

PRAYERS OF JESUS IN THE GOSPEL OF JOHN AS PARADIGMS

Antony Edanad *

1. Introduction

In traditional Christian understanding prayer¹ is seen as "speaking to God" or as "raising of the soul to God." In fact, prayer is at the same time *both* conversation with God *and* conscious elevation of one's whole being to God. There cannot be any conversation with God without the awareness of God's ineffable reality and presence, and there cannot be any raising of one's whole self to God without some kind of communication with God, verbal or non-verbal. Moreover, speaking to God involves listening to God and paying attention to his presence. Prayer has also a necessary communal dimension. Even in the case of personal prayer the praying individual stands in communion and solidarity with others. Prayer is and should be rooted in faith in God as one who is concerned about the humans and who makes himself accessible to them relating himself to them and intervening in their favour. The prayers of the Israelites found in the Bible are characterised by the recollection of the past deeds of God in their favour, certainty about his power and intention to intervene at present, and confidence and trust that he will accomplish his plan in the future.

Prayers of Jesus presented in the Gospel of John reflect the above-mentioned features and they are to be seen in the light of the Johannine theology. For obvious reasons based on the dynamics of the formation of the Gospels they cannot be taken as records of the exact words of Jesus. They are rather part of the Gospel *kerygma* showing the nature of his

*Prof. Dr. Antony Edanad cmi is an erudite Johannine scholar and a long-time professor of New Testament at the Dharmaram Vidya Kshetram, Bangalore. He is the author of *Christian Existence and the New Covenant* (1987) and many other articles in renowned periodicals.

¹The English word 'prayer', which is derived from the Latin *precari*, basically means a petition or request. However, in the religious use it has a wider sense of any communication of the humans with God.

relationship with God and with others, and expressing his soteriological identity.

In the Gospel of John we find two observations made by others about the efficacy of Jesus' prayer because of his personal status before God (Jn 9:31; 11:22), a formula indicating the prayerful gesture of Jesus ("give thanks") on the occasion of the miraculous feeding of a large number of people (Jn 6:11), and a promise made by him that he would effectively ask God, his Father, to give another Paraclete (the Spirit) to the disciples after his departure from them (Jn 14:16). Besides these oblique references to his prayers, in the Gospel there are two short prayers (Jn 11:41-42; 12:27-28) and a long one (Jn 17:1-26), which deserve special attention.

2. John 11:41-42

The context of Jn 11:41-42 is the last of the seven signs² worked by Jesus revealing his identity and the nature of his saving mission, namely, the raising of Lazarus whom he loves (11:3, 11). Lazarus is a representative of all those who believe in Jesus, who are his own (10:14), whom he loves (13:1; 15:9), and for whom he lays down his life (10:15) in order that they may have life in abundance (10:10). Jesus is the resurrection and the life so that those who believe in him, even if they die, will live (11:25). Raising of Lazarus from death to life is the sign of this truth and illustrates what Jesus has stated at 5:25, "Very truly, I tell you, the hour is coming and is now here, when the dead will hear the voice of the Son of God, and those who hear will live." The physical life that he gives is symbolic of the divine and eternal life, and it is the sign of the resurrection that those who believe in him are to experience. In preparation for the working of this sign, looking upward Jesus says: "Father, I thank you because you heard me. I knew that you always hear me, but I have said this on account of the crowd standing around, that they may believe that you sent me" (11:41-42).

Since these words of Jesus are in the form of a statement rather than a petition, one may wonder whether they are actually a prayer as such. However, looking upward, up to heaven, is a gesture expressing prayerful

²The seven signs of Jesus are narrated at Jn 2:1-11; 4:46-54; 5:1-18; 6:1-15; 6:16-21; 9:1-41; and 11:1-44.

