

John Chapter Sixteen

Read **John 16:1-15** – Persecution/Works of the Spirit

v.1 “THESE THINGS HAVE I SPOKEN UNTO YOU THAT YE SHOULD NOT BE OFFENDED [caused to stumble; ASV].”

First of all Jesus knew without doubt that every one of them who was present in this setting would face more trials and tribulations because of Him than they had ever endured before. Since they would face these challenges He wanted to bolster their faith and courage. Matthew records:

Matthew 26:31 “...ALL YE SHALL BE OFFENDED BECAUSE OF ME THIS NIGHT: FOR IT IS WRITTEN, I WILL SMITE THE SHEPHERD, AND THE SHEEP OF THE FLOCK SHALL BE SCATTERED ABROAD.”

Also in Matthew’s record we find that he had warned them earlier:

Matthew 24:10 “AND THEN SHALL MANY BE OFFENDED, AND SHALL BETRAY ONE ANOTHER, AND SHALL HATE ONE ANOTHER.”

v.2 “THEY SHALL PUT YOU OUT OF THE SYNAGOGUES: YEA, THE TIME COMETH, THAT WHOSOEVER KILLETH YOU WILL THINK THAT HE DOETH GOD SERVICE.”

It would seem that it’s one thing to be persecuted by those that we recognize as our enemies but quite another to be persecuted by those that we see as our friends or even part of our spiritual family. Jesus is warning them that the time would come, and very shortly, that they would not only be barred from the Jewish synagogues as heretics but that they would be killed in the name of God. The classic example is the activities of Saul:

Acts 8:1 “AND SAUL WAS CONSENTING UNTO HIS DEATH (Stephen). AND AT THAT TIME THERE WAS A GREAT PRESECUTION AGAINST THE CHURCH WHICH WAS AT JERUSALEM; AND THEY WERE ALL SCATTERED ABROAD THROUGHOUT THE REGIONS OF JUDEA AND SAMARIA, EXCEPT THE APOSTLES.

v.3 “AND THESE THINGS WILL THEY DO UNTO YOU, BECAUSE THEY HAVE NOT KNOWN THE FATHER, NOR ME.”

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How is it that they could persecute the disciples of Jesus Christ unto death in the name of God and not know God? Is there a parallel in this world today? I would submit that there is. Islam in the name of Allah, whom they consider the God of Heaven, is doing the same thing today. They are at war with every religion that does not conform to their doctrine. Such is the nature of Mohammadism and has been since its very beginning. Paul writes in later years that as Saul he persecuted the church out of ignorance:

I Timothy 1:13 "WHO WAS BEFORE A BLASPHEMER, AND A PERSECUTOR, AND INJURIOUS: BUT I OBTAINED MERCY, BECAUSE I DID *it* IGNORANTLY IN UNBELIEF."

Saul was a Pharisee. Saul was schooled in the Mosaic Covenant at the feet of Gamaliel, one of the most prominent Jewish schools in existence at that time, how could he claim ignorance as the reason for his persecution of the church? This is hard for me to comprehend but I think he explains it in his writing to the church at Rome:

Romans 10:1-2 "BRETHREN, MY HEART'S DESIRE AND PRAYER TO GOD FOR ISRAEL IS, THAT THEY MIGHT BE SAVED. FOR I BEAR THEM RECORD THAT THEY HAVE A ZEAL OF GOD, BUT NOT ACCORDING TO KNOWLEDGE."

And then he tells us why:

Romans 10:3 "FOR THEY BEING IGNORANT OF GOD'S RIGHTEOUSNESS, AND GOING ABOUT TO ESTABLISH THEIR OWN RIGHTEOUSNESS, HAVE NOT SUBMITTED THEMSELVES UNTO THE RIGHTEOUSNESS OF GOD."

