

# The Gospel of John

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## Chapter Sixteen

### John 16:1-4

*"These things I have spoken to you, that you may be kept from stumbling. (2) "They will make you outcasts from the synagogue, but an hour is coming for everyone who kills you to think that he is offering service to God. (3) "And these things they will do, because they have not known the Father, or Me. (4) "But these things I have spoken to you, that when their hour comes, you may remember that I told you of them. And these things I did not say to you at the beginning, because I was with you.*

John added this discussion of Jesus to offer some encouragement to the disciples who may become discouraged based upon His warning concerning the hatred of the world at the end of chapter 15. What He now has to say may not bring a lot of peace! He states that they will excommunicate them from the synagogue and even kill some of them because they think that they are serving God by doing such awful things. Luke tells us in Acts that Saul was one of these people persecuting the church and thinking that he was serving God. Paul also testified of his persecution of the church: *"as to zeal, a persecutor of the church; as to the righteousness which is in the Law, found blameless."* (Phil 3:6) They surely would have known about the excommunication of the man who was healed from being born blind. (John 9:22, 34). Also the raising of Lazarus perturbed the Jews to the extent that they tried to kill Jesus and Lazarus (John 12:10). Jesus gives the reason for these persecutions as the people not knowing either Him or the Father. By not knowing, Jesus means not an intellectual ignorance but their lacking of a proper experiential knowledge. They hated Jesus because of who they thought He was in relationship to their false understanding of serving God. Their understanding was actually great darkness: *"But if your eye is bad, your whole body will be full of darkness. If therefore the light that is in you is darkness, how great is the darkness!"* (Matt 6:23) Jesus then tells them that the reason He is telling them these coming events now is so they will remember that He had warned them when those events occur. He then states that He did not warn them at the beginning of their interaction because while He was in His incarnate form He could protect them. He was able to deflect the attacks on them solely to Himself and He continued to do so even until the moment of His arrest (John 18: 8, 9). John writes in another book that a huge break occurred between the church and the synagogue at the end of the first century. There were Jews who were actually of Satan but believed that they served God:

*Rev 2:9 'I know your tribulation and your poverty (but you are rich), and the blasphemy by those who say they are Jews and are not, but are a synagogue of Satan.*

*Rev 3:9 'Behold, I will cause those of the synagogue of Satan, who say that they are Jews, and are not, but lie--behold, I will make them to come and bow down at your feet, and to know that I have loved you.*

### John 16:5-7

*"But now I am going to Him who sent Me; and none of you asks Me, 'Where are You going?' (6) "But because I have said these things to you, sorrow has filled your heart.*

(7) *"But I tell you the truth, it is to your advantage that I go away; for if I do not go away, the Helper shall not come to you; but if I go, I will send Him to you.*

John already recorded Peter asking this of Jesus: "*Simon Peter \*said to Him, "Lord, where are You going?"*" (John 13:36a) so why does John record this question of Jesus? The first conversation was apparently only between Peter and Jesus for there is no mention of any interaction with other disciples. Neither Peter nor any of the other disciples are mentioned to press Jesus for an answer to the question. Now Jesus is addressing all of the disciples and He wants them to try to understand the purpose of His leaving them although He knows that they will not fully understand until after Pentecost. Jesus knows their sorrow but He knows that later they will be filled with the Holy Spirit and He will guide them into understanding. Jesus knew that as long as He was with them His ministry would be localized and they could not totally understand His mission. After Pentecost they will understand that it was to their advantage for Him to go to the Father so that He could send the Holy Spirit from the Father.

### **John 16:8-11**

*"And He, when He comes, will convict the world concerning sin, and righteousness, and judgment; (9) concerning sin, because they do not believe in Me; (10) and concerning righteousness, because I go to the Father, and you no longer behold Me; (11) and concerning judgment, because the ruler of this world has been judged.*

Jesus then tells them that the Holy Spirit will convict the world concerning sin, righteousness, and judgment. The word translated "convict" is a word that describes the action of a court against someone where his guilt is defined and fixed. The Holy Spirit is God's prosecuting attorney who presents God's case against humanity. Sin is not some violation of the Law but is not believing in the essence of the person of Jesus and His mission that was at the direction of the Father. This sin is what people do as they totally reject the truth of Jesus Christ as revealed by the Holy Spirit. Only God can convict a person of unbelief. The second area of conviction is righteousness as Jesus revealed the character of God against whom all actions and thoughts are to be judged. The Pharisees had developed an extensive list of laws that they thought they could obey and thus earn righteousness. But Jesus clearly showed them that their laws did not penetrate far enough into the consciousness of mankind as He is quoted as elaborating in Matt 5:21-48. We also have the frightening words of Jesus regarding real righteousness:

Matt 7:21-23 "Not everyone who says to Me, 'Lord, Lord,' will enter the kingdom of heaven; but he who does the will of My Father who is in heaven. (22) "Many will say to Me on that day, 'Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in Your name, and in Your name cast out demons, and in Your name perform many miracles?' (23) "And then I will declare to them, 'I never knew you; depart from me, you who practice lawlessness.'