attitude³ and the direct address of God as "Father," a translation of Aramaic 'abbâ', which in the Gospels is Jesus' characteristic manner of addressing God in prayer,⁴ highlights the conversational aspect of prayer, besides his intimacy and special filial relationship with God. In anticipation of what is going to happen with the power he has from God, his Father, by virtue of his union with God, and with supreme confidence Jesus gives thanks to God for having already heard and granted his (implied) desire to give life to Lazarus. Thereby he indicates that it is the Father who is working through him and his will is not different from the Father's.⁵ His confidence in the Father is rooted in the consciousness of his intimate relationship with him⁶ as the Son who always does the will of the Father performing the saving task entrusted to him.⁷ Jesus expresses aloud his confidence in the Father, who always hears him and who is, therefore, going to work through him, as it is clearly indicated, for the sake of others so that they may believe in him and in the Father as the one who sent him. This public prayer of Jesus is a form of proclamation shedding light on what he subsequently does: the raising of Lazarus. The consequence of this prayer, that is raising of Lazarus from death, is linked to the death of Jesus: because of this his opponents decide, ironically, to deprive him, the life-giver, of his own life.⁸ His death marks his "hour," the hour of his glorification culminating in his resurrection.⁹ The raising of Lazarus itself is stated as to result in the glorification of Jesus (11:4). Thus, this prayer of Jesus implies his desire to complete his saving mission through his glorification by death and resurrection.

3. John 12:27-28

At Jn 12:23 Jesus has announced the arrival of the hour for the glorification of the Son of Man that he is. In the same context he says: "Now my soul is troubled. And what should I say – 'Father, save me from

³See Mk 6:41 and the parallel Jn 17:1.

⁴See Jn 12:27; 17:1, 4, 21, 24; also Lk 11:2; Mk 14:36.

⁵Jesus expresses his close dependence on God and the unity of their purpose at Jn 5:19-21, 30, 36; 14:10-11.

⁶Jn 10:38; 14:10-11, 20; 17:21, 23.

⁷Jn 6:38; 9:4; 17:4.

⁸Jn 11:45-53; also 11:14-16.

⁹See Jn 12:23-24, 27-28; 13:1, 31-33.

this hour"?¹⁰ No, it is for this reason that I have come to this hour. Father, glorify your name" (12:27-28).

As the hour of his glorification through death and resurrection has arrived, the Johannine Jesus is fearful of the dark side of this hour, that is, the confrontation with Satan, the prince of this world (12:31), which is to result in his suffering and death. His natural tendency is to ask the Father to save him from this ordeal. However, he is conscious of the will of the Father and the nature of his mission. He is also confident that he can go through this frightening trial and complete his mission with the power of the Father, and with courage and in obedience to the divine plan he prays, "Father, glorify your name."

God's "glory" in the Bible (in Hebrew *kābôd*) means the mighty presence of God that can be experienced in some visible form. To glorify the divine name, therefore, means not only to exalt it but also to make the divine reality signified by the name experienceable. The name of the Father signifies his intimate relationship with Jesus as his unique Son. Consequently, the prayer that Jesus makes, addressing God directly as "Father," is a prayer for concrete manifestation of the unique relationship between God and himself as the Father and the Son. In the Gospel the ultimate revelation of Jesus is to take place when he is "lifted up" by crucifixion and resurrection; then his divine identity as "I am" is to become manifest (8:28). "I am" used absolutely, that is, without any complement, stands as the divine self-designation of Jesus¹¹ and this may be regarded as the divine name that the Father has given him (17:11, 12). The prayer that Jesus at the arrival of his "hour" makes to the Father to "glorify" his name is at the same time a prayer to "glorify" himself, namely, that the Father, according to his plan (10:17-18), through the death and resurrection of Jesus may in concrete form reveal the nature of the relationship between them and the real identity of Jesus so that those who accept him in faith may have salvation.¹² This prayer is, therefore, a prayer

¹⁰Another possible translation of this passage is: "Now my soul is troubled. And what should I say? Father, save me from this hour..."

¹¹In John there are six instances of this: 6:20; 8:24, 28, 58; 13:19; 18:5. This can be understood against the background of the revelation of divine name reported at Ex 3:14.

¹²See 8:28 with, especially, 3:16-17; 5:24; 6:40; and 11:25.

to accomplish the will of the Father and it is equivalent to "hallowed be your name, your kingdom come, your will be done" (Mt 6:9-10).

The prayer of Jesus receives an immediate response in the form of an audible heavenly voice, presumably the voice of the Father: "I have glorified it, and I will glorify it again" (12:28). The Father has glorified his name through the ministry of Jesus (2:11; 11:4) and he is surely going to bring to completion this glorification through the death and resurrection of Jesus, which is the culmination of that ministry; and the ultimate glorification of the divine name will be done through the glorified Jesus who will draw all people to himself (12:32). In the Gospel this is the only instance of the Father audibly responding to the prayer of Jesus, and it is stated that this response has come for the benefit of others and that Jesus himself did not need such a reassurance (12:30), as at 11:42 the prayer itself was meant to lead the listeners to believing that the Father has sent him.

