

For the past several weeks, we have been examining our Savior's High Priestly Prayer to His Heavenly Father—I've mentioned He begins with Himself (vv1-5), extends to the apostles (vv6-19), and then includes all Christians of all time (vv20-26).

Thus, I want to consider verses 9-11a, under the three following main headings—What He prays, Who He prays for, and Why we pray for them.

- I. What He Prays
- II. Who He Prays For
- III. Why He Prays For Them

I. What He Prays

1. V9—"I pray for them"—we aren't left to guess what our Savior prays for, as He expressly tells us in this prayer...
2. As we read through it, we find He prays for four things—their preservation, sanctification, unification, and glorification...
3. [1] He prays for their preservation, v15—"I do not pray that You should take them out of the world, but that You should keep them from the evil one..."
4. That is, keep them from the devil—from being destroyed by the devil—from believing the lies of the devil...
5. No Christian can be indwelt, deceived, or destroyed by the devil, and the reason being, Christ prays for them...
6. [2] He prays for their sanctification, v17—"Sanctify them by Your truth. Your word is truth"—conform them to My image...
7. Sanctification refers to the ongoing process, wherein God, through the word, makes His beloved people holy...
8. At the very heart of the word "sanctify" is the concept of "setting apart"—of setting us apart from this world...
9. This process begins when we become Christian, and it ends when we die or Christ returns—it's a life long process...
10. [3] He prays for their unification, v20—"I do not pray for these alone, but also for those who will believe in Me through their word; that they all may be one, as You, Father, are in Me, and I in You..."
11. This refers first to a positional unity that necessitates their conversion—being taken out of this world by salvation...
12. But it also includes, as we will see when we examine these verses, a practical unity that the world can behold...
13. [4] He prays for their glorification, v24—"Father, I desire that they also whom You gave Me may be with Me where I am, that they may behold My glory..."
14. That is—our Savior not only prays for our perseverance and sanctification, but also their eternal glorification...
15. He prays that every Christian endures to the end, and spends eternity with Him, in the new heavens and earth...
16. Thus, in summary—He prays that every elect person is joined to the church, preserved, sanctified, and glorified...

II. Who He Prays For

1. V9—"I pray for them"—that is, He prays only for those who are Christian—that is, those called out of this world...
2. Thus, our Savior contrasts "them" with "the world"—He prays for "them" that is, the disciples taken from the world...

3. And so our Savior affirms that He was not praying for His enemies, but He was praying for His beloved friends...
4. Again, this was typified in the OC, in that the High Priest, wore the names of the 12 tribes on his breast and shoulders...
5. On his breastplate and shoulders were 12 stones, in which the name of the 12 tribes were engraved—this meant he interceded for them...
6. He bore their names on his breast because he loved them, and on his shoulders, because he carried or protected them...
7. Thus, in a typical manner, the High Priest illustrated the fact that he prayed or interceded, only for God's people...
8. V9—"I pray for them (apostles)" v20—"I do not pray for these alone, but also for those who will believe in Me through their word..."
9. That is, as the NC High Priest, He prays for His NC Israel—or, those who have been given to Him by His Father...
10. Now, before I suggest a few ways in which Christ prays for His people, let me briefly provide a needed clarification...
11. Historically, Reformed Christians have maintained—Christ's death is sufficient for the world, and efficient for the elect...
12. By this is meant—Christ suffered sufficiently, so that any person, who comes to Him in faith, will be saved...
13. And yet, Christ suffered in such a way, so as to make certain, that His people will actually be reconciled to God...
14. Simply put—Christ uniquely died for His people so as to ensure their salvation—He died for them efficiently...
15. By "efficient" is meant "a focused or specific way" so as to cause their salvation—every person Christ died for in this sense He prays for...
16. Put another way—Christ died for the elect in a way He did not die for the non-elect, and thus, only prays for them...
17. Thus, we must view the cross from two perspectives—from the standpoint of sinners, the cross is preached broadly...
18. That is, that Christ died sufficiently for all—this is the very heart of the gospel message—Christ and His cross...
19. And yet, from the standpoint of Christians, the cross is viewed as a specific atonement to ensure our salvation...
20. Perhaps I can put it this way—the sinner beholds the cross, in all of its universal and world-wide sufficiency...
21. But then having come to Christ, he now looks back upon that cross as more than that, but as a particular atonement...
22. Thus, Christ, as our NC High Priest, prays for His people—He prays for them covenantally, effectually, and continually...
23. [1] He prays for them covenantally—by this I mean, Christ prays on behalf of His people, or, He prays for their sakes...
24. This means, Christ prays to the Father as their covenant head—He stands in their place—He represents them...
25. This was typified in the OC, in that the High Priest enter beyond the veil, once a year, on behalf of the people...
26. The Holy of Holies, was a smaller room beyond the veil, that pictured the very presence of God in heaven...
27. The High Priest represented the people, as a picture of what Christ would actually do, for His beloved people...
28. [a] The High Priest wore white garments—this typified Christ's perfect righteousness, or His perfect and sinless life...
29. [b] The High Priest carried a basin of blood—this typified Christ's atoning blood, that He would shed on the cross...