Righteousness is not something that mankind can earn but is only connected with a relationship to the Son. The connection between righteousness and His going to the Father is probably because this final act of Jesus proves His perfect obedience to the Father as He then sits at the right hand of the Father in a judgment role.

The final conviction of the Holy Spirit will be concerning judgment as Jesus then sits in the judgment seat and that Satan has been judged also. The word translated "judged" above is better translated as "condemned" and it is in the perfect tense, meaning that it has been settled as fixed

and permanent. He has been judged and sentenced but the final state of his sentence is not yet carried out: *“And the devil who deceived them was thrown into the lake of fire and brimstone, where the beast and the false prophet are also; and they will be tormented day and night forever and ever.”* (Rev 20:10)

### **John 16:12-15**

*“I have many more things to say to you, but you cannot bear them now. (13) “But when He, the Spirit of truth, comes, He will guide you into all the truth; for He will not speak on His own initiative, but whatever He hears, He will speak; and He will disclose to you what is to come. (14) “He shall glorify Me; for He shall take of Mine, and shall disclose it to you. (15) “All things that the Father has are Mine; therefore I said, that He takes of Mine, and will disclose it to you.*

Jesus told them that there was much more He would like to say to them but they were not yet ready to deal with them properly. Jesus calls the Holy Spirit the Spirit of truth for He will be enlightening them about reality. The Greek word *ekeinos* is used that is masculine in agreement with *parakletos*. He will bear witness of Christ (John 15:26), expose the errors of the world (John 16:8), guide the disciples in truth (John 16:13), and will glorify Christ (John 16:14). He will help them clearly understand all that Jesus had taught them by His words and actions. He will not speak on His own but will speak to them about all that He hears (from the Father and the Son) and He will tell them things that will occur regarding the mission of God on earth and heaven. He will glorify Jesus as they will be taught about the work of God from Creation to the End. All that the Father has are given to Jesus and the Holy Spirit will make all of those clear to them and to us, thanks to the writings of the Apostles that are revealed and brought forward to us 2000 years later.

### **John 16:16-18**

*“A little while, and you will no longer behold Me; and again a little while, and you will see Me.” (17) Some of His disciples therefore said to one another, “What is this thing He is telling us, ‘A little while, and you will not behold Me; and again a little while, and you will see Me’; and, ‘because I go to the Father’?” (18) And so they were saying, “What is this that He says, ‘A little while’? We do not know what He is talking about.”*

Jesus then tells them that shortly they will no longer be able to physically see Him and then a short time later they will see Him physically. Thus He is telling them that soon He will be crucified and then He will be resurrected so that they will see Him again. John clearly records their total confusion and lack of spiritual understanding. They remembered Him saying He would go to the Father (John 14:28) and showed that they did not understand that either. This conversation among the disciples clearly shows how little spiritual understanding they had and the contrast with their understanding and actions after Pentecost are amazing. It was the same way with any of us today even if we were brought up in a church until we were also born again and indwelt with the Holy Spirit so that we could understand reality: *“But a natural man does not accept the things of the Spirit of God; for they are foolishness to him, and he cannot understand them, because they are spiritually appraised.”* (1 Cor 2:14)

### **John 16:19-24**

*Jesus knew that they wished to question Him, and He said to them, "Are you deliberating together about this, that I said, 'A little while, and you will not behold Me, and again a little while, and you will see Me'? (20) "Truly, truly, I say to you, that you will weep and lament, but the world will rejoice; you will be sorrowful, but your sorrow will be turned to joy. (21) "Whenever a woman is in travail she has sorrow, because her hour has come; but when she gives birth to the child, she remembers the anguish no more, for joy that a child has been born into the world. (22) "Therefore you too now have sorrow; but I will see you again, and your heart will rejoice, and no one takes your joy away from you. (23) "And in that day you will ask Me no question. Truly, truly, I say to you, if you shall ask the Father for anything, He will give it to you in My name. (24) "Until now you have asked for nothing in My name; ask, and you will receive, that your joy may be made full.*

