

## **Grace to You :: *Unleashing God's Truth, One Verse at a Time***

### **The Holy Spirit Convicts the World, Part 1**

Scripture: John 16:1-7

Code: 1558

John 16:1 to 11 which is the next in our series of passages in the gospel of John. Beginning in verse 1, our Lord speaks: "These things have I spoken unto you that ye should not be offended. They shall put you out of the synagogues. Yea the time cometh that whosoever killeth you will think that he doeth God service. And these things will they do unto you because they have not known the Father, nor Me. 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. Now I go my way to Him that sent Me and none of you asketh Me where goest thou, but because I have said these things unto you sorrow hath filled your heart. 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 unto you. And when He is come, He will reprove the world of sin and of righteousness and of judgment, of sin because they believe not on Me, of righteousness because I go to My Father and ye see Me no more, of judgment because the prince of this world is judged." May God bless to our hearts this portion of Scripture as we shall study it in a moment.

Let's bow together in prayer.

Father, as we approach Your Word now we ask that our hearts might be lifted up to the heavenlies, that we might see Your truth. We thank You most of all that we belong to Jesus, what it is to know Him and love Him and to sense His love, companionship, to know His salvation. And, Father, as we look at this passage in the Word of God, we pray that the Spirit might be our teacher, that we might be thrilled with what we learn and that we might apply it to our life. We pray in the name of our Savior, Jesus Christ. Amen.

Turn in your Bibles to John chapter 16 verses 1 through 11. In our continuing study of the gospel of John, we come to a very, very classic passage, that which deals with a very, very important ministry of the Holy Spirit.

Now you'll recall that in the gospel of John, John is presenting Jesus Christ. His detail in each chapter surrounds the person of Christ. And John's concern is that Christ be seen as God in human flesh. He is concerned with the deity of Jesus Christ, that Christ is in fact God in a body.

Also, however, he is concerned with presenting the record of the life of Jesus Christ with particular emphasis on certain details that do reveal His humanity. And we have seen this interwoven as we've

gone through the gospel of John, majoring on deity and then minoring on the issues of His humanity.

Now as we come to the sixteenth chapter, it is still the last night before the crucifixion of the death of the Christ...the crucifixion and death of Christ. He is spending that last night with His eleven disciples, Judas being dismissed to carry out his betrayal. And He is giving them the instruction they need to face the world without Him.

Now for several weeks we have been studying the fifteenth chapter and we have learned that the disciples will have to face a world that is intensely hostile, that they will be facing a world that will hate Christ and hate Christians and hate them who represent Christ. The disciples will be facing a world that is in rebellion against Christ. And if they cannot find Christ upon whom they can vent their hatred, they will vent it upon those who represent Christ. And so we're going to see, even continuing this morning, this very obvious hostility and hatred of the world.

But in our last study in 15, we not only saw the hatred of the world but we saw that how the hatred of the world is opposed by the testimony of the Holy Spirit. How that Christ will send the Holy Spirit who will testify of Me, verse 26 of chapter 15.

The Spirit will then confront the world face to face. And He will do it in the believer. John has told us the words of Jesus that the Spirit is with you but shall be...where?...in you. And that the Holy Spirit will come to dwell in the disciples and in all believers, Jesus predicts this, promises it, and it came to pass just as He said in Acts chapter 2 on the day of Pentecost.

The Spirit would dwell within them and within them the Spirit would witness through them to the testimony of Jesus. And we said then that all Spiritcontrolled testimony is about Jesus Christ. It majors on Christ.

All right, then, in chapter 15 in the last part of the chapter the world will hate the disciple but the Spirit will confront the world with the testimony of Jesus through the disciple.

Now as we come to chapter 16 verses 1 to 11, we find almost a parallel passage. For Jesus again details the hatred of the world and again presents the work of the Holy Spirit in confronting the world. Only this time He gets more specific about how it is that the Spirit confronts the world. He does not only testify about Jesus, but He convicts men of sin. So it is not only a testimony ministry, it is a conviction ministry. And by the double conviction and testimony ministry, the Spirit of God seeks to turn the hostile heart of man away from rebellion against God to believing in Jesus Christ and receiving Him as Savior and Lord. That's the message the Holy Spirit preaches and teaches and does it through the life of the Christian who is faithful.

So, the world then can be confronted, even though it's hostile, even though it hates Christ, hates those who name Him.

And if you're a Christian who really lives for Christ, you live godly in this world, Paul says you will suffer persecution, you'll feel the hostility of the world. Even though the world is hostile, the Spirit of God has the power and energy to confront the hostile world, break its hostility, smash down its wall of resistance and bring to the heart of a man conviction of sin, the testimony of Jesus Christ so that that man gives his life to Christ and is redeemed.

Now in chapter 16:1 to 11, we see this pattern. And we see how the Holy Spirit breaks down this resistance by the tremendous work of conviction. And it's an obvious thing that before anybody can ever be saved, that before anybody can ever come to a knowledge of Jesus Christ, he has to have a sense of his own sin, doesn't he? He has to be made aware that he has a need for a Savior. He has to come to grips with the problem of judgment and righteousness and sin in his life. And that's exactly what the Holy Spirit does. He brings to light those three areas of sin, righteousness and judgment. Convicts of those, then gives the testimony of Jesus which is the answer to those problems and by that a man can trust Christ and be redeemed.