30. [c] The High Priest carried a gold pan of incense—the High priest carried two items beyond the veil—blood and incense...
31. The incense came from a small golden pan in which he burned a special blend of spices—this created a cloud of sweet aroma...
32. Scripture elsewhere uses incense to symbolize prayers (Ps.141:2; Rev.8:2)—just as smoke rises, so our prayers rise up to God...
33. Thus, every year as the High Priest entered the Holy Place, he did so, wearing white garments, carrying blood, and with incense...
34. Or, as he entered the Holy of Holies to sprinkle blood on the Mercyseat, a cloud of smoke engulfed the room...
35. This was typical of the fact, that Christ, as our High Priest, would plead the merits of His life and death for us...
36. Perhaps I could say—Christ would fill the presence of God in heaven with the sweet aroma of His atoning work...
37. Thus, Christ prays for the members of His NC—He prays for His NC Israel—He prays for God's elect nation...
38. [2] He prays for them effectually—by this I mean, His prayers always produce the effect they intend—He is always heard...
39. This simply means—every person Christ prays for, will, without a single exception, be preserved and sanctified...
40. Their preservation and sanctification is certain—the Son always gets what He asks for—His prayers are always heard...
41. Jn.11:41-42—"And Jesus lifted up His eyes and said, Father, I thank You that You have heard Me. And I know that You always hear Me..."
42. The Father always heard His prayer while He was on earth, and the Father always hears His prayers in heaven...
43. [a] Because of His DIVINITY—that is, His prayers are always heard, because the Father always hears His Son...
44. Surely brethren, this goes without saying—whatever God the Son asks for, God the Father will always give Him...
45. Heb.4:14—"Seeing then that we have a great High Priest who has passed through the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast our confession..."
46. In other words—our High Priest who has entered heaven on our behalf, is no mere man, but is the Son of God...
47. And thus, it's for this reason, our Savior's prayers are more than mere petitions, but expressions of divine will...
48. V24—"Father, I desire (will) that they also whom You gave Me may be with Me where I am"—this is the will of God's Son...
49. [b] Because of His PURITY—that is, His prayers are always heard, because as Man He was and is sinless...
50. There is a mysterious connection between the effectiveness of our prayers and the present purity of our hearts...
51. Ps.66:18—"If I regard iniquity in my heart, the Lord will not hear" Jas.5:16—"The hardworking prayer of a righteous man avails much..."
52. Thus, Christ was always heard, and will always be heard, in part, because of the sinless purity of His heart...
53. Heb.5:7—"In the days of His flesh, when He had offered up prayers and supplications, with strong cries and tears to Him who was able to save Him from death, He was heard because of His godly fear (or His piety)..."
54. [c] Because of His BLOOD—that is, His prayers are always heard, because of His perfect, atoning, sacrifice...
55. Heb.12:22-24—"But you have come to Mount Zion...to Jesus the Mediator of the NC, and to the blood of sprinkling that speaks better things than that of Abel..."

56. Here Paul speaks of the blood of Christ as "speaking"—it's as if the blood itself is praying or interceding for us...
57. The blood of Abel demanded justice, whereas, the blood of Christ speaks of mercy—it speaks of better things...
58. Thus, Christ's intercession is effectual, because of what His blood says—His blood speaks mercy and forgiveness...
59. This is why, oftentimes, our hymns speak of Power in the Blood—Christ's blood speaks on behalf of every believer...
60. William Cowper (Hymn 188)—"Dear dying Lamb, thy precious blood shall never lose its power, till all the ransomed church of God be saved, to sin no more..."
61. [3] He prays for them constantly—the phrase "I pray" could be rendered "I am praying" or "I continue to pray..."
62. The point being—what Christ did while on earth, He continues to do in heaven—He always intercedes for us...
63. Rom.8:34—"Who is to condemn? Christ Jesus is the one who died – more than that, who was raised – who is at the right hand of God, who indeed is interceding for us..."
64. Heb.7:25—"Therefore He is also able to save to the uttermost those who come to God through Him, since He always lives to make intercession for them..."
65. Ex.28:29—"So Aaron shall bear the names of the sons of Israel on the breastplate of judgment over his heart, when he goes into the holy place, as a memorial before the LORD continually..."
66. Let me clarify something—though Christ is verbally praying, this does not mean He verbally prays in heaven...
67. The reason why He here prayed verbally was because He was physically and bodily on earth, apart from His Father...
68. Furthermore, He prayed verbally and audibly so that the apostles (and us), would know WHAT He prays for...
69. Thus, we must not think that our Savior is physically or literally in heaven, constantly praying for His people...
70. But as He presently stands before the Father in heaven, His very presence, is as it were, is a continual prayer...
71. Heb.9:24—"For Christ has not entered the holy places made with hands, which are copies of the true, but into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us..."
72. This is how Christ intercedes for us—He presently stands in heaven, as the Lamb that was slain for our sins...
73. Charles Wesley—"Five bleeding wounds he bears, received on Calvary; they pour effectual prayers, they strongly plead for me; forgive him, O forgive, they cry, forgive him, O forgive, they cry, nor let that ransomed sinner die..."

