

“τοῖς ἀνθρώποις οὓς δέδωκάς μοι ἐκ τοῦ κόσμου” In Jesus’ Priestly Prayer (John 17:6-10): Motivation for Christian Holy Living in Nigeria

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Abstract

This paper explores the phrase “τοῖς ἀνθρώποις οὓς δέδωκάς μοι ἐκ τοῦ κόσμου” (the people whom You gave Me out of the world) from Jesus’ High Priestly Prayer in John 17:6–10, examining its theological and ethical implications as a motivation for Christian holy living, particularly in the Nigerian context. It is noteworthy that despite the evident growth of Christianity in Nigeria, moral and spiritual decline among Christians remains a pressing issue. Many professing Christians struggle with a compromised faith that mirrors societal corruption rather than biblical values. There appears to be a gap between religious profession and ethical behavior, raising the urgent need to call the attention of the Christians in Nigeria back to holy living. The study therefore emphasizes the identity of believers as a distinct people given to Christ by God, called out from the world, and entrusted with a sanctified purpose. Through exegetico-critical analysis and contextual application, the paper argues that this divine calling fosters a sense of belonging, responsibility, and moral distinction that challenges Nigerian Christians to uphold holy living amidst societal pressures such as corruption, materialism, and moral compromise. The research insists that by understanding their status as God-given gifts to Christ, believers in Nigeria are motivated to live lives that reflect divine ownership, purpose, and transformation, thereby influencing the broader society with kingdom values.

Keywords: Jesus, Priestly Prayer, motivation, Christian, Holy Living, Nigeria

Introduction

The Christian journey is fundamentally shaped by the relationship between Christ and His disciples. In John 17:6-10, Jesus refers to His disciples with the words, **τοῖς ἀνθρώποις οὓς δέδωκάς μοι ἐκ τοῦ κόσμου** “the people whom You have given Me out of the world.” This statement is not only deeply theological but also central to Christian identity and sanctification. Jesus identifies His disciples as a distinct people, chosen and set apart from the world, entrusted to Him by the Father (Carson, 1991). This theological truth is a cornerstone for understanding Christian purpose, mission, and holy

living. The passage underscores themes of divine election, sanctification, and spiritual responsibility. Jesus not only acknowledges the disciples as gifts from the Father but also intercedes for their protection and mission in the world (Beasley-Murray, 1999). This passage affirms that those who belong to Christ are called to live distinct lives, reflecting the holiness of the one who sent them (Köstenberger, 2004).

In Nigeria however, Christianity continues to grow numerically and institutionally. Yet, there is increasing concern over the apparent disconnect between professed Christian faith and daily moral conduct. Despite the evident growth of Christianity in Nigeria, moral and spiritual decline among Christians remains a pressing issue. Many professing Christians struggle with a compromised faith that mirrors societal corruption rather than biblical values (Ogunewu, 2004). There appears to be a gap between religious profession and ethical behavior. This raises important questions: How can the message of John 17:6-10 inform Christian life today? What does it mean to be “given out of the world” in a Nigerian context characterized by materialism, secularism, and social injustice? Giving appropriate answers to these questions suggests the need for renewed theological reflection on what it means to live a holy life (Ogunewu, 2004).

And as Carson (1991) observes, the phrase “given out of the world” carries with it implications of both divine initiative and ethical responsibility. The problem in Nigeria is not merely theological misunderstanding but a practical failure to embody biblical holiness. This paper therefore seeks to explore how Jesus’ words in John 17:6-10 can serve as a theological and motivational foundation for Christian holy living in Nigeria. Specifically, the study aims to analyze the context and meaning of John 17:6-10 within Johannine theology; explore how the theme of divine election and sanctification can motivate holy living; and as well, contextualize these biblical insights for contemporary Nigerian Christians, using exegetico-critical approach and contextual application. The paper serves as a call to holy living, providing a biblical foundation for Christian ethics and spiritual formation in Nigeria. By reflecting on the identity of believers as those “given out of the world,” the study challenges Nigerian Christians to pursue a lifestyle consistent with their calling in Christ.