4. John 17:1-26

After his farewell discourse to the disciples (13:31-16:33) the Johannine Jesus makes this prayer concluding the process of leave-taking in preparation for his death and departure to the Father. By far this is the longest and the most profound of the prayers of Jesus found in the Bible. It is an intimate conversation with his Father in the form of a monologue made in the presence of his disciples and intended for their information and benefit. The presence of the silent and invisible listener of this prayer is constantly made alive by invoking him frequently with supreme confidence as "Father" (17:1, 4, 21, 24), "Holy Father" (17:11) and "Righteous Father" (17:25). Jesus establishes "eye-contact" with him by looking up to heaven as he begins to make this prayer (17:1). In this prayer many of the themes of the discourse as well as of other discourses in the Gospel are recalled.

In general, the prayer has three parts: (i) Jesus, addressing "Father," prays for glory: he prays for his own glorification indicating that he has glorified the Father by accomplishing the task of making him known (17:1-8); (ii) invoking "Holy Father," he prays for those whom the Father has given him: describing the precarious situation of the disciples, he requests the Father to guard them and to make them holy (17:9-19); and (iii) addressing "Father," Jesus prays for those who believe through the

disciples' word: the request is that they may be one and, thus, make known the one who sent him and loved them and that all those who belong to him be included in the love that unites the Father and the Son and participate in the glory of the Son (17:20-26).

Structurally, the prayer consists of reminiscences and requests. Recollections are made (a) of the intimate relationship between the Father and the Son, (b) of what the Father has given to the Son, (c) of what the Son has accomplished for the disciples whom the Father has given him, and (d) of the situation of the disciples. Requests are made to the Father (e) on behalf of Jesus, the Son, and (f) for the disciples.

a. The intimate relationship between the Father and the Son

During the prayer Jesus consistently acknowledges the close and unique relation existing between the Father and himself, the Son, and indicates the various dimensions of it. Twice he recalls that the Father and the Son are one (17:11, 22), which has been a theme of his previous proclamation (10:30). This unity involves their mutual and dynamic immanence: the Father is in Jesus and he is in the Father (17:21, 23).¹³ It is a union of love by which the Father has imparted his glory to the Son (17:24, 26).¹⁴ In contrast to the hostile world, Jesus knows the Father (17:25).¹⁵ Because of their unity all those who belong to Jesus are also the Father's, and all that the Father has are also Jesus' (17:10; compare 16:15).

b. The Father's gifts to the Son

Jesus gratefully recalls also the various gifts that the Father has given him out of love for him. Everything that the Son has is from the Father, and the Father has given to Jesus especially his word making him the ultimate mediator of revelation (17:7-8).¹⁶ Moreover, the Father has given him the divine name (17:11-12), and the glory that Jesus has, he has received from

¹³See 10:38; 14:10, 11, 20 for previous statements about their union of immanence.

¹⁴The Father's love for the Son has been the subject of discussion at 3:35; 5:20; 10:17; 15:9-10.

¹⁵Jesus has stated during his ministry that since he comes from the Father he, more than anyone else, knows him (6:46; 7:29; 8:55; 10:15).

¹⁶At 3:35 there was the declaration, "The Father loves the Son and has given all things into his hand." According to John, Jesus himself is the Divine Word, which was from the beginning, become incarnate (1:1-5, 10-14, 16).

the Father before the beginning of the world (17:5, 22, 24).¹⁷ The Father has sent him giving him power over all people in order to give eternal life to all who believe in him (17:2-3). Consequently, the disciples are those who have been given to him by the Father (17:6, 9-10).¹⁸

c. **What Jesus has done for the disciples**

Jesus during his prayer reminisces about what he has done in favour of the disciples, whom the Father has given him, as response to the relationship he has with the Father and to the gifts he has received from him. Jesus has given to the disciples the word that he himself has received from the Father, leading them to the knowledge of who Jesus is in relation to the Father and to have faith in him (17:7-8, 14) and thus receive eternal life (17:2-3).

