

## Connecting Minds

"These are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing you may have life in His name" (John 20:31)

### The Gospel of John

Chapter 17:1,2

**"Father, the hour has come. Glorify Your Son, that Your Son also may glorify You, as You have given Him authority over all flesh, that He should give eternal life to as many as You have given Him."**

The word "given" or something of that idea appears three times in verse 2. It is a natural way to divide up this verse to look at these three phrases separately.

First, "As You have given Him authority over all flesh..." Here we look at the authority of Christ. This authority originates from God the Father - "As You have given..." It is all encompassing - "Over *all* flesh..." It is also highly instructive that Jesus uses the word "flesh", the Greek word *Sarx*. This word is often used to describe the rebelliously corrupt part of men and women. Thus Jesus' authority is not just over all, but it is over all the corruption and wickedness that dwell within the hearts of men and women. It is an authority for the purpose that Jesus might give eternal life to those who have been given to Him.

Here is the second phrase then, "That He should give eternal life..." This is one of the key themes in the gospel of John and Jesus is constantly referring to this life that He is to give. We think of John 3:16 - "That whosoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life..." Jesus says in John 10:10, "I have come that they may have life, and that they may have it more abundantly..." The life Jesus has been given authority to give is one of happiness, unending happiness.

Henry Scrougal, a Scottish preacher in the 1600s wrote a book called *The Life of God in the Soul of Man*. The definition of a Christian is that they possess the life of God. We show the world that we possess this life by rejoicing in the life we possess, by growing to great maturity - maturity in knowledge, holiness, service, etc. As we grow there is an evident joy within us. It isn't a flippant joy or a circumstantial joy. It is a deep down, well of

fresh water springing up joy. Martyn Lloyd-Jones writes "A miserable Christian is, in a sense, a contradiction in terms."<sup>1</sup>

Next, and thirdly, we look at the phrase "To as many as You have given Him..." Jesus speaks of His Father giving Him the gift of a people. Paul tells us in Ephesians 1:3,4 that this gift of a people promised to the Son was made in eternity – "He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world..."

Here we run into the teaching of God's sovereign grace. Jesus Christ has authority over everyone - "You have given Him authority over all flesh..." Yet, who does Christ have the authority to give eternal life to? Only to those whom the Father has given, or gifted, to Him. Jesus has authority over all, but He doesn't give life to all indiscriminately, He gives life only to those that the Father has chosen. "That He should give eternal life," not to all, not to everyone, not to those who have good works... but the emphasis is upon God's choosing - "to as many as You have given Him..."

Charles Spurgeon writes "My text seems to me to present that double aspect which so many people either cannot or will not see. Here is the great atonement by which the Mediator has the whole world put under his dominion; but still here is a special object for this atonement, the ingathering, or rather outgathering of a chosen and peculiar people unto eternal life."<sup>2</sup>

Do you think that we were on Jesus' mind when He went to the cross? Certainly we were. Christians are a gift of God the Father to God the Son. But we were the second thing on His mind because the first thing was the glory of God.

## TableTalk

How many times does the idea of a people given to Christ appear in this one prayer?

<sup>1</sup> The Assurance of Our Salvation, Martyn Lloyd-Jones, pg. 124

<sup>2</sup> The Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit, vol. 10, Charles Haddon Spurgeon, pg. 285