So you see then it's all of the Holy Spirit. Christian witness is all of the Holy Spirit. We're still reviewing a little bit. He's the one that does the witnessing in us. He's the one that does the conviction. We can't do it on our own strength.

Now as we look at this passage in chapter 16, I want to break it into three simple categories that really are...they're unique in themselves and yet they lead into the next one very very simply. We're going to see three things...the killing of the disciples by the world. This is the first little area Jesus talked about. Into the comforting of the disciples by the Lord.

And then the convicting of the world by the Spirit. Now these three separate themes blend into each other and we see the narrative here as Jesus presents it. And it's a fantastic thing culminating in the Spirit's ministry to the unsaved man...the ministry of convicting him of sin, righteousness and judgment so that he feels a need for Jesus Christ. And then giving testimony to Christ so that the need can be met.

But first Jesus begins by repeating the warning that a disciple in this world is going to feel hatred, persecution and maybe even death. And point one we call the killing of the disciples by the world...the killing of the disciples by the world. And it's verses 1 through 4...your outline says 3, it's 4.

Verse 1, Jesus speaks, "These things have I spoken unto you that you should not be offended." Now the key thing that we want to understand to begin with is what is the word "things" refer to. What are these things? One word in the Greek, two words in English, "These things He has spoken," what

things? The things that He has just said in chapter 15:18 through 25. That which deal with the hatred of the world. Jesus is saying I told you about the hatred of the world because I don't want you to be surprised when you get it.

In other words, to be forewarned is to be forearmed. I want to equip you to go into the battle with your eyes wide open. I want you to realize that you're going to get it when you get into this world. That when I leave it's only going to begin, the hostility the world has directed at Me is going to be directed at you who represent Me, so be ready for it, anticipate it. These things have I spoken unto you that you shouldn't be offended.

And the word "offended" is a very interesting word. In the Greek, and I'll say it in the Greek because that will help you to realize what it means...the word is skandalizo from which we get our word "scandalize" which is kind of a long process of etymology away from what it originally meant. It comes from a noun skandalon. And the noun meant a stick...now watch this...but a special stick, a stick that held up a trap. You'd set a trap and you'd put a stick there, some kind of a stick, and you'd put the bait on the stick and when the animal hit the bait, the stick went down, the trap came down and that was it. The skandalon then was a trigger that pulled the whole trap down.

And Jesus is saying that to these disciples. He is saying, "Men, I'm telling you this that you might not be trapped unaware, that you might not find yourselves in the world jumping around without any kind of sensitivity to the fact that there's a trap set for you. I don't want you to get trapped without knowing it.

Realize, men, the world is going to be after you. They're going to hate you and persecute you because they did it to Me and the servant is not greater than his lord. Don't get trapped unawares, men, you got the information, you know it's coming."

And so, Jesus gives them full information. His disciples are totally aware of what's going to go on. They know the meaning of discipleship. They know all the heart and painful parts about it as well as the joyous parts. They know that there is a trap awaiting them out there that the world is going to try to catch them, the world is going to try to persecute them and they are to be aware of that and not to be caught unaware.

It's kind of an interesting thing to realize that even with all this information that they had, and even though Jesus said I don't want you to be offended, it turned out that they were. You say, "Well why?" Well, just look at it, backing up for a minute, from this angle. Can you imagine what would have happened to them if they were offended when He told them this, what would have happened to them if they hadn't known this? It would have been infinitely worse. I mean, they hadn't known anything about the hatred of the world. And all they had to go on was chapter 14 and the first part of chapter 15, and all the promises, love, joy, and peace and all this kind of stuff and promises that you can do

anything in My name and I'll give you power to do greater works than I did. And I'm going to give you a comforter and He'll energize you and empower you and they'd be like a lot of little kids running through the park with balloons, you know.

Just... "Oh, oh...life is really terrific, just one big ball...happy go lucky Christian life," see and all of a sudden the world will start to persecute them and all of a sudden their thoughts would go... "Wait a minute...wait a minute...what is this...what is happening?" And they would become disillusioned with Christ, they would become disappointed with Him. Their whole faith would begin to falter and become undermined. Jesus needs to warn them so that they understand that this is all part of the plan so they don't go racing into this whole area of discipleship with a misguided kind of glee, unaware that there are going to be obstacles. The Lord says expect it, it's going to come. And He's not trying to discourage them, He's trying to fortify them so when it does come they're going to be ready for it.

And it's really the tenderest kind of concern that causes Him to do this. In fact when it did happen, when the persecution came, they should have, you know, said in their minds... "Oh, yeah, that's what He said, didn't He? Fulfilled prophecy." And it should have strengthened their faith.

But the first time the persecution began, they were offended. And who was the first of them that was persecuted?

