

# John 17:5

By David Bernard

(The Oneness of God)

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In John 17:5 Jesus prayed, “O Father, glorify thou me with thine own self with the glory which I had with thee before the world was.” Again, Jesus spoke of the glory He had as God in the beginning and the glory the Son had in the plan and mind of God. It could not mean that Jesus pre-existed with glory as the Son. Jesus was praying, so He must have been speaking as a man and not as God. We know the humanity did not pre-exist the Incarnation, so Jesus was talking about the glory the Son had in the plan of God from the beginning. Other verses of Scripture relating to the preexistence of Jesus as God are covered in Chapters 4, 5, and 9.

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Of course, we know that Jesus as God pre-existed the Incarnation, since the deity of Jesus is none other than the Father Himself. We recognize that Jesus (the divine Spirit of Jesus) is indeed the Creator. These verses describe the eternal Spirit that was in the Son—the deity that was later incarnated as the Son—as the Creator. The humanity of Jesus Christ could not create, but God who came in the Son as Jesus Christ created the world. Hebrews 1:10 clearly states that Jesus as Lord was the Creator.

Perhaps these scriptural passages have a deeper meaning that can be expressed as follows: Although the Son did not exist at the time of creation except as the Word in the mind of God, God used His fore knowledge of the Son when He created the world. We know He created the world by the Word of God (Hebrews 11:3). He created the world with the knowledge of His plan for the Incarnation and the redemption of the cross in mind. Perhaps in this same foreknowledge He used the Sonship to create the world. That is, He predicated the entire creation on the future arrival of Christ. As John Miller explains, “Though He did not pick up His humanity till the fulness of time, yet He used it, and acted upon it, from all eternity.”<sup>3</sup> Thus Romans 5:14 states that Adam was the figure of Him that was to come, namely Christ; for evidently God had the Son in mind when He created Adam.

We know that God does not live in time and He is not limited by time as we are. He knows the future with certainty and He can foreordain a plan with certainty. Thus, He can act on a future event because He knows it is going to happen. He can regard things that do not exist as though they do exist (Romans 4:17). That is how the Lamb was slain before the foundation of the world (Revelation 13:8), and that is why the man Jesus could pray, “O Father, glorify thou me with thine own self with

the glory which I had with thee before the world was” (John 17:5). Although God created man so that man would love and worship Him (Isaiah 43:7; Revelation 4:11), man’s sin would have thwarted God’s purpose in the creation had not God had the plan to restore man through the Son. God foresaw the fall of man, but He nevertheless created man since He had foreordained (predestinated) the Son and the future plan of redemption (Romans 8:29-32). The plan of the Son was in God’s mind at creation and was necessary for the creation to be successful. Therefore, He created the world by the Son.

We know that the verses of Scripture that speak of creation by the Son cannot mean the Son existed substantially at creation as a person apart from the Father. The Old Testament proclaims that one individual Being created us, and He is Jehovah, the Father: “Have we not all one father? hath not one God created us?” (Malachi 2:10); “Thus saith the LORD, thy redeemer, and he that formed thee from the womb, I am the LORD that maketh all things; that stretcheth forth the heavens alone; that spreadeth abroad the earth by myself” (Isaiah 44:24).

Jesus was not crucified in a physical sense before creation, the Son was not begotten before creation, and the man Jesus did not exist to have glory before creation. (Note: Jesus spoke as a man in John 17:5, for by definition God does not pray and does not need to pray.) How can the Bible describe all these things as existing before creation? They existed in the mind of God as a predestined future plan. Apparently, the verses of Scripture that speak of God creating the world by the Son mean that God used and took advantage of His future plan of the Sonship when He created the world. Certainly the plan for the Son and for redemption existed in God’s mind before and during creation. (For more discussion of this concept, see the treatment of Genesis 1:26 in Chapter 7)

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## **The Glorification of the Son**

By David Bernard

(The Oneness View Of Jesus Christ)

In John 17 Jesus Christ prayed to the Father shortly before His arrest in the Garden of Gethsemane and subsequent crucifixion. He began His prayer by asking, “Father, the hour is come; glorify thy Son, that thy Son also may glorify thee” (John 17:1). In verse 5 He repeated His request for glorification and specified that He desired the glory that He had with the Father before the creation of the world.

This prayer raises a number of interesting questions. Is Jesus an inferior divinity who needs to receive glory from some other deity? Did Jesus exist as a glorified man before Creation? Are Jesus and the Father two distinct persons?