If they had not been ignorant of the righteousness of God, if they had submitted themselves to God and accepted the teaching, the proof, the miracles that Jesus performed; if they had had open minds and hearts, hearing, listening and accepting Paul writes that Christ would not have been crucified:

I Corinthians 2:8 "WHICH NONE OF THE PRINCES OF THIS WORLD KNEW: FOR HAD THEY KNOWN *it*, THEY WOULD NOT HAVE CRUCIFIED THE LORD OF GLORY."

v.4 "BUT THESE THINGS HAVE I TOLD YOU THAT WHEN THE TIME SHALL COME, YE MAY REMEMBER THAT I TOLD YOU OF THEM. AND THESE THINGS I SAID NOT UNTO YOU AT THE BEGINNING, BECAUSE I WAS WITH YOU."

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He had not told them of the things that he would suffer and that persecution that they would endure at the beginning because He was with them, and the time had not yet come for them to be fulfilled. Now that they are at hand he needs to bolster their faith and give them encouragement to maintain their faith. This is needed especially since they did not understand the nature of his kingdom and their view of a Messiah that would overthrow Roman rule was in error.

v.5 “BUT NOW I GO MY WAY TO HIM THAT SENT ME; AND NONE OF YOU ASKETH ME, WHITHER THOU GOEST?”

We see two things in this verse, first of all Jesus confirms his preexistence, a fact he knew all along. Now he is simply returning to God the Father: to the former state that he enjoyed prior to his coming to earth.

John 17:5 “AND NOW, O FATHER, GLORIFY THOU ME WITH THINE OWN SELF WITH THE GLORY WHICH I HAD WITH THEE BEFORE THE WORLD WAS.”

Secondly he tells them of the things that are to come to help them endure what they would encounter as his apostles. The time has come that he will have to leave them and they need that kind of encouragement. They apparently have given themselves up in grief because they haven't ask him where he is going. They are only acknowledging, at the moment, that he is leaving them.

v.6 “BUT BECAUSE I HAVE SAID THESE THINGS UNTO YOU, SORROW HATH FILLED YOUR HEARTS.”

They are so filled with grief and uncertainty about his leaving them that they haven't even asked him about the “WAY” that they need to go. They are so overwhelmed by their grief, by the trauma of losing him as a guide and leader that they are apparently kind of numb. Most of us who have lost loved ones to the grim reaper probably understand that condition.

v.7 “NEVERTHELESS I TELL YOU THE TRUTH; IT IS EXPEDIENT FOR YOU THAT I GO AWAY: FOR IF I GO NOT AWAY, THE COMFORTER WILL NOT COME UNTO YOU; BUT IF I DEPART, I WILL SEND HIM TO YOU.”

Jesus is still working to get his disciples to understand that he must go away. He explains to them that unless he returns to the Father, the Comforter that he had promised them could not come. In time the Holy Spirit, which would bring them special powers, would be more valuable to them in their work than Jesus himself. His work is just about finished, God's purpose has been fulfilled and it is time for him to go. We see the value of the Holy Spirit when Peter declares to the Jews in Jerusalem:

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Acts 2:33 “THEREFORE BEING BY THE RIGHT HAND OF GOD EXALTED, AND HAVING RECEIVED OF THE FATHER THE PROMISE OF THE HOLY GHOST, HE HATH SHED FORTH THIS, WHICH YE NOW SEE AND HEAR.”

v.8 “AND WHEN HE IS COME, HE WILL REPROVE [convict, ASV] THE WORLD OF SIN, AND OF RIGHTEOUSNESS, AND OF JUDGMENT.”

Jesus living here on earth as a man; was just that, a man. By that I mean that He was limited by the normal physical limitations of what one man could do. However, when he returned to the Father and sent the Holy Spirit, or Holy Ghost, to his disciples then the ability to proclaim and spread the Gospel would be multiplied many times over. In addition, without his death, there would be no “good news” to preach because nature of Almighty God, the Most Holy One, would not allow him to forgive mankind of their sins without an appropriate sacrifice.

v.9 “OF SIN BECAUSE THEY BELIEVE NOT ON ME.”

