

Seventh Sunday of Easter

FIRST READING – Acts 1:12-26

Matthias Chosen to Replace Judas

12 Then they returned to Jerusalem from the mount called Olivet, which is near Jerusalem, a Sabbath day's journey away. 13 And when they had entered, they went up to the upper room, where they were staying, Peter and John and James and Andrew, Philip and Thomas, Bartholomew and Matthew, James the son of Alphaeus and Simon the Zealot and Judas the son of James. 14 All these with one accord were devoting themselves to prayer, together with the women and Mary the mother of Jesus, and his brothers. 15 In those days Peter stood up among the brothers (the company of persons was in all about 120) and said, 16 "Brothers, the Scripture had to be fulfilled, which the Holy Spirit spoke beforehand by the mouth of David concerning Judas, who became a guide to those who arrested Jesus. 17 For he was numbered among us and was allotted his share in this ministry." 18 (Now this man acquired a field with the reward of his wickedness, and falling headlong he burst open in the middle and all his bowels gushed out. 19 And it became known to all the inhabitants of Jerusalem, so that the field was called in their own language Akeldama, that is, Field of Blood.) 20 "For it is written in the Book of Psalms, "'May his camp become desolate, and let there be no one to dwell in it'; and "'Let another take his office.' 21 So one of the men who have accompanied us during all the time that the Lord Jesus went in and out among us, 22 beginning from the baptism of John until the day when he was taken up from us—one of these men must become with us a witness to his resurrection." 23 And they put forward two, Joseph called Barsabbas, who was also called Justus, and Matthias. 24 And they prayed and said, "You, Lord, who know the hearts of all, show which one of these two you have chosen 25 to take the place in this ministry and apostleship from which Judas turned aside to go to his own place." 26 And they cast lots for them, and the lot fell on Matthias, and he was numbered with the eleven apostles.

1:12-26 Luke intentionally writes two volumes. The first, the *Gospel of Luke*, focuses on the course of Jesus' earthly life from his conception by the Holy Spirit of the Virgin Mary until his assumption into heaven. The second volume, the *Acts of the Apostles*, focuses on the narrative of the Church beginning with the twelve apostles and the pouring out of the Spirit on Pentecost. However, Luke's narrative of the Church is only a beginning and remains open ended. While the *Gospel of Luke* ends with Jesus' arrival in Jerusalem, the Book of *Acts* ends with Paul's arrival in Rome, where he is left to preach and await his destiny (Acts 28). For Luke, the ministry of Christ continues in the apostles, and the apostolic ministry continues in the Church until Jesus' second coming. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 22, Part 2)

The transition from the ministry of Christ to the ministry of the apostles is located, for Luke, precisely in Jesus' ascension. Luke includes this event in both his volumes; it brings his account of Christ's Passion to perfection (Luke 24) and inaugurates his narrative of the Church (Acts 1). Thus, the Ascension is recorded in two different ways. In Luke's Gospel, the Ascension is the fitting conclusion to Easter Sunday and the resurrection of Jesus. Jesus is the High Priest who offers the benediction (Lk 24:50-53), perhaps the benediction Zechariah was unable to proclaim in Luke 1. However, in Acts, the Ascension is the conclusion of the apostles' catechesis. Like Elisha in 2 Kings 2, Jesus is taken into heaven right before the apostles' eyes. They receive a portion of his Spirit on Pentecost. Through the Spirit, the apostles' ministry is the continuation of Jesus' own work. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 22, Part 2)

1:12 returned – Responding to the angels' prompting, the apostles return to Jerusalem with great joy (Luke 24:52). Remembering Jesus' words that they were to wait for the gift of the Holy Spirit, they made an upper room somewhere in Jerusalem their headquarters until that would happen, dividing their time

between this room and the temple (Luke 24:53). Whenever they met together, one in heart and mind, they joined together in worship and prayer. (LL)

Mount called Olivet. The ascension occurred on the eastern slope of the mount between Jerusalem and Bethany (Lk 19:28–29, 37. (CSB)

Sabbath day's journey. This distance was drawn from rabbinical reasoning based on several OT passages (Ex 16:29; Nu 35:5; Jos 3:4). A faithful Jew was to travel no farther on the Sabbath. (CSB)

Pious Jews were expected to stay within the permitted distance of 2,000 cubits (just over ½ mi) from home on the holy day (Ex 16:29; Nu 35:5; Jsh 3:4). (TLSB)

hodon. The theme of the road or the way is a prominent one in Luke's writing and ties his account together into one narrative. This theme is rooted in the Old Testament. Sin leaves Adam and Eve barred from "the way" that leads to the tree of life (Gen 3:22–24). The journey motif is essential to the narratives of Abraham, Jacob, and Joseph. *Exodus*, the title for the second book of the Pentateuch, literally means "the way of departure." "The way" is also an important catechetical theme (Psalm 1). In Luke's Gospel, Jesus is determined to journey to Jerusalem (Lk 9:51); this road to Jerusalem forms the substance of Jesus' conversation with Moses and Elijah on the Mount of Transfiguration (Lk 9:31). In Acts, "the Way" becomes the very name by which the Christian Church is known (Acts 9:2). Here in v 12, the return journey from the Mount of Olives to Jerusalem is the first road walked by the apostles after Jesus' ascension. The apostolic Church journeys the intervening period between Jesus' ascension and his return (1:11). (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 22, Part 2)

The Sabbath day's walk was set at 2000 paces, from one-half to ¾ mile. The expression was thought to go back to the time when Israel was wandering through the desert. The distance was supposed to be reckoned from the farthest tent on the fringe of the camp to the place of worship at the center. The base of the Mount of Olives is 2000 paces from the city. (PBC)

1:13 room. Probably an upper room of a large house, such as the one where the Last Supper was held (Mk 14:15) or that of Mary, mother of Mark. (CSB)

Possibly the site of the Last Supper, though Luke uses a different word here than in his Gospel. (TLSB)

hyperōion. Luke notes that the Church originates in the "upper room." This room appears to be the same room where Jesus had the disciples prepare the Passover feast (Lk 22:12). In Luke 22, this room is called a *kataluma*, or "guest room." *Kataluma* connects the room of the Passover feast with Jesus' birth narrative. In Luke 2, there is no *katalumati* for Jesus, so he is laid in a manger instead. Thus, it seems that the *kataluma* in which Jesus was destined to dwell is the upper room where he institutes the Sacrament of his Supper. This same room is the place in which the Church is given birth (Acts 2:1–2). (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 22, Part 2)

where they were staying – Luke is setting the scene for the replacement of Judas. At the same time Luke expands the group that gathered together each day. He adds the women, probably those at the crucifixion and the resurrection. The only name mentioned is Mary, Jesus' mother, who was in John's care. Without comment or explanation Jesus' brothers also are listed as part of the worshipping and praying group. Named as unbelievers by John (7:5), it is highly probable that the resurrection of Jesus brought them to faith so that now we find them here. (LL)

Bartholomew. Apparently John calls him Nathanael (see Jn 1:45–49; 21:2). (CSB)

James son of Alphaeus. The same as James the younger (Mk 15:40). (CSB)

Zealot. “the Zealot” is to say that he belonged to a sort of “freedom party” of political activists, people who were not only zealous in the Jewish religion but who also sought freedom from Roman rule. It is a mixed group of ordinary men with ordinary names. The Lord would accomplish extraordinary things through them. (PBC)

Judas son of James. Not Judas Iscariot, but the same as Thaddaeus (Mt 10:3; Mk 3:18). (CSB)

1:14 *with one accord* – For a great many people religion is an occasional thing, something to enjoy on great festivals, something to rely on in time of danger. But real religion is more than an emergency measure. It is continual. It sets the pattern of man’s daily thought and practice. Like regular meals, it silently stocks the storehouses of his spirit with power. It works by the law of accumulated reserves. Tracks are laid, patterns formed, habits established. Like the continual presence of the masterworks of art, it cures the heart of second-rate satisfactions. It is hard for a man brought up on the music of Bach to be completely satisfied with the tunes of tin-pan alley. It is hard for a person raised in the company of Jesus to be satisfied with chiselers and compromisers. (IB)

Because the early Christians were close to Christ, the earliest Church had a natural unity that has since been tragically fractured. (TLSB)

homothumadon. This word, often translated with reference to being in harmony or in one accord, is a common expression describing the Church in Acts (2:46; 4:24; 8:6). The *thumos* root suggests the notion of desire or passion (7:57; 12:20; 18:12; 19:29). The Church shared one and the same desire or passion, that is, a desire for Christ and his presence. Similar language is used in Luke’s account of the Lord’s Supper (Lk 22:15). Jesus begins his celebration of the Passover by saying that he has desired with a great desire (*epithumiai epethumēsa*) to eat this Pasch with his disciples. While the devil inspires a passionate hatred toward Christ and his disciples, Jesus unites the Church in a passionate love for God and for one another. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 22, Part 2)

devoting themselves to prayer – With undivided attention, their hearts and minds were open to receive the promised Spirit. (TLSB)

with the women. Possibly wives of the apostles (cf. 1Co 9:5) and those listed as ministering to Jesus (Mt 27:55; Lk 8:2–3; 24:22). (CSB)

Mary the mother of Jesus. Last mentioned here in Scripture. (CSB)

brothers. These brothers would include James, who later became important in the church (12:17; 15:13; Gal 2:9). (CSB)

Listed in Mark 6:3; James and Jude were the most notable in the Early Church. See p 2134 in TLSB.

