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An Application of Discourse Analysis Methodology in the Exegesis of John 17

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Abstract

This study applies discourse analysis methodology to the study of the seventeenth chapter of John. Instead of adopting the typical three-fold division of Jesus' prayer based upon the three referents (Jesus, the immediate disciples, and future disciples), greater attention is given to Jesus' requests and final commitment, the mainline verbs. By giving more structural significance to the mainline verbs, the structural division and natural outline of Jesus' prayer become more evident.

Cover Page Footnote

Thomas W. Hudgins is currently studying in the Doctor of Education program at Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary under the direction of Dr. David Alan Black. He received the Master of Divinity from SEBTS in May 2010. Esta obra se la dedicó a mi querido padre, el Señor Rigoberto Mejía, quien me ha dado el mejor ejemplo de caminar con Jesucristo que he visto.

<center>INTRODUCTION</center>

Modern linguistics and its subsidiaries like discourse analysis continue to break ground in the field of biblical studies. There are no written words more valuable and more precious than the words of the Old and New Testaments. For that reason, wherever there is an advance in the study of language, its methodology ought to be applied to the sacred texts of the Christian faith, and it should be applied with great precision and care.

The discourse analysis to follow will: (1) attempt to provide the best structural division of the unit based on the prominence of Jesus' requests, (2) outline the unit based on the structural markers, and (3) evaluate the resulting structure in light of the John 17's typical divisions.

<center>THE REQUESTS OF JOHN 17 AS MAINLINE VERBS</center>

Not every word is equal in a sentence with regard to its force, focus, and the attention it demands. Not every verb in a discourse unit shares the same amount of weight and prominence. Silva has used the illustration of a chessboard with its pieces distributed. He suggests that the location of each chess piece on the board may not actually reflect the state of a particular match. Instead, he says, "there is a dynamic relationship among the pieces that reveals the true 'meaning' of the game."[1] Moreover, "analyzing its individual components without reference to their place in the linguistic system" is dangerous.[2] Building upon his illustration, it would not do justice to the game of chess to consider that each piece is *equally* important. The loss of one's rook or one's queen is a devastating blow in the game of chess, more so than the loss of one's pawn. The requests in prayer genre, especially in John 17, must carry, like the rook or queen, more weight, especially in determining the structure of the passage, than supportive material.

The concept of mainline/supportive material has been developed by Robert Longacre. His study of structure is directly connected to the identification of mainline verbs.[3] He writes:

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[1] Moisés Silva, *God, Language, and Scripture: Reading the Bible in the Light of General Linguistics*, *God,* Vol. 4 of Foundations of Contemporary Interpretation, ed. Moisés Silva (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House, 1990), 45.

[2] Ibid., 45.

[3] For a discussion on this distinction, see Robert E. Longacre, *The Grammar of Discourse*, 2nd edition (New York: Plenum Press, 1983), 21-22. For an application of these principles, see Longacre's *Joseph: A Story of Divine Providence: A Text Theoretical and Textlinguistic Analysis of Genesis 39 and 39-48* (Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 1989). And, for a very clear explanation of what he has done in the study of OT narrative, see David T. Toshio, *The First Book of Samuel*, NICOT (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 2007), 51-52 and David L. Allen, "The Discourse Structure of Philemon: A Study in Textlinguistics," in *Scribes and Scripture: Essays in Honor of J. Harold Greenlee*, ed. David Alan Black (Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 1992), 80, specifically concerning

[I]n regard to the distribution of tenses/aspects in various discourse types, unless we distinguish the mainline versus supportive material, we can make only statistical statements. We can, e.g., say that 'past tense predominates (or is very frequent) in narrative discourse; present or future, in procedural discourse; and imperatives, in hortatory discourse.' If we recognize, however, the distinction between the mainline and supportive material, this statement can now be made a structural statement, such as, 'past tense characterizes the mainline of narrative discourse; present or future (depending on language or subtype), the mainline of procedural discourse; and imperative, the mainline of hortatory discourse.' Further statements can then be made in regard to correlation of mainline tenses/aspects with various types of supportive materials in each genre.[4]

As Longacre points out, identifying the type or genre of a discourse unit is an important step toward identifying which material is mainline and supportive. Mainline material in narrative discourse is marked by the use of past tense or aoristic aspect. This is true even in John's account of the gospel. The prayer, however, in John 17 is a pause in the narrative and has a distinct discourse type (i.e., prayer genre). The mainline material in this section is not marked by the past tense. The prayer is actually hortatory discourse taking place within the narrative. As such, according to Longacre, one can expect the mainline elements to be marked by the use of the imperative.

The central concern of this paper is that the imperatives (i.e., requests or petitions) have a prominent function within the discourse unit. Jesus uses two ways to make requests to his Father: (1) verbs in the imperative mood and (2) the verb + ἵνα + subjunctive construction.[5] Each verb used in the imperative mood is a second person, singular aorist. There are a total of three verbs in the imperative mood and one of them is used twice.

Concerning the latter, there are two variations. Jesus uses the verb + ἵνα + aorist subjunctive in 17:15. He uses the verb + ἵνα + present subjunctive in 17:21 (3x), 17:23 (2x), and 17:24 (2x). These weaken the force behind the request and identify Jesus as the one who has the lower rank. Similar structures can be found in the NT. The construction is used with the verbs ἐρωτάω, παρακαλέω, δέομαι, and θέλω. In 1 Cor. 1:10, Paul uses the same construction with παρακαλέω. In 1 Thes.

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the "verb rank" system. While the application of his principles has primarily been applied to OT narrative texts, this paper carries some of them into the realm of the NT and prayer genre.

[4] Longacre, *The Grammar of Discourse*, 21.

[5] Concerning the second, some may hesitate at understanding these as similar to the verbs that use the imperative. There are only two options. The ἵνα clauses are either indicating purpose/result or content. With the latter, the clauses work with the main verbs to form the requests. If the former is actually how they are being used, then the prayer only reveals the *why* of Jesus' prayer from 17:18 to the end.

4:1, the construction is found with ἐρωτάω and παρακαλέω. It is found again in 2 Thes. 3:12.[6] The verb ἐρωτάω is used in this construction outside of John's account of the gospel but still within the Johannine corpus (2 Jn. 5). These constructions, in context with the imperatives that precede them, require an imperatival understanding even though the force is reduced.

<div style="text-align:center">THE STRUCTURE OF JOHN 17</div>

Concerning the structure, most scholars have accepted a three-fold division of Jn. 17: Jesus' prayer for himself (vv. 1-5), Jesus' prayer for his immediate disciples (vv. 6-19), and Jesus' prayer for his future disciples (vv. 20-26).[7] This division is based on the variation between the person(s) for whom Jesus is praying. The question is whether such a division is warranted by the text. Laurentin and Malatesta have each offered differing structural breakdowns. Laurentin's division of Jn. 17 is based off the use of the καὶ νῦν.[8] He has the following division: Introduction (vv. 1-4), Transition (vv. 5-6), Part I (vv. 7-12), Part II (vv. 13-23), Transition (v. 24), and Conclusion (vv. 25-26). This is quite different from the most commonly accepted structure of Jn. 17. Malatesta's division is based off a chiastic structure and rhythm.[9] Schnackenburg follows a structure similar to the three-fold division; however, he offers a further division within verses 20-26. Dividing that section in half (vv. 20-23, 24-26), he calls the latter Jesus' "petition for the fulfillment of his own."[10] Concerning the varying divisions, Black writes, "Each has presented several stylistic features that could not have been accidental, but none of these analyses is problem-free."[11]

Different from other structural analyses, the drive behind the present analysis will be the strength of the *requests*[12] (or, *petitions*) of Jesus.[13] Alongside

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[6] The subjunctive in this case is ἐσθίωσιν. The force of the exhortation is "eat your own bread." The construction may lend support to interpreting the participle imperatively.

[7] Nevertheless, there have been quite a few different structural divisions proposed over the years. For a complete list of the various divisions, see J. Becker, "Aufbau, Schichtung und theologiegeschichtliche Stellung des Gebets in Johannes 17," *ZNW* 60 (1969): 56-83.

[8] A. Laurentin, "We'attah— καὶ νῦν. Formule caractéristique des textes juridiques et liturgiques (a propos de Jean 17,5)," *Bib* 45 (1964): 168-432.

[9] His divisions are 1-5, 6-8, 9-19, 20-24, and 25-26. See Edward Malatesta, "The Literary Structure of John 17," *Bib* 52 (1971): 190-214.

[10] Rudolf Schnackenburg, *The Gospel According to St. John*, Vol. 3, Herder's Theological Commentary on the New Testament, ed. Serafin de Ausejo, Lucien Cerfaux, Beda Rigaux, Rudolf Schnackenburg, and Anton Vogtle (New York: The Crossroad Publishing Company, 1975), 169.

[11] David A. Black, "On the Style and Significance of John 17," *CTR 3:1* (1988): 144.