When the Holy Spirit came he would convict the world of sin because they “BELIEVE NOT ON ME”. We see this happening in various places in the beginning history of the church. Initially on Pentecost when Peter preaching to them that:

“THEREFORE LET ALL THE HOUSE OF ISRAEL KNOW ASSUREDLY, THAT GOD HATH MADE THAT SAME MAN JESUS, WHO YE HAVE CRUCIFIED, BOTH LORD AND CHRIST.” **Acts 2:36**

The multitude reacted this way:

“NOW THEN THEY HEARD *this*, THEY WERE PRICKED IN THEIR HEART, AND SAID UNTO PETER AND TO THE REST OF THE APOSTLES, MEN *and* BRETHREN, WHAT SHALL WE DO?” **Acts 2:37**

Another was Saul:

“AND HE TREMBLING AND ASTONISHED SAID, LORD, WHAT WILT THOU HAVE ME TO DO? AND THE LORD *said* UNTO HIM, ARISE, AND GO INTO THE CITY, AND IT WILL BE TOLD THEE WHAT THOU MUST DO.” **Acts 9:6**

But they were in the minority, just as they are today.

v.10 “OF RIGHTEOUSNESS, BECAUSE I GO TO MY FATHER, AND YE SEE ME NO MORE.”

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Jesus, though condemned and crucified by men, was innocent of any crime, in fact innocent of any sin. Consequently his righteousness, his innocence and the facts of his resurrection was used in various situations by the writers of the New Testament to verify He was the Messiah promised, Son of God.

Acts 17:31 "BECAUSE HE HATH APPOINTED A DAY, IN THE WHICH HE WILL JUDGE THE WORLD IN RIGHTEOUSNESS BY *that* MAN WHOM HE HATH ORDAINED, *whereof* HE HATH GIVEN ASSURANCE TO ALL *men*, IN THAT HE RAISED HIM FROM THE DEAD."

See also **Romans 1:4**, **I Corinthians 15:4**, etc.

v.11 "OF JUDGMENT, BECAUSE THE PRINCE OF THIS WORLD IS JUDGED."

Before Jesus died for the sins of the world there could be no judgment because all mankind was condemned simply because there was no means of redemption. But as a result of Jesus' death man has been given the opportunity to appear before God in judgment redeemed from sin. The power that Satan exercised over mankind has been removed and the world can be judged. The Hebrew writer emphasized:

Hebrews 2:14 "FORASMUCH THEN AS THE CHILDREN ARE PARTAKERS OF FLESH AND BLOOD, HE ALSO HIMSELF LIKewise TOOK PART OF THE SAME; THE THROUGH DEATH HE MIGHT DESTROY HIM THAT HAD THE POWER OF DEATH, THAT IS, THE DEVIL."

v.12 "I HAVE YET MANY THINGS TO SAY UNTO YOU, BUT YE CANNOT BEAR THEM NOW."

There is much more that Jesus' disciples need to know, but all in good time. They are not yet ready and need the Comforter, the Holy Spirit to guide them. They still have not lost their desire or perhaps even their belief that Jesus would establish a physical kingdom and throw off the Roman yoke on Israel. They now have the basics and that will be sufficient for a few more weeks.

v.13 "HOWBEIT WHEN HE, THE SPIRIT OF TRUTH, IS COME, HE WILL GUIDE YOU INTO ALL TRUTH [the truth, ASV]: FOR HE SHALL NOT SPEAK OF HIMSELF; BUT WHATSOEVER HE SHALL HEAR, *that* SHALL HE SPEAK: AND HE WILL SHEW YOU THINGS TO COME."

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Jesus assures them again that when the Spirit of Truth is come that they will be able to understand and know all things that are required. He also assures them that the Spirit will not speak those things or provide to them those things that he desires but will provide only that He is instructed to provide. Just as John wrote in his first general epistle:

I John 2:20 “BUT YE HAVE AND UNCTION [anointing, ASV] FROM THE HOLY ONE, AND YE KNOW ALL THINGS.”

v.14 “HE SHALL GLORIFY ME: FOR HE SHALL RECEIVE OF MINE, AND SHALL SHEW *it* UNTO YOU.”

