

The Church of the Servant King

Survey of the Bible Series – The Gospel of John (SB_JN16A_The Coming Holy Spirit Prophesied)

Introduction

After teaching His disciples principles related to communion and fellowship with Him in the first verses of chapter 15 along with the necessity for bearing fruit in the form of love for one another, Jesus proceeds to teach His disciples to expect hatred from the world in verses 18-25. In those verses, the principles of Cosmic 2 degeneracy (as we have defined that term) were embodied in Jesus' teaching.¹ Jesus now provides further encouragement to His disciples as He teaches them about a new ministry of the Holy Spirit to believers unlike the Holy Spirit's ministry to believers in the past.

It is important to note that Jesus lived within the Age of Israel and His ministry anticipated the establishment of the Messianic kingdom of God on earth as He proclaimed and taught His disciples to proclaim the Gospel of the "kingdom of heaven is at hand" (Matt 10:7). His teaching here in John 15 and 16 is best understood in that context. The Old Testament basis for Jesus' teaching on the subject of the coming Holy Spirit and His ministry in the context of the last days of Israel leading to and including the establishment of the Messianic kingdom is found in such passages as the following:

And it shall come to pass afterward ["in the last days" per Peter in Acts 2:17] that I will pour out My Spirit on all flesh; your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, your old men shall dream dreams, your young men shall see visions. And also on My menservants and on My maidservants I will pour out My Spirit in those days. (Joel 2:28-29)

And I will not hide My face from them anymore; for I shall have poured out My Spirit on the house of Israel, says the Lord God. (Ezek 39:29)

And I will pour on the house of David and on the inhabitants of Jerusalem the Spirit of grace and supplication; then they will look on Me whom they pierced. Yes, they will mourn for Him as one mourns for his only son, and grieve for Him as one grieves for a firstborn. (Zech 12:10)

These passages and others that prophesy of the spiritual dynamics and historical phenomena that attend the last days of the Age of Israel and the establishment of the Messianic kingdom are perhaps best understood to relate to a period of time (i.e. "the last days" as a reference in the context of this study to the seven year Tribulation period, the 2nd Advent of Jesus, and the establishment of the Messianic kingdom on earth) vs. a point in time (i.e. the 2nd Advent alone). When Jesus' ministry is understood from this perspective, His teaching regarding the coming Holy Spirit is understood to relate to the period of Israel's last days. This perspective is more consistent with Jesus' teaching and ministry while He was on the earth.

If this view is correct, then we do not understand Jesus primary focus to be teaching principles of the Holy Spirit's relationship to the Church Age believer. Nevertheless, it is valuable to see in this teaching the similarity between the ministry of the Holy Spirit to believer's of those

¹ See our series – "The Spiritual Life of the Believer" – for a detailed examination of Satan's two spheres of operation