He has revealed the Father's name to them enabling them to know and acknowledge the relation between the Father and Jesus and their relation to them and empowering them to keep the word (17:6). The revelation of the Father's name involves the manifestation of his love for the humankind in general (3:16) and for the disciples in particular (17:23) and the revelation of God as the Father of Jesus and the disciples as the children of God (1:12-13; 20:17). Jesus is to reveal the name of the Father further with his glorification so that the Father's love given to him may be communicated to the disciples and through that love he may be in them (17:25-26). Jesus has protected them in the Father's name given to him and has guarded them from being lost (17:12).¹⁹

As the Father has sent Jesus into the world he is sending the disciples into the world to continue the ministry entrusted to him by the Father (17:18). The sending of Jesus involved the consecration of Jesus by the Father; he has been set apart and made holy by the Father for the fulfilment of his mission (10:36). Now he consecrates himself by fulfilling

¹⁷At 1:14 John has acknowledged that when the Word that was from the beginning became flesh "we have seen his glory, the glory of the Father's unique Son."

¹⁸The Johannine Jesus has previously stated that those who believe in him are those given to him by the Father and they are those who have been drawn to him and taught by the Father (6:37, 44-45).

¹⁹At 6:39 Jesus has said, "And this is the will of him who sent me, that I should lose nothing of what he has given me, but raise it up on the last day."

the mission entrusted to him so that the disciples are consecrated in truth (17:19). Jesus himself is the truth, the revelation of God and the way to the Father (14:6). As a result of the completion of his revelatory and saving mission the disciples will be made holy and set apart to continue his mission of imparting the saving truth.

Jesus has given to the disciples the glory that he has received from the Father enabling them to be united, as he and the Father are one (17:22). The glory that Jesus received from the Father means the Father's dynamic presence in him resulting in their mutual immanence and unity.²⁰ It is the same glory, the divine reality, that Jesus has communicated to the disciples, and that should enable them to have a unity based on and similar to the unity of the Father and the Son. To the extent that the disciples have received the glory from Jesus he is glorified in them (17:10), his dynamic, saving presence becomes manifest in and through them.

d. The situation of the disciples

Jesus recalls the precarious situation of the disciples as background for the requests that he makes on their behalf. Although Jesus is about to depart from this world the disciples are to remain in the hostile world (17:11). The world²¹ has not known the Father (17:25) and, therefore, it does not know who in reality Jesus is and what relationship the disciples have with the Father, and it refuses to acknowledge and accept them. On the contrary, it hates the disciples because they do not belong to it as Jesus himself did not belong to it (17:14, 16). The opposition of the world to Jesus and to the disciples has been the theme of detailed discussion in the farewell address of Jesus (15:18-25). Although the remarks of Jesus regarding the opposition of the world are made to his immediate disciples, this opposition is understood as something to be experienced by his later disciples also.

e. Request to glorify the Son

The only request on his own behalf that Jesus makes to the Father during this prayer is to glorify him, the Son (17:1-5); and it is also with this request that he begins his long prayer:

²⁰For this theme of glory, see 10:30, 37-38 together with 1:14.

²¹"World" in this context has a pejorative meaning and signifies those people who are opposed to God and his Son, Jesus Christ.

¹Father, the hour has come, glorify your Son so that the Son may glorify you, ²inasmuch as you gave him power over all people, to give eternal life to all whom you have given him. ³And this is eternal life, that they know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom you sent. ⁴I glorified you on earth by completing the work you have given me to do. ⁵So now, Father, glorify me in your presence with the glory that I had with you before the world existed.

By obediently fulfilling his mission Jesus had begun to reveal his glory (2:11). After the arrival of the Greeks, signalling the coming of the hour for him, the Son of Man, to be glorified (12:20-23) by being lifted up and revealing his divine identity (8:28) and drawing all people to himself (12:32), he had asked the Father to glorify his name and the Father responded saying, "I have glorified it, and I will glorify it again" (12:28). During his farewell meal with the disciples, immediately after Judas left the scene with the intention of betraying him, Jesus began his farewell address with the announcement: "Now the Son of Man has been glorified, and God has been glorified in him. If God has been glorified in him, God will also glorify him in himself and will glorify him at once" (13:31-32). Jesus has been announcing the commencement of the process of his ultimate glorification through death and resurrection. In the glorification of Jesus, the Son sent by God, who is one with him, God himself is glorified: the divine glory is manifested in and through Jesus. The ultimate agent of this process of glorification is God himself and he is going to bring it to completion.