A more literal translation here would be that the Holy Spirit would “TAKE OF OR FROM ME” all things and then show them to you. He would be directed in what he provides to Jesus disciples by Jesus himself as the one at the right hand of God ruling over his own kingdom.

v.15 “ALL THINGS THAT THE FATHER HATH ARE MINE: THEREFORE SAID I, THAT HE SHALL TAKE OF MINE, AND SHALL SHEW *it* UNTO YOU.”

Jesus is repeating what he has taught them throughout his ministry; God will give His Son all authority:

John 3:35 “THE FATHER LOVETH THE SON, AND HATH GIVEN ALL THINGS UNTO HIS HAND.”

And it is these things that he will show to Jesus’ disciples.

Read **John 16:16-24** – Christ Departure and Return

v.16 “A LITTLE WHILE, AND YE SHALL NOT SEE ME: AND AGAIN, A LITTLE WHILE, AND YE SHALL SEE ME, BECAUSE I GO TO THE FATHER.”

In a little while; it is yet in the darkness of this very night that he will be arrested in the garden of Gethsemane and will die before another 24 hours have passed. He warns them that they won’t see him, that after a little while, we know that it was three days, he will appear to them again and then will go back to the Father. They really didn’t comprehend what he was telling them.

v.17 “THEN SAID SOME OF HIS DISCIPLES AMONG THEMSELVES, WHAT IS THIS THAT HE SAITH UNTO US, A LITTLE WHILE, AND YE SHALL NOT SEE ME: AND AGAIN, A LITTLE WHILE, AND YE SHALL SEE ME: AND, BECAUSE I GO TO THE FATHER?”

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It is though Jesus is talking in riddles to them. This was to be expected back at the beginning of his ministry when:

“AND WITH MANY SUCH PARABLES SPAKE HE THE WORD UNTO THEM, AS THEY WERE UNABLE TO HEAR *it*.” Mark 4:33

Even today we have those that have been blinded by prejudice, false doctrines and the opinions of men that don't fare any better regarding their understanding of the Word of God.

v.18 “THEY SAID THEREFORE, WHAT IS THIS THAT HE SAITH, A LITTLE WHILE? WE CANNOT TELL WHAT HE SAITH.”

Apparently they are hung up on the phrase “A LITTLE WHILE”, what is “A LITTLE WHILE?” Well to some in some situations it could be an hour or so, in others it could be a day or two. We have to understand the context in order to put the proper time limits on “A LITTLE WHILE”. In addition Jesus uses it to designate two different spans of time. One span of time applies to the period of time that will come when they will not see him, when he will be in the grave and the other span of time applies to the time that they will see him before he returns to heaven.

v.19 “NOW JESUS KNEW THAT THEY WERE DESIROUS TO ASK HIM, AND SAID UNTO THEM, DO YE INQUIRE AMONG YOURSELVES OF THAT I SAID, A LITTLE WHILE, AND YE SHALL NOT SEE ME: AND AGAIN, A LITTLE WHILE, AND YE SHALL SEE ME?”

Jesus knows their thoughts and asks if they want him to explain his words to them further.

v.20 “VERILY, VERILY, I SAY UNTO YOU, THAT YE SHALL WEEP AND LAMENT, BUT THE WORLD SHALL REJOICE: AND YE SHALL BE SORROWFUL, BUT YOUR SORROW SHALL BE TURNED INTO JOY.”

Dark days are coming to the disciples of Jesus. When Mary Magdalene came to them with the news that the tomb was empty they were weeping and lamenting the loss of their loved one:

“*and* SHE WENT AND TOLD THEM THAT HAD BEEN WITH HIM, AS THEY MOURNED AND WEPT.” Mark 16:10

But the joy of Mary Magdalene and the “OTHER MARY” was complete for they had spoken with the angels at the empty tomb where he had been resurrected.