[12] *Requests* may be defined as those things in which Jesus is actually asking the Father to do.

the petitions, the prayer is made up of what may be categorized as *accounts*[14] and *statements of fact*,[15] all of which are highlighted or accented by various types of clauses. Each of these operates in relationship to the petitions. There is one deviation at the end of the prayer, which will be identified later as *commitment.*
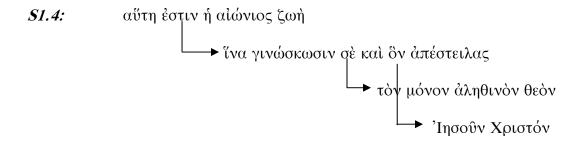
THE STRUCTURE AND REQUEST #1[16]

πάτερ

S1.1:   ἐλήλυθεν ἡ ὥρα

M1:   **δόξασόν σου τὸν υἱόν**

S1.2:   → ἵνα ὁ υἱὸς δοξάσῃ σέ

S1.3:   → καθὼς ἔδωκας αὐτῷ ἐξουσίαν πάσης σαρκός

                    → ἵνα πᾶν ὃ δέδωκας αὐτῷ δώσῃ αὐτοῖς ζωὴν αἰώνιον

δέ

S1.4:   αὕτη ἐστιν ἡ αἰώνιος ζωὴ

                → ἵνα γινώσκωσιν σὲ καὶ ὃν ἀπέστειλας

                            → τὸν μόνον ἀληθινὸν θεὸν

                                → Ἰησοῦν Χριστόν

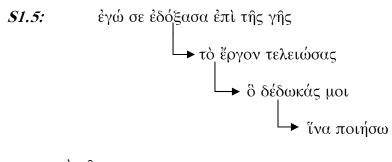[13] The only author who places greater importance on the requests is D. F. Tolmie. Although he offers a different analysis and structure, the weight that he places on the content as opposed to the participants is encouraging. See D. F. Tolmie, *Jesus' Farewell to the Disciples: John 13:1-17:26 in Narratological Perspective* (Leiden, The Netherlands: E. J. Brill, 1995), 113-115.

[14] *Accounts* may be defined as those things which Jesus, as the Good Shepherd, presents to the Father about how or what he has done during his earthly ministry.

[15] *Statements of fact* are exactly that, such statements as "This is eternal life…" or "Your Word is truth."

[16] In the following analysis, mention is made to the requests which are the mainline parts of the prayer. The supportive ideas are those which exist in relationship to the mainline elements. A structural diagram is provided for the reader prior to (with the exception of Request #4 where it follows an introduction) the discussion of the requests and final commitment. The mainline material is highlighted in bold. The reader will also notice that the supportive material is indented.

S1.5:   ἐγώ σε ἐδόξασα ἐπὶ τῆς γῆς

     → τὸ ἔργον τελειώσας

       → ὃ δέδωκάς μοι

         → ἵνα ποιήσω

  καὶ νῦν

  πάτερ

M1: **δόξασόν με σύ παρὰ σεαυτῷ τῇ δόξῃ**

       → ᾗ εἶχον πρὸ τοῦ τὸν κόσμον εἶναι παρὰ σοί

S1.6:   ἐφανέρωσά σου τὸ ὄνομα τοῖς ἀνθρώποις

      → οὓς ἔδωκάς μοι ἐκ τοῦ κόσμου

S1.7:   σοὶ ἦσαν

    κἀμοὶ

    αὐτοὺς ἔδωκας

    καὶ
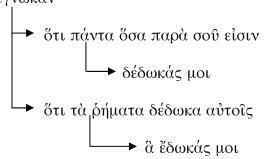
    τὸν λόγον σου τετήρηκαν

  νῦν

S1.8:   ἔγνωκαν

    → ὅτι πάντα ὅσα παρὰ σοῦ εἰσιν

      → δέδωκάς μοι

    → ὅτι τὰ ῥήματα δέδωκα αὐτοῖς

      → ἃ ἔδωκάς μοι

S1.9:   καὶ

αὐτοὶ ἔλαβον

καὶ

ἔγνωσαν ἀληθῶς
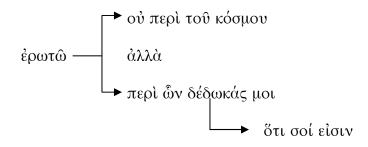
    → ὅτι παρὰ σοῦ ἐξῆλθον

καὶ

ἐπίστευσαν

    → ὅτι σύ με ἀπέστειλας

S1.10:   ἐγὼ περὶ αὐτῶν ἐρωτῶ

        → οὐ περὶ τοῦ κόσμου

ἐρωτῶ ——   ἀλλὰ

        → περὶ ὧν δέδωκάς μοι

                → ὅτι σοί εἰσιν

καὶ

τὰ ἐμὰ πάντα σά ἐστιν

καὶ

τὰ σὰ [πάντα] ἐμά [ἐστιν]

καὶ

δεδόξασμαι ἐν αὐτοῖς

καὶ

οὐκέτι εἰμὶ ἐν τῷ κόσμῳ

καὶ

αὐτοὶ ἐν τῷ κόσμῳ εἰσίν

κἀγὼ

πρὸς σὲ ἔρχομαι

The first request (M1) is found in 17:1: δόξασόν σου τὸν υἱόν. It is repeated in 17:5 forming an *inclusio*: δόξασόν με σύ παρὰ σεαυτῷ τῇ δόξῃ. This request is the most significant petition. The significance is marked by the position in the prayer (it is the first request) and its three additional mentions, two in Request #1's section and a final mention at the end of the prayer which brackets the idea of God's glory throughout the entire prayer (17:22-24).[17] Looking at this request, Morris spots the problem directly with the typical three-fold division of the prayer. He writes:

> This part of the prayer is often said to be Jesus' prayer for himself. As he prays that he may be glorified (vv. 1, 5) there is perhaps something in this. But this is not prayer 'for' himself in the way we usually understand this. Since his glorification is to be seen in the cross it is a prayer rather that the Father's will may be done in him.[18]

The prayer is *for him*. But, it is also for the Father. As Jesus mentions in the prayer, everything that he has done in his earthly life has glorified the Father. There is no reason to think that Jesus is seeking anything less than that in this request. Ultimately, Jesus' request is eternally significant, for everyone.

The first request has ten supportive ideas.[19] The first supportive idea (S1.1) deals with "the hour" that John has been presenting throughout his account of the gospel. Prior to chapter 12, the hour had not actually arrived (2:4; 7:30; 8:20). By the time of the Passover celebration, the hour had come and Jesus knew it (12:23; 13:1). The next four supportive ideas relate specifically to the Son. The final four correspond to the disciples and directly to how Jesus glorified the Father while on the earth. Each of the first four supportive elements is found within the chiasmus. The latter four exist outside of it. They elaborate on the manner in which the Son had glorified the Father while on the earth, and they serve as an introduction to the second request.

Following S1.1, the next two supportive ideas are directly connected to the request by a purpose clause (S1.2) and a comparative clause (S1.3). Jesus requested that the Father glorify him in order that (ἵνα) he might glorify the Father. The

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[17] Black, "On the Style and Significance of John 17," 145.

[18] Leon Morris, *The Gospel According to John*, rev. ed., NICNT (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1995): 635.

[19] Supportive ideas (i.e., S1.1) are those that the author has set apart from the mainline content (or, requests). Anything that is not a request or commitment is classified as a supportive idea.

second supportive idea is the comparative clause. Jesus requested that the Father glorify him in a similar fashion (καθὼς) as he had given him authority over all flesh. The glorification that Jesus requested consists of a close association between his authority over all flesh and his capacity to grant eternal life to the ones whom the Father has given him. The tendency is to interpret the second clause as a purpose clause. Some, like Kruse, have pointed to its role of identifying the reason for which the Father should grant Jesus' request.[20] This may or may not be the reason for its use. If it is, it is strange that καθὼς is used in place of ἵνα (especially since John prefers it), but it may be because of its close proximity to the previous ἵνα, marking the primary purpose.[21]

The fourth supportive idea (S1.4) is an elaboration of what constitutes eternal life: αὕτη ἐστιν ἡ αἰώνιος ζωὴ. It is the first statement of fact, the first stative reality using the verb εἰμί, and the first marked with a coordinating conjunction (δέ, which is explanatory in this instance). This eternal life consists of a Jesus-given capacity for some to know the Father and his Son. He is identified as the one sent by the Father and as ᾿Ιησοῦν Χριστόν. All of this is marked off by the epexegetical ἵνα and what follows it.