The meaning of the prayer of Jesus at 17:1-5 is to be seen against this background and in continuity with these ideas. Being aware of the arrival of the hour of his glorification Jesus asks the Father to glorify him so that he can glorify the Father by revealing him (v. 1). The reason for this request is that he has been sent by the Father to impart eternal life to those who believe in him (v. 2). However, before he can do that he has to complete his revealing and saving ministry through the process of his glorification by death and resurrection and, thus, open up the possibility to believe in him knowing and acknowledging his real identity and his relation with God as the Father (v. 3). After recalling that he has glorified the Father on earth, namely, that he has made the Father's saving presence in history experienceable through his total ministry (v. 4), Jesus now asks the Father to glorify him in his presence with the glory that he had "in the

beginning," even before the world existed (v. 5). He is requesting the Father to complete the process of his glorification which is to happen by his being "lifted up"²² by death and resurrection, whereby he can return to the Father,²³ his divine identity can be fully revealed (8:28), he can draw all to himself (12:32), and give them eternal life (3:14-15).

Although Jesus is asking the Father to glorify him it is not a prayer for his own sake. The glorification of Jesus means the completion of his saving ministry and has as its goal imparting of salvation to others. Hence, ultimately, this is a prayer that the Father may accomplish through him, through his saving plan for the salvation of humankind. He is submitting himself to the will of the Father and asking him to bring it to fulfilment.

f. Requests for the disciples

Whereas in this context Jesus prays for himself only once and that too in effect is a prayer for others, he makes several requests in favour of his disciples, both his immediate disciples and those who will become disciples later.

The first of these requests (17:11) is that the Father may keep the disciples in his name, the name that he has given to Jesus. The reason for this request is that Jesus has revealed the Father's name to them and has given them the Father's word and they have believed in him and have known and acknowledged the relation between the Father and Jesus (17:6-8). Hence, they belong to the Father and Jesus (17:10) and not to the world that is hostile towards Jesus and hates them too (17:14, 16). While he was with them he protected them in the Father's name (17:12); but now he is going to the Father leaving them in the world; they, therefore, need continued protection from the Father (17:11). Jesus highlights the contrast between the world and his disciples by remarking that he is not praying for the world, since it stubbornly remains opposed to him and shuts itself from the sphere of salvation, but only for the disciples (17:9). At 17:11 the stated purpose of keeping the disciples in the Father's name is that they

²²See the three statements in the Gospel about the Son of Man as to be "lifted up" (3:14-15; 8:28; 12:32).

²³The return of Jesus to the Father has been predictably a recurring theme in the context of his farewell. See Jn 13:1; 14:2-4, 12, 28-29; 16:5, 7, 10, 17, 28; also 6:62; 20:17.

may be one as the Father and Jesus are one. What is envisaged is, therefore, more than a mere protection from the attack of the world. The Father is asked to keep them in his name, namely, to keep them as related to and united with him by virtue of the revelation of his name, which is equivalent to his word, that Jesus has given them (17:6). It means to keep them in faith and thus keep them united participating in the union between the Father and the Son. At 17:13 the purpose of Jesus' statements and prayer is given: "I say these things in the world so that they may have my joy fulfilled in themselves." Earlier, during the discourse, after indicating the necessity of the disciples remaining united to him in faith and producing the fruits of discipleship by observing his commandments and abiding in his love just as he has done in relation to the Father (15:1-10), Jesus has said, "I have said these things to you so that my joy may be in you, and that your joy may be fulfilled" (15:11). The joy of Jesus is the result of his awareness of his union with the Father and of the dynamic expression of this union in the form of accomplishing the will of the Father. The disciples will have this joy fulfilled in them when, as a result of the protection of the Father, they remain united to the Father and to the Son and to one another and manifest that union in their lives.

The prayer of Jesus at 17:11 is repeated at 17:15 in another form: "I am not asking you to take them out of the world, but I ask you to protect them from the evil one." The "evil one" is the same as the "prince of this world," namely, Satan, who is opposed to Jesus and who is going to be defeated with the glorification of Jesus.²⁴ The evil one will try to thwart the effectiveness of Jesus' saving action by attacking his disciples who are in the world and trying to deviate them from the way that Jesus is. In this confrontation the disciples need the protection of the Father.