Exegetical Study of John 17:6-10 - Preliminary Observations

Delimitation of the Text John 17:6-10

The text John 17:6-10 is a segment within the larger context of Jesus’ farewell prayer. The context, that is captioned the parting of Jesus by some scholars, falls within the structure of John’s Gospel always referred to as, “the book of glory: Jesus’ preparation of the new messianic community and passion” (Köstenberger, 2004: 10). Prior to the pericope, Jesus has prayed for himself, in particular for his glorification (vv. 1-5). That glorification is

integrally bound up with the benefit of all those the Father has given him (v. 2). So, Carson (1991) asserts, “it is not surprising he now turns from his single petition for himself to his several for his disciples” (p. 557).

Meanwhile the text, John 17:6-10 is the first part of the pericope (17:6-19), where Jesus, before beginning the prayer, advances the grounds for these petitions. Carson (1991) captions it Jesus’ ground for his prayer, asserting that the shorter pericope (vv. 6-10) states the reasons why Jesus is praying for the people as opposed to others, and the reasons why the Father should meet his requests. Looking at the whole thing, it is evidential that by far the largest prayer of Jesus relates to his disciples. It shows that Jesus was much more concerned about them than about himself. This is because Jesus was sure of the suffering that was inevitable and the victory that was certain. He had predicted that the disciples would desert him (John 16:32); “nevertheless, Jesus prayed for them with confidence that they would be kept by the Father’s power and presented for a future ministry” (Tenney, 1981: 163).

More so, In John 17:6-10, Jesus explicitly states that He has manifested the Father’s name to the disciples, whom the Father has given Him. This declaration underscores the theme of revelation, which is central to Johannine theology. The term “manifested” (ἐφάνερωσα) indicates a clear and intentional disclosure of divine truth, suggesting that Jesus serves as the ultimate mediator between God and humanity (Brown 1982). The act of revealing the Father’s name is not merely an intellectual exercise but is deeply relational, emphasizing the intimate connection between Jesus and His followers. This relational aspect is critical, as it establishes the foundation for the disciples’ identity and mission.

Moreover, the passage highlights the concept of belonging and divine election. Jesus refers to the disciples as those whom the Father has given Him, implying a sense of divine purpose and selection (Morris 1995). This notion of being chosen is significant within the Johannine context, as it reflects the broader theme of the community of believers being set apart for a specific mission. The disciples are not merely passive recipients of Jesus’ teachings; rather, they are active participants in the unfolding narrative of salvation history. This active participation is further emphasized in verse 10, where Jesus states that all He has is from the Father, reinforcing the unity of purpose between the Father and the Son. The theological implications of this passage extend to the understanding of Jesus’ identity. By asserting that He has given the disciples the words that the Father gave Him, Jesus positions Himself as the authoritative voice of God. This assertion challenges the prevailing Jewish understanding of divine authority and revelation, as it places Jesus at the center of God’s salvific plan (Keener 2003). The exclusivity of Jesus as the revealer of

God’s nature is a recurring theme in the Gospel of John, and this passage encapsulates that centrality.

Therefore, the intercessory nature of Jesus’ prayer in this segment cannot be overlooked. His plea for the disciples to be kept in the Father’s name signifies a protective and nurturing role that Jesus assumes as He prepares to leave the earthly realm (Horsley 1998). This protective aspect is crucial, as it foreshadows the challenges the disciples will face in the world. The prayer serves as a reminder of the ongoing relationship between the divine and the community of believers, emphasizing that while the disciples are in the world, they are not of it. Thus, John 17:6-10 serves as a rich theological text that delineates the relationship between Jesus, the Father, and the disciples. The themes of revelation, divine election, and intercession are intricately woven into the fabric of this passage, providing a profound understanding of the nature of Jesus’ mission and the identity of His followers. This analysis highlights the importance of contextualizing the text within the broader narrative of the Gospel, allowing for a deeper appreciation of its theological significance.

Textual Criticism of John 17:6-10

The Greek text of John 17:6-10 as written here is from Nestle-Aland, 28th edition.