Well it was Jesus Himself. This very night, this very night, they came to get Jesus. The disciples should have known it was going to happen, but look what they did. Matthew chapter 26 verse 31, just listen. "Then saith Jesus unto them," now listen to this, "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."

Jesus says, "Men, you're all going to be scandalized, you're all going to be offended, trapped, caught, you're going to blow the whole thing, men." Now this presents to us a very interesting theological dilemma and I'll share it with you because I want you to suffer the same dilemmas that I suffer.

Jesus says in John 16, "I don't want you to be offended." In Matthew 26 later on the same night He says, "You will be offended."

You say, "Well, if He knew they were going to be offended, why did He bother to say I don't want you to be offended?"

That's a good question, I'm glad you asked. The answer is the same answer that's throughout all Scripture. The answer is this...God knows everything, Christ knows everything but it's a man's responsibility as to how he responds. Let me show you what I mean. Jesus says to them, "You don't

need to be offended, you don't need to be. I'm going to give you all the ingredients...all the promises, all the warnings, all the information to go into the world and not be offended and not be trapped unaware...you don't need to be." And yet He says you will.

You see, from a divine side they had all the equipment. But it boiled down to a personal will, didn't it? To a personal choice. In other words, there's a tremendous principle here.

The principle is human responsibility. A man has his own personal will as to whether or not he applies the truth and the promises of God. Did you know that? Did you know that? God knows everything. And God gives man the information he needs to live his life, He gives him all the instruction and yet a man can either take it or leave it.

They had sufficient warning. They had sufficient information. And yet when it came to the hour, they rejected what they knew to be true and in fear they ran away. You say, "Boy, that was pretty bad of them." Yeah, well it's a lot like us. We aren't much different. The Bible tells us we have all knowledge. We have all the wisdom that we could possibly ask for. And God doesn't hold back any of it. We have all the resources that He could possibly give us, we are complete in Him, Colossians 2:10. And yet we run into a problem and immediately fear...we're afraid...begin to doubt our salvation. We fall into sin. We stumble. We neglect this. We neglect that, etc., etc., etc. It's not that we don't have the ingredients, it's not that we don't have the information and it's not that we don't have the Holy Spirit who is the power to conquer everything, it's that we have not been willing to apply our personal will to that which we possess.

It's the same thing here. Jesus says you don't need to be offended, I'm telling you all this so you don't have to be offended but you will be because that's the way you are. Instead of calling on your resources, you'll fall back on your human fears. Christ had done all that He could do. He positionally had, as to us, given them everything. They knew what they needed to know. They had everything. So do we. We have the Holy Spirit to overcome. It boils down to whether or not we want to claim the power, the love, the strength, and the wisdom that He's put at our disposal or whether we not...or whether we want to cower in fear. It's a personal will that's involved.

And so, Christ is saying I don't have any...anything to hold back, I'm going to tell you the whole thing because I don't want you to be trapped unaware. But they didn't fall back on what they knew. In fear they ran. Boy, that's a tremendous principle. You see, that's why...and watch this one, this is really critical...that's why whatever you do in your Christian life is not the responsibility of God because He's given you all the ingredients to conquer in every situation...it's a matter of personal will as to whether or not you take those resources or not.

All right, then having said that, that I don't want you to be offended, and knowing in His mind that they would, He describes for them the kind of persecution they're going to get.

And this adds detail to chapter 15. He just told them the world would hate him, He didn't give them these kind of details, but look at this in verse 2. This is what they can expect. "They shall put you out of the synagogues," that's the first thing, "yea, the time cometh that whosoever killeth you will think that he doeth God service." Isn't that interesting?

He says, first of all, you're going to get unsynagogued.

Now that's a very important thing. To be a part of the synagogue in a Jewish situation was to be a part of the entire culture.

All the social life, all the economic life and all the religious life surrounded the life of the synagogue. That was everything.

That was the place where they were together. That was their whole world in the synagogue. And if you got unsynagogued, you became a moral outlaw. The Jewish law said you were worse than a pagan Gentile. You were dropped to the scum of the earth when you were put out of the synagogue. And, boy, they feared this...they feared it.

Back in chapter 9, for example, you remember the parents of the blind man that Jesus healed? The one thing they were afraid of, verse 22, "These words spake his parents because they feared the Jews for the Jews had agreed already that if any man did confess that He was Christ, he should be put out of the synagogue." They didn't want to get put out of the synagogue.

They didn't want to get ostracized from all the prerogatives and hopes of Israel. They didn't want to become an Unjew and get lost from all the things that were part of their life and their culture. They didn't want to be cut off from their families.

They didn't want to lose their job which happened when you were put out of the synagogue.

And so, what He's saying to His disciples is this, "Men, you're going to get cut off from the life of your nation. You're going to get cut off from your people. They're going to throw you out of their whole world." And they hated them so much they did this. The Jewish leaders would focus the hatred they had for Christ on those who were Christ's and they'd focus their hatred on the disciples and they did. And the followers of Jesus would little by little be excommunicated from the life of Israel...social and religious and economic life. They would become castoffs. They would be viewed in the most despicable terms as traitors to Israel.