The fifth supportive idea (S1.5) marks Jesus' first account of himself given to the Father: ἐγώ σε ἐδόξασα ἐπὶ τῆς γῆς (17:4). The account gives support to Jesus' petition to be glorified. Jesus could ask (with confidence) the Father to glorify him because he could report that he had lived a life devoted to glorifying the Father. The manner in which Jesus glorified the Father consisted of accomplishing those things that the Father had assigned and given him to accomplish prior to being sent.[22]

The sixth supportive idea (S1.6) is the second account of Jesus to his Father concerning himself: ἐφανέρωσά σου τὸ ὄνομα τοῖς ἀνθρώποις (17:6). Jesus shifted the attention onto the disciples, a characteristic for the remainder of the request that is outside of the chiasmus. It introduces the disciples who become the predominant attention of the last four supportive elements. In their first mention, Jesus referred to them as the ἀνθρώποις. Every mention following this will refer to them either with the personal pronoun or as the ones given to the Son by the Father by the verb δίδωμι. The only exception to this is in 17:20 with reference to future disciples, where Jesus used the verb πιστεύω.

The seventh subordinated idea (S1.7) is directly related to the sixth. Jesus, with a combination of two statements of fact and the first account not concerning himself, identifies who the disciples are: σοὶ ἦσαν κἀμοὶ αὐτοὺς ἔδωκας καὶ τὸν λόγον σου τετήρηκαν (17:6). Understanding these three statements as the sixth subordinated idea is warranted by the two uses of καὶ, the first of several uses of

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[20] Colin G. Kruse, *John*, The Tyndale New Testament Commentaries (Grand Rapids,MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2003), 339.

[21] For a lengthier discussion, see C. K. Barrett, *The Gospel According to St. John*, 2nd ed. (Philadelphia, PA: The Westminster Press, 1978), 502.

[22] Barrett, 504.

parataxis.[23]   The ones given to Jesus belonged to the Father. They were given to Jesus. The final part, the first *account* of Jesus concerning someone other than himself, builds upon how Jesus glorified the Father on the earth. His work, which consisted of making known the Father's name, resulted in radically changing the lives of the disciples. They had kept the word of the Father signaling past action that had ongoing results as indicated by the perfect.

The eighth supportive idea (S1.8) is found in 17:7-8. Like the concluding portion of the preceding idea, this supportive idea carries on with an account by Jesus concerning the disciples. Another perfect tense verb (ἔγνωκαν) identifies that Jesus' manifestation of the Father's name to them had ongoing effects. The perfects are not used with the verb associated with Jesus. Instead, they are used with the actions of the disciples, which were responses to the works of Jesus. This subordinated idea is marked off by the νῦν (17:7).

Four verbs associated with the disciples follow. "They have known" is expanded with the use of a content ὅτι and a causal ὅτι. This first verb is concerned with what the disciples knew about the Father; the final three verbs are concerned with what the disciples knew about the Son. This section has a striking similarity to the third subordinated idea. Lexically, both share the word γινώσκω. Both concentrate on how one relates to the Father and the Son. Specific attention is given to the disciples affirming that the Son was sent by the Father.

The tenth supportive idea is not marked by an adverb or conjunction. Instead, it is marked by the shift back onto Jesus. Nevertheless, the attention is not solely on Jesus. The attention is now placed on the relationship of the disciples to Jesus. In addition, the verbs return to the first person singular. With the exception of one verb (δεδόξασμαι), the verbs experience a shift in tense, now being in the present tense. Jesus identifies who he is praying for (the disciples) and who he is not praying for (the world) in 17:9. Those in "the world" hardly take a place of prominence in the prayer over the Father, Jesus, and the disciples. But, as Morris points out, the presence of "the world" in the prayer is highly concentrated, much more so than the rest of the gospel.[24] Here, the high concentration of references serves as a means of identifying what Jesus has done specifically with those around the table as he prays in addition to what their mission is going to be and going to consist of.

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[23] Donald Guthrie calls this the "most characteristic feature of John's style." Barrett calls it the "most striking feature." He also mentions that Greek more often uses subordination. John prefers the paratactic over the normal hypotactic. See Barrett, 7; Margaret Davies, *Rhetoric and Reference in the Fourth Gospel*, JSNTSS 69, ed. Stanley E. Porter (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1992): 266-67; Donald Guthrie, *New Testament Introduction* (Downers Grove 1990), 320.
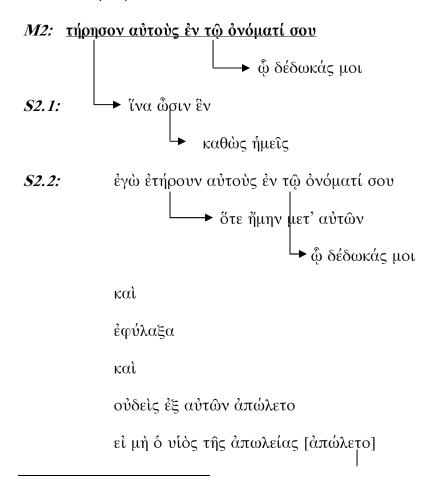
[24] Morris writes, "The noun occurs eighteen times in this prayer, which is considerably more than in any section of comparable length anywhere else in this Gospel" (639).

There is a noticeable shift in verb tense between verses six and nine. In the sixth subordinated idea, Jesus said that the disciples "were" the Father's; whereas, in verse ten he says that they "are" the Father's. This change (imperfect to present) calls for elaboration. First, this section is marked by another series of καὶ constructions, a total of six. In one sense, they were the Father's and he gave them to the Son, but, in another, nothing belongs to the Son that does not belong to the Father.
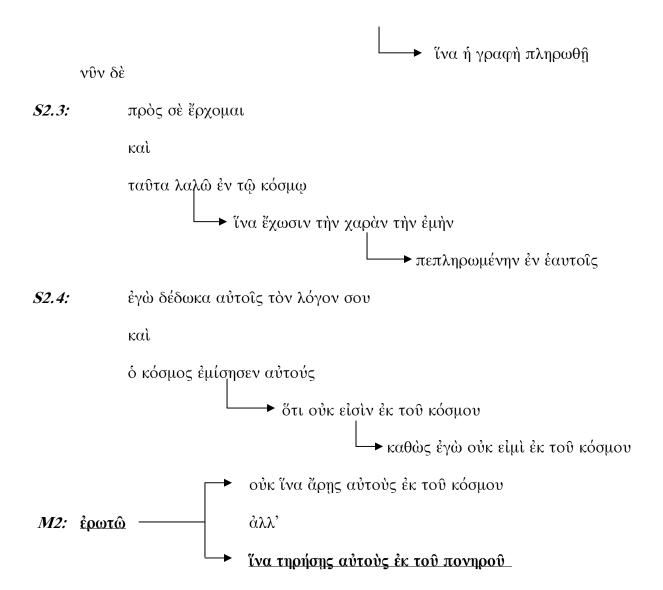
The final half of this section (S1.10; John 17:9-11a) marked off by the καὶ series leads into the next *request* of Jesus. Because the hour had finally come (17:1), from his perspective he is no longer in the world. He is leaving them to go to the Father. They, however, are still in the world.[25] It is because of this reality that Jesus makes his next request known to the Father.

THE STRUCTURE AND REQUEST #2

πάτερ ἅγιε

M2: **τήρησον αὐτοὺς ἐν τῷ ὀνόματί σου**

ᾧ δέδωκάς μοι

S2.1: ἵνα ὦσιν ἓν

καθὼς ἡμεῖς

S2.2: ἐγὼ ἐτήρουν αὐτοὺς ἐν τῷ ὀνόματί σου

ὅτε ἤμην μετ' αὐτῶν

ᾧ δέδωκάς μοι

καὶ

ἐφύλαξα

καὶ

οὐδεὶς ἐξ αὐτῶν ἀπώλετο

εἰ μὴ ὁ υἱὸς τῆς ἀπωλείας [ἀπώλετο]

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[25] See Morris, 643. He points out that Jesus places emphasis here with the use of the personal pronoun.