6 Ἐφανέρωσά σου τὸ ὄνομά τοῖς ἀνθρώποις, οὓς ἔδωκας μοι ἐκ τοῦ κόσμου. Σοὶ ἦσαν, κάμοι αὐτούς ἔδωκας, καὶ τὸν λόγον σου ἔτετήρηκαν. 7 νῦν ἔγνώκαν ὅτι πάντα ὅσα ἔδωκάς μοι παρὰ σοῦ εἰσιν. 8 Ὅτι τὰ ῥήματα, ἃ ἔδωκάς μοι δέδωκα αὐτοῖς, καὶ αὐτοὶ ἔλαβον καὶ ἔγνώσαν ἁλθῶς ὅτι παρὰ σοῦ ἐξῆθον, καὶ ἐπίστευσαν ὅτι σὺ με ἀπέστειλας. 9 Ἐγὼ περὶ αὐτῶν ἐρωτῶ· οὐ περὶ τοῦ κόσμου ἐρωτῶ, ἀλλὰ περὶ ὧν δέδωκάς μοι, ὅτι σοὶ εἰσιν. 10 Καὶ τὰ ἐμά, πάντα σὰ ἐστὶν καὶ τὰ σὰ ἐμά, καὶ δέδοξασμαι ἐν αὐτοῖς.

The purpose of textual criticism is to critically consider Greek text and have a careful, analytical evaluation of it (Obielosi 2020), with the aim of removing errors from text and taking it closer to the archetype (Noun 2021). This is exactly what is handled in this segment of the research.

Verse 6 of the Greek text contains the statement, “ἔδωκας μοι ἐκ τοῦ κόσμου.” The critical sign “r” before a Greek word indicates that the Greek word has replacement in some other manuscripts (Trobisch 2013). The word seen after critical sign “r” is

ἔδωκας indicating that ἔδωκας has replacement in other manuscripts. According to Nestle-Aland (2012), ἔδωκας is replaced with δεδωκας in C L Γ Δ Ψ 0109 f^{1,13} 33.56^s. 700. 892^s. 124. 1424. 1844. : txt **κ** A B D K N W Θ 579. Based on the principle of “*lectio brevior* (the shorter reading is the better reading)” (Trobisch, 2013: 22), it can be seen that ἔδωκας as contained in the manuscript used in this research is shorter than δεδωκας which is the replacement in other manuscripts, it can be adjudged that our text is closer to the original.

The same thing is applicable to the word ῥετήρησαν in the same verse 6 which is replaced by ετηρησαν in **κ** N 33; ῥεγνώκαν in verse 7 is replaced with εγνων in **κ** : εγνωκα in W 579 sy^{hmg} : εγνωσαν C Ψ f¹³ 33.700. 1241 : txt A^{vid} B D K L N Γ Δ Θ 0109 f¹ 565^s. 892^s. 1424. 1844 **β**. Still in verse 7, ῥεδωκας is replaced with εδωκας in A B 0109. 1. 579; and ῥεῖσιν is replaced with εστιν. The rules applicable to the paragraph before this should as well be applied here. In verse at we have the statement [□] καί ῥεγνωσαν. And when [□] ... encloses a statement, it means that “several words were omitted. The beginning and the end of the omission is marked” (Trobisch, 2013: 14). And according to the analyses by Nestle-Aland (2012) such omission occurred in the manuscripts **κ*** A D W a e q sam^{ss} ly pbo. Now, the principle of *lectio difficilior* (the more difficult reading is the better reading) (Trobisch, 2013) should applied. Therefore, if the manuscript used in this research has no such omission, it means that it is harder to read, therefore, the Greek text this research used is closer to the archetype.

Another verse in the anchor scripture of this research that has critical sign is verse 10, which appears thus: τὰ ἔμὰ πάντα σὰ ἄστιν, καί τὰ σὰ ἔμὰ, and the [⋯] sign means several words were replaced (Trobisch, 2013). And according to the critical apparatus of Nestle-Aland (2012), the statement τὰ ἔμὰ πάντα σὰ ἄστιν, καί τὰ σὰ ἔμὰ is replaced with εμοι αυτους εδωκας in **κ** (*codex sinaiticus*). Again ῥεδεδόξαι is replaced with εδοξασας με. Here again, the principle of the older the manuscript the closer to the original will apply, thereby making the manuscript used in this research nearer to the original.

Working Translation

6. I have made known your (the) name to the people whom you have given me out of the world. Yours they were and to me you have given them, and they have kept your word. 7. Now they have known that everything you have given me is from you. 8. Because the words you have given to me I have given them, 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 you have given me, for they belong to you. 10. And all that I have is yours and all that you have is mine, and I am glorified in them.

The Semantic Analysis of John 17:6-10

The author of John employs a range of significant Greek terms that encapsulate the theological depth and Christological focus of the passage, John 17:6-10, which is the central focus of this chapter. This section, as established earlier, advances the grounds for the petitions of the High Priestly Prayer, where Jesus intercedes for His disciples and articulates his relationship with the Father. The choice of specific Greek syntaxes in this passage is crucial for understanding the nuances of Jesus’ mission and his divine authority.