And the sad part of it is that it would go so far as to kill them. They would literally kill them. Look at verse 2 again.

"And when they killed them, they would think that they were doing God...what?...service." Service...fantastic...what a colossal mistake. I mean, to kill the Son of God as service to God. And then to go along and kill every other disciple they could find and say, "Here, God, we're doing this for You." What a colossal blunder. I mean, they were doing God service by killing His.

That was the depth of their sin and that was the depth of their ignorance of God. And it became true of the Romans and it became true of all the other people who persecuted Christianity. And they've done it in the name of service to God. You go back far enough and read things like the Spanish Inquisition. That was all done in the name of God, service to God. Or you go back and read the Crusades, how that the crusaders marched across Europe and thought that in order to take the land back from the Turks, the holy land, they ought to eliminate the Jews so they slaughtered Jews all the way across Europe and left a trail of Jewish blood everywhere they went. And they did it in the name of Jesus Christ. Is it any wonder the Jew has not much concern about the name of Jesus Christ? People have done things like that all throughout history in the name Christ as service to God, so called. And in truth it's been blasphemous to God.

But you can see the attitude of the Jew in this situation.

The Jew believed in one God. And he believed he knew who that God was. And here came Jesus along and said, "I'm God," and that just blew their minds, you know.

Back in John, for example, chapter 10 and verse 30, Jesus says, "I and the Father are one," I'm one with God. And immediately in verse 31 it says, "And they took up stones to stone Him." They were infuriated that anybody would claim to be God, it was blasphemous. And He says, "I've done many things, I've done many good works. For what work do you stone Me?" And they said, "We don't stone You for any work, we stone You because You say You're equal with God." To them the destruction of anybody who claimed to be equal with God was service to God. Do you see? They thought they were serving God.

And interestingly enough the word "service," see it there at the end of verse 2, the word "service?" The word in the Greek that is used for service here is the word that's used for the service of the priests at the altar. It's the highest word for religious service. It's the standard word for service to God.

They were actually carrying out worship in their own heads by slaughtering people who named the name of Christ. And that's been going on under the guise of religion for years and years and years and still is.



Now you know, it's interesting as I thought about this, I tried to see...now this is a prophecy. "They shall put you out...they shall kill you thinking they're doing God service..."

when did this happen? Listen, that could be a direct prophecy to the life of one man. You say what man? I'll show you what man.

Acts chapter 26, that will give you a hint. Listen to the comments of this one man. Verse 9, Acts 26, "I verily thought within myself that I ought to do many things contrary to the name of Jesus of Nazareth." Humph..."Which thing I also did in Jerusalem. And many of the saints did shut up in prison, having received authority from the chief priests, and when they were put to death, I gave my voice against them, the slaughter of these Christians. And I punished them often in every synagogue and compelled them to blaspheme and being exceedingly mad against them I persecuted them even unto foreign cities." Who was that?

That was Paul. He chased Christians all over everywhere killing them. You know what he was doing? He was doing service to whom?

In his own heart he was doing service to God...he figured it out, that's what God wanted me to do, Hebrew of the Hebrews, tribe of Benjamin, circumcised, right in the little situation there. And I was going around defending the name of God...encouraging people, making them talk about Christ because that was blasphemy, then killing them.

Now Jesus said it will happen to you, and it did. And there was one great example, the man Paul. And I'm sure if Paul went at his persecutions like he went at everything else, it was something. Jesus says that's the way it's going to happen, get ready.

You say, "Well, that doesn't happen any more today."

Listen, persecution still goes on in places in our world and I still believe with all my heart, though you may not die for Christ in the simplest sense here in our life, in our country, it's still true that Paul said, "All that live godly shall suffer persecution." I don't feel the world likes Jesus now any better than they did then. And a man who stands up and really defends the name of Jesus Christ is going to get it. Someone told me the other day that a young man got up at Arrowhead Springs and gave his testimony, that there was a group of men in America who had met for the express purpose of eliminating all of the Christian leaders in America by assassination. And this one young man had been assigned to go to Campus Crusade to eliminate Bill Bright, as I understand it. And on the way was converted to Christ and gave this testimony. Now if you don't think that Satan is active underground in our world, you're wrong, he is...he is. The persecution of those who love Jesus Christ goes on not only in a disconnected way but in a very organized manner. But God has the upper hand, doesn't He?



So, Jesus says I'm going to show you the whole shot, guys, I'm not going to pull any punches, I want you to know what it's going to be like. I'm offering you, friends, the hardest task in the world. Are you up to it? I like that about Jesus, that honesty. He doesn't want any disciples who haven't counted the cost. This has to be a part of our witnessing, friends, did you know that? That when you bring someone to Jesus Christ, it's not only the abundant life, it's not only the joy and the thrill of knowing Jesus Christ, it's also the thrill and joy of being in a world that's set against you and knowing that in the world you shall have tribulation but be of good cheer...what?...I've overcome the world. It's also knowing there's going to be a hostility and a rebellion and persecution if you really live for Christ. I don't think anybody could come...should come to Christ until they've counted the cost. And Jesus is saying that's what I'm telling you, guys. I'm offering you something which can lacerate your body and tear your heart out, but the dividends are eternal.