⟶ ἵνα ἡ γραφὴ πληρωθῇ

νῦν δὲ

S2.3:   πρὸς σὲ ἔρχομαι

καὶ

ταῦτα λαλῶ ἐν τῷ κόσμῳ

⟶ ἵνα ἔχωσιν τὴν χαρὰν τὴν ἐμὴν

⟶ πεπληρωμένην ἐν ἑαυτοῖς

S2.4:   ἐγὼ δέδωκα αὐτοῖς τὸν λόγον σου

καὶ

ὁ κόσμος ἐμίσησεν αὐτούς

⟶ ὅτι οὐκ εἰσὶν ἐκ τοῦ κόσμου

⟶ καθὼς ἐγὼ οὐκ εἰμὶ ἐκ τοῦ κόσμου

⟶ οὐκ ἵνα ἄρῃς αὐτοὺς ἐκ τοῦ κόσμου

M2: <u>ἐρωτῶ</u> ⟶ ἀλλ᾽

⟶ <u>**ἵνα τηρήσῃς αὐτοὺς ἐκ τοῦ πονηροῦ**</u>

S2.5:   ἐκ τοῦ κόσμου οὐκ εἰσὶν

⟶ καθὼς ἐγὼ οὐκ εἰμὶ ἐκ τοῦ κόσμου

The second request (M2) is found in 17:11: πάτερ ἅγιε, τήρησον αὐτοὺς ἐν τῷ ὀνόματί σου. Like the first request, this request is marked off by the vocative address. Unlike the first request, the vocative is modified with the adjective, something that only occurs twice in the prayer. It is possible that this vocative marks the two imperatives in the prayer following the first request. Following the two imperatives, τήρησον (17:11) and ἁγίασον (17:17), Jesus actually shifts in the

manner in which he makes requests to the Father. Following 17:17, all requests will follow the verb + ἵνα + subjunctive construction.[26] The two verbs used in this construction are ἐρωτῶ or θέλω. Requests #1 (17:1, 5), #2 (17:11), and #3 (17:17) use verbs in the imperative mood. The one exception prior to the requests following 17:17 is the structure of 17:15 (οὐκ ἐρωτῶ ἵνα ἄρῃς αὐτοὺς ἐκ τοῦ κόσμου, ἀλλ᾽ ἵνα τηρήσῃς αὐτοὺς ἐκ τοῦ πονηροῦ) which follows the construction of those after verse 17. The only explanation is the contrastive nature (οὐκ ἐρωτῶ ἵνα...ἀλλ᾽ ἵνα) of the prayer and its close association to Request #2 in proximity and content. 17:15 is best understood as actually part of the supportive material for Request #2 especially given its use of τηρέω. τήρησον (17:11) and ἐρωτῶ ἵνα τηρήσῃς (17:15) are semantically the same. Thus Request #2, like the first request, also has an *inclusio*. Before Jesus prays for his disciples, he distinguishes between for whom he *is* and *is not* praying (supportive material). After the request is made Jesus expands on what "keeping" them actually entails (supportive material).

The second request (τήρησον) in 17:11 is mentioned at the end of its section, ἐρωτῶ ἵνα τηρήσῃς (17:15). While the prepositional phrases serving as objects of the verb are different, they reflect that keeping the disciples in the name of the Father is parallel to keeping them from evil. This request, as Ridderbos points out, "has in view the threatening character of the world surrounding them."[27] It has five supportive ideas. The first three concentrate on Jesus while the latter two have their attention on the disciples. Like Jesus' first request, Request #2 (M2) follows with a purpose clause[28] coupled with a comparative clause comprising the first supportive idea (S2.1): ἵνα ὦσιν ἓν καθὼς ἡμεῖς (17:11). Jesus requested that the Father keep his disciples in the Father's name in order that they might be one; and, he compared the oneness that he desired with the disciples to the oneness that he shares with the Father.[29] Ridderbos adds:

> This last phrase introduces a motif that helps to shape the entire prayer and, while not coming to its full development until vss. 20ff., serves here to define the unity of the disciples as their being taken together into the fellowship of the Father and the Son. In that fellowship they are safe from that which threatens them in the world.[30]

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[26] Daniel Wallace notes that the use of ἵνα is present because Jesus is requesting an action to be performed. He writes, "The direct object ὅτι clause also answers *What?* but it fills in a statement, not a command." Daniel B. Wallace, *Greek Grammar Beyond the Basics* (Grand Rapids 1996), 475.

[27] Herman N. Ridderbos, *The Gospel of John: A Theological Commentary* (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company), 553.

[28] Morris, 644.

[29] See the parallel idea in Jn. 10:25-30.

[30] Ridderbos, 553.

Instead of asking the Father to take some preventive measure, a work that would not involve the disciples firsthand, in safeguarding his disciples, Jesus' request is one that involves the Father doing something in the lives of those who belong to him. This unity, here, has ramifications on the deliverance of the disciples from evil. Later in the prayer, it is going to have salvific ramifications for the lives of others as the gospel goes forth. Moloney points out that "all Jesus is and does flows from his oneness with the Father (cf. 10:30, 38)."[31] In the same way, all that the disciples are and will do (i.e., abiding in Christ) will flow from their unity with one another and the godhead.

Also like the first request, Jesus' second request elaborates on how Jesus has done the exact same thing that he is now requesting the Father to do. The second supportive idea (S2.2) is found in 17:12: ὅτε ἤμην μετ' αὐτῶν ἐγὼ ἐτήρουν αὐτοὺς ἐν τῷ ὀνόματί σου ᾧ δέδωκάς μοι, καὶ ἐφύλαξα, καὶ οὐδεὶς ἐξ αὐτῶν ἀπώλετο εἰ μὴ ὁ υἱὸς τῆς ἀπωλείας, ἵνα ἡ γραφὴ πληρωθῇ. This section is again marked by a καὶ series which joins together two verbs (ἐτήρουν and ἐφύλαξα) related to Jesus and one passive verb (ἀπώλετο) which is associated with the "son of lostness." All of this functions to demonstrate that Jesus had in fact "kept" and "protected" the ones that were given to him.

The two verbs associated with Jesus are related semantically. The best reference to understanding what Jesus had in mind when he mentions this is Jn. 10:28-29. There, Jesus mentions that of the ones who receive eternal life from him, they would never perish (οὐ μὴ ἀπόλωνται). The verb ἁρπάζω signifies that either a being that desires to remove the recipients from God exists or that, even if such a being did not exist, removing a believer from his or her relationship with God would be an absolute impossibility. The two verbs, therefore, are best understood in this light. The most interesting part is Jesus' use of the imperfect with the first verb. It is one of only three uses of the imperfect in the entire prayer. Much like Mt. 1:25 concerning Joseph's character, the imperfect, here, demonstrates that Jesus was devoted to protecting the ones who had been given to him. In fact, only one was lost in order that (ἵνα) the Scriptures might be fulfilled. The point is that Jesus had not lost any.

The third supportive idea (S2.3) is found in 17:13: πρὸς σὲ ἔρχομαι καὶ ταῦτα λαλῶ ἐν τῷ κόσμῳ ἵνα ἔχωσιν τὴν χαρὰν τὴν ἐμὴν πεπληρωμένην ἐν ἑαυτοῖς. It is marked off by the use of the temporal adverb (νῦν) and the conjunction δέ. The conjunction marks a great shift that is taking place in the life of Jesus and the disciples. Within the Farewell Discourse, Jesus had broken the news in the clearest way up to that point that he was about to be separated physically from the disciples. This conjunction demonstrates the contrast. Jesus had been keeping (imperfect tense) them in the name of the Father throughout his earthly ministry, "but now"

[31] Francis J. Moloney, *The Gospel of John*, Sacra Pagina, ed. Daniel J. Harrington (Collegeville, MN: The Liturgical Press, 2005), 467.

he is coming to the Father.[32] It is for this reason that Jesus requests the Father to keep his disciples in the Father's name. He is leaving them in one sense.

The second verb (λαλῶ) conjoined with ἔρχομαι, which is also in the present tense, is expanded with a purpose clause. As one expects, the disciples were worried, surprised, and afraid of a life that consisted of not seeing the one that they had come to value more than anything or anyone else in this world. In fact, three of them bore witness to his glory (Mt. 17; Mk. 9; Lk. 9). Jesus, like the great shepherd that he is, knew this and tried to comfort them throughout the Farewell Discourse. Jesus then prayed, committing them to the only one other than himself who had the capacity to keep them in the Father's name. He explained his own reasons for doing so to the Father, namely so that the disciples would have his joy overflowing in abundance among each other.

The fourth supportive idea (S2.4) is found in 17:14, which consists of two accounts (one concerning himself and one concerning the world). First, Jesus gave an account concerning himself to the Father, namely that he had given (δέδωκα) the Father's message to the disciples. This account is joined together (καὶ) with another account. It is actually Jesus' first account that deals neither with himself nor with the disciples. Instead, it is the first account concerning the world. One of the ongoing effects of Jesus' act of giving the disciples the Father's message was that the world hated them for it. From here, Jesus offers a cause for their hate marked by the ὅτι and a comparison for the disciples marked by the καθὼς. The world hated the disciples because they were not of the world. Jesus told his Father that in this manner the disciples were exactly like him as he is not of the world.

Prior to moving to the third request, Jesus, like the first request, repeats his petition to the Father (M2). This time, Jesus identifies from what or from whom he is asking the Father to keep the disciples. Even though he is about to be removed from the earth, he does not ask that the disciples be removed with him, a theme which he solemnly addresses with the disciples throughout the Farewell Discourse. Instead, he asks the Father to keep them from evil. The fifth supportive idea (S2.5) builds upon why Jesus makes this request to the Father.

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[32] Pragmatically, the idea of coming and going are related. They both involve movement. The difference between the two is determined by the relationship between speaker/writer and hearer/audience. Jesus is the deictic center between the Father and the disciples. For example, in Jn. 13:33, the term is best translated "going" because his destination was going to increase the distance between the two. In Jn. 16:5 and 17:13, it is best understood as "coming" because his destination was going to decrease the distance between the two. In fact, the preposition that follows the verb in 17:13 implies that Jesus was returning to a much valued relationship with the Father. He does not use a destination to name where he is going. Instead, where Jesus is going is defined by *who* is there not *what* is there or *where* there is.

