that task. The third reason is stated in the last part of verse 11: *that they may be one, even as we are.*

The third reason Jesus gave for the prayer of preservation of these eleven apostles is that they may develop a unity, that they may have a oneness, the kind of oneness that God the Father has with the Son. Indeed, among the apostles this prayer was fulfilled. Although they had differences among themselves, they were always able to reconcile these differences and be united in fellowship.

The fourth reason for their preservation is in verse 12: *While I was with them, I kept them in your name which you have given me: and I guarded them.*

While Yeshua was present, He guarded them. By means of His guard, they were preserved. But again, He was not going to be with them much longer. He asked the Father to take over the role of preserving them.

The fifth reason is in verse 14: *I have given them your word; and the world hates them, because they are not of the world, even as I am not of the world.*

The fifth reason that God the Father should do the work of preservation is because these apostles now have the word of the Messiah; because they had the word of the Messiah, the world hates them; because the world hated them, they would need to be divinely preserved, so He asked God the Father to preserve them.

### B. Their Protection: John 17:15-16

*I pray not that you should take them from the world, but that you should keep them from the evil one. They are not of the world, even as I am not of the world.*

### 1. The Request

The second thing that Yeshua prayed for was their protection; in particular, they were to be protected from the evil one, who is Satan. Whereas His prayer for their preservation was to be preserved from the world; His prayer for their protection was to be protected from Satan.

### 2. The Reason for the Request

This is necessary because, while they were no longer “of the world,” nevertheless, they were still in the world. That is a dangerous place for any believer to be, because Satan is “the prince of this world” (Jn. 12:31). Jesus made it clear that He was not asking God the Father to take these apostles out of the world. That would happen some day, but that is not what He asked for. They needed to remain in the world, because they had a commission to fulfill in the world. However, they were no longer of the world, which meant they were no longer of this world’s system. According to verses 9-14, their preservation was required because they were no longer of this world’s system. Not only does the world hate them, but according to verses 15-16, Satan also hated them, and this required their protection. Yeshua asked God the Father to protect them from Satan, because, while they were no longer of the world, they were still in the world. Jesus again gave a reason for the petition.

### C. Their Sanctification: John 17:17-19

*Sanctify them in the truth: your word is truth. As you did send me into the world, even so sent I them into the world. And for their sakes I sanctify myself, that they themselves also may be sanctified in truth.*

#### 1. The Request

The third thing that Yeshua prayed for was their sanctification. The word sanctify means “to be set apart.” First, they were to be set apart in the truth in verse 17. Secondly, they were to be set apart for a specific mission in verse 18: *As you did send me into the world, even so sent I them into the world.* They were to be set apart for the same mission Jesus had. Just as Yeshua was sanctified, that is, set apart by God the Father for a mission to the world, even so, these eleven apostles were now to be sanctified or set apart for a mission to the world. Jesus also sanctified Himself in verse 19, meaning He set Himself apart, that they would also be set apart in truth.

#### 2. The Areas of Sanctification

In praying for their sanctification, Yeshua prayed for their sanctification in two areas: first, to be set apart in the truth; and secondly, to be set apart for the mission they were to perform in the world.

### III. THE MESSIAH’S PRAYER CONCERNING ALL BELIEVERS: JOHN 17:20-26

In the third division of the High Priestly Prayer, Yeshua prayed for all



believers. John 17:20 states: *Neither for these only do I pray, but for them also that believe on me through their word; ...*

The these only are the eleven apostles for whom He prayed in verses 9-14. He now prayed for those who would believe because of the testimony of the eleven apostles. In praying for all believers, He prayed specifically for two things: for their unity in verses 21-23, and for their glorification in verses 24-26.