When the Spaniards were conquering South America, the famous Spaniard Picero presented his men with a choice. They were about to move south into Peru and he drew a line with his sword on the sand and he said, "Gentlemen, on that side are toil, hunger, nakedness, storm desertion and death and the adventure of Peru.

On the other side, the safety and poverty of Panama. And yours is the choice. For my part, I go south." There was a silence and a brief hesitation and then an old soldier led 12 other soldiers to step across the line to Picero's side and the 14 men were the ones that opened the way to Peru.

That's essentially only in a grandiose glorious sense what Jesus is saying to men today as He said to His disciples then.

I'm not offering you the way of ease, I'm offering you the way of conquest. I'm not offering you the way of comfort but I'm offering you the way of victory and riches and eternal blessing.

He wants men who are willing to go into adventure with Him with their eyes wide opened to know what it is to be His disciple and to know that we just don't fit in the world...we just don't fit.

But yet in the power of the Holy Spirit we can confront the world, can't we, and we can see the hearts of men and women turned to Jesus Christ.

Then in verse 4, Jesus expands the thought of verse 1, kind of like verses 2 and 3 are little interlude. Verse 4, He says, "But these things have I told you that when the time shall come ye may remember that I told you of them." This is good. He says...again this is the same thought as verse 1...I'm telling you this so when it all happens you'll remember that I told you and your faith will be strengthened. Don't you know that the greatest way to strengthen faith is to see fulfilled prophecy? I believe the greatest proof of the Word of God and its divine authorship is the fulfillment of prophecy. And it happens all the time. It's because history verifies the Word of God. And there's so many, many

instances. And so what Jesus is saying, now that I've told you this, when it happens you can look back and say He told us, He knows and our faith will grow. These things that I've told you about the hatred of the world are to strengthen you.

Back in chapter 14:29 He said the same thing essentially.

Now I've told you before it come to pass that when it is come to pass ye might...what?...believe. You know another word for believe that starts with "f"? Faith...He told them before hand to build their faith when it happened. And naturally when they began to see all these things come to pass like Jesus said they were going to come to pass, their faith started to grow. And so He fortifies them by telling them.

Now look at the last part of verse 4, "And these things I said unto you...I said not unto you at the beginning because I was with you." Oh, this is really good...this is good. He says I didn't tell you all this stuff at the beginning. Can you imagine if they'd been living with this for three years? Can you imagine what they'd be like by this time? They'd be basket cases, anticipating the hatred of the world and the persecution that was going to come all through those years. They wouldn't have even enjoyed anything. I mean, at this time they're so moping and weepy and miserable, at this point at the end of verse 6 He says all you've got is a whole lot of sorrow in your hearts.

I don't...you know, there's no way He could have lived with that for three years. They didn't need to know that all the way along.

Now in Matthew 5 and in Matthew 10 which are much earlier in His ministries, He had told them to expect some abuse from the world. He had told them they would be reviled and they would be persecuted to a degree. But He had never unloaded on them the depth of it. He had never told them that the whole world was going to be set against them...never told them they were going to be killed in the name of service to God. I mean, the scope of the thing now was shocking and their reaction was just unbelievable. They were already so sad because He was going and even when He gave them all those promises, their sorrow still carried on and then when He dumped this on them about the hatred of the world, they were ready to collapse in sorrow for themselves.

It's amazing when you've got a lot of negatives how impossible it is to see the positives. And they had heard a few things earlier about persecution but they never saw anything like this. And if He had told them all of this before, their hearts wouldn't have been able to handle it. They couldn't even handle it now. I'll tell you something, friends, if chapter 16 came before chapter 14, I don't think there ever would have been any disciples left around for chapter 14. Chapter 14 is all the comfort and all the promises. That had to come before this. He had to give them all this. And He waits till the very last night, the very last hours of His life to warn them about the hatred of the world. After He's had three years to build up their confidence in their faith, after He's taken chapter 14 to unload these

precious promises to them and fill them and equip them with everything, then He finally says, "Now, men, here's the negative..." It's time now, but not any sooner. They couldn't take it any sooner.

And I like this, too. He says also, I didn't say it unto you at the beginning because I was with you. What do you think He meant by that? I think He meant this...as long as Jesus was there, Jesus always absorbed the brunt of the attack, didn't He?

All throughout the narrative of the gospels, they're never attacking the disciples. Even when the disciples did something they didn't like, you know, like eat with unwashed hands, who did they go to? They went to Jesus. He always...He always got the attack. It was always Christ that got it. And so He says as long as I was with you, I got it all and you really didn't need to worry about it. But He says, "Now, gentlemen, there is about to be a fundamental change in your life style. The world is not going to be able to get at Me and they're going to therefore get at the closest thing to Me which is you." Now you know that Satan's set against Christ, don't you? And if Satan can't get at Christ, he's going to get at those who are His. He wants to get Christ but if he can't get Christ he'll get everybody that belongs to Christ and try to get at them.