To start with, the term “ἐφάνερωσα” (*ephanerōsa*), translated as “I have made known” by this research is pivotal in verse 6. The word literally means “I have manifested,” or “I have revealed” (Carson 1991:558). This verb, derived from the root “φαίνω” (*phainō*), meaning “to shine” or “to make visible,” indicates a revelation of divine truth. Scholars argue that John uses this term to emphasize the unique role of Jesus as the revealer of God (Brown 1966). This means, as translated by this research, if not this Jesus’ spectacular role of making the father visible, the Father would not have been known by the people. Carson (1991) asserts that the aorist term *ephanerōsa* doubtless sums up Jesus’ entire ministry, including suffering on the cross that lies just ahead. The act of manifestation, as translated by some scholars, suggests not only the disclosure of God’s character but also the intimate relationship between the Father and the Son, reinforcing the Johannine theme of revelation (Morris 1995).

Another Greek syntax in verse 6 that attracted the interest of this research is “ὄνομα” translated as name. Gill (n.d) argues that the name as used here is:

not the “*Nomen Tetragrammaton*”, the name of four letters, the name “Jehovah”, and which the Jews call “*Shemhamphorash*”, and say is ineffable, and to be pronounced by Adonai ... but either God himself, or the perfections of his nature, or his will of command, or rather his Gospel; unless Christ himself, or his name Jesus, God by the angel gave him, and in whose name there is salvation, and no other can be thought to be meant; and which, as it was manifested to his disciples, so it is to all whom God has chosen and given to Christ (p. 542-542).

Still in the same view with the foregoing, Carson (1991) avows that as used in this text embodies God’s character; insisting that, to reveals God’s name is not make God’s

character known. He strengthens his point here by asserting that name of God as used here implies a particular ‘name’ of God, and insisted that “I am” or “I am he” as used in Exodus 3:13-15 is in view and referenced to. This research agrees with Carson as the working translation carefully inserted “the” in parenthesis before **ὄνομα** as appeared in the Greek text. The essence of this is to bring out that the author is certain about the name it refers to which Jesus has revealed to the people.

ἔδωκας. Still in verse 7, the word “ἔδωκας” (*edōkas*), meaning “you have given me,” is also significant syntactically, as it highlights the concept of divine gifting. The word appeared six times, though in different spellings, within the pericope under consideration; once in verses 6 and 7, twice in verse 8, and once in verses 9 and ten respectively. The Greek word is a derivation of “δίδωμι” (*didōmi*), meaning “to give.” It underscores the theological notion of election and divine sovereignty. According to scholars, this reflects the Johannine understanding of the disciples as a gift from the Father to the Son, which is a recurring theme throughout the Gospel (Horsley 1998). This notion of being given to Jesus serves to reinforce the idea of belonging and the protective relationship that Jesus has with his followers. Again, Tenney (1981) posits that (the gift was irrevocable and the Father was able to guarantee it. Jesus had no doubt of the final outcome” (p. 163). He further argues that the disciples were obedient; they had accepted the message Jesus gave them. In spite of much misunderstanding on their part, there is no evidence that those who were with Jesus in the upper room had rejected or doubted the truth he imparted to them. They may not have comprehended it instantly, as the text of John shows (2:22; 20:9). They recognized that Jesus’ message came from God; and they accepted him as a messenger of God, as their own confession declared (16:30).

Ἐγνώκαν (*egnōkan*) meaning “they have known.” This also appears in verse 7 and it is the perfect form of “γινώσκω” (*ginōskō*). The term “γινώσκω” (*ginōskō*), translated as “know,” is significant in the context of Johannine literature. This verb conveys a deep, experiential knowledge rather than mere intellectual assent (Bultmann 1971). The use of “know” in this context suggests an intimate relationship between the Father, the Son, and the disciples, emphasizing that true knowledge of God comes through a personal relationship with Christ. Scholars note that this theme of knowledge is central to John's Gospel, where knowing God is synonymous with eternal life (Köstenberger 2004).

