

John 17:5

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And now, O Father, glorify thou me with thine own self with the glory which I had with thee before the world was.

Analysis

And now, O Father, glorify thou me with thine own self with the glory which I had with thee before the world was (kai nyn doxason me sy, pater, para seauto te doxe he eichon pro tou ton kosmon einai para soi). This verse presents one of Scripture's clearest affirmations of Christ's pre-existence and eternal deity. Jesus prays for restoration of the doxa (glory) He possessed **before the world was** (pro tou ton kosmon einai)—not 'before I was born' but before creation itself existed.

The verb eichon (imperfect active indicative of echo, 'to have') indicates continuous possession in past time: Jesus continuously had this glory in eternity past. This glory was para soi (with you, in your presence)—the Son's glory existed in intimate fellowship with the Father before time began. Jesus is not requesting glory He never had, but the restoration of His pre-incarnate splendor now veiled in His humiliation. This verse demolishes Arianism (Christ as created being) and Adoptionism (Jesus became divine)—He possessed divine glory eternally. Paul echoes this in Philippians 2:6-11: Christ's self-emptying (kenosis) and subsequent exaltation. The incarnation involved voluntary concealment of glory; the resurrection and ascension restore its full manifestation.

Historical Context

The High Priestly Prayer (John 17) occurs in the upper room on Passover night, hours before Jesus' arrest. This prayer reveals Jesus' consciousness of His divine identity and mission more fully than any other passage. Early church councils

(Nicaea 325, Constantinople 381) used this verse against Arian heresy, which denied Christ's eternal deity. Arius argued Christ was a created being; this verse proves Christ existed before creation. Athanasius championed this text in defending homoousios (same substance) with the Father. Jehovah's Witnesses, modern Arians, must explain how a created being could possess glory with God before creation. Socinians argued 'glory' meant merely future honor Christ would receive; Reformed exegesis rightly sees pre-existent glory. Calvin wrote: 'Christ reclaims the heavenly glory which he had laid aside for a time.' The verse establishes both Christ's deity (eternal glory with God) and His genuine incarnation (glory temporarily veiled).

Related Passages

Revelation 20:12 — Judgment according to deeds

Matthew 25:31 — Final judgment

Study Questions

1. How does Jesus possessing glory with the Father before creation establish His full deity and refute claims that He is a created being?
2. What does Christ's voluntary laying aside of glory teach us about humility and self-sacrificial love (Philippians 2:5-8)?

Matthew 25:34 (Parallel theme): Then shall the King say unto them on his right hand, Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world:

John 14:9 (Parallel theme): Jesus saith unto him, Have I been so long time with you, and yet hast thou not known me, Philip? he that hath seen me hath seen the Father; and how sayest thou then, Shew us the Father?

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