I can illustrate this to you. What period of time in history...past or future...has the greatest outpouring of Satan's wrath? It's the Tribulation, isn't it? And do you know what Satan's going to do in the Tribulation? I'll show you. Look at Revelation 12. And you see, he can't get at Christ. So watch what he does. This is really a graphic illustration of this principle. Now in Revelation 12 verse 4 and it's talking about Satan like a dragon, verse 9 explains that Satan is the dragon or the serpent, verse 4, here's Satan's attack during the Tribulation, "And his tail drew the third part of the stars of heaven," this is going way back to his fall, a third of the angels fell with him, cast him to the earth, "and the dragon stood before the woman who was ready to be delivered to devour her child as soon as it was born." The woman, Israel. The child, Christ. Satan tried to devour Christ, didn't he? For 33 years he tried to devour Him. Tried to devour Him in Herod's decree when He was a baby. Tried to devour Him at the temptation when he tried to get Him to follow...to fall down and worship Satan. Tried to devour Him on the cross. He couldn't do it. He couldn't do it.

You think he gave up? No. He tried to devour the child that the woman brought forth, he couldn't get to the child...look at verse 13. "And when the dragon was...saw that he was cast unto the earth he persecuted the woman who brought forth the child." Then he goes after...he couldn't get Christ so he goes after the nation that brought forth Christ. And if that's not bad enough verse 17 says, "And the dragon was angry with the woman and went to make war with the remnant of her seed who keep the commandments of God and have the testimony of Jesus." He didn't just stop at Israel, he went after everybody that had the testimony of Jesus and kept the commandments of God. Satan couldn't get at Christ so he took off after everybody that had anything to do with Jesus Christ. Do you see it? And that's what's going to happen in the Tribulation when that horrible culmination of evil takes place and Satan just venomously pours his attack out on those that belong to Jesus Christ. In fact it's so

venomous there that two out of three Jews are going to be slaughtered. And the Antichrist, the beast is going to go across the earth just slaughtering Christians right and left. And I believe by the millions.

Why? Because if Satan can't get at Christ, he'll get at those who are Christ's to destroy His kingdom and His power. And so Jesus is saying to His men, "Look, they're going to come after you, the world is. When I was around they shot at Me, all the attack came at Me, but I'm going to be gone and it's going to be you and that's why I'm warning you. As long as I was here you didn't need to worry, it was after Me. But now it's going to change, you're going to get it." He's preparing them for the conflict.

And I hope you realize...I hope you realize that the world is out after you. I hope you know that if you're a Christian. I hope you're not fooled into thinking that you can flirt with the world and not feel it because you can't. The world subtly wants to undermine your faith. When James says that Satan goes around like a roaring lion seeking whom he may devour, he's not talking about unbelievers, he's already devoured them, he's talking about Christians. He wants to wipe your testimony out.

The world is after you and you've got a battle on your hands, my friend. If you don't know it, you ought to check again Ephesians chapter 6 verse 11, put on the whole armor of God that you may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil for we wrestle not against flesh and blood but principalities, powers, the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in the heavenlies. I mean, we're in a battle with Satan. We're fighting the forces of hell. And Satan's using the world against us to propagate his deadly doctrines.

So, first of all, Jesus says you're going to get persecuted the killing of the disciples by the world. Secondly, and we'll just look at this point and then we'll close, and this is beautiful and sad at the same time...not only the killing of the disciples by the world but the comforting of the disciples by the Lord. And this is one of those passages that just opens up the little window, you know, and you get a glimpse of the humanity of Jesus Christ. This is one of those windows that I just get excited about. I get, you know, chills up my spine when I just get these little insights into Jesus. This is thrilling and yet it's sad.

These verses, verses 5 and 6 and 7, show us two things.

They show us the complete selfishness of the disciples and the complete selflessness of Jesus. And when the disciples should have been comforting Christ, He turns around and comforts them.

Look at verse 5 and notice the sadness in the words of Jesus.

"But now I go My way to Him that sent Me and none of you ask of Me where goest Thou. But because I have said these things," and again tauta(?), these things refers to the persecution, "I have

said these things unto you, sorrow has filled your heart."

Now what's He saying here? This is good, get this. He's grieved...He's grieved in His heart. You say, "Why is He grieved?" Because, you see, He sees the selfishness of these disciples. You see, nobody is asking Him what this means to Him, all they're worried about is what it means to them, do you see?

He says instead of saying, "Lord, why don't You tell us...you know...You're going up there, where You going? And what's it going to be like when You get there for You? And what kind of glory awaits You? And what will it be like to go back into the Father's presence after You've been gone so long? And what will the Father do for You? And what does this mean?" Instead of that they're just sitting there in all their misery down in the mouth sorrow, mumbling about their own problems. They didn't really care what it meant to Jesus, they were only worried about what it meant to them. Do you see their selfishness in it?

Jesus saw it.