Jesus knew what they were discussing and He realized their anxiety so He proceeded to give them an analogy so they could better understand what was happening. They had been with Jesus for three years and had heard many wonderful words and seen many miracles. They were probably still hoping that He was the promised Messiah who would return Israel to prominence in the area. But now He was telling them that He would be leaving them so they had to be wondering if they had wasted three years of their lives following Him. They knew of the vast difference between a woman's pains of childbirth and the joy of seeing their child but they could not understand the comparison at this point. Jesus knew that when He was resurrected and then spent some time with them their joy would be full and their life would then have eternal meaning as they would represent Him to the world. They will not have to ask Him any more questions about the meaning of His life after His resurrection and their being indwelt by the Holy Spirit for then the Spirit of truth would make them clearly understand the mission of Jesus and His relationship with the Father. Since Jesus had not yet gone to the Father they could not ask for something in His name to the Father. They had been taught by Jesus to pray to the Father (Matt 6:9) but they had not been told to pray in His name. But after all was clearly revealed to them they could then ask as long as they asked in line with the will of the Father. Indeed their joy will be made full at that time even though they will suffer considerable persecution and even death.

### **John 16:25- 27**

*"These things I have spoken to you in figurative language; an hour is coming when I will speak no more to you in figurative language, but will tell you plainly of the Father (26) "In that day you will ask in My name, and I do not say to you that I will request the Father on your behalf; (27) for the Father Himself loves you, because you have loved Me, and have believed that I came forth from the Father.*

Jesus had to speak to them in parabolic language because of their spiritual immaturity. Presumably the "hour" in which He would speak to them plainly of the Father was after His resurrection. There was a period of forty days after this event during which He could have told them much. However the Gospels do not shed much light on what Jesus told them during this time although it may be that He told them much that was reflected in the later writings of the apostles: "To these He also presented Himself alive, after His suffering, by many convincing proofs, appearing to them over a period of forty days, and speaking of the things concerning the kingdom of God." (Acts 1:3) After the resurrection, the belief in Him by the disciples would be fixed and they would then have direct access to the Father through Him so Jesus does not have to

pass on the requests to the Father. The love one has for Jesus seals a relationship of love of the Father and by the Father for those who love Jesus. Just “tacking on” the phrase “in the name of Jesus” does not guarantee that our love for Jesus is genuine. If we really love Jesus then we can be assured that He loves us and that the Father hears our prayers.

### **John 16:28-33**

*"I came forth from the Father, and have come into the world; I am leaving the world again, and going to the Father." (29) His disciples \*said, "Lo, now You are speaking plainly, and are not using a figure of speech. (30) "Now we know that You know all things, and have no need for anyone to question You; by this we believe that You came from God." (31) Jesus answered them, "Do you now believe? (32) "Behold, an hour is coming, and has already come, for you to be scattered, each to his own home, and to leave Me alone; and yet I am not alone, because the Father is with Me. (33) "These things I have spoken to you, that in Me you may have peace. In the world you have tribulation, but take courage; I have overcome the world."*

Jesus clearly stated His origin and His destination so that the disciples could understand. They then affirmed their understanding and belief. Having originated from the Father they knew that He must then have equality with God and would then know everything that exists. Since He was acknowledged as God then nobody could question that status. However Jesus was still skeptical of the depth of their belief. He told them that some difficult times were coming when they would be scattered away from Him and nobody but the Father would be with Him. He told them that He had spoken these things to them so that they may have peace in the coming tribulation. He had previously told them about His peace: *“Peace I leave with you; My peace I give to you; not as the world gives, do I give to you. Let not your heart be troubled, nor let it be fearful.”* (John 14:27) His peace was in spite of the tribulation of the world and He told them not to be fearful because He proclaimed victory over the world.

Note the two realities: in Me and in the world. To which do you belong? To be in Christ also is a promise of tribulation from the world that hates Him and therefore will hate His believers. But to the person who is in Christ there is the promise of peace and the knowledge that He has overcome the world and death. We have these wonderful promises that were taught by the Holy Spirit to Paul:

Rom 8:16-17 The Spirit Himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God, (17) and if children, heirs also, heirs of God and fellow heirs with Christ, if indeed we suffer with Him in order that we may also be glorified with Him.

Phil 1:28 in no way alarmed by your opponents--which is a sign of destruction for them, but of salvation for you, and that too, from God.