THE STRUCTURE AND REQUEST #3

M3: <u>ἀγίασον αὐτοὺς ἐν τῇ ἀληθείᾳ</u>

S3.1: ὁ λόγος ὁ σὸς ἀλήθειά ἐστιν

S3.2: κἀγὼ

ἀπέστειλα αὐτοὺς εἰς τὸν κόσμον

⟶ καθὼς ἐμὲ ἀπέστειλας εἰς τὸν κόσμον

καὶ

ὑπὲρ αὐτῶν ἐγὼ ἁγιάζω ἐμαυτόν

⟶ ἵνα ὦσιν καὶ αὐτοὶ ἡγιασμένοι ἐν ἀληθείᾳ

The third request (M3) is found in 17:17: ἀγίασον αὐτοὺς ἐν τῇ ἀληθείᾳ. This request is by far the shortest. It has only two supportive ideas. Despite being short, it has a very lexically unique content for the Gospel of John, thus making it very important. Barrett clearly demonstrates that sanctification is directly related to a future mission or role. In 10:36, Jesus refers to himself as the one whom the "Father sanctified *and* sent into the world" (emphasis added). This idea of sanctification followed by a specific work, role, or mission is seen throughout the Old Testament. Barrett mentions Jeremiah as well as Aaron and his sons.[33] The verb ἁγιάζω has the idea of regarding something as holy or making something holy. As will be seen in the second supportive idea, this idea of holiness, like what Barrett mentions, never exists apart from a divine purpose. The first supportive idea is a statement of fact exactly like 17:3 while the second is an explanation of why and by what means the disciples of Jesus are to be sanctified.

The first supportive idea (S3.1) is found in the latter part of 17:17: ὁ λόγος ὁ σὸς ἀλήθειά ἐστιν. Here truth is defined like eternal life in 17:3. This particular attributive position is unique to the prayer and occurs only twice. It emphasizes both the subject and its adjectival pronoun. The second subordinated idea (S3.2) is found in 17:18-19. This is yet another account of Jesus to his Father concerning the

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[33] Barrett, 510. See also Gail R. O'Day and Susan E. Hylen, *John*, Westminster Bible Companion (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 2006), 164.

disciples. It is made up of an act of Jesus (past), a comparative clause marked by καθὼς, an act of Jesus (present), and a purpose clause marked by ἵνα (future).

Jesus reported to his Father that he had sent the disciples (ἀπέστειλα). The use of the aorist for both Jesus and the disciples warrants further examination. There are a few options such as referring back to a time when Jesus sent them out (mentioned in the synoptics) or using it proleptically.[34] The fact that the previous proclamations mentioned by the other gospel accounts are not mentioned in John lends to the latter understanding. Lexically, this idea shares similarities and cohesion with the first and second requests and their respective sections. The primary difference is that the attention is no longer on Jesus as the one who was sent; instead, the disciples are the ones marked out as being sent by Jesus. This is a huge shift in the prayer. The reference to Jesus comes only through the comparative clause. He sent the disciples out in the exact same way that the Father had sent him.[35]

Once one connects the dots that this section shares with the first request, the implications of this are obvious. With the first request, Jesus defined eternal life as knowing the one true God and the one whom he sent. The report that immediately follows is that Jesus has glorified the Father on the earth: τὸ ἔργον τελειώσας ὃ δέδωκάς μοι (17:4). The direct implication is that the disciples are sent out with God-appointed works to accomplish. These works center on making known the Father and the Son, and eternal life, which is the same purpose that Jesus was sent out to accomplish. The disciples were sent out with the ultimate goal of glorifying God, just as Jesus was sent.

The second statement by Jesus is in the present tense. Emphatically, with the only reflexive pronoun in the prayer (ἐμαυτόν), Jesus expressed that he was sanctifying himself for the disciples. The notion of substitution is hard to overlook here. Jesus expressed the purpose for which he sanctifies himself, namely in order that the disciples might be sanctified in truth. The absence of the article with ἀληθείᾳ points the hearer/reader back to the initial request (ἁγίασον). Another *inclusio* is formed, and once again, Jesus does not request that his Father do anything that he himself has not done or, as in this case, is in process of doing.

THE STRUCTURE AND REQUEST #4

As mentioned before, Jesus changes the manner in which he makes requests to the Father. From this point on, Jesus will follow the verb (either ἐρωτῶ or θέλω) + ἵνα + subjunctive construction. Also, the prayer at this point becomes much more complex. Up to this point, the prayer has had a characteristic of brevity. Now, the

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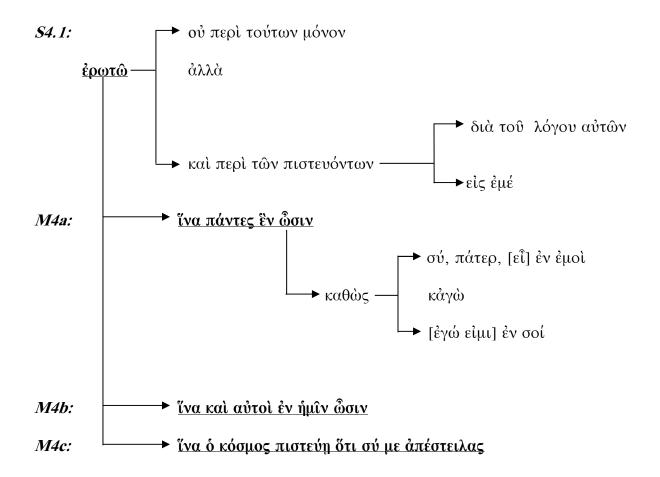[34] See Morris, 647.

[35] Morris writes: "The mission of Christ forms the pattern for the mission of the apostles. Earlier we have read that the Father sanctified him and sent him into the world (10:36). He has just prayed that the Father would sanctify the apostles and now he sends them into the world" (647).

prayer takes on a new dynamic. While Jesus actually asks his Father for five things within this section, there is only one verb signaling ellipses. Five ἵνα + subjunctive constructions will share one verb (ἐρωτῶ). Together, these will constitute Requests #4.1-4.5.[36] The content of each of the requests are so interrelated that they are impossible to study apart from one another.

The section is marked off by the use of δέ, the third of four uses. The first use marked the definition of eternal life (17:3). The second contrasted Jesus' coming to the Father with his work of keeping the disciples in the Father's name while on the earth. Naturally, with the shift in the construction of the requests and with the complexity, one can expect to see this use here.

The fourth request is found in 17:20-23. In order to present the request in the clearest fashion, the following diagram is provided:

S4.1:   οὐ περὶ τούτων μόνον

ἐρωτῶ   ἀλλὰ

                                        διὰ τοῦ λόγου αὐτῶν

          καὶ περὶ τῶν πιστευόντων

                                        εἰς ἐμέ

M4a: ἵνα πάντες ἓν ὦσιν

                                        σύ, πάτερ, [εἶ] ἐν ἐμοὶ

                    καθὼς   κἀγὼ

                                        [ἐγώ εἰμι] ἐν σοί

M4b: ἵνα καὶ αὐτοὶ ἐν ἡμῖν ὦσιν

M4c: ἵνα ὁ κόσμος πιστεύῃ ὅτι σύ με ἀπέστειλας

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[36] Under the heading Request #4, there are actually five requests made. In order to recognize the complexity of the prayer at this point and that all the requests share a common verb, it is best to refer to all of them as Request #4.

S4.2:   κἀγὼ

          τὴν δόξαν δέδωκα αὐτοῖς

               → ἣν δέδωκάς μοι

                    → ἵνα ὦσιν ἓν

                         → καθὼς ἡμεῖς ἕν

S4.3:   ἐγὼ [εἰμι] ἐν αὐτοῖς

          καὶ

          σὺ [εἶ] ἐν ἐμοί

M4d: ⎯⎯⎯→   **ἵνα ὦσιν τετελειωμένοι εἰς ἕν**

M4e: ⎯⎯⎯→   **ἵνα γιγώσκῃ ὁ κόσμος**

                              → σύ με ἀπέστειλας

               → ὅτι ⎯

                              → ἠγάπησας αὐτοὺς

                                   → καθὼς ἐμὲ ἠγάπησας

There are five requests and three supportive ideas.