In chapter 14 verse 28 you have a similar thought in the middle of verse 28. Just listen to these words, "If you loved Me you would rejoice because I said I go unto the Father." Did you get that? He said if you only knew what this meant to Me, you'd be happy. You'd say, "Lord, listen, listen...the persecution...wow, we don't care about that. I mean, if this is going to bring joy to You and glory to You, Lord, go, we're just excited for You." See, they could have said that. They could have said, "Lord, tell us, you know, tell us about it." Can't you imagine a whole chapter of revelation between verses 6 and 7 in there? A whole new chapter about what it's going to be like to go back to the Father. But it was never written because they never asked.

Why didn't they ask? Worrying about their own sorrow. Poor us...see. No one cared about Him. That's selfish. You say, "Now wait a minute, now, wait a minute. Earlier didn't some ask?" Yeah they did...they sure did. Chapter 13 verse 36 and I'll show you. Peter, listen to this, Jesus says, "None asks, none of you asks where I go," verse...but watch this one in verse 5, but back here in chapter 13 verse 36 listen, "Simon Peter said unto Him, Lord...here's the very question... where goest Thou?"

Where You going, Lord? And Jesus said over there in chapter 16, "Nobody asks Me." You say, "Oh yes, yes he did." And Thomas did, chapter 14 verse 5, "Lord, we don't know where You're going and how can we know the way," and implied in the question is, "Lord, where is it You're going and how do You get there?"

You say, "Well, is that a contradiction in the Bible?" No, not at all. It's two different periods of time. And I want to show you something that's a startling revelation. There was a time when the disciples

said, "Lord, where You going?" But do you know why? Now watch this one. The only reason Peter asked and the only reason Thomas asked the question that was probably on all their minds was because they thought they might get to go too. Peter says, "Lord, how do You get there? I'm going. If You're going to die, I'll die, too, right?" Didn't he say that?

Sure. "Lord, I want to know where You're going cause I'm going with You." That's all right. That's fairly commendable. I can understand they wanted to go with Jesus, I can read that clear.

But after two chapters have gone by and Jesus has said, "Men, you're staying here," now nobody asks Him where He's going. Why?

It doesn't involve them anymore.

Do you see the difference? They were eager to ask where He was going when they thought they might go along. But all of a sudden when it just had been made clear to them that they were going to have to stay and feel the hostility of the world, they were too involved in their own sorrow to care about what it meant to Jesus to go there. So then when you go back to chapter 13 you can be sure that they weren't asking because they wanted to know what it meant to Jesus, right? They were asking cause they wanted to know what it would mean to them to go with Him. They were selfish. Somebody could have said, "Lord, why don't You tell us what this means to You. I mean, just tell us what it will be like to go back to the Father and how You get there and what it's like when You go into His presence. Just tell us that." Just imagine what kind of revelation we'd had if somebody...but they didn't ask. Why? Cause it didn't involve them. They weren't going. So they were just going to wallow in their misery. Lost in their own sorrow. So stuck on the sorrow of the moment they didn't even bother to ask Jesus what His death, burial, resurrection and ascension meant to Him and to them. They saw only their own sorrow.

You know, that's really a great insight into human nature, isn't it? We really look that way at our own lives, whatever effects us, you know. We live most of our Christian lives, you know, with mirrors on instead of glasses and just looking at ourselves all the time...my needs, my world, my...see, you know.

This is it. And we never get lost in the glory of Jesus Christ.

And we never learn what it is to just step outside our own little dingy world and just praise Christ for all that He is. And just seek to glorify Him and give Him honor. Too busy with our own little world, see.

Well, these disciples, we'll give them the benefit of the doubt, they came alive pretty soon. By the time you get to the end of the book of Luke, it's really beautiful. They've...He's died, He's risen again,



you know. They've seen this and now their faith is whom...like a rock. And verse 50 it says, "He led them out as far as Bethany and He lifted up His hands and blessed them." You just see them out there in that hillside and He blessed them. "And it came to pass while He blessed them He was parted from them and carried up into heaven." He just took off, right straight up into the sky. You can imagine that, can't you?

"And they worshiped Him and returned to Jerusalem with great joy and were continually in the temple praising and blessing God." I mean, it was a great day, Jesus is gone. You say..."What?" I mean, that's quite a change, men. Yeah, but between this point and that point their faith had been strengthened by His death and resurrection. The resurrection of Jesus Christ would be enough to strengthen anybody's faith. I mean, you just don't walk out of a grave after three days. And you just don't ascend into heaven either. And so, there was a time in which their faith was encouraged and their joy was made full when they saw Him leave.

But at this moment, can't you see the sorrow of Jesus? They could have comforted Him. They could have shown Him their love and they could have comforted Him, responded to Him when He needed that. But they were so selfish and just like Jesus always does, He turns right around and comforts them. Verse 7, "Well, nevertheless, I tell you the truth." I know it's hard for you to believe it, men, if you can stop crying long enough to listen.