tois adelphois. The gathering in the upper room consists of the eleven apostles, the women, Mary the mother of Jesus, and his brothers. This gathering constitutes the origins of the Church and is described in terms of family relations (v 15; 15:7, 13). The reordering of the family of God is a significant theme in the Gospel of Luke (Lk 3:8; 8:19–21; 11:27–28; 12:49–53; 13:28–30; 14:25–26; 15:11–32; 19:9; 20:9–18). This gathering also recalls Luke’s account of the resurrection of Jesus (Lk 24:1–11), which mentions the eleven, the women, Mary, and all the rest. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 22, Part 2)

1:15-26 Luke describes the earliest church in the interim between the ascension and Pentecost. The visible physical presence of Jesus in the church is gone, and the Spirit has not yet been poured out. The community is led by Peter. He has gained popularity among the “believers” (brothers), so named here for the first time in Acts. This designation became the standard nomenclature for the group. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 7, Part 2)

1:15 *in those days* – During the 50 days between Easter and Pentecost. (TLSB)

The purpose of this gathering was to discuss the appointment of a replacement for Judas. Luke makes a few interesting comments regarding the involvement of the body of Christians, the use of Scripture, and the use of prayer. The 11 disciples felt compelled to include the larger group of “brothers” to help in selecting a replacement. One hundred twenty persons were present. Perhaps the number is symbolic of 12 times 10 or simply an indication of the growth of the church. But it certainly indicates the involvement of members of the body of Christ, as well as their unity and togetherness (*epi to auto*), when decisions need to be made. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 7, Part 2)

ōsei hekaton eikosi. Luke likes to use *ōsei* to change a literal number into a more theologically significant number. (In Lk 9:28, he uses it to place the transfiguration “about eight days” after the preceding events; both Matthew and Mark place the transfiguration “six days” after the events.) Here Luke approximates the number of those gathered to be 120 (12 × 10), which may connect the Church to the new Israel. Jesus had already made this connection for the apostles when he told them at his Supper that they would “sit on thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel” (Lk 22:30). In Acts 1:6, Jesus answers the apostles’ question about the restoration of Israel with reference to the Church and the gift of the Spirit. The connection between the apostolic college and the twelve tribes of Israel may be a key in Peter’s call to restore the apostolic band to its proper number. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 22, Part 2)

en tais hēmerais tautais, “in [during] those days,” the period of time that followed the ascension. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 16, Part 2)

Peter stood up – His words and the believers’ subsequent actions show that a major change has taken place in Jesus’ followers. Peter is now an interpreter of Scripture and of God’s purpose for the church. His insight into Scripture and God’s purpose will be demonstrated in his missionary speeches, but even before the mission begins he is presented as one who knows what “was necessary” now (1:16) and what Scripture indicates to be “necessary” now (1:20-22). Peter is taking over a major function of the departed Jesus. It might seem that there has been no preparation for this sudden shift in role, but that is not true. The language with which Peter begins his speech in 1:16 echoes the language that Jesus used when he was last presented as Scripture interpreter. (Tannehill)

In a suddenly widening circle of disciples, Peter strengthened his brothers (Luke 22:32) as Jesus had predicted (John 21:15-17). The location in vv. 15-26 may no longer be the upper room of v. 13, due to the number of people. A courtyard would better accommodate such a large group. (TLSB)

en mesōi tōn adelfōn, “in the midst of the brothers.” Peter arises to speak the Word, which gathers a community of believers around itself; thus, he who speaks the gathering Word is said to stand in the midst of those gathered by that Word. “Brothers” is used in a figurative sense of fellow members of the gathered community. NIV translates “believers,” which speaks to the relationship of each to the Lord, but lacks the note of mutual relationship and the role of the gathering Word. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 16, Part 2)

1:16 *brothers – edei plērōthēnai tēn grafēn.* *edei* is an indicative imperfect active of *dei*, indicating something that is compulsory, necessary, inevitable. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 16, Part 2)

the Scripture had to be fulfilled. For the Scripture referred to see. Both before and after Christ came, numerous psalms were viewed as Messianic. What happened in the psalmist's experience was typical of the experiences of the Messiah. No doubt Jesus' instruction in Luke 24:27, 45–47 included these Scriptures. (CSB)

All Scripture is God-breathed, with the Holy Spirit as its primary author. (TLSB)

edei plērōthēnai. This language recalls Jesus' instructions to the disciples before his ascension (Lk 24:44). *edei* is at the heart of Jesus' Passion statements and refers to his death and resurrection as a divine necessity. It is necessary because the heavenly Father has ordained it. In Lk 24:44–47, there are three things counted as a divine necessity. The Scriptures *must* be fulfilled, Christ *must* suffer and rise from the dead on the third day, and repentance and forgiveness *must* be preached to all nations. These three necessities become the substance of the apostolic sermons in Acts. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 22, Part 2)

There is a divine necessity (*dei*) that Scripture must be fulfilled. However, God did not decree the betrayal; he merely foretold it. Judas fulfilled that prophecy of his own free will. This prophecy was through (*dia*) David as the instrument of divine inspiration. The Holy Spirit remained the speaker and the cause of inspiration. Interestingly, Scripture not only foretells events about Jesus, but also the fate of people other than Jesus (Ps 69:25)—in this case, Judas—as well as the action of the church (Ps 109:8) in replacing Judas. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 7, Part 2)

fulfillment of prophecies is dependent on human acquiescence. (Concordia Pulpit *plērōthēnai* is an aorist passive infinitive. The will of God that is set down in his Word must be fully accomplished. The NIV, “the Scripture had to be fulfilled,” should not be taken to mean that the Resources - Volume 16, Part 2)

The language with which Peter begins his speech in 1:16 echoes the language that Jesus used when he was last presented as Scripture interpreter: It was necessary that the Scripture be fulfilled” Luke 24:44. At that time Jesus “opened the mind “of his followers “to understand the Scriptures.” The disciples could not understand the scriptural necessity of Jesus' suffering prior to the revelation of the risen Messiah (Luke 18:31-34). Now they can, and this permits them to understand many things, including the defection of Judas, as part of God's way of working in a resistant world. In Luke 24:44-46 Jesus spoke of “all that is written...concerning me,” including his suffering. This could include the role of the betrayer, especially when the first of Peter's quotations in Acts 1:20 comes from Psalm 69, a psalm from which a number of references to Jesus' passion in the New Testament are drawn. Thus we are probably to infer that Peter is either reminding his audience of what Jesus had directly taught them from the Psalms (which are explicitly mentioned in Luke 24:44) or is following Jesus' lead in finding references to the events of the passion there. Faced with Satan's onslaught on the disciples during his arrest and death, Jesus asked Peter to “strengthen your brothers” following Peter's own recovery (Luke 22:32). Peter becomes the leader of the early church. What Peter does through his speech in Acts 1:16-22 may seem a rather small thing compared to the momentous events reported before and after. Nevertheless, it can be understood as an important step in strengthening the community in the faith that was shaken by Jesus' arrest and death. Reconstituting the twelve is an important step in preparation for witness to Israel. This is an act of faith in Jesus and a first step in obedience to his new call. Peter's faith inspires the faith of others. (Tannehill)

Human eyes are blind to the reality of Jesus' presence even when he stands directly in sight, and ears are deaf to his words even when he speaks them audibly, unless Jesus himself heals the spiritual blindness

and deafness (Luke 4:18-19). Eyes and minds must be opened and faith created by God in order to understand the mystery of the kerygma of his crucified and risen Son. Both salvation and its apprehension through faith are God's work. Jesus reverses the incomprehension and confusion exhibited by the disciples after his earlier passion predictions (Luke 9:44-45; 18:31-34). This illumination of darkened minds comes through Jesus' own radical Christological interpretation of the OT Scriptures. (Concordia Commentary – Luke)

The Holy Scriptures were of critical importance to Jesus, and the written Word of God is important for His people today too. (LL)

Holy Spirit spoke – hēn proeipen to pneuma to hagian dia stomatos dauid, “which the Holy Spirit put into the mouth of David” (author's translation). The will of God is neither unknown nor a matter of conjecture, for he has caused it to be spoken. Here the will and Word of God and his Spirit are tied together: his will is revealed in the Word put into man's mouth by the Holy Spirit. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 16, Part 2)

mouth of David Co-author with the Holy Spirit of the psalms quoted in v 20. As a prophet, David glimpsed the future fulfillment of his own calling in the life of Christ. (TLSB)

Judas – Our Lord regarded Judas's betrayal as the fulfillment of prophecy. (TLSB)

a guide – hodēgou. Peter describes Judas as a “guide” or a leader in the way for those wanting to arrest Jesus. This language is used in the LXX version of the Psalms for God's shepherding work (Ps 23:2; 25:5; 107:30); in Lk 6:39 referring to “blind guides” on the way of salvation; in Jn 16:13 of the Spirit guiding the Church into all truth; and in Acts 8:31, where the Ethiopian eunuch expresses his need for one to guide him in understanding the Scriptures. Thus, Peter seems to suggest Judas was an apostle in the kingdom of Satan, a kind of pastor for those seeking to kill Christ. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 22, Part 2)

1:17 share - Usually rendered as “lot” and has two senses in the Bible: a plot of land, one's goodly heritage in the Promised Land, and means of determining God's will, carried out prayerfully and solemnly. (TLSB)