Before identifying the first request, it is necessary to look at the first supportive idea (S4.1). Following the same construction as verse 9, Jesus identifies for whom he praying.[37] The qualification with the fifth request is somewhat different. In verse 9, Jesus is excluding a group from those for whom he is praying. Here, in verse 20, Jesus is including a group for whom he is praying. The group for whom Jesus was praying is still in view here. Jesus has only indicated that the

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[37] The most common division of Jn. 17 places much weight upon these words. Most see a transition in the referent for which Jesus is praying. The problem with seeing a referent shift here that affects the structure is the remainder of the prayer cannot be applied restrictively to future disciples. The flow of the text supports understanding the words to follow as including the previous group and extending to include a future group. In no way is Jesus restrictively praying for future disciples. Such a division title does not do justice to the text. This will be discussed in the next section.

extent of his prayers is to include even more (οὐ μόνον). Jesus anticipated this new group. After all, he had sent the disciples out in the same manner that he was sent. There is an expectation of reduplication. Jesus expanded on what will characterize the ones who belong to this new group using two prepositional phrases (διὰ τοῦ λόγου αὐτῶν and εἰς ἐμέ). Just as Jesus told the Father that he had given the Father's word to the disciples (17:8 and 14), he had the same expectation of the disciples. It would be their word only in the sense that they would be the means of communicating it to others. The content of the message would lead those who hear it to believe in Jesus Christ.

Requests 4a-4c are found in John 17:20-21: ἐρωτῶ…(M4a) ἵνα πάντες ἓν ὦσιν, καθὼς σύ, πάτερ, ἐν ἐμοὶ κἀγὼ ἐν σοί,(M4b) ἵνα καὶ αὐτοὶ ἐν ἡμῖν ὦσιν, (M4c) ἵνα ὁ κόσμος πιστεύῃ ὅτι σύ με ἀπέστειλας. The first two requests pertain to the disciples' relationship toward each other (ἓν) and to their relationship to God (ἐν ἡμῖν). Again Jesus used a comparative clause (καθὼς) in order to clarify the nature of his request. The clause contains ellipsis but the idea is clear. In the same way that the Father is related to the Son and the Son to the Father, the disciples ought to so be related to one another. Moloney calls this "a oneness that makes God known."[38] Unity that is both horizontal (between disciples; see 13:35) and vertical (between disciples and God; see 17:11) is essential to making God known, the Johannine synonym for salvation (i.e., eternal life).

The third request (M4c) concerns a third group–the world. In 17:9, Jesus specified that he was not praying for ones of the world (οὐ περὶ τοῦ κόσμου ἐρωτῶ). The things Jesus prayed concerning the disciples could not be said about the ones of the world. They had not kept the word; they had not come to know that all things are from the Father; they had not been given the words that had been given to Jesus; they had not kept them; they had not truly known from whom Jesus came, nor had they believed that he was sent by the Father. The only thing that spoke truly of the ones who remained in the world is found in 17:14: ὁ κόσμος ἐμίσησεν αὐτούς. They hated the disciples because they were positionally in Christ and no longer identified with them. But, Jesus' prayer is for them to believe. It is from this group that the περὶ τῶν πιστευόντων will spring up. Just as in Requests #1, #2, and #3, Jesus drew attention to the importance of believing that he was sent by the Father.

The second supportive idea (S4.2) is found in between Requests 4c and 4d: (S4.2) κἀγὼ τὴν δόξαν ἣν δέδωκάς μοι δέδωκα αὐτοῖς, ἵνα ὦσιν ἓν καθὼς ἡμεῖς ἕν. This is the most peculiar of the supportive ideas. It is comprised of an act of Jesus (past) followed by a purpose clause (future), which is then expanded by a comparative clause. Jesus reported that he had given the glory to his disciples. The glory that he gave was the glory that had been given to him. In some way, Jesus
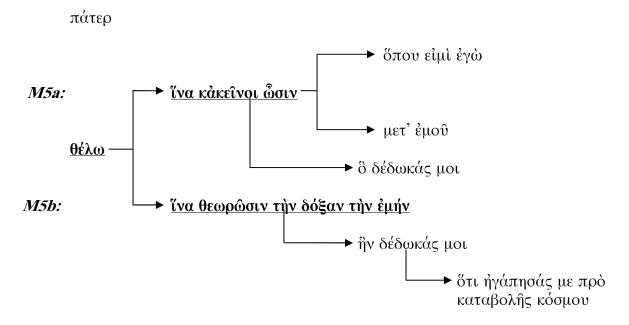
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[38] Moloney, 473.

associates the disciples' capacity to be one directly with the act of giving his glory to them. The question is, "In what way has Jesus given his glory to the disciples"? John's prologue reads, "And the Word became flesh, and dwelt among us, and we saw his glory, glory as of the only begotten from the Father, full of grace and truth" (1:14). There are a couple options here. First, John saw the glory of God at the transfiguration (Mt. 17; Mk. 9; Lk. 9) to which this may be a reference. This is certainly the event which Peter had in mind when he mentioned the glory of God in his second epistle (2 Pet. 1:16-18). Second, John could be referring to the glory of Christ in a different manifestation. This may explain the "full of grace and truth". With reference to what Jesus prayed, being witness to his glory is quite different from being the recipients of his glory. This is by far the most puzzling section of Jesus' prayer.

This supportive idea is parallel to Request 4a. This is a request, whereas this supportive material is a statement of fact. In the other sections, Jesus has followed a similar pattern. He requests something from the Father. Then he describes how he has either done it while he was on the earth or how he is still in the process of doing it. The final part of this supportive idea is an expansion of the idea of oneness. Picking up on Requests 4a and 4b, Jesus expanded the concept of ἐν ἡμῖν (17:21). The comparative clause that modified Request 4a went as follows: σύ, πάτερ, ἐν ἐμοὶ κἀγὼ ἐν σοί (17:21). So, the final part of the supportive idea builds upon this reading, ἐγὼ ἐν αὐτοῖς καὶ σὺ ἐν ἐμοί (17:23). The point of contact between the two is Jesus Christ.

Requests 4d and 4e are found in 17:23: (M4d) [ἐρωτῶ] ἵνα ὦσιν τετελειωμένοι εἰς ἕν, (M4e) [ἐρωτῶ] ἵνα γινώσκῃ ὁ κόσμος ὅτι σύ με ἀπέστειλας καὶ ἠγάπησας αὐτοὺς καθὼς ἐμὲ ἠγάπησας. Both requests are similar to Requests 4a and 4c. Request 4d, which parallels 4a, elaborates a little further on the concept of oneness. Jesus prayed that the disciples might be the ones perfected into one. Until now he used the first participle that is not associated with a prepositional phrase to describe the disciples. The participle is in the passive tense, which identifies that the perfecting process is outside of the capacity that the disciples have in and of themselves. The perfecting work necessitates the work of God.

Request 4.5 parallels 4.3 in content. However, Jesus elaborated upon what he was asking. Following the request, Jesus adds a content clause (ὅτι) with two elements, one of which is extended by a comparative clause (καθὼς). In the latter, Jesus asked that the world would believe that the Father sent him. In Request 4.5, Jesus asks that the world would know the same thing, using γινώσκω instead of πιστεύω. This request extends the idea of what Jesus asks from the Father. He asks that the world might know also that the Father loved them. The measure for what Jesus asks for the disciples and the ones who will believe through their word is the demonstration of the same act that the Father has done for the Son. It is impossible to read these words and not remember the word Jesus told Nicodemus: "For God so loved (ἠγάπησεν) the world (τὸν κόσμον)…" Its strength is seen in its direct proximity to the next request—ultimately that they might be with him forever (i.e., eternal life).

THE STRUCTURE AND REQUEST #5

πάτερ

M5a: <u>ἵνα κἀκεῖνοι ὦσιν</u> → ὅπου εἰμὶ ἐγὼ

→ μετ᾽ ἐμοῦ

<u>θέλω</u> → ὃ δέδωκάς μοι

M5b: <u>ἵνα θεωρῶσιν τὴν δόξαν τὴν ἐμήν</u>

→ ἣν δέδωκάς μοι

→ ὅτι ἠγάπησάς με πρὸ καταβολῆς κόσμου

Since 17:19, Jesus changed the manner in which he made requests to the Father. Request #5, like the one before it, follows the verb + ἵνα + subjunctive construction. Instead of ἐρωτῶ, Jesus uses θέλω, which draws more attention to the desire of Jesus.[39] In this way, the prayer moves toward a climax. Once more, Jesus addresses God with the vocative πάτερ. Like the previous request, there is only one verb that two ἵνα + subjunctive constructions share. Requests 5a and 5b are found in 17:24: (M5a) θέλω ἵνα ὅπου εἰμὶ ἐγὼ κἀκεῖνοι ὦσιν μετ᾽ ἐμοῦ, (M5b) [θέλω] ἵνα θεωρῶσιν τὴν δόξαν τὴν ἐμήν, ἣν δέδωκάς μοι ὅτι ἠγάπησάς με πρὸ καταβολῆς κόσμου. Request 5a is made up of the request and two prepositional phrases. He uses the distant demonstrative (ἐκεῖνος) as he prays for them, which is the first and only instance in the prayer. As the prayer ends and as the hour draws closer and closer, it is as if he moves further and further away.[40] He also prayed that the disciples would be *where* Jesus was going and *with* him.[41] Request 5.2 is composed

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[39] See Moloney, 475; O'Day and Hylen, 165.