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Matthew 28:8 “AND THEY DEPARTED QUICKLY FROM THE SEPULCHER WITH FEAR AND GREAT JOY; AND DID RUN TO BRING HIS DISCIPLES WORD.”

v.21 “A WOMAN WHEN SHE IS IN TRAVAIL HATH SORROW, BECAUSE HER HOUR IS COME: BUT AS SOON AS SHE IS DELIVERED OF THE CHILD, SHE REMEMBERETH NO MORE THE ANGUISH, FOR JOY THAT A MAN IS BORN INTO THE WORLD.”

He compares the pain and sorrow that they would endure to that of a woman giving birth to a child. This is an analogy that is common in scripture and found in the prophets. Isaiah in writing about the pain and anguish that he felt when God gave him a “GREVIOUS VISION” concerning the treachery that would destroy Babylon:

Isaiah 21:3 “THEREFORE ARE MY LOINS FILLED WITH PAIN: PANGS HAVE TAKEN HOLD UPON ME, AS THE PANGS OF A WOMAN THAT TRAVAILETH: I WAS BOWED DOWN AT THE HEARING *of it*; I WAS DISMAYED AT THE SEEING *of it*.”

But all that goes away or seems trivial when the newborn child is laid in her arms. When Jesus is resurrected, his disciple see him and understand better the reasons for what was done they will indeed have the same kind of joy.

v.22 “AND YE NOW THEREFORE HAVE SORROW: BUT I WILL SEE YOU AGAIN, AND YOUR HEART SHALL REJOICE, AND YOUR JOY NO MAN TAKETH FROM YOU.”

They will endure a period of deep sorrow but it will be short, only a “LITTLE WHILE” as he had told them. Then they would know great joy, a permanent joy. We can see this readily in two references recorded by Luke:

Luke 24:41 “AND WHILE THEY YET BELIEVED NOT FOR JOY, AND WONDERED, HE SAID UNTO THEM, HAVE YE HERE ANY MEAT.”

They are flabbergasted, doubtful; but joyful because they are seeing Jesus again. When he “OPENED” “THEIR UNDERSTANDING” and explained the scriptures just before he ascended.

Luke 24:52 “AND THEY WORSHIPED HIM, AND RETURNED TO JERUSALEM WITH GREAT JOY.”

v.23 “AND IN THAT DAY YE SHALL ASK ME NOTHING. VERILY, VERILY, I SAY UNTO YOU, WHATSOEVER YE SHALL ASK THE FATHER IN MY NAME, HE WILL GIVE *it* YOU.”

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Jesus had taught them early in his ministry that if they ask, they would receive, seek and they would find (**Matthew 7:7**) and even earlier in this discourse:

John 14:13 “AND WHATSOEVER YE SHALL ASK IN MY NAME, THAT WILL I DO, THAT THE FATHER MAY BE GLORIFIED IN THE SON.”

But they would not be able to ask him, as he would no longer be with them, but rather they should ask the Father in His name as we do when we pray today.

v.24 “HITHERTO HAVE YE ASKED NOTHING IN MY NAME: ASK, AND YE SHALL RECEIVE, THAT YOUR JOY MAY BE FULL.”

Up until this point in time his disciples had not viewed Christ as a mediator between them and God, but now he commands them to do so and assures them that when they do their prayers will be answered.

Read **John 16:25-33** – The End of Parables

v.25 “THESE THINGS HAVE I SPOKEN UNTO YOU IN PROVERBS: BUT THE TIME COMETH, WHEN I SHALL NO MORE SPEAK UNTO YOU IN PROVERBS, BUT I SHALL SHOW YOU PLAINLY OF THE FATHER.”

Up until now Jesus had done much of his teaching through proverbs or parables. Now that his death and resurrection is about to take place, he will no longer do so but rather speak plainly and openly in his last teaching. The parables contained many things that they were not ready to hear. When He spoke a parable to a general audience and it was appropriate or when they asked, Jesus explained his parables to them. An example is the parable of the sower, in **Matthew 13:1-23**.

v.26-27 “AT THAT DAY YE SHALL ASK IN MY NAME: AND I SAY NOT UNTO YOU, THAT I WILL PRAY THE FATHER FOR YOU: FOR THE FATHER HIMSELF LOVETH YOU, BECAUSE YE HAVE LOVED ME, AND HAVE BELIEVED THAT I CAME OUT FROM GOD.”