To understand this passage, we must recognize that Jesus prayed as a man. As we discussed in chapters 7 and 8, the prayers of Christ stem from His humanity, and any time we seek to interpret those prayers we must keep His humanity foremost in our minds.

Trinitarians say that Jesus was speaking as a second divine person here, but if that were so, Jesus would not be coequal with the Father, as they maintain, but inferior. Jesus would be a divine person

who was lacking in glory, who needed the Father to give Him glory, and who asked the Father for help. Jesus would not be omnipotent (all powerful), but lesser in glory and power than the Father. In short, Jesus would not possess some of the essential characteristics of deity. Contrary to the rest of Scripture, He would not truly be God.

If we acknowledge that Jesus is God manifested in the flesh as the Bible teaches (Colossians 2:9; I Timothy 3:16), then we must also affirm that as God He always had divine glory, never lost it, and never needed anyone else to give it to Him. What did He mean, then, when He said, "Glorify thou me . . . with the glory which I had with thee before the world was"?

### **Glory through the Crucifixion and Resurrection**

We can explore the setting and context for the answer. Jesus was praying in view of His upcoming crucifixion. He had come into the world to offer His life as a sacrifice for the sins of humanity (Matthew 20:28), and He realized that the time had come for Him to fulfill this plan. Although His humanity naturally shrank from the upcoming agony, He knew that His death on the cross was the supreme, perfect will of God for Him. As He had said earlier in John 12:27, contemplating His death, "Now My soul is troubled, and what shall I say? 'Father, save Me from this hour'? But for this purpose I came to this hour" (NKJV).

The glory to which Jesus referred in John 17:1, 5 is therefore predicated upon His submitting as a man to the plan of God through the crucifixion, resurrection, and ascension. Immediately after the statement of John 12:27 Jesus prayed, "Father, glorify thy name. Then came there a voice from heaven, saying, I have both glorified it, and will glorify it again" (John 12:28). Jesus then explained, "And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto me. This he said, signifying what death he should die" (John 12:32-33). God glorified Christ by lifting Him up before all the world on the cross.

God further glorified Christ by raising Him from the dead. "Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father" (Romans 6:4). Christ's atoning death became effective for us by His resurrection (Romans 4:25), which transformed His death into victory over sin, the devil, and death itself. At His resurrection He received a glorified human body (Philippians 3:21).

God glorified the man Jesus throughout His earthly ministry by investing Him with divine power and working through Him miraculously, but the supreme glorification occurred through the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. That was the ultimate plan for which Jesus was born and lived.

The eternal glory of God is not, therefore, the subject of discussion in John 17, but the glory the man Jesus Christ received by fulfilling God's plan for our salvation. The Glorification of the Son 113 Jesus said of His disciples in John 17:22 that they shared in the glory that God gave to Him: "And the glory which thou gavest me I have given them; that they may be one, even as we are one." God emphatically declares that He will never share His divine glory with anyone else. "My glory will I not give to another" (Isaiah 42:8). "I will not give my glory unto another" (Isaiah 48:11). Jesus could not have meant that He gave the disciples the glory of deity.

Instead, He referred to the glory that He as a man received in fulfilling God's plan of salvation for the human race, the benefits of which He imparts to those who believe in Him. The disciples had already shared in Christ's glorious, miraculous ministry. Soon they would also share in the glory of His crucifixion and resurrection by receiving the Holy Spirit (I Peter 1:11-12). They would have "Christ in

you, the hope of glory” (Colossians 1:27), an experience that would be “joy unspeakable and full of glory” (I Peter 1:8). Through the gospel, people obtain “the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ” (II Thessalonians 2:14). By “the salvation which is in Christ Jesus” we have “eternal glory” (II Timothy 2:10).

Another day of glory also awaits believers, for when He returns we will “be found unto praise and honour and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ” (I Peter 1:7). Just as God glorified the man Christ by raising Him from the dead with an immortal body, so we will be “raised in glory” (I Corinthians 15:42-43). In our resurrection, we will receive a glorified body “like unto his glorious body” (Philippians 3:21). We will be “glorified together” with Him (Romans 8:17), and we shall “appear with him in glory” (Colossians 3:4).

The end result of God’s plan of salvation is that believers will live with the glorified Christ throughout eternity. They will behold His glory, and will worship Him as the glorified One. They will say, “Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honour, and glory, and blessing” (Revelation 5:12). With this ultimate objective in mind, Christ prayed, “Father, I will that they also, whom thou hast given me, be with me where I am; that they may behold my glory, which thou hast given me: for thou lovedst me before the foundation of the world” (John 17:24).