In verse 10, the phrase “καὶ ἐν αὐτοῖς” (*kai en autois*), meaning “and in them,” signifies the indwelling presence of Christ in his followers. The preposition “ἐν” (*en*) implies a profound connection and unity between Christ and his disciples. This concept of indwelling is crucial for understanding the transformative power of the believer's relationship with Christ, which is also a key theme in Johannine theology (Schnackenburg

1980). The unity expressed here is not merely functional but ontological, suggesting that the essence of the disciples is intertwined with that of Christ.

The use of these Greek terms analyzed above in John 17:6-10 reflects the author's theological intentions and the overarching themes of revelation, relationship, and unity. By employing specific vocabulary, John articulates a profound understanding of the nature of God, the mission of Jesus, and the identity of the disciples. This passage serves as a theological anchor for understanding the nature of Christian discipleship and the intimate relationship believers are called to have with Christ.

The Close Reading of John 17:6-10

The anchor text opens with ἐφανερώσα σου το ὄνομα τοῖς ἀνθρώποις οὓς δέδωκάς μοι ἐκ τοῦ κόσμου, (I have made known your name to the people whom you gave me out of the world), verse 6. This verse employs the Greek verb "ἐφανερώσα" (*ephanerōsa*), which translates to “I have made known” “I have manifested,” or “I have revealed.” This verb indicates a deliberate act of disclosure, suggesting that Jesus’ mission was to reveal the character and essence of God to humanity. The use of “name” (ὄνομα, *onoma*) in this context is significant, as it encompasses not just the title of God but also God’s attributes and nature (Bultmann 1963). The act of revealing God's name signifies a deep relational knowledge that Jesus has imparted to his disciples, emphasizing the intimate connection between the divine and the human.

Furthermore, the phrase οὓς δέδωκάς μοι ἐκ τοῦ κόσμου, (whom you have given me out of the world) highlights the concept of divine election and the special status of the disciples. The Greek term “ἔδωκάς” (*edōkas*), meaning “you have given” implies a purposeful selection by God, indicating that the disciples are chosen for a specific mission and relationship with Jesus. This notion of being “out of the world” (ἐκ τοῦ κόσμου, *ek tou kosmou*) suggests a separation from worldly values and a calling to a higher purpose (Morris 1995). The phrase ἐκ τοῦ κόσμου, *ek tou kosmou* “out of the world,” further underscores the distinction between the disciples and the broader world. In Johannine literature, the world often symbolizes opposition to God and the divine mission (Meyer 2014). By stating that the disciples are taken “out of the world,” Jesus highlights their election and the transformative nature of their relationship with him. This election is not merely a physical separation but a spiritual one, indicating that they are now part of a new reality defined by their allegiance to Christ. The implication of the idea that the disciples are given out of the world is that they are not merely followers but are part of a divine plan that transcends earthly existence.

Verses 7 and 8 read: νυν ἐγνώκαν ὅτι πάντα ὅσα δέδωκας μοι παρὰ σου ἐστίν. ὅτι τὰ ρήματα ἃ δέδωκας μοι δέδωκα αὐτοῖς καὶ αὐτοὶ ἔλαβον καὶ ἐγνώσαν ἀληθῶς ὅτι παρὰ σου ἐξήλθον καὶ ἐπίστευσαν ὅτι σὺ με ἀπέστειλας. Here Jesus continues to elaborate on the knowledge imparted to the disciples: “Now they have known that everything that you have given me is from you. For I have given them the words that you gave me.” The Greek word “γινώσκω” (*ginōskō*), which is used in the perfect form here (*egnōkan*) meaning “to know,” refers to the state of their knowledge at the time established by νυν (now) (Carson 1991). It also conveys a sense of experiential knowledge rather than mere intellectual understanding. This distinction is crucial; as it indicates that the disciples have not only received information but have also experienced the truth of Jesus’ teachings in their lives. The repetition of the phrase “you have given” reinforces the theme of divine provision and the continuity of revelation from the Father to the Son and then to the disciples.

The phrase τὰ ρήματα ἃ δέδωκας μοι “the words that you have given me” in verse 8 indicates the divine origin of Jesus’ teachings. There is a shift between the Greek λόγος (word) in verse 6 and ρήματα (word) in verse 8. While the former refers to Jesus, the living word; the latter talks about the inspired word of God. Therefore, the term ρήματα, “words” are “neither Jesus’ teaching as whole nor itemized precepts, but Jesus’ actual words, or his utterances” (Carson, 1991: 560). Ρήματα carry significant weight in Johannine theology, often associated with the creative and revelatory power of God (Bultmann 1960). By conveying these words to the disciples, Jesus not only fulfills his role as a mediator but also empowers them to continue his mission in the world.