[40] It is possible that Jesus could use this word because the prayer actually takes place at a distance from the disciples. Within the narrative, no movement takes place between 13:31-17:26. When 18:1 picks up, Jesus, "with His disciples," departed to the garden. It is best to understand the demonstrative as Jesus anticipating his separation from the disciples.

[41] Observe the similarity here with the third subordinated idea under Request #2. Jesus defined where he desired his disciples to be not by where that location was but, rather, by who would also be there, namely Jesus himself. The same can be seen in John 14. In addition, one could make a similar connection to John 4; worship is not defined by the place but rather the quality of the person who is worshipped, who is doing the worship, and in what manner he or she is doing it.

of the request and subordinate clause. Jesus prayed that the disciples might experience (or, partake of) his glory.[42] Jesus identified this glory as the glory that the Father gave to him because the Father loved him since before the foundation of the world.
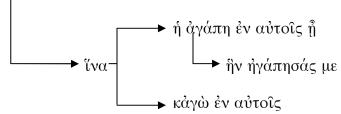
THE STRUCTURE AND JESUS' FINAL COMMITMENT

πάτερ δίκαιε

S6:   καὶ

ὁ κόσμος σε οὐκ ἔγνω

δέ

ἐγὼ σε ἔγνων

καὶ

οὗτοι ἔγνωσαν

→ ὅτι σύ με ἀπέστειλας

καὶ

ἐγνώρισα αὐτοῖς τὸ ὄνομά σου

καὶ

M6: **γνωρίσω [αὐτοῖς τὸ ὄνομά σου]**

ἵνα ⎡ → ἡ ἀγάπη ἐν αὐτοῖς ᾖ
      | → ἣν ἠγάπησάς με
      ⎣ → κἀγὼ ἐν αὐτοῖς

The final section of Jesus' prayer is the most distinct. Jesus uses the vocative address (πάτερ) for the last time to introduce this section (17:25). It is only the

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[42] For only the second time, the third attributive position is used to draw attention to both elements—the glory and Jesus himself. While they might experience it, it is never theirs but always his.

second use in the entire prayer that is modified with an adjective. This time Jesus draws attention to the righteousness of God (δίκαιε). The previous modified address focused on God's holiness in anticipation of Request #3. The structure of this section is similar to Request #2 in that the supportive idea precedes the mainline verb.

The supportive idea (S6) is found in 17:25-26: καὶ ὁ κόσμος σε οὐκ ἔγνω, ἐγὼ δέ σε ἔγνων, καὶ οὗτοι ἔγνωσαν ὅτι σύ με ἀπέστειλας• καὶ ἐγνώρισα αὐτοῖς τὸ ὄνομά σου. It is marked by the final paratactic construction. The greatest concentration of *parataxis* prior to here is located with Request #1 beginning with the seventh supportive idea (S1.7, S1.9, and S1.10). Jesus gave an account concerning each referent (the world, Jesus and the Father, and the disciples) that had been mentioned in the entire prayer, a fitting summary. Each of the first three accounts is marked by the verb γινώσκω, which also connects back to Request #1 and #4. Both requests also draw attention to Jesus being sent by God as the content of knowing/believing.

The next to the last link in the paratactic chain is Jesus' final account to the Father concerning himself. Jesus had been the means for the disciples coming to know that he was sent by the Father. The verb used changes with this link and is repeated in the mainline verb (γνωρίζω). The *parataxis* actually extends to include this verb. As an unexpected surprise in the prayer, Jesus does not make another request to the Father. Instead, he commits to performing a specific act (M6): καὶ ἐγνώρισα αὐτοῖς τὸ ὄνομά σου καὶ γνωρίσω (17:26).[43] This is the only future tense verb in the entire prayer. Jesus' ministry had consisted of making known God's name to the disciples. With the approach of his hour, Jesus would sanctify himself. Nevertheless, his commitment to and participation in the redemptive plan would not falter or cease. Instead, Jesus tells the Father that he would continue to do exactly what the Father had sent him to do. Just as 17:4 mentioned, in this manner Jesus would continue to glorify the Father. The commitment is expanded with two purpose clauses (ἵνα). Their content closely parallels the comparative clauses of Request 4.1 and the subordinated idea of 4.2. This time they are the purposes for why Jesus commits to making known the Father's name: (1) in order that the love with which the Father loved the Son might be in them, and (2) in order that the Son might be in them.

THE STRUCTURE: OUTLINE

The following outline is offered as an alternative that draws out the author-intended and most important elements. The prayer may be summed up shortly in this way: Jesus prayed that the Father would glorify him in order that he could then glorify the Father. This glorifies the Son and the Father, namely the disciples

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[43] See Jn. 12 for a similarity with the Father's response to Jesus' prayer. The Father proclaimed that he had glorified himself and would do so in the future.

living in the world carrying on the mission of Christ to make the Father's name known to everyone and declaring that Jesus was sent by him so that all who believe might be with Jesus forever.

I.   Transitory introduction. (17:1)
II.   Request #1. (17:1-11a)
     A. In light of his relation to his Father. (17:1-4)
         1.   Jesus' request for glorification. (17:1-4)
             a. When Jesus asks to be glorified. (17:1)
             b. Why Jesus asks to be glorified. (17:1)
             c. How Jesus asks to be glorified. (17:2)
             d. What constitutes eternal life. (17:3)
             e. The Son has glorified the Father. (17:4)
     B. In light of his relation to his disciples. (17:5-11a)
         1.   Jesus' request for glorification.
             a. The Son has manifested the father to the disciples. (17:6)
             b. Who the disciples are. (17:6)
                 i.   In relation to the Father.
                 ii.   In relation to the Son.
                 iii.   In relation to the Word.
             c. The disciples' response has glorified the Son. (17:7-9)
                 i.   What they have known about the Father. (17:7)
                 ii.   How they came to know it. (17:8)
                 iii.   How they received it. (17:8)
                 iv.   What they have known about the Son. (17:8)
                 v.   What they have believed about the Son. (17:8)
             d. Who Jesus is about to pray for and why. (17:9-11a)
                 i.   In relation to the Son. (17:9)
                 ii.   Because they belong to the Father. (17:10)
                 iii.   Because they glorify the Son. (17:11)
                 iv.   Because they are about to be separated (17:11a)
III.   Requests #3 and #4. (17:11b-19)
     A. Request #2: Jesus requests for the Father to keep the disciples. (17:11b-16)
             a. Why Jesus asks the Father to keep the disciples. (17:11b)
             b. The Son had kept the disciples. (17:12)
                 i.   The Son kept the disciples.
                 ii.   The Son protected the disciples.

                iii.   The Son lost none of the disciples.

           c. The Son is about to be physically separated from the disciples. (17:13)

           d. The world hates the disciples. (17:14)

    1. Request #2: Jesus requests for the Father to keep the disciples. (17:15-16)

  B. Request #3: Jesus requests for the Father to sanctify the disciples. (17:17-19)

        1.   What constitutes truth. (17:17)

        2.   The Son had sent the disciples out on a mission like his. (17:18)

        3.   The Son was in the process of sanctifying himself for them. (17:19)

IV.   Request #4: Jesus requests a unity for his disciples that results in the salvation of souls. (17:20-23)

        1.   Who Jesus is praying for in addition to the disciples. (17:20)

  A. Jesus requests that they will be one. (17:21)

  B. Jesus requests that they will be in a special relationship with the Father and Son. (17:21)

  C. Jesus requests that the world will believe on account of their witness. (17:21)

        2.   The Son has given his glory to the disciples. (17:22)

        3.   The Son is the mediator between the Father and the disciples. (17:23)

  D. Jesus requests that the disciples will be perfected into a union with each other. (17:23)

  E. Jesus requests that the world will know on account of their witness and unity. (17:23)

V.   Request #5: Jesus requests that the disciples will be with him and experience his glory forever. (17:24)

VI.   Jesus' Final Commitment: Jesus commits to making known the Father's name. (17:25-26)

  A. The final report.

        1.   The world has not known the Father.

        2.   The Son has known the Father.

        3.   The disciples have known the Father

  B. The final commitment.

        1.   The Son has made the Father's name known.

        2.   The Son will continue to make the Father's name known (through sending the disciples out and praying for them, and personal involvement in the building of his church).