### **Foreordained Glory**

Knowing that the human race would fall into sin, God foreordained a plan of salvation based on the birth, death, and resurrection of the Son of God. “Forasmuch as ye know that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold, from your vain conversation received by tradition from your fathers; but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot: who verily was foreordained before the foundation of the world, but was manifest in these last times for you” (I Peter 1:18-20). Jesus is “the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world” (Revelation 13:8).

Jesus Christ was not actually born before the creation of the world, nor was He actually crucified at that time. But in the plan of God the atoning sacrifice of Christ was a foreordained, certain event. God does not inhabit time as we do; the past, present, and future are all alike to Him. He “calleth those things which be not as though they were” (Romans 4:17). As discussed in chapter 4, He created the world with the Son in view, predicating all creation upon the future arrival and atonement of the Son of God.

When Jesus asked for the Father to give Him the glory He had with Him before the world began, He was not speaking of a time when He lived alongside the Father as a second divine person. Glory from such a time would be divine glory, which He could never have lost and which He could never share with His disciples.

Before the Incarnation, the Spirit of Jesus was the one eternal God, not a second person. The glory of which Jesus spoke was the glory He as a man would have in the fulfillment of God’s foreordained plan of redemption for the human race. That was what Jesus looked forward to as He prayed, and that was what He asked the Father to give Him so that He could share it with all believers.

### **The Glorification of the Name**

Jesus asked for glory so that He could in turn glorify the Father, and He also affirmed that He had already glorified the Father (John 17:1, 4). Throughout His earthly ministry He exalted God through His teachings and through the miracles He performed. But He knew that the supreme glorification of the Father would take place through His crucifixion and resurrection. His crucifixion would reveal God's love in an unparalleled way (Romans 5:8), and His resurrection would supremely demonstrate God's almighty power (Ephesians 1:19-20).

Jesus prayed, "Father, glorify thy name" (John 12:28). In the context, the subject of discussion was Christ's death. Jesus wanted God to glorify the divine name through Christ's own life and death.

God's name represents His character, power, authority, and abiding presence. (See Exodus 6:3-7; 9:16; 23:20-21; I Kings 8:29, 43.) Jesus thus requested that God's character and presence be revealed through His human life.

In John 17, Jesus stated that He had indeed revealed God's name, that is, God's character and presence, to His disciples. "I have manifested thy name unto the men which thou gavest me out of the world. . . . I kept them in thy name. . . . I have declared unto them thy name, and will declare it" (John 17:6, 12, 26). In short, Christ revealed the Father to us. To put it another way, in Christ the Father revealed Himself.

In John 17:11, Jesus prayed, "Holy Father, keep through thine own name those whom thou hast given me." Interestingly, most scholars conclude today that in the original Greek text the word translated as "those" is actually in the singular rather than the plural. If so, the meaning would be, "Holy Father, protect them by the power of your name—the name you gave me" (NIV).

This reading would correspond to other statements in Scripture that Jesus bears the Father's name. Jesus said, "I am come in my Father's name" (John 5:43). Hebrews 1:4 says of the Son, "He hath by inheritance obtained a more excellent name." Since the Son inherited His name, it must have first belonged to His Father.

The name that the Son of God received was Jesus (Matthew 1:21). It was the name He bore all His life, and the name that was broadcast throughout the country as a result of His miracles and teachings. It was the name given credit for the miracles in the early church (Acts 3:6, 16). It is the only name in which we receive salvation and remission of sins (Acts 4:12; 10:43).

When we invoke the name of Jesus in faith, all the power and authority of God becomes available to us. Moreover, when God answers prayers offered in the name of Jesus, the Father is glorified in His Son. "And whatsoever ye shall ask in my name, that will I do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son. If ye shall ask any thing in my name, I will do it" (John 14:13-14).

The Father has chosen to reveal Himself to this world by the name of Jesus, which literally means "Jehovah Savior" or "Jehovah Is Salvation." The Father glorified the man Jesus by investing His name (character, power, authority, presence) in Him, by leading Him to the cross to die for the sins of the world, and by raising Him from the dead. Far from manifesting to us a second person of the Godhead unknown to Old Testament saints, the Son manifested to us the one, indivisible God for the purpose of our salvation.