In verse 9, Jesus states, ἐγὼ περὶ αὐτῶν “I am praying for them,” which introduces the theme of intercession. The Greek verb “ἑρωτῶ” (*erōtō*), meaning “to ask” or “to request,” signifies a personal and intimate appeal to God on behalf of the disciples. This act of prayer underscores the protective and mediating role of Jesus, emphasizing his commitment to the well-being of his followers (Horsley 1998). The prayer was particularly for his disciples, but Blum (1983) insists that the effects apply to all believers. At this point Jesus was not praying for the world in its hostility and unbelief. After this prayer is for the disciples’ preservation against the hostility of the world and sanctification (cf. verses 11, 17). The richness of this verb of to ask in pray as used in this verse highlights the relational dynamics at play, as Jesus intercedes for those who belong to him.

Finally, in verse 10, Jesus declares, καὶ τὰ ἐμὰ πάντα σὰ ἐστὶν καὶ τὰ σὰ ἐμὰ “All mine are yours, and yours are mine,” adding that: καὶ δεδοξασμαι ἐν αὐτοῖς “and I am glorified in them.” The Greek word δεδοξασμαι from δόξα (*doxa*), meaning “glory,”

encapsulates the essence of divine presence and honor. The mutual possession of the disciples by both the Father and the Son signifies a profound unity and shared purpose. This unity is not only a theological statement but also a call to the disciples to reflect the glory of God in their lives (Käsemann 1980). The phrase ἐν αὐτοῖς ἐδοξάσθην, *en autois edoxasthēn* “I am glorified in them” indicates that the glorification of Jesus is intrinsically linked to the disciples’ faithfulness and witness. This mutual indwelling reflects the profound unity that characterizes the relationship between the divine and the believers, suggesting that the disciples’ lives are a testament to the glory of Christ.

An Exegetical Conclusion

In conclusion, the exegesis of John 17:6-10 reveals a rich tapestry of theological themes; including revelation, divine election, experiential knowledge, intercession, and glory. These elements underscore the relational dynamics between Jesus, the Father, and the disciples, highlighting the significance of their calling and the transformative nature of their relationship with God. The nuances of the Greek language enhance the understanding of the text, illustrating the depth of Jesus’ mission and the transformative nature of the disciples’ relationship with him. This passage invites further reflection on the implications of belonging to Christ and the call to manifest his glory in the world.

τοῖς ἀνθρώποις οὓς δέδωκάς μοι ἐκ τοῦ κόσμου As Motivation for Christian Holy Living in Nigeria

Jesus’ priestly prayer as contained in John 17:6-10 highlights His deep concern for His disciples, emphasizing their separation from the world and sanctification in truth. The phrase “τοῖς ἀνθρώποις οὓς δέδωκάς μοι ἐκ τοῦ κόσμου” (*to the people whom You have given Me out of the world*), which is the focus of this research, underscores God's sovereign hand in calling believers out of the world to belong to Jesus (Carson 1991). It affirms that believers are not of the world, but have been chosen and set apart by God for Christ. This calling forms the basis for living a life of holiness, separated from worldly values and aligned with divine purpose. These made the prayer a motivation for Christian holy living, particularly in the Nigerian context, as discussed below.

Separation from the World: In the Nigerian presently, the greatest challenges facing Christians include systemic corruption, religious syncretism, materialism, and socio-political instability. Dabbling into Jesus’ high priestly prayer serves as a reminder to all Christians in Nigeria of their spiritual identity and obligations. The text reminds believers in Nigeria that they belong to Christ and must reflect His character in all areas of life. That holy living should not just be a personal pursuit, but a testimony to God’s

transformative power in a corrupt world (Adeyemo 2006). Therefore, Jesus' prayer for his disciples as seen in the exegeted text is an immediate call for Nigerian Christians to live distinctively, separating themselves from worldly values and behaviors that contradict biblical teachings, just as Apostle Paul enjoined the Corinthians church (2 Corinthians 6:14-17). The demand on Christians in Nigeria is to avoid worldly practices such as corruption, materialism, and moral compromise, which are prevalent in society (Ojo 2016). For instance, in a country where bribery and dishonesty can be commonplace, Christians are motivated by Jesus' high priest prayer to uphold integrity and honesty in all dealings, reflecting their status as people given to Christ out of the world.