III. Why He Prays For Them

1. I suggest that in verses 9-11a, we find three beautiful reasons WHY our Savior prays for these men (and by inference, Christians of every era)...
2. [1] Because of who they are, v9—"I do not pray for the world but for those whom You have given Me, for they are Yours..."
3. Our Savior prays for them because the Father chose them, and gave them to Him, in the eternal covenant of redemption...
4. The Father has entrusted their eternal welfare to His beloved Son, who promised to eternally care for them...
5. For example, when a man and woman marry, the man publically promises to provide for and protect his wife...
6. So too, Christ in one sense, promised in eternity past, in the covenant of redemption, to protect and provide for His bride...
7. Thus, Christ prays for His people because, the Father elected them and gave them to Him from eternity, as a love gift...

8. This again was typified in the OC, in that the High Priest wore the names of the twelve tribes over his heart...
9. Ex.28:29—"So Aaron shall bear the names of the sons of Israel on the breastplate of judgment over his heart, when he goes into the Holy Place..."
10. [2] Because of what they do, v10—"And all Mine are Yours, and Yours are Mine, and I am glorified in them..."
11. Christ prays for them because they glorify Him—they glorify Him within and throughout this wicked world...
12. What a tremendous thought—Christ is glorified IN US—we are a means of glorifying Him before men and angels...
13. [a] We glorify Him by trusting Him—that is, by entrusting our eternal souls to Him, His righteousness, and blood...
14. [b] We glorify Him by obeying Him—we glorify Him as our lives our characterized by purity and good works...
15. Matt.5:16—"Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father in heaven (our works glorify the Father and Son)..."
16. [c] We glorify Him by preaching Him—they love to tell others about who He is and what He has done for us...
17. Thus, Christ prays for His people because they glorify Him—this is why He does not take them out of the world...
18. Have you ever thought about why Christians are left in this world—why doesn't He take us to heaven after saving us...
19. Why does He leave us in this world, filled with all manner of sin, evil, danger, wickedness, sorrow, and death...
20. Well, here is one obvious reason—to glorify Him—He leaves us in this world that we might give Him glory...
21. And this is why He prays for us—that we would have strength and ability to live lives that bring Him glory...
22. [3] Because of where they are, v11a—"Now I am no longer in the world, but these are in the world, and I come to You..."
23. Our Savior prays for His people because they are left IN THIS WORLD, filled with sin, sinners, and Satan...
24. Observation 1—Behold the example of Christ—that is, Christians should imitate Christ and pray for others...
25. Now obviously, Christians are not able to pray for others in the same way that Christ prays for us—He prays for us as our High Priest...
26. But Scripture does command us to pray for each other, and I suggest that Christ's prayer instructs us on what to foremostly pray for...
27. If Christ is praying for our preservation, sanctification, and glorification, then we too should pray for the same things...
28. But this passage also provides the reasons why we should pray for others—for the same reasons, Christ prays for them...
29. We must for others because of who they are—they are elected by the Father, and given to Christ as His bride...
30. We must pray for others because of what they do—they are in this world, to bring glory to the Father and to the Son...
31. We must pray for others because of where they are—they are presently in this world filled with sin and temptation...
32. Observation 2—Behold the privilege of every Christian—that is, to have Christ daily and effectually, praying for them...
33. Oh dear Christian—your enemies shall never defeat or destroy you because your High Priest intercedes for you...
34. As long as Christ fills heaven with the aroma of His person and atoning work, no true Christian shall ever perish...

35. It's always a wonderful thing to know, someone is praying for you—that's something I love to hear—"I am praying for you..."
36. But O brethren, what a blessing it ought to be, to know that our beloved Savior prays for us, night and day, in heaven...
37. Yes, we presently live in a wicked and evil world—yes, we are plagued by remaining sin—yes, times are difficult...
38. But Christ prays for us—He intercedes for us in the presence of the Father—and His prayers are always heard...
39. We shall be preserved from our enemies—we shall be sanctified—and we shall, without exception, be glorified...
40. Observation 3—Behold an invitation to every sinner—our Savior prays for those who come to Him in faith...
41. Heb.7:25—"Therefore He is also able to save to the uttermost those who come to God through Him, since He always lives to make intercession for them..."
42. He prays for those "who come to God through Him"—that is, He prays for every person who comes to Him...
43. Oh dear poor sinner—do you desire that Christ would pray for you—that He would keep you, sanctify you, and glorify you...
44. Then you must come to God through Him—you must come to Christ as the Mediator who died for your sins...
45. And, having come to Christ, you will then realize, the reason you came to Him, was because He was praying for you...