### A. Their Unity: John 17:21-23

*...that they may all be one; even as you, Father, are in me, and I in you, that they also may be in us: that the world may believe that you did send me. And the glory which you have given me I have given unto them; that they may be one, even as we are one; I in them, and you in me, that they may be perfected into one; that the world may know that you did send me, and loved them, even as you loved me.*

#### 1. The Request

The first request Jesus made concerning all believers was for their unity. He made a similar request for the eleven apostles at the end of verse 11. Concerning the apostles, that prayer was answered. But concerning all believers, unfortunately, that prayer has not always been answered. In one sense, all believers are united in the Body of the Messiah. In that sense, the prayer of Yeshua has been answered, because every believer is a member of the Body of the Messiah. But this passage goes beyond mere positional unity that all believers have in the Body. This prayer was also for a unity of fellowship among all believers. Unfortunately, this has not always gone as well as it might have gone.

In this first petition, Jesus prayed for the unity of all believers. Unity is possible because all believers are indwelt by the Holy Spirit. It is because of this indwelling, that unity is possible. If we obey the Spirit that indwells us, we will show love for one another. We will have unity among ourselves, and it is this unity that will attract the unbeliever and bring him to the Lord.

#### 2. The Reason for the Request

Jesus also gave a reason for this request: by this unity among believers, the world will know that Yeshua was indeed sent by the Father “that the world may believe that you did send me.” Among the bigger stumbling blocks to people coming to recognize Jesus as their Lord, Savior, and Messiah, has been the disunity and the infighting among believers, and the undue and unfair criticism that believers have against each other. Not that all criticism is wrong. Some criticism is absolutely necessary, especially in the areas of church discipline. But a lot of criticisms are merely petty criticisms based on character, personality conflicts, personal preferences, and an unwillingness to accept a fellow-believer because of race or social status in society. Any such disunity is a reproach to the name of Yeshua the Messiah.

When believers show a unity in fellowship, people come to the Lord, because unbelievers are impressed when believers show love for one



another. But when there has been disunity, this has brought reproach upon the name of Jesus the Messiah and has turned unbelievers away from facing the issue of the Messiahship of Yeshua.

### **B. Their Glorification: John 17:24-26**

*Father, I desire that they also whom you have given me 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. O righteous Father, the world knew you not, but I knew you; and these knew that you did send me; and I made known unto them your name, and will make it known; that the love wherewith you loved me may be in them, and I in them.*

The second thing Yeshua prayed for concerning all believers is that ultimately all believers may be where He is. Jesus is now in glory in Heaven. His prayer is that we also will be with Him in glory in Heaven, and this prayer will be answered some day. When we are in glory, we will also be able to behold His glory which the Father restored to Him.

While we will all be in glory with the Messiah, there will be a difference in degree between our glory and the glory of the Messiah. The glory that believers will have will be a reflected glory; but the glory that Yeshua will have will be an innate glory that is rightfully His. An illustration of this is the relationship of the sun and the moon. Both the sun and the moon give forth light. The sun, however, has light innately within itself. The moon also has light, but it is not a light that originates from itself. The moon is merely reflecting the light of the sun. Jesus is the light, and the light we will have in glory in Heaven will be reflected glory light; we will be reflecting the glory of Yeshua (II Cor. 3:18).

Jesus prayed for our ultimate glorification, and other Scriptures make it very clear that this prayer will be answered.

### **CONCLUSION**

Seven things can be learned about prayer from this chapter. First, prayer should be addressed to God the Father; as Yeshua did six different times in this prayer. Secondly, prayer should be organized, as the prayer of Jesus was organized. Thirdly, prayer should contain petitions and requests. Fourthly, when making petitions, reasons should be given for these requests. The fifth thing is that prayer should be for ourselves, as Yeshua prayed for Himself. The sixth thing is that prayer should be for those we know personally, as Jesus knew the apostles personally. And the seventh thing is that prayer should be for those we do not know personally; such as people on the mission field that we may never meet in this life, just as Yeshua did not know personally those who would believe because of the testimony of the eleven apostles.✠

### **NOTES**

#### **IF YOU ENJOYED THIS BIBLE STUDY, DR. FRUCHTENBAUM RECOMMENDS:**

*MBS009, 016, 020, 028, 031, 032, 035, 036, 040, 043, 044, 048, 049, 056, 060, 069, 070, 075, 076, 094, 099, 127, 134, 183, 185.*