The protection that the Father is asked to give the disciples is expressed in more positive terms in another request in the same context: "Consecrate them in the truth; your word is the truth" (17:17). Jesus is asking the Father to set apart the disciples from the world and to transform them making them holy. This consecration is to be done in the truth, which

²⁴See Jn 12:31; 14:30; 16:11.

is the Father's word, and which Jesus himself is.²⁵ The reason for this request is that Jesus is sending them into the world to continue his ministry, as the Father has sent him to fulfil his plan of salvation (17:18). The consecration of the disciples is to be based on Jesus consecrating himself (17:19). They have been consecrated by the word that Jesus had given them enabling them to believe in him (17:8). Now he is going to consecrate himself by completing his saving work and revealing fully his identity so that they can accept the full truth and, thus, be consecrated more completely.

Johannine Jesus prays specifically for his later disciples also, namely, those who are going to believe in him by accepting the proclamation that will be made (17:20-23):

²⁰I ask not only on behalf of these, but also on behalf of those who will believe in me through their word, ²¹that they may all be one. As you, Father, are in me and I am in you, may they also be in us, so that the world may believe that you have sent me. ²²The glory that you have given me I have given them, so that they may be one, as we are one, ²³I in them and you in me, that they may become completely one, so that the world may know that you have sent me and have loved them even as you have loved me.

The main point of his request is their unity, "that they all may be one." The model and basis of the unity of the believers is to be the unity of the Father and the Son. The believers have to participate in the union between the Father and the Son, which is a dynamic union of mutual immanence. The believers can have this by virtue of the "glory" that Jesus has given them, which he himself received from the Father (17:22). By the communication of the divine glory the Father is in Jesus and he is in the believers (17:23). The unity of the believers is to be the testimony to the world that it is the Father who has sent Jesus and that the Father loves them as he has loved Jesus (17:21, 23).

Finally, Jesus expresses his desire to the Father that the disciples who belong to him may be with him in the place where he is going, namely, in

²⁵See Jn 14:6 where Jesus presents himself as the truth, and the hymn about the Word in the Prologue of the Gospel where Jesus is presented as the Word become flesh (1:1-5, 10-12, 14, 16).

"the Father's house," to see the glory, which the Father has given him because the Father loved him before the creation of the world (17:24). Jesus has told the disciples that he is going to the Father's house to prepare a place for them and that he will return to take them to be with him in that place (14:2-3). He has also asked the Father to glorify him in his presence with the glory that he had in his presence before the world existed (17:5). Combining these Jesus is asking the Father that, though now he is leaving the disciples in the world, since they belong to him they also should be one day with him in the presence of the Father participating in his glory. The disciples, who saw the partial revelation of the glory of Jesus during his ministry and believed in him (2:11) and who are going to experience the process of his glorification and should remain united with him in faith, are to see his glory fully when they are united with Jesus in his Father's house. The petitions of Jesus are concluded on that eschatological note.

5. Conclusion

There are some features common to all the three prayers of Jesus given in the Gospel of John. One is the familiar and intimate manner in which he addresses God: "Father." That form of address is to be seen against the background of his unique and intimate relation to God described in the Gospel as one of the principal aspects of his revelation. In his prayers Jesus shows his awareness and conviction of who he is in relation to God.

Related to that is the confidence he shows that the Father will grant his prayer. His confidence is rooted in his intimacy with God and in the fact that he is the Son who always seeks to do the will of the Father. In the longest of his prayers he has expressed this enumerating what he has done in pursuance of the Father's plan. His obedience extends to his requests too. His wishes are not different from the Father's, and what he asks for is essentially the realisation of the Father's plan of salvation.

His petitions are for the well-being and benefit of others. Even when he seemingly asks something for himself, such as glory, it is ultimately intended for furthering the divine plan. Remarkably all the three prayers have the context and also content of the glorification of Jesus, which happens through his death and resurrection and by which he fulfils his mission of saving the humankind.

The three prayers of Jesus in the Gospel are made in the presence of others and in their hearing. This he does not to show off his piety. The

prayers are extensions of his revelation and also a form of proclamation inviting people to know and accept in faith God as his Father and himself as the Son sent by him, who obediently accomplishes the Father's plan for humankind.