“AT THAT DAY”, on the day that it would become appropriate to do so, they would ask whatever they needed in His name. But he would not answer them directly; in fact He would not be answering them or providing for them at all. Rather, the Father, God who loves them, just as He loves Jesus, would answer their requests and provide their needs. In many ways he is now weaning them away from him, His is not to be glorified except through or by the Father. God is to be glorified in their prayers, by their love and their worship. God loves them because they have accepted and believed Him as God’s son.

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v.28 "I CAME FORTH FROM THE FATHER, AND AM COME INTO THE WORLD: AGAIN, I LEAVE THE WORLD AND TO GO MY FATHER."

John writes in the beginning of this book that:

John 1:1 "IN THE BEGINNING WAS THE WORD AND THE WORD WAS WITH GOD AND THE WORD WAS GOD." **v.14** "AND THE WORD WAS MADE FLESH, AND DWELT AMONG US, (AND WE BEHELD HIS GLORY, THE GLORY AS THE ONLY BEGOTTEN SON OF THE FATHER,) FULL OF GRACE AND TRUTH."

Now "THE WORD" is to return to his proper place, to the right hand of God.

v.29 "HIS DISCIPLES SAID UNTO HIM, LO, NOW SPEAKEST THOU PLAINLY, AND SPEAKEST NO PROVERB."

Jesus' disciples do not claim to understand what he is telling them but when we read their reaction to his crucifixion and the fact that they did not believe Mary Magdalene when she told them he was gone from the tomb we wonder.

v.30 "NOW ARE WE SURE THAT THOU KNOWEST ALL THINGS, AND NEEDEST NOT THAT ANY MAN SHOULD ASK THEE: BY THIS WE BELIEVE THAT THOU CAMEST FORTH FROM GOD."

The key to this verse seems to be the fact that the disciples did believe that Jesus was the Son of God. He knew their very thoughts and this was sufficient for them to believe that he was from God and the Son of God. He answered questions that they had not yet asked, knowing their thoughts.

v.31 "JESUS ANSWERED THEM, DO YE NOW BELIEVE?"

Jesus is, in effect, asking them, "do you truly and really believe? Jesus still has doubts for he knows the trials that they will go through very shortly. He knows that before the events of the night are over that they will be scattered like sheep without a shepherd as he states in the next verse.

v.32 "BEHOLD, THE HOUR COMETH, YEA, IS NOW COME, THAT YE SHALL BE SCATTERED, EVERY MAN TO HIS OWN, AND SHALL LEAVE ME ALONE: AND YET I AM NOT ALONE, BECAUSE THE FATHER IS WITH ME."

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Yes, the hour is coming, before the night is over, that they will be scattered and on their own. They will leave him alone with his trial. We know that the Apostle Peter followed him and another disciple who was known to the high priest (**John 18:15**); possibly the Apostle John. But the rest:

Mark 14:50 "AND THEY ALL FORSOOK HIM AND FLED"

And at the time of his resurrection when they found the tomb empty we find that:

"THEN THE DISCIPLES WENT AWAY AGAIN UNTO THEIR OWN HOME." **John 20:10**

But he is not alone for God is with him and so He is with us as well no matter what trials we may face.

v.33 "THESE THINGS I HAVE SPOKEN UNTO YOU, THAT IN ME YE MIGHT HAVE PEACE. IN THE WORLD YE SHALL HAVE TRIBULATION: BUT BE OF GOOD CHEER; I HAVE OVERCOME THE WORLD."

He has spoken these things to help them overcome the fear and doubt that they would face. Just as he told them earlier:

John 14:27 "PEACE I LEAVE WITH YOU, MY PEACE I GIVE UNTO YOU: NOT AS THE WORLD GIVETH, GIVE I UNTO YOU. LET NOT OUR HEART BE TROUBLED, NEITHER LET IT BE AFRAID."