THE OTHER STRUCTURES AND WHY THIS STRUCTURE MATTERS

The structure of John 17 is typically identified with a three-fold division. As Ridderbos has mentioned, there have been a few that have attempted to divide the verse in a variety of ways, but this remains the typically accepted division.[44] Verses 1-5 constitute Jesus' prayer for *himself*. Verses 6-19 contain Jesus' prayer for his *immediate disciples*. Verses 20-26 pertain to his *future disciples*.[45] Who follows or adopts this structure? A great many expositors and commentators do with some slight variations. Whitelaw writes, "With almost perfect unanimity the prayer is recognized as falling into a threefold division; according to which Christ prays, first, for Himself (ver. 1-5); secondly, for His immediate disciples (ver. 6-19); and, thirdly, for His future followers (ver. 20-26)."[46] Stallings calls this the "natural outline."[47] Morris writes: "The prayer is difficult to subdivide, for it is essentially a unity, but it is possible to discern a movement."[48] The movement is seen through the three-fold division. There are some varying flavors to this typical three-fold division. Some split the first and second division between verse eight and nine.[49]

This structure hinges on the participants. One determines the "natural outline" and the "movement" based upon those who are involved in the prayer. The

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[44] Ridderbos writes: "Expositors have attempted to further divide the prayer in a variety of ways and on the basis of a number of methods and criteria. Some proceed from the structure representatives of the farewell prayer genre, others from the rhythmic cadence that the prayer is said to show or from the recurrent transitional formula 'and now' and the use of certain transitional keywords. The majority, however, attempt to lay bare the structural outline on the basis of the content of the prayer. But neither form nor content has thus far led to a consensus" (547).

[45] For an example, see Warren Wiersbe, *The Wiersbe Bible Commentary: The Complete New Testament* (Colorado Springs: CO: David C. Cook, 2007), 294; Clive Marsh and Steve Moyise, Jesus and the Gospels: T & T Clark Approaches to Biblical Studies (New York: T & T Clark International, 2005), 55. Ridderbos is perhaps the most clear in his distinction writing that Jesus prayed for those "followers whom he has not yet met" (142).

[46] Thomas Whitelaw, *Commentary on John* (Grand Rapids, MI: Kregel, 1993), 349.

[47] Jack W. Stallings, *The Gospel of John*, Randall House Bible Commentary (Nashville, TN: Randall House Publications, 1989), 245. Stallings goes so far as to say that "there are several ways one *may* arrange the truths of this chapter" (emphasis added). The difference between *may* and *can* are great. Discourses have author-intended structure. Part of exegesis is identifying this structure. Authorial intent extends to structure. Evangelical hermeneutics assert that there is author-intended meaning. No one haphazardly considers a verse may mean this or may mean that. When the jury is deliberating, it can mean one thing or it could mean another; but it has to be one.

[48] Morris, 634. Concerning the prayer being "essentially a unity," this could be said of every single pericope and discourse in Scripture. Difficult to subdivide, it still remains the responsibility of the exegete to do it and with accuracy.

[49] See Gary M. Burge, "Gospel of John," *The Bible Knowledge Background Commentary: John's Gospel, Hebrews-Revelation*, ed. Craig A. Evans (Colorado Springs, CO: Victor, 2005), 139-142; Alfred McBride, *The Divine Presence of Jesus: Meditation and Commentary on the Gospel of John* (Huntington, IN: Our Sunday Visitor Publishing Division, 1992), 154; Jerome Neyrey, *The Gospel of John*. NCBC (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 278-279.

most disappointing aspect about this division is the tendency to view the last division as referring to future disciples as if it does not refer to the eleven remaining with Jesus. Stallings, even though he does not actually provide an outline, does exactly this.[50] Not everyone does this, however. Many avoid the distinction and clearly state that it includes the present and future disciples.[51] Is it important? Absolutely, if you think Peter, James, John, and the rest are part of the "they" group in verse 24.

Another common trait, a cousin of the three-fold division, is to divide the last six verses in half. Sometimes verses 20-23 and verses 24-26 represent the divisions while for others the division comes between verses 24 and 25. For example, Barrett sees a shift at verse 25 with Jesus reviewing his ministry.[52] There are some other types of divisions that are more complicated like the ones mentioned by Becker, and others that are much simpler.

The question remains whether or not one should identify structure based upon the participants involved. Some problems are evident, as demonstrated above with the absence of the eleven from the final part of the prayer if it only refers to *future* disciples. This is not the only weakness. The requests cannot be subordinated beneath other parts of the prayer. The fact that other parts of the prayer can be understood subordinately is one proof that the mainline element of the requests is not being imposed upon the text. Others have recognized the importance of the petitions. Neyrey has done the best work thus far in this respect. He says that the three-fold division reduces "the entire prayer to a series of petitionary prayers" and points out that "while John 17 contains many prayers of petition, it also expresses prayers of other types and purposes."[53] In his analysis, he identifies petitionary, informative, self-focused, and petitionary/self-focused prayers. His work is not definitive or without its own issues, but it is extremely helpful.[54] Lincoln paid close attention to the petitions writing, "In line with the evangelist's fondness for

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[50] Stallings, 244. For another example, see Ben Witherington III, *John's Wisdom: A Commentary on the Fourth Gospel* (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 1995), 267.

[51] See Andrew T. Lincoln, *The Gospel According to Saint John*, BNTC (New York: Continuum, 2005), 434; Barrett, 499; Kruse, 345; Tom Hale and Steve Thorson, *Applied New Testament Commentary: Applying God's Word to Your Life* (Colorado Springs, CO: Victor, 1997), 418; John MacArthur, *John 12-21*, The MacArthur New Testament Commentary (Chicago, IL: Moody Publishers, 2008), 302; Andreas J. Köstenberger, *John*, BECNT (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2004), 484, 497. Hale and Thorson are probably the clearest about the inclusion of the eleven disciples. They write, "Here we see that Jesus was not praying for His eleven disciples alone, but also for all who have ever believed (and yet will believe) in the Gospel of Christ" (418).

[52] See Barrett, 499.

[53] Neyrey, 278.

[54] His typo concerning the first petition is distracting; it comes in verse one, not verse two. In addition, he lists verse 9 as a "self-focused and petitionary" placing it on the same level as verse 1's "glorify the Son" and verse 6's "I have manifested." Instead, verse 9 is informative (using his language) like verse 3.

structuring episodes in seven parts, the prayer contains seven specific petitions, the first and last sections having two each and the longer middle section three."[55] Quast bases his outline off of the petitions as well. He comes short, however, when he only identifies three: glorification, sanctification, and unification.[56] Quast's division is helpful to show the danger in the three-fold division. He obviously observes the importance of the petition for the structure. Sadly, he still ended up with the typical structure. By doing so, he omits Requests #2, #3, and parts of Request #5 (such as that the world might believe). It could be argued that believing falls under the umbrella of unification. It could also be argued that Request #6, that the disciples would be with Jesus and experience his glory, is under the same umbrella. But one element of the prayer is completely missed–namely the final commitment. Most miss it.

There are a minimum of four significant contributions for giving prominence to the requests/petitions of Jesus in order to determine the structure of the passage. First, when the requests are viewed as primary, one of the most overlooked and under-stressed points in the prayer is uncovered. The requests are made in the aorist (1,5, 11, and 17) and present (15, 20, and 24). The presence of the future, the only future tense verb, is striking in comparison. Second, when the requests are viewed as primary, they uncover how intentionally congested the prayer becomes toward the end. The prayer is moving toward a climax, most likely the future tense declaration at the end. This congestion helps to build the climax. Observing the verbs more carefully alerts the reader of this. Third, when one pays closer attention to the verbs uncovers the *inclusio* in verses 1-5, which is missed many times. And finally, paying attention to the verbs uncovers the Great-Commission element in John's Gospel which this prayer provides.

CONCLUSION

This study has focused mainly on establishing the structure of Jn. 17. The typical three-fold division that gives attention to the three referents (Jesus, the immediate disciples, and future disciples) does not account for everything. This paper has identified the requests of Jesus as the mainline verbs. All other material is supportive. The unit is highly cohesive within itself and with its context.[57] The prayer, known for its brevity through the uses of *asyndeton* and *parataxis*, becomes

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[55] Lincoln, 434. There are others. For example, see Alexander S. Jensen, *John's Gospel as Witness: The Development of the Early Christian Language of Faith* (Burlington, VT: Ashgate Publishing Company, 2004), 137. Sadly, he sees the prayer as the work of redaction and, even worse, borrowing from Gnostic sources.

[56] See Kevin Quast, *Reading the Gospel of John: An Introduction*, rev. ed. (Mahway, NJ: Paulist Press, 1996).

[57] For the best discussion, see Black, "On the Style and Significance of John 17," 149. Black's entire article is devoted to the rhetorical elements that, in his own words, "serve to increase the impact and appeal" of the prayer (144).

more structurally complicated around 17:20. The climax occurs in two manners. Twice the unity of the disciples is prayed for in conjunction with the salvation of the world. In addition, in a prayer of multiple requests to the Father, Jesus surprisingly ends his prayer with his only commitment, the only future tense verb—a commitment to continue making known the name of the Father.

Basic composition entails an outline, and a structure. Discourses, of any value, have an author-intended structure. This prayer, the conclusion of the Farewell Discourse, is no different. Placing greater emphasis on the participants when the third division of the typical three-fold structure actually entails all disciples (including the eleven) is haphazard exegesis. Adopting it so often demonstrates expositional dependence on commentaries and laziness in the area of hard-work exegesis. In the case of this prayer, the requests are primary for determining the structure of the prayer. The participants are secondary.

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