“For” (*hoti*), though normally translated in a causal sense, here refers to the point on which the prophecy rests. Judas was an apostle who was numbered with the 12 and obtained the rank (*elachen*, “obtained by lot”) of the apostolic ministry of Jesus Christ. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 7, Part 2)

katerithmēmenos (perfect passive participle), “he had been counted, numbered.” *elachen ton klēron*, “he was allotted his portion.” It was not through his own decision or efforts that Judas came to be included among the Twelve, but rather he received it (*elachen* from *lanchanō*). Neither was it by mere chance or fate, though his selection is rightly called by lot (*klēros*). The NIV translation, “he was one of our number and shared in this ministry,” blunts the notion of supernatural selection found in the Greek text. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 16, Part 2)

katērihthēmenos. Peter refers to Judas as one “numbered” among the apostles. This is a perfect passive participle, which recognizes the divine origins of his place in the apostolic office. God established Judas as an apostle by lot (*ton klēron*). This language may suggest that Peter sees the original number of apostles as a divinely ordained number that must now be restored. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 22, Part 2)

in this ministry – The description of apostleship as diakonia (ministry or service) is also noteworthy. The closest preceding occurrence of this noun or its related verb is in the Last Supper scene, as Jesus corrects the apostles' rivalry over rank and instructs them in the special quality of their future leadership. The leader, Jesus says in Luke 22:26, must become "like one who serves." Jesus is speaking of the servant who waits on the table, in contrast to the honored participants in a banquet. In Luke diakonia (service) and diakonew (serve) always refer to the work of preparing and serving food, work normally performed by those regarded as social inferiors, such as women and servants (see Luke 4:39; 8:3; 10:40; 12:37; 17:8; 22:26-27). /// In John 13 – foot washing – Jesus does what only non-Jewish slaves did. /// Yet at the Last Supper Jesus not only describes his own role in these terms but also makes such service a norm for the apostles. The repeated description of apostleship as "service" in Acts 1:17, 25 can remind us of this fact and may imply that the early church now recognizes that its leadership must conform to Jesus' way of service. (Tannehill)

1:18-19 Luke digresses from Peter's speech to give an account of Judas's fate. (TLSB)

1:18 *reward* – Payment Judas received from the Council for betraying Christ. He bought a field indirectly, because the Council did this with the money Judas returned. (TLSB)

acquired a field. Judas bought the field indirectly: The money he returned to the priests (Mt 27:3) was used to purchase the potter's field (Mt 27:7). (CSB)

misthou tēs adikias. The notion of divine reward for work done is prominent in Luke's Gospel (Lk 6:23, 35; 10:7). Peter sees the "field of blood" as the "reward" for Judas's service in the ministry of death. Thus, later in his prayer, Peter refers to Judas as one who "turned aside to go to his own place" (v 25). Judas's dwelling place is also the subject of Psalm 69, quoted by Peter (v 20). (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 22, Part 2)

Judas does not return the money as a sign of repentance, but goes to buy a farm with the payment for his wicked deed. This action stands in direct contrast to his "having a share in this ministry." Rather than be one of those who "left their own things" and will "sell their farms" and "call nothing their own," Judas separates from the group by his purchase of property for himself. We notice that like Ananias and Sapphira, who will later be described as doing the same thing, Judas is said to have been possessed by Satan (Luke 22:3; Acts 5:3), and to have "entered into a conspiracy" to get money (Luke 22:4-6; Acts 5:9). Spiritual disaffection is symbolized by physical acquisitiveness. (Sacra)

Most Bible versions report vv 18 and 19 in parentheses, indicating that it would seem unnecessary for Peter to include this information in his speech, since most people were aware of it already (see notes on v 19). Luke later adds this information for the benefit of future readers. This man named Judas did not personally purchase the piece of real estate. The money that he received for betraying the Son of God was returned to the temple. Subsequently, the chief priests decided to use it to purchase the field of blood (Mt 27:3-8) "as a burial place for foreigners." (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 7, Part 2)

fell headlong. Mt 27:5 reports that Judas hanged himself. It appears that when the body finally fell, either because of decay or because someone cut it down, it was in a decomposed condition and so broke open in the middle. Another possibility is that "hanged" in Mt 27:5 means "impaled" and that the gruesome results of Judas's suicide are described here. (CSB)

The rope Judas hanged himself with (Mt 27:5) likely broke, causing his already decaying corpse to fall and rupture. (TLSB)

1:19 Akeldama. An Aramaic term, no doubt adopted by people who knew the circumstances, for the field was purchased with Judas's blood money (Mt 27:3–8). (CSB)

Luke simply reminds his readers that the whole city knew the story of the field of blood. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 7, Part 2)

1:20 it is written. Two passages of Scripture (see NIV text notes) were put together to suggest that Judas had left a vacancy that had to be filled. (CSB)

Vicious attacks on King David were ultimately directed at God and gave a preview of the trouble in store for Christ, the greater David. (TLSB)

become desolate – The first quotation is based on Ps 69:25 (LXX; H. T. 68:26). *ērēmōmenē*, “be brought to ruin,” becomes *erēmos*, “abandoned, forsaken,” and *en tois skēnōmasin*, “in the dwellings,” is left out. In Peter's quotation from Ps 109:8 (LXX; H. T. 108:8), *laboi*, a wish, becomes *labetō*, a command. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 16, Part 2)

Peter uses the common formula for introducing an Old Testament Scripture: “it has been written” (*gegraptai*). In two passages (Ps 69:25; Ps 109:8) the psalmist indicates that a habitation (*epaulis* can also mean “homestead,” “cottage,” “cabin,” but here refers to an office) has become vacant and another person should take this “place of leadership.” Peter adapts this prophecy by equating the leadership position with an office in the church (*episkopēn*). (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 7, Part 2)

another take his office – The fact that the number of apostles must be twelve according to the original choosing of Jesus appears to have been taken for granted. That this was necessary in order to match the 12 patriarchs, the 12 tribes of Israel, and the 12 thrones awaiting them to judge these 12 tribes was undoubtedly also the basis for this decision. (LL)

episkopēn, “office.” The KJV, “bishoprick,” is based on the use of the masculine of this noun to designate the ecclesiastical leader, the liturgical president and overseer of the assembly, the bishop. Here the word is used to designate official leadership and responsibility. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 16, Part 2)

Judge 12 tribes – This refers not to condemning old, unbelieving Israel, but to the responsibility of shepherding and oversight in the new Israel, the church. This is the Lukan equivalent to Jesus giving to Peter the keys of the kingdom in Matthew (16:19 and his bestowal of the office of the keys upon the disciples in John (20:22-23). The OT judges were saviors and deliverers who led the people of God to repentance and faith (e.g., Judges 2:10-23; the LXX uses the verb *krino* “to judge,” for their leadership [e.g., Judges 10:2-3]). So too the apostles and pastors in the apostolic ministry will “judge” in the following way:

The Gospel requires of those who preside over the churches that they preach the Gospel, remit sins, administer the sacrament, and, in addition, exercise jurisdiction, that is, excommunicate those who are guilty of notorious crimes and absolve those who repent. (Concordia Commentary – Luke)

1:21-22 Because Peter has offered biblical warrants regarding this election, it is necessary (*dei*) that one of the men (*andrōn*) should become one with them in their future travels. This successor should have at least two qualifications: (1) he must have been with Jesus and the disciples from Christ's baptism to his ascension, and (2) he must have been witness to the resurrection, as were the other disciples. Peter

determined the requirements, but the final choice was left to the Lord. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 7, Part 2)

1:21 men – Greek aner, “male,” “husband.” Christ chose only men for the apostolic ministry (Luke 6:13-16). He also treasured the service of women (Luke 8:2-3; 24:9; Acts 9:36). The early Christians maintained a clear division in the callings of men and women. (TLSB)

Note from Luke 8:2-3... Women followed Jesus, support the ministry of Jesus and the apostles. This is striking, because females did not normally follow Jewish rabbis. (TLSB)

Note from Luke 24:9... Some modern interpreters emphasize that since God chose to have women first bear witness to the resurrection, this means God specially ordained the for service in the Church. This argument fails on two counts: the angels were actually the first to bear witness to His mighty acts (cf. Psalm 145), even children (Psalm 8:2). The “go-and tell” passages in the Gospels are not about ordaining or commissioning people to offices in the Church, but about people acting as couriers or witnesses (e.g., Matthew 11:4; 18:15; Mark 5:19; Luke 7:22; 13:32). (TLSB)

Note from Acts 9:36... Tabitha’s example shows that as believers grow in faith in Christ, they bear the fruit of faith, imitating Christ. Cf. Matthew 25:31-40; Acts 2:44-45; 1 Timothy 5:3-16. (TLSB)

accompanied us. Ministered publicly. (CSB)

He was a witness to the whole public activity of Christ, up to the resurrection. “in and out” is a Hebrew idiom encompassing everything Jesus did (cf. Dt. 28:6). (TLSB)

sunelthontōn is an aorist active participle, used here of those who lived and traveled with the Lord through his public ministry until after his resurrection. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 16, Part 2)

1:22 with us a witness to his resurrection. Apparently several met this requirement. On this occasion, however, the believers were selecting someone to become an official witness to the resurrection—thus, a 12th apostle (v. 25). (CSB)

martura tēs anastaseōs. The qualifications for the apostolic office are clearly described. The man must be a witness to the narrative of Jesus’ life with special emphasis on his resurrection from the dead. This language refers to Jesus’ own words. In Lk 24:44–48, Jesus speaks of the divine necessity that governs the fulfillment of the Scriptures, his own Passion, and the preaching of repentance and forgiveness in his name. In Lk 24:48, Jesus concludes by calling the apostles “witnesses of these things.” (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 22, Part 2)

1:23 Barsabbas. Means “son of (the) Sabbath.” This patronymic was used for two early Jewish Christians, possibly brothers. One was Joseph (here); the other was Judas, a prophet in Jerusalem who was sent to Antioch with Silas (15:22, 32). (CSB)

Justus. Joseph’s Hellenistic name. Nothing more is known of him. (CSB)

Hebrew, Aram, and Latin names. Considerable detail concerning someone not chosen or not mentioned again. He was likely well known in the Early Church. (TLSB)

Matthias – Short form of Mattathias, a name famous as a result of the war to liberate Israel from the tyranny of Antiochus IV Epiphanes (cf. 1 Macc. 2:1). (TLSB)

There were only two nominees who could fulfill the requirements: Joseph, called Barsabbas, and Matthias. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 7, Part 2)

1:24-25 The apostles hold together despite Judas's defection; they remain intact even after the martyrdom of James the Great (cf. 12:2). (TLSB)

1:24 *you have chosen* – Apostles are chosen directly by Christ Himself. He appoints overseers and elders indirectly through the mutual consent of clergy and people (cf. 20:17, 28). (TLSB)

Luke emphasizes the importance of prayer here and also throughout his gospel. The gathering implores the Lord to “show us which of these two you have chosen.” Peter prayed directly (*su*) to the Lord Jesus. “You have chosen” (*exelēxō*, aorist) indicates that Jesus had already made the choice, but he had not revealed the name of that apostle to the congregation or to Peter. Peter set an example for all congregations to follow in selecting not only pastors but also other people for congregational leadership. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 7, Part 2)

1:25 *this ministry* – In the NT, almost always specific, a concrete form of service laid on a particular person. (TLSB)

apostleship – The ambassadorial office Jesus instituted in Luke 6:13. (TLSB)

apostolēs, “[of] apostleship,” is literally a mission or a sending for the purpose of accomplishing a particular goal. Although Matthew uses the appellation *apostolos* very sparingly and prefers “the Twelve” (*dōdeka*), and even then only with reference to their initial mission (Matthew 10), Luke appears to use the term more generally. In this narrative, however, the reference is clearly to the Twelve whose full number is fully restored when Matthias is added to the Eleven (*hendeka*). (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 16, Part 2)

ministry – In the NT, almost always specific, a concrete form of service laid on a particular person. (TLSB)

diakonias, from *diakonia*, “ministry,” is descriptive of service toward others, charitable support and help, and of ministerial service to God. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 16, Part 2)

The job description is stated in two words: “ministry” (*diakonias*) and “apostolic” (*apostolēs*), which grants the new disciple the full right of apostleship, equal to that of the 11. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 7, Part 2)

1:26 *cast lots*. See Pr 16:33. By casting lots they were able to allow God the right of choice. The use of rocks or sticks to designate the choice was common (see 1Ch 26:13–16; see also notes on Ne 11:1; Jnh 1:7). This is the Bible's last mention of casting lots. (CSB)

klerous, “lots”; in the original sense, some small object thrown to make a determination, as in Mk 15:24. The word is also used to indicate that which has been assigned (Acts 8:21). In the ancient world this was not seen as mere chance; it signified a determination made by fate or destiny. The term is used here, in conjunction with its occurrence in v 17 referring to Judas, to indicate that the choice of a man to complete again the number of the Twelve is no more in the hands of men or blind fate than was the choosing of the Eleven and Judas. It is the Lord's doing. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 16, Part 2)

klērous. The “lot” (*klēron*) is the way Judas entered the apostolic band (v 17), and so it becomes the way Matthias takes his place. The *klēron* is the word used in the LXX referring to the lot of the priests (Deut 10:9). From this word, we get the term “clergy,” which means one whose portion or destiny or lot is found in God. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 22, Part 2)

All offices and duties to be performed in the OT temple were chosen by lot. Names of candidates were written on stones which were put into a vessel, which was then shaken. The name on the first stone to fall out of the vessel was elected. (LL)

The name of Matthias was selected, and he was added to the number of the apostles. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 7, Part 2)

eleven apostles – Twelve apostles were needed to confront the 12 tribes of Israel on the day of Pentecost. (TLSB)

1:12–26 The disciples and others seek the Lord’s will concerning the candidate of His choice to replace Judas as a leader of the Church, the new Israel. Today, entrust your future to the Lord in prayer. He will prepare your way before you. Since our Lord is present with us till the end of the age, He will knit together in love His faithful people with Himself and with one another. • Jesus, our King, may we never tire of watching in prayer before Your throne, and may Your will be our delight. Amen. (TLSB)

EPISTLE – 1 Peter 4:12-19; 5:6-11

Suffering as a Christian

12 Beloved, do not be surprised at the fiery trial when it comes upon you to test you, as though something strange were happening to you. 13 But rejoice insofar as you share Christ's sufferings, that you may also rejoice and be glad when his glory is revealed. 14 If you are insulted for the name of Christ, you are blessed, because the Spirit of glory and of God rests upon you. 15 But let none of you suffer as a murderer or a thief or an evildoer or as a meddler. 16 Yet if anyone suffers as a Christian, let him not be ashamed, but let him glorify God in that name. 17 For it is time for judgment to begin at the household of God; and if it begins with us, what will be the outcome for those who do not obey the gospel of God? 18 And “If the righteous is scarcely saved, what will become of the ungodly and the sinner?” 19 Therefore let those who suffer according to God's will entrust their souls to a faithful Creator while doing good.

4:12 beloved. Or “Loved ones” (see 2:11). (CSB)

In one sense Peter is acting like a coach at half-time knowing that victory is in the team’s grasp but spending every minute encouraging and exhorting his players. (LL)

do not be surprised at the fiery trial. See 1:6–7; 2:20–21. (CSB)

Cf 1:6–7; 2:20–21. Great suffering afflicts some Christians, who may bear such crosses as God strengthens them through affliction. Luther: “God lays a cross on all believers in order that they may taste and prove the power of God—the power which they have taken hold of through faith” (AE 30:127). (TLSB)

Sooner or later, in every generation, painful trials come to each and every Christian. – The first persecutions against Christians were done by Jew who saw Christ as a major threat to their religious beliefs and way of life. The same Sanhedrin that had put Jesus to death saw to it that the deacon Stephen

became the first martyr. After that murder, the floodgates of hatred and persecution were opened and most of the Christians were driven from Jerusalem. They took their faith with them, however, and planted new congregations wherever they went. Another sad blow came when King Herod Agrippa I casually had the apostle James beheaded in order to curry favor with his Jewish subjects. Paul frequently encountered bitter Jewish hostility on his missionary journeys. The Roman government at first ignored Christianity, thinking that it was just a weird offshoot of Judaism, which had official permission to exist. By the time Peter was writing this letter, however, the split between Christianity and Judaism was apparent to all, and Christianity was viewed as a dangerous and subversive movement. The emperor Nero (54-68), a violent and immoral man, in July of the year 64 chose to blame the Christians in Rome for a terrible fire that that and destroyed part of the city. Hundreds of Christians were arrested, convicted for antisocial beliefs, cover in the skins of wild animals, and torn to death by dogs, others were crucified, coated with pitch, and set on fire, so when darkness fell, they burned like torches in the night. Peter was killed by Nero. The emperor Domitian (81-96) demanded that all his subjects recognize him as “Lord and God.” Obviously this emperor worship would be repulsive to Christians. It was during this time that the apostle John, supervisor of the congregations in the province of Asia, was exiled from Ephesus to the island of Patmos. Under the emperor Trajan (98-117), regional governors knew that they had full authority to arrest, punish, and even kill Christians just for bearing the Christian name. Persecution continued into the 20th century. In her book *In the Lion’s Deb*, Christian writer Nina Shea asserts that more Christians have died in the 20th century simply for being Christians than in the past 19 centuries combined. For example, in the early years of the 20th century, hundreds of thousands of Christian Armenians were slaughtered by Muslim Turks. When the Bolshevik revolution prevailed in Russia, the communist government of Lenin made hostility to Christianity a central feature of Soviet life; atheism was the official state philosophy. All of the Russian Orthodox Church’s property and assets were immediately seized by the state. In 1929 Stalin began a decade of terror for the church, intending to destroy it. Ninety-two per cent of the church buildings were closed and with destroyed or converted into museums, warehouses, or factories. All but one of the seminaries was closed. The number of priests was reduced by 95 percent. The triumph of Mao and his Communists in 1949 ushered in a terrible era for Christians in China. There were 8,325 Protestant missionaries in 1936 and fewer than 20 by 1952. Nina Shea has documented the abduction and death of more than one million Sudanese, mostly Christians and non-Muslims, at the hand of the country’s Islamic government in recent years. (PBC)

fiery trial – *purosei peirasmon* – Trial by fire. This may be linked to Proverbs 27:21, “The crucible for silver and the furnace for gold” There were ten persecutions during the first three centuries of the NT church’s history. Statistics vary as to how many persons have seen martyrdom in our own time. The “trial” is not a tragedy; in God’s world “chance” does not exist for the elect (Rom 8:28). The focus is not on the intensity of heat but on the refining power of the fire. (Concordia Pulpit Resources Volume 9, Part 2)

4:13 *but* – *alla* which means “quite to the contrary.” He is going to say the very opposite of our fears and fleshly thoughts.

rejoice insofar as you share Christ’s sufferings. Peter once rebelled against the idea that Christ would suffer (see Mt 16:21–23). (CSB)

Suffering for the sake of the Gospel, while unpleasant, is an honor for Christians, who know that their Savior suffered to save them. (TLSB)

This is not to assist in the atoning for our sins. The persecuted will find comfort in the realization that a righteous, innocent Christ also suffered. . (Concordia Pulpit Resources Volume 9, Part 2)

also rejoice and be glad when his glory is revealed – When the Gospel’s effects are seen in your life and witness. (TLSB)

4:14 *insulted for the name of Christ.* See Mt 5:11–12; Jn 15:18–20; Ac 5:41; 14:22; Ro 8:17; 2Co 1:5; Php 3:10; 2Ti 3:12. (CSB)

Christ transforms the world’s taunts into His blessing (cf Ac 5:41). (TLSB)

Matthew 5:11: “Blessed are you when people insult you, persecute you and falsely say all kinds of evil against you because of me.”

Acts 4:15: “The apostles left the Sanhedrin, rejoicing because they had been counted worthy of suffering disgrace for the Name.”

All who would show loyalty to Him, and share in ministry to His redeemed people, are always liable to have to share in this approach.

Spirit of glory and of God rests upon you – We do not face insults and persecution alone; God is with us to empower and to bless us. (TLSB)

4:15 Suffering the effects of our own sin is not bearing the cross. (TLSB)

meddler – One who wants to supervise the affairs of others. (TLSB)

4:16 *glorify God* – By confessing Christ, even if it means death or adversity. (TLSB)

that name – Christian. (TLSB)

4:17 *judgment to begin with the household of God.* The persecutions that believers were undergoing were divinely sent judgment intended to purify God’s people. – As a rule these troubles are punishments for sin. In the godly they have another and better purpose, that is, to exercise them so that in their temptations they may learn to seek God’s help and acknowledge the lack of unbelief in their hearts. (Ap XII, 151) (CSB)

Some will see the effects of their own sin (v 15). God allows us to face such consequences that we might repent. (TLSB)

the outcome ... for those who do not obey the gospel. If God brings judgment on his own people, how much more serious will the judgment be that he will bring on unbelievers! (CSB)

Or refuse to believe. Without faith in Christ, there is no hope. Luther: “The time of judgment, foretold by the prophets, is at hand [Jer 25:29; Ezk 9:6]. When the Gospel is preached, God begins to punish sin, in order that He may kill and make alive” (AE 30:130). (TLSB)

4:18 This proverb teaches that believers may suffer the effect of their sins. Unlike unbelievers, they face such suffering in faith, trusting in God’s deliverance. (TLSB)

4:19 *according to God’s will* – Not for their sins but for the sake of the Gospel. Luther: “[Peter] teaches us to subdue the flesh with sobriety, watchfulness, temperance, prayer, and to find comfort and strength through the sufferings of Christ” (AE 35:391). (TLSB)

entrust their souls – Trusting that God will preserve them. (TL SB)

faithful Creator – Our Maker will continue to care for us graciously. (TL SB)

4:12–19 God permits suffering in our lives for a variety of reasons. Sometimes it comes as a direct result of our own sin in order to discipline us. Other times it is an effect of being God’s child in a world that wants to crush His Church. Although we do not know God’s hidden will, we trust He has only the best in mind for us. He will strengthen, uphold, and bless us in the midst of persecution. He will use any afflictions we face for our good or for blessing others. With our eyes on the cross, we can endure. Our God will preserve us, and He has prepared an eternal home for us in heaven for the sake of Christ. • Lord God, in the midst of trials and persecution, keep our hearts and minds stayed on You, our only refuge. Amen. (TL SB)

Shepherd the Flock God

6 Humble yourselves, therefore, under the mighty hand of God so that at the proper time he may exalt you, 7 casting all your anxieties on him, because he cares for you. 8 Be sober-minded; be watchful. Your adversary the devil prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour. 9 Resist him, firm in your faith, knowing that the same kinds of suffering are being experienced by your brotherhood throughout the world. 10 And after you have suffered a little while, the God of all grace, who has called you to his eternal glory in Christ, will himself restore, confirm, strengthen, and establish you. 11 To him be the dominion forever and ever. Amen.

5:6 *at the proper time he may exalt you.* His help will come at just the right time. (CSB)

When it fits God’s purpose and benefits others or ourselves. (TL SB)

5:7 *casting all your anxieties on him* – epirphantes meaning to “throw them” because it is a care to Him concerning you. The Christian attitude is not negative self-abandonment or resignation, but involves one’s self-humbling to trust God with your troubles. – It is not always God who smites us down, but it is always God who lifts us up. (PBC)

Pray knowing that God provides for your needs. “The person who knows that he has a Father who is gracious to him through Christ truly knows God” (AC XX 24). (TL SB)

he cares for you – This expresses a belief which is distinctive of Christianity and of biblical faith. Christians begin with, and are meant to build on, the confidence that God does care.

5:8 *Be sober-minded.* See 1Th 5:6, 8. – To be free of cares should not make a Christian complacent or careless. Peter, himself, had a lot of trouble with this. (CSB)

Pray for Christ’s return (cf 1Th 5:6, 8). (TL SB)

watchful. Perhaps Peter remembered his own difficulty in keeping awake during our Lord’s agony in Gethsemane (see Mt 26:36–46). (CSB)

Do you wonder why you still find certain sins so fascinating even when you’ve been burned by them before? Well, says Peter, wake up and realize what you’re up against in your life: you have a fearsome enemy, one of the greatest of the spirit world, a dragon whose spiky tail swept a third of the stars out of

the sky, that is, seduced other angels to join his rebellious conspiracy (Revelation 12:3-4). What a dreadful thought – this evil, worldwide, powerful spirit is committed to dragging you off to hell too. (PBC)

your adversary – It is like that of a staling attorney in the courtroom before the judge. (LL)

like a roaring lion – Peter may be comparing Satan with a lion because of the impending killing of Christians by wild beasts in the Roman arena. (Concordia Pulpit Resources Volume 9, Part 2)

Satan seeks to harm Christians in any way possible. Under Nero, some Christians literally faced death by lions in the Roman arena. The devil “tries every trick and does not stop until he finally wears us out, so that we either renounce our faith or throw up our hands and put up our feet, becoming indifferent or impatient” (LC V 26). (TLSB)

5:9 *resist him* – But here is the good news: the descendant of the woman, prophesied in Eden, has crushed the serpent’s head. His power to accuse (that’s what the name devil actually means) is broken, for Christ has forgiven all sin. Satan’s power to control and manipulate is broken, because the Spirit of the Lord lives in the believers and shares His strength. James says, “Resist the devil, and he will flee from you” (James 4:7). One little word can indeed fell him, the word of the gospel, that there is no condemnation for those in Christ Jesus. (PBC)

By God’s Word, which gives us strength and guidance to face temptations (Eph 6:11–18). (TLSB)

your brotherhood. They are not isolated; they belong to a fellowship of suffering. (CSB)

Christians in other times and places also faced persecution and have demonstrated the strength of God’s care for His people. Luther: “You must be sober and vigilant, but in order that the body may be ready. But this does not yet vanquish the devil. It is done only in order that you may give the body less reason to sin. The true sword is your strong and firm faith. If you take hold of God’s Word in your heart and cling to it with faith, the devil cannot win but must flee” (AE 30:142). (TLSB)

It can be comforting to know that other faithful Christians are suffering in similar ways. Just because you are suffering does not mean that there is something wrong with you. Remember that your brothers and sisters in faith all over the world are suffering too as they wait for Christ to return and create a new heaven and a new earth. (PBC)

5:10 *have suffered a little while* – The same God who called you to eternal glory through the gospel will not let your sufferings go on one minute longer than He allows, and He already has His plan of relief ready to go. From God’s point of view, your sufferings last just a little while, for at just the right time our loving Father will come with strength and restoration. (PBC)

will restore you – God will care for all our needs, even in persecution. “God has kindled in their hearts this beginning of true godliness. He will further strengthen and help them in their great weakness to persevere in true faith unto the end” (FC SD II 14). “Through the Word, by which He calls us, the Holy Spirit bestows grace, power, and ability for this purpose” (FC SD XI 33). (TLSB)

5:11 *the dominion* – *kratos* means “might” occurs 12 times in the NT, eleven of God and only once of the devil. – There is no verb in the Greek of this verse. It may be the language of prayer, i.e. so may it be. It is more probably the language of acknowledgement and as in 4:11, and in the familiar ending of the Lord’s prayer.

Words of praise are a fitting response to God’s blessings. (TLSB)

amen – This adds an emphatic endorsement. Such an assertion affords the fullest ground of confidence and courage.

5:1–11 The chief Shepherd calls undershepherds to teach, preach, administer the Sacraments, and guard His sheep, always keeping in mind that sin and the devil seek to entrap them. The devil and false teachers, even though they are damned, would lead us astray through sin and temptation, and take us to hell. By the Gospel, we have fervent love for one another because we share the same faith, Baptism, and Spirit. We will endure by God’s power. • Almighty God, keep us strong in faith through Your Word, that we constantly behold Your Son, who saves us from sin and eternal death. Amen. (TLSB)

GOSPEL – JOHN 17:1-11

The High Priestly Prayer

When Jesus had spoken these words, he lifted up his eyes to heaven, and said, “Father, the hour has come; glorify your Son that the Son may glorify you, 2 since you have given him authority over all flesh, to give eternal life to all whom you have given him. 3 And this is eternal life, that they know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom you have sent. 4 I glorified you on earth, having accomplished the work that you gave me to do. 5 And now, Father, glorify me in your own presence with the glory that I had with you before the world existed. 6 “I have manifested your name to the people whom you gave me out of the world. Yours they were, and you gave them to me, and they have kept your word. 7 Now they know that everything that you have given me is from you. 8 For I have given them the words that you gave me, and they have received them and have come to know in truth that I came from you; and they have believed that you sent me. 9 I am praying for them. I am not praying for the world but for those whom you have given me, for they are yours. 10 All mine are yours, and yours are mine, and I am glorified in them. 11 And I am no longer in the world, but they are in the world, and I am coming to you. Holy Father, keep them in your name, which you have given me, that they may be one, even as we are one.

17:1-11 This chapter is the High Priestly Prayer of Jesus. The portion considered here explores Jesus’ thoughts about Himself and His disciples. It is a prayer Jesus wanted His disciples to hear. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 15, Part 2)

Today is a pivotal Sunday, standing as it does between Ascension and Pentecost. Christ has ascended, but has not yet sent the Spirit. Our text is from Jesus’ high priestly prayer, a magnificent intercession in which Christ at times speaks as if he has already fulfilled his mission and departed from this earth—hence its selection in the lectionary for this Sunday. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 3, Part 2)

The prayer may be visualized as a series of concentric circles expanding outward. Our Lord first prays for himself, that the Father may glorify his Son, so that the Son may in turn glorify the Father. In language typical of the theology of the cross, the term “glorify” paradoxically refers to the ignominy of his crucifixion. That horrible, shameful event is the hour of Christ’s glory, through which he glorifies the Father by fulfilling the will of him who sent him. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 3, Part 2)

The circle expands as Christ then intercedes specifically for the elect—those the Father has given him—and explicitly not for the world at large (v 9). If we take the past-tense verbs literally, Christ is praying for the disciples, who had already received his Word and believed that he was sent from the Father. (If the

aorist verbs are gnomic—timeless—then the intercessions apply equally well to disciples today.) (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 3, Part 2)

Later in the prayer, after our text, the circle expands further as Christ prays also for those who would come to believe through the disciples' word (v 20). Jesus is not only praying for those disciples gathered around the Passover table with him, but also for all disciples everywhere of all times, who, baptized in the triune name (cf. v 6), gather at his holy Table, receive his Word, and do his work "The work of God is this: to believe in the one he has sent" (In 6:28). (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 3, Part 2)

Jesus deliberately prays to his Father in the presence of his disciples. He wants them to hear his prayer requests, which directly apply to them. They are about to go through a tremendous shock—his death, resurrection, and then his departure. They need this prayer, as do we. How encouraging for us to know that no matter what we go through, Jesus is with us, because we belong to him. "No one can snatch them out of my hand. My Father, who has given them to me, is greater than all; no one can snatch them out of my Father's hand" (Jn 10:28–29). (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 3, Part 2)

The character of this intercession is profound beyond description, possessing an eternal, timeless quality. It offers a glimpse into the communion between the Father and Son, a communion in which we participate, thanks to the intercessory work and prayer of Christ. As in most of John's gospel, the Greek text is deceptively easy and simple, while theologically sublime. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 3, Part 2)

17:1 This verse marks the division between the discourse and the prayer. Jesus lifts His eyes to heaven. The hour has come for the Father to glorify the Son by investing the human nature of Jesus with the full use of the divine power. The time has also come for the Son to glorify the Father by His entire activity of obedience. The Son glorifies the Father in the world. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 15, Part 2)

he lifted his eyes to heaven. The customary attitude in prayer (11:41; Ps 123:1; Mk 7:34), though sometimes the person prostrated himself (see Mt 26:39). (CSB)

The last thing Jesus did before leaving for the Garden of Gethsemane was lift His eyes heavenward and pray aloud to God the Father. This prayer has been called Jesus' high priestly prayer because with it Jesus functioned as high priest and interceded to the Father, for the disciples first and then for all believers. It was a prayer such as only the Son of God could pray, truly the Lord's prayer. (PBC)

and said – Jesus frequently went off to pray privately. Early in His ministry, after a particular long and busy day, Jesus rose early the next morning and "went off to a solitary place, where He prayed" (Mark 1:35). In the Sermon on the Mount, after He had condemned the phony prayer life of many of the religious leaders of the Jews, Jesus countered by saying: "This is how you should pray" (Matthew 6:9), and He taught them the Lord's Prayer. It is no wonder that Jesus spent much time in prayer. He had come, He insisted constantly, not to do His will but the will of His Father (Matthew 11:27; John 8:27-29). In order to do this, Jesus needed to be in constant communication with His Father, always moving toward the completion of His act of salvation for the sins of the world. (LifeLight)

Father. Used of God in John's Gospel 122 times. (CSB)

Martin Luther, perhaps reflecting the way the medieval church of his time depicted the Father as an awesome and fearful judge, wrote in the Small Catechism, "With these words God's tenderly invites us to believe that He is our true children, so that with all boldness and confidence we may ask Him as dear children ask their dear father." The fact that the Son Himself not only addresses God in this familiar way

but also invites us to do the same in the Lord's Prayer tells us something about the Father's attitude of love toward His people. It also tells us what we need to know before we pray: the Father Himself wants us to pray to Him, He listens to His dear children, and He answers our prayers according to His good and gracious will for our lives and welfare. (PBC)

the hour has come – This covers his suffering, death, resurrection and ascension. This contrasts with what Jesus had said in 2:4. (CSB)

elēluthen hē hōra; doxason sou ton huion. The hour had come for the Son to be glorified by being sacrificed. God's glory involves divine anguish, Christ bearing the Father's wrath against sin. It also includes resurrection and ascension, where the Son would be ultimately glorified, his human nature being "assumed into fellowship with the Trinity" (Martin Chemnitz, *The Two Natures in Christ*, trans. J. A. O. Preus [St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1971], 390). (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 21, Part 2)

Jesus began by praying for Himself and the mission set before Him. He acknowledged that the time had come for culmination of His ministry and the fulfillment of His purpose. (PBC)

"Father, the time has come." This contrasts with earlier statements that the hour had not yet come (In 2:4). With these words, you can almost hear Jesus say, "Well, Father, here we go. I'm about to complete the work you gave me. As we head down the final stretch, to you be the glory." The disciples see God's glory as the Son glorifies the Father (Jn 1:14). (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 3, Part 2)

Jesus prays "Father the time has come" (John 17:1). As John wrote his gospel, He was fully aware of the time that hovered over the entire earthly life of Jesus. "in the beginning was the Word" (1:1) are the words that begin John's gospel, referring to the eternal dimension of the Son of God. Yet time was not an enemy for Jesus or something that could not be controlled – as we cannot control the passage of time. Instead, Jesus frequently states: "My time has not yet come" (John 2:4; 7:6, 8, 30; 8:20). This expression reminds us that the entire act of salvation had its own timetable, which was not subject to the constraints and demand of people but reflected God's own will and plan. (LifeLight)

Glorify. The glory of the Father and that of the Son are closely connected, and the death by which Jesus would glorify God would lead to eternal life for believers (v. 2). (CSB)

John's gospel uses the noun *doxa*, "glory," 18 times and the verb *doxazō*, "glorify," 23 times. Like "truth," "glory" is closely associated with God's grace in Christ. John introduces the concept by saying God's glory is seen in Jesus, the Word made flesh, whose glory is "glory of the only-begotten from the Father, full of grace and truth" (Jn 1:14 literally). Compared to secular literature, John's distinctive emphasis is that glory is seen in lowly service (Leon Morris, *Expository Reflections on the Gospel of John*). The cross is the place to see such glory. Thus glory is prominent in the prayer of John 17 just before the cross, the lowliest of lowly service and therefore the most splendid revelation of glory. See also v 4: "I have brought you glory on earth by completing the work you gave me to do." The verb *teleioō*, "to complete," is related to *teleō*, "to finish, complete" in Jesus' word from the cross, "It is finished" (Jn 19:30). This emphasis ties in with the Epistle (1 Pet 5:5–6): God gives grace to the humble; humble yourself and God will lift you up. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 6, Part 2)

doxasēi se. The words for "glorify" are identical but differing in meaning. This "to glorify" means the dissemination of the Gospel everywhere to the end of the age. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 21, Part 2)

The glorification would take place on the cross. (TLSB)

Through Jesus death he would be glorified because he would lead many to eternal life – The Son could only do so because the Father glorified the Son. – In praying for God the Father to glorify Him, Jesus was praying for the successful outcome of His work of salvation. The glory would come with Jesus’ victory on the cross over sin and Satan, would become manifest in His resurrection and ascension, and would be made full in heaven. It would follow close upon the darkness of the cross. When the disciples saw Jesus alive after the grave, they saw that glory, “the glory of the One and only, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth” (1:14). (PBC)

17:2 given. The thought of giving is stressed in this chapter (vv. 4, 6–9, 11–12, 14, 22, 24); see note on 3:27. (CSB)

This was a reminder for the disciples that he had power over spiritual life and death because of his saving work on behalf of mankind.

John uses *didōmi*, “to give,” 75 times in his gospel, but uses *charis*, “grace,” only 4 times (1:14, 16–17). Expositors have noted that John uses “to give” much like Paul uses “grace.” The gift God gives, by his grace, is eternal life. While eternal life continues on in heaven, we do not have to die before receiving it, for it starts in the new birth of water and the Spirit (Jn 3:5–6), and is a present reality for those who believe that Jesus is the Christ (Jn 20:31; cf. also I Tim 6:12). Eternal life denotes a quality or kind of life (as well as its duration); Jesus came that we may have life abundantly (Jn 10:10). (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 6, Part 2)

Jesus and the Father are together in the mission of salvation. The Son has been given authority over all flesh in his human nature. The Son has authority to give eternal life. Eternal life is a gift. He also has the authority for judgment. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 15, Part 2)

authority over all flesh. Christ rules over all people. (TLSB)

all flesh – This revelation of this glory was integrally bound with His mission for “all people” (Literally, “all flesh”). He won eternal life for everyone. (PBC)

to give eternal life. Jesus’ teachings are simple and consistent. His words spiral and bring us back again to the all-sufficient, saving truth. All who believe in Jesus as God’s Son have eternal life. (PBC)

whom you have given him.† Again God’s gift of salvation is stressed. (CSB)