I'm telling you the truth, guys. "It is better for you that I go away." It's better...it's better that I go away. Listen, if He didn't die, their sins wouldn't be forgiven. If He didn't rise, they never would have eternal life. If He didn't never ascend into the heavens, what would happen? "If I go not away the Comforter will not...what?...come unto you. But if I depart I'll send Him unto you." It's better that I go. Because when I go your sins are forgiven, eternal life is bought for you by My resurrection, I'll ascend into heaven, I'll send the Holy Spirit whose been with you but shall be where? In you. You'll have power to activate all My promises that I gave you. The Spirit will witness through you, convict the world through you. It's better that I go away. You have to be physically with Me now, but the Spirit will be in you wherever you are. What a fantastic promise. It's better that I go.

And as I told you last week, the Holy Spirit's coming is the key to every promise. So He says the Comforter...and that's the Holy Spirit. Christ says I'm going back into heaven and I'm going to send you the Holy Spirit, you Christians, you who love Me, and He'll live in your heart. And He'll energize you and strengthen you and empower you for Christian living. And He'll witness to Me through your body. And He'll convict men through what you say and what you preach and what you teach. The super helper will come. Guys, you don't have anything to sorrow about.

Now I want to enter into a little theological thought here that's really loaded. This is profound. Now watch this statement in verse 7, "If I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you." Now there's a very important truth in that, theologically. Do you know that the Holy Spirit couldn't come until Jesus

left? You say why? Why? Why couldn't the Holy Spirit come before He left? Good question, I'm glad you asked.

I'll tell you why. The Holy Spirit...I'm going to give you a couple of reasons...the Holy Spirit, watch this, the Holy Spirit's ministry, chapter 16 verse 14, is to show men the things of...what?...of Christ. And He cannot display the things of Christ until they are accomplished. Do you see that? The Holy Spirit cannot present the works of Christ to men until the works of Christ are done. His message is incomplete...it's incomplete.

Let me give you another reason. I don't know if you ever thought about this. The Holy Spirit, now watch this one, the Father loves the Son, right? The Father says to the Son, "Son, Christ, accomplish Your work and I will give You a reward...a reward." Did you know that? You say, "What was the reward?"

The reward, now watch this one, the reward to Jesus for His finished work was the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit was given to Christ, watch this, given to Christ by the Father as a reward for His finished work. Christ in turn sent the Holy Spirit to dwell within us. Now notice it again, verse 7, if I depart, I will send Him unto you. Why? Because the Father will give Him to Me.

You say, "MacArthur, where did you get that little tangled up thought?" In Acts 2:33...you know me better than to know I didn't make it up. Acts 2:33, listen to this, this is beautiful.

Jesus...Jesus is the theme of this verse. Jesus is the antecedent to everything that's said. "Therefore Jesus being by the right hand of God exalted." Now that's right, isn't it?

Christ was lifted up at the right hand, Philippians 2:9 to 11, Christ was exalted to the right hand of the Father. "And having received from the Father the promise of the Holy Spirit," who received the promise of the Holy Spirit? Jesus Christ...Jesus Christ. You mean to say that the Father promised Jesus that He'd send the Holy Spirit? That's right. And He promised Him that on the basis of His finished work. And so in order for the Holy Spirit to come, Christ had to finish His work. The verse says, "Received from the Father the promise of the Holy Spirit, Hewho does the He refer to again? Jesushath shed forth this which you now see and hear." In other words, and the Father gave the Spirit to Jesus who then sent forth the Spirit to dwell within us.

Now then, that means that the Spirit of God, now watch this, is the reward gift to the Son for His finished work. Thus the Spirit cannot come until the Son accomplishes His task.

Therefore verse 7 again, the words are correct, as the Spirit of God inspired them, "If I go not away, the

Comforter...what?...will not come." He will not come. Oh what a promise it is.

Did Jesus finish His work? Did He finish it? Did He fall on His knees in chapter 17 and say, "Father, I've finished the work which You gave Me to do?" Did God respond by giving Him the Spirit? Did He shed forth His Spirit to dwell within us? Every ministry of Jesus Christ is completed and the Spirit of God wants to operate in your life and my life. The world hates the believer but in spite of all the hostility and hatred of the world, Jesus said you have a Comforter who will strengthen you and empower you and energize you to meet this hostile world face to face and give testimony to Me and convict men of sin with effect. What a tremendous promise. It's for sure that a group of persecuted weeping sorrowing disciples couldn't confront a world and do anything effective, but when they became energized by the Holy Spirit, they turned the world upside down. Beloved, it's a hating world, it is a hating world. But greater...watch this one...is He that is in you than he that is...where?...in the world.

Father, we thank You this morning for our time together. We thank You for the little insights into Jesus Christ that we've seen this morning. We thank You that You told us what to expect that the world would hate us, that we wouldn't fit in, that Satan would be out to get us to devour us. We thank You that You also told us that You'd send us the super helper, the Comforter to empower us, to strengthen us, to meet this world head on with a testimony of Jesus Christ and the conviction of sin all through the Spirit. Father, this morning we pray that we might really accept that power that is within us, that we might determine to live for Jesus Christ whatever the cost with boldness and courage in the face of a hostile world and count it all joy to suffer for Him who suffered and died for us. We pray in His name. Amen.

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