Sanctification and Holiness: That Jesus asserts that his disciples are people given to him by God out of the world simply implies that they are called out of darkness into God's marvelous light. Such a call is an induction into sanctification. Thus, it can be inferred that the prayer places emphasis on the importance of sanctification, where believers are set apart for God's purposes. Unlike what is seen in Nigeria today where Christians are no longer different from the world. They live and talk like the world and the needed purity which should ordinarily be their identity has become vitiated. Going through the exegeted text is a motivation for Nigerian Christians to pursue holiness vigorously, understanding that their lives are to reflect the character of Christ in a world filled with challenges and temptations (Ephesians 4:22-24). As noted by Adeyemo (2006), "holiness is not an option but a necessity for Christian living (p. 178). This can manifest in active involvement in church activities, personal devotion, holy living and community service that honors God. It can as well manifest in their activities via day-to-day office work, political business meetings and plans, as well as policy making that would salvage this country from economic quagmire which has made many countries to regard Nigeria as a failed state.

Identity in Christ: The affirmation that believers are "given" to Jesus out of the world reinforces their new identity in Him. Nigerian Christians can find motivation in knowing they belong to Christ, which should influence their self-perception and interactions with others just as Paul admonishes the Galatians Christians (Galatians 2:20). This identity calls for a re-evaluation of priorities, focusing more on spiritual growth and less on material accumulation or social status. In addition, this identity underscores communality. Nigerian Christians must see themselves not only as individuals but as part of a spiritual community gifted to Christ. This has implications for unity within the church, support for one another, and collective witness in society (Nwaomah 2014). In a country marked by religious tensions and division, the Church's identity of unity in holiness can serve as a beacon of hope and a model for national reconciliation. Thus, Jesus' emphasis on the disciples being "out of the world" yet belonging to Him fosters a sense of community and

unity among believers. Nigerian Christians are encouraged to build strong, supportive relationships within their church communities, standing as a witness to the world of the transformative power of the Gospel (John 13:35). This unity can be a powerful testimony in a diverse and often divided society.

Perseverance in the Face of Challenges: One of the things to learn from Jesus’ prayer to His disciples is to persevere in the face of challenges ravaging the country. Understanding that they have been given to Jesus can motivate Nigerian Christians to persevere through trials and persecution, knowing they are under His care and protection (Romans 8:31-39). This assurance can provide strength in the face of adversity, encouraging believers to remain steadfast in their faith. The insecurity challenges emanating from insurgence groups in Nigeria such as Niger-Delta militants, Boko-Haram, the killer herdsmen, the unknown gun men, just to mention but a few, should not deter Nigerian Christians any longer knowing that Jesus has chosen them. They should rather persevere and stand resolute in the midst of such challenges, while joining force with the government to bring in long lasting solutions.

Stewardship and Responsibility Jesus’ statement that His followers are given to him out of the world implies stewardship and responsibility. In Nigeria presently, Christians no longer see themselves as stewards to Christ. They no longer take responsibility on the other hands. Many are already heavenly conscious but worldly useless. Therefore, the study in question should educate and motivate Nigerian Christians to know that they are managers of the property Christ has given to them. Having this at the back of their minds should always remind them that one day they are to give out to God who has given them to be stewards of Christ. They should therefore be responsible, accountable and answerable in their place of primary assignment. Nigerian Christians in understanding Jesus’ prayer should learn that they are always on duty, under obligation and liable to account for all that God has bestowed to them. Therefore, Nigerian believers are called to be faithful representatives of Christ in their families, churches, workplaces, and government institutions. This includes a commitment to integrity, compassion, and justice as evidence of their sanctified status (Ogunewu 2012).

Conclusion

Conclusively, the theological truth embedded in John 17:6–10 challenges Nigerian Christians to embrace their distinct identity in Christ and live accordingly. Their holy living should transcend church activities and be visible in every facet of society as a reflection of their being “given out of the world” to the Son of God. Thus, the text serves as a powerful motivation for them to live holy lives, distinct from the world, uphold their new identity in Christ, persevere in the face of challenges, and be responsible knowing

that they are answerable and liable to God and humanity as stewards. By understanding all these, they can navigate the complexities of their society with faith and integrity.

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