Jesus reminds the disciples (and us) that he is God. He has been granted authority over all flesh, to give all believers eternal life (cf. *exousia*, “authority” also in 1:12, where N1V translates it “right”). He and the Father share the same glory (vv 5,10; Jn 1:1, 2). He came from the Father, he is the “sent one,” the Apostle (v 8; the final verb is the one from which “apostle” comes). He and the Father are one (v II). (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 3, Part 2)

hina pan ho dedōkas autōi dōsēi autois zōēn aiōnion. The Son freely gives eternal life to each whom the Father has given him for eternal perseverance. According to particular election (J. T. Mueller, *Christian Dogmatics* [St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1934, 1955], 589), the Father chooses certain ones to be his and gives them to his Son before time, bringing them to saving faith in time (cf. Acts 13:48; Rom 8:29–30; Titus 1:1). “He ordained in His eternal purpose what cannot fail or be overthrown. He placed salvation for safekeeping in the almighty hand of our Savior, Jesus Christ, from which no one can snatch

us” (FC SD XI 46). Again, “Election is a cause of faith and salvation” (F. Bente, *Historical Introductions to the Lutheran Confessions* [St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 2005], 472). (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 21, Part 2)

Jesus doesn’t want us to forget to whom we belong: (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 3, Part 2)

Believers in Christ do not come to Him by their own power, God brings them to Him. (TLSB)

Believers in Christ know from this prayer that they have eternal life. (PBC)

17:3 Jesus summarizes two key points: (1) to know God is eternal life, and (2) knowledge of the true God cannot be separated from Christ, who is the only access to such knowledge (cf. 14:6-7). (TLSB)

hautē de estin hē aiōnios zōē hina ginōskōsin se ton monon alēthinon theon. Those who love the Father and the Son are known by them forever (cf. 1 Cor 8:3). Believing that the Father is the true God and that Jesus Christ is the one the Father has sent and the true God (cf. 1 Jn 5:20; Jn 1:18, “The only God, who is at the Father’s side”), one has eternal life (cf. Jn 6:33–40, 47). (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 21, Part 2)

they know you – Eternal life is knowing the true God. The two most common Greek verbs for “to know” occur more often in John than in any other NT book (57 of the 222 occurrences of *ginōskō*, and 84 of 318 for *oida*). For John, knowing is a transforming experience. The gift of knowing God ushers the believer into a new quality of life, unlike anything else in this world—a heavenly life that lasts forever. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 6, Part 2)

St. Bernard of Clairvaux: “Knowledge then is the fruit of faith, perfect charity of hope... Understanding and love, that is, the knowledge of and delight in the truth, are perhaps, as it were, the two arms of the soul, with which it embraces and comprehends with all saints the length and breadth, the height and depth, that is the eternity, the love, the goodness, and the wisdom of God” (SLSB, p. 37). (TLSB)

How clearly Jesus spells out what eternal life is all about to know the Father by knowing: the one he has sent (cf. 14:6). To “know” is much more than to recognize some facts. It is to keep God’s Word (v 6), i.e., to believe, be conformed to, and follow the Word (*tēreō* reflects Hebrew *shamar*, the word used so often for both God and his people keeping the covenant; NIV’s “obey” has Reformed overtones). It is to receive and believe God’s words to us through Christ (v 8); to be one with Christ and the Father (v 11). (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 3, Part 2)

only true God – The pagans around them and us cannot say this because they don’t worship the true God or have many gods.

False teachers have abused this passage, using it to question whether Jesus was true God. (TLSB)

Athanasius: “Now had (Jesus) been a creature, He would not have added this, and ranked Himself with His Creator (for what fellowship is there between the True and the not true?); but as it is by adding Himself to the Father, He has shown that He is the Father’s nature; and He has given us to know that of the True Father He is the True Offspring. And John too, as he had learned, so he teaches this, writing in his Epistle, ‘And we are in the True, even in His Son Jesus Christ; This is the True God and eternal life’” (NPNF2 4:398). (TLSB)

Hilary of Poitiers: “If... the Father is the only true God, Christ is not outside the only true God, since the Father, Who is the only true God, glorifies in Himself Christ (cf. 13:32; 14:10; 17:5)” (NPNF2 9:169). (TLSB)

This is what it means to have the gift of eternal life. The Father is the only God and Jesus is the Christ. This is not say that the Father is God but the Son is not God. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 15, Part 2)

sent. Again the mission of Jesus is mentioned. (CSB)

17:4 *I have glorified you.* Christ’s mission was not self-centered. – Only Jesus can make this statement. (CSB)

The first three verses speak about what Jesus will do after He is glorified. Verses 4-5 speak about what Jesus has done. The shift is from third person to first person. Jesus brought glory to the Father on earth and will continue by the Father’s side in heaven. While Jesus entire work on earth was to bring redemption to man, it was also to glorify the Father. The crowning point is Jesus’ atoning death. (Concordia Pulpit Resources – Volume 6, Part 2)

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egō se edoxasa epi tēs gēs. The Son did so during his humiliation by accomplishing all that the Father commanded him. He lived the perfect life in the stead of sinners; he forgave sins in his words and Passion; he overthrew death in his resurrection; he ascended as the Church’s firstfruits. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 21, Part 2)

the work you gave me. Jesus emphasized the supreme place of the Father. (CSB)

17:5 *glorify me ... with the glory I had with you.* Jesus asks the Father to return him to his previous position of glory, to exchange humiliation for glorification. This occurred at Christ’s resurrection and exaltation to God’s right hand. (CSB)

After the earthly part is finished, the heavenly part can begin. Jesus’ primary concern was always the glorification of the Father. Jesus is not requesting an award for His work. Jesus is glorified so that He can continue to glorify the Father and so He can bring to eternal life all the Father has given Him. He is to receive the glory He shared before the world was created. He wants to be glorified according to His human nature. (Concordia Pulpit Resources – Volume 6, Part 2)

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kai nun doxason me su, pater. Jesus asks in the hearing of the Eleven that he would now, following the Passion, be elevated bodily to the right hand of his Father, to rule the Church, inhabiting her with his life-

giving flesh in his Word and treasured Sacraments, keeping the Church in his Father's name. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 21, Part 2)

tēi doxēi hēi eichon . . . para soi. Jesus' flesh would now be exalted where it would have the same glory that his divinity always had. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 21, Part 2)

world. The universe (see notes on v. 14; 1:10). "World" occurs 18 times in this prayer. (CSB)

The whole point of this verse is that God is asked to glorify Jesus by glorifying his human nature with the divine glory which he had from eternity and had also in the state of humiliation.

before the world existed. Preincarnate glory with the Father. Christ is eternal and thus existed before the world was made. (TLSB)

17:6 *I have manifested your* – God's name is the revelation of God himself. It is the triune name placed on us in Baptism. (CSB)

God's name is the revelation of God himself. It is the triune name placed on us in Baptism. Jesus has done his job as the Word made flesh. He has revealed God to us as the God of grace and truth (1:14–18). (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 3, Part 2)

Jesus now turns His attention to His disciples. Jesus is voicing His utmost thoughts about the disciples whom He loves. Jesus has succeeded with them. He is proud of them, even though He knows their sins to come. Jesus spoke the Word to His disciples. The disciples have learned and guarded that Word. They have all entered into the new covenant with Jesus. (Concordia Pulpit Resources – Volume 6, Part 2)

ephanērōsa sou to onoma tois anthrōpois hous edōkas moi. The disciples have been taught the name of his Father, being his property. Being given to the Son, also, as his property, they, by the power of both Father and Son, have kept the Father's word by believing Jesus' word as coming from the Father. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 21, Part 2)

people those whom you gave me.† Again the divine gift (cf. 6:44). (CSB)

Literally, He had revealed the Father's "name" to them. The "name" of God is everything that reveals Him to us, particularly His Word. And again, it is no coincidence that Jesus is also called the Word. In Him we know the Father. (PBC)

Jesus is referring to the disciples still present with Him, the 12 minus Judas (who had left to betray Jesus), the prayer continues. (LifeLight)

kept your word – The disciples sinned often. So do we. It is Jesus' obedience that counts and because of it he constantly forgives us.

That very evening not one of the disciples got up to wash feet. Jesus' words concerning greatness being found in servanthood seemed to fall on deaf ears. Was Jesus seeing something about the disciples that we can't see? No and yes. No, the disciples could claim no breakthroughs in "naming the name" of Jesus or in obeying the will of our Father. But Jesus did not even mention the disciples' failings – failings that were evident and would become even more so as the evening wore on. It is as though they didn't exist, for Jesus was seeing the impact on His disciples of the forgiveness He would win for them and for us on the cross. Jesus' words on His disciples have to be seen in the context of the cross. (LifeLight)

17:7-8 *panta hosa dedōkas moi*. “Everything” refers to the doctrine that the Father has given to his Son (cf. Jn 8:28). *ta hrēmata ha edōkas moi*. What the Father has given (aorist tense) to the Son, the Son has now given (perfect tense) to the disciples, as representative of the entire Church, the completion of the transaction. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 21, Part 2)

17:7 *they know* – This denotes an intimate, saving knowledge.

Everything that you have given me ... is from you. Only as people see the Father at work in Jesus do they have a proper concept of God. The disciples had at last reached this understanding. (CSB)

The disciples believed that everything Jesus taught came from the Father. (Concordia Pulpit Resources – Volume 6, Part 2)

This includes Jesus’ coming, His entire ministry, His Word and works, His disciples - in short, all that He is, has received, and has done to reveal His Father’s love for the world. (TLSB)

17:8 *have given them* – Christians know and believe that they become a Christian only because the Father gave them to Jesus.

The words you gave me – *rhēmata* – The exact words directly from God. Three things about the disciples are mentioned: 1. They accepted the teaching (unlike the Pharisees and others who heard it but did not receive it). 2. They knew with certainty Jesus’ divine origin. Acceptance of the revelation led them further into truth. 3. They believed (see note on 1:7; cf. 1:12; 20:31). – Jesus didn’t even mention His miracles here. The words made the difference, as they do now for us. (PBC)

In the words of Jesus the disciples heard the very Word of the Father. The job now done, and the disciples did receive the Word. They knew Jesus to the full extent of who He was. (Concordia Pulpit Resources – Volume 6, Part 2)

What a contrast Jesus draws between these disciples and most of the learned religious community, who did not accept him, his teaching, or his divinity (cf. 1:11). (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 3, Part 2)

17:9-10 *erōtō . . . peri hōn dedōkas moi, hoti soi eisin*. Though he prays for those of the world occasionally (cf. Lk 23:34), his focus here is concerning those the Father has given him of all generations. Coupling this with v 10, *kai ta ema panta sa estin kai ta sa ema*, it is clear that the Son has as much ownership of his Church in his fleshly divinity as the Father does in his divinity. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 21, Part 2)

kai dedoxasmai en autois. When a person is brought to trust in Jesus, Jesus is glorified (perfect tense). (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 21, Part 2)

17:9 *I am praying for them* – The disciples were His special charge, and they needed help and strength to face what was coming. (PBC)

not ... for the world. The only prayer Jesus could pray for the world was that it cease to be worldly (i.e., opposed to God), and this he did pray (vv. 21, 23). (CSB)

Jesus did not pray for the world in its opposition to God, though He loves the world (3:16) and prayed it would be saved through the Word that His witnesses share (vv 20–23). (TLSB)

Jesus is not ungracious when he states that he is not praying for the world. Later he does pray for the world to come to faith and salvation (vv 21, 23), and earlier he affirmed that the world is the object of God's love (3:16). But as a theological term, the world per se represents the forces of evil that oppose God. Its salvation requires it to cease being "the world." Christ focuses his petitions on behalf of those who will be left with the task of transforming the world through the power of the Gospel. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 3, Part 2)

Here is comfort for those worried about being left behind and forgotten. The disciples did not attach themselves to Jesus of their own will because they liked him; the prior fact is that they were chosen by God. Jesus makes this clear in Jn 6:44, 65; 15:16. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 6, Part 2)

This is not saying that He is not concerned about the whole world because later he does pray for the whole world. His death and resurrection was for everyone.

17:10 glorified in them. Through their fruitful discipleship (cf 15:8). (TLSB)

There is a double possession here. Jesus' possessions are the Father's, and the Father's possessions are Jesus'. Jesus is made great in the hearts of the disciples because they believe that He came from the Father. (Concordia Pulpit Resources – Volume 6, Part 2)

17:11b-19 The text is the middle portion of Jesus' High Priestly Prayer. The prayer itself is set among Jesus' teachings at the Last Supper and immediately prior to his departure for the Garden of Gethsemane. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 10, Part 2)

According to the paragraphing in Nestle 26th edition, in verses 1-5 Jesus prays for Himself, in verses 6-8 He speaks of what He has done for men, in verses 9-19 He prays specifically for the disciples, in verses 20-23 He prays for the unity of future believers, and in verses 24-26 He prays for the eventual glorification of all believers. The various sections overlap each other. Although verses 9-19 are spoken specifically for the disciples, they apply in their entirety to us today. (Buls)

The disciples must have heard this prayer, called the *Sacerdotal*, or *High-priestly Prayer*. (Buls)

17:11 they are in the world – Now Jesus was going to leave the world and go to the Father, but the disciples had to remain in the world. So Jesus prayed for them, placing them in the Father' care. (PBC)

Holy Father. A form of address found only here in the NT (but cf. 1Pe 1:15–16; Rev 4:8; 6:10). The name suggests both remoteness and nearness; God is both awe-inspiring and loving. (CSB)

"Holy Father" this expression is unique in the Scriptures. "Holy" is applied very frequently to the third person of the Trinity, less often to the Son, and only here to the Father. Not only is He holy in Himself but, like the Son and the Spirit, causes holiness in the life of the believer, as is immediately explained. (Buls)

Jesus is asking the Father to do that which Jesus had been doing all along. The divinity of Jesus is implied. "Them" is the disciples. "Your name" is equivalent to "Your revelation," the Word of God. "To me," Jesus, denotes the human nature of Christ. This usage reminds us of the same at Luke 10:22, where the human nature of Christ is clearly meant. "So that" introduces a purpose clause. "May be" means "to

continue to be." "One" denotes a unity, an analogy, not identity. The unity of Christians among themselves is analogical, not identical, to the unity between Jesus and the Father. (Buls)

Bengel aptly remarks that the unity of Christians is by grace but that the unity of Jesus and the Father is by nature, that is, their consubstantial nature. The unity among Christians is caused by the Father, working through the Word of God, and for which unity Christ prayed. Unity among Christians is not caused by Christians themselves. They discover it among themselves when they compare with each other what they believe and practice. (Buls)

pater hagio, tērēson autous en tōi onomati sou. These words are the summary of John 17, that the Holy Father (one-time usage by the Lord) would keep the disciples of all ages strong in his name, so that the evil one cannot touch them (cf. 1 Jn 5:18). (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 21, Part 2)

Here God's name clearly implies His power that saves His followers from the forces of evil. (PBC)

I am coming to you - "I am coming to you" is a basic Ascension text. Since Jesus' glorification is secure, emphasis shifts to the welfare of the disciples. See Jn 14:18–19 in last Sunday's Gospel, and today's First Reading. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 6, Part 2)

keep them in your name – His name is his revelation, his Word.

tērēson "protect, keep under guard, keep firm"; *onomati* "name, title, authority, power"; "name" here signifies the power of the person who bears the name. Jesus, when he was on earth, displayed divine power both in saving the disciples from physical danger (for example, stilling the storm), and in keeping them united. His divine "name" is without peer (Is 9:6; Jer 23:6; Mt 1:21; 18:20; Phil 2:9–41; see also the Second Commandment and meaning and First Petition and meaning in Luther's Small Catechism). R. C. H. Lenski (*St. John's Gospel* [Minneapolis: Augsburg, 1943] 1136) notes that the Father gave the "name" (revelation, Word) to Jesus so that he, in turn, would give it to his disciples to use in their ministry to the world (Acts 4:10–12). (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 10, Part 2)

The disciples will be exposed to danger after Jesus leaves, so Jesus is asking his Father to protect them (*tērēson autous*, literally "keep them") against all ungodliness. The disciples have been guarding the Word; now Jesus is asking the Father to guard them and keep them in the Word. They cannot lose their connection with the saving name of Jesus. The goal is to keep the disciples one against the world, for they are already one. Oneness is broken by teaching contrary to the true doctrine. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 19, Part 2)

We are protected by the great "I Am"—the holy, proper name of God (YHWH, Kurios) that Jesus also uses for himself (Jn 8:58; cf. Ex 3:14–15). (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 3, Part 2)

God's "name" is the revelation of his character and qualities. "I have revealed your name" (v 6) is equivalent to "I have revealed you," because he who has seen the Son has seen the Father (Jn 14:9). The Epistle talks about persecution "because of the name of Christ"—that is, because of all that he is and stands for (1 Pet 4:14). "If you suffer as a Christian, do not be ashamed, but praise God that you bear that name" (1 Pet 4:16). (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 6, Part 2)

hina ōsin hen kathōs hēmeis. That is, they will continue to be one in name, word, and work (cf. Jn 14:10), holding and exercising the one true faith over against all enemies that would divide them. Though this seems impossible, the true Church will, by the Lord's miraculous power, always be one united entity (cf. v 18). (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 21, Part 2)

This is being faithful to Jesus' revelation of the Father. (TLSB)

The disciples are still in the world, in the midst of unbelievers and enemies of the Gospel. Therefore the earnest petition of Christ is most necessary, that His Father, the Holy Father, that desires to keep His holy name unsullied, would keep the believers in His name, in the confession of His name, in true faith, to the end. Only if the Father Himself takes care of His own, will the spiritual union of the believers in no wise be disturbed or brought to naught. God must keep the believers in the one true faith by the Word of His truth, which reveals and teaches His name. The preservation in faith is the work of God. To Him the believers of all times must look to keep them steadfast in His Word and faith, unto the end, as is His gracious and good will. (Kretzmann)

Jesus will leave, and the disciples will still be in the world. This is the reason for the request. The Holy Father is to guard the disciples from unholiness. When the disciples were under Jesus' care, they guarded the Word. Now under the Father's care, they are to be guarded by Him and kept in the Word. The Father is to keep them one. This is an ethic of love and agreement in purpose by staying in the Word. (Concordia Pulpit Resources – Volume 6, Part 2)

that they may be one. The latter part of the prayer strongly emphasizes unity. Here the unity is already given, not something to be achieved. The meaning is “that they continually be one” rather than “that they become one.” The unity is to be like that between the Father and the Son. It is much more than unity of organization, but the church's present divisions are the result of the failures of Christians. (CSB)

Spiritual unity of the Church. (TLSB)

“That they may be one” means to be unified but without losing individual distinctiveness, blending and interacting with each other without losing uniqueness. Lenski argues that Jesus does not pray for them to become one but to remain one in faith in spite of the dangers that would divide them. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 10, Part 2)

“That they may be one” refers first to the unity of believers with the Father through the Son, since the unity is preserved by the power of the Father's name, which he gave to his Son. Then it also refers to the communion of saints in the church. Here is visible evidence that God has not left his people on their own. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 6, Part 2)

When the disciples came to faith in Jesus, they became one with him and the Father. This wasn't the oneness of essence that belonged to the Father and the Son exclusively, and it wasn't merely an outward unity. It was the spiritual oneness of all who have eternal life in Christ. The entire prayer has the one great burden that we may be preserved on oneness by complete adherence to the Word. (Judas) (PBC)

even as. Gk *kathos*, also translated “just as” in v 21. A comparison. Whereas the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit are one in being (Dt 6:4), Christians enjoy only a similar unity, as the Gk shows. Ancient and modern false teachers have badly muddled Jesus' words by overlooking this and arguing that the Father and Son have a unity only of will and works, not of being. Beware such false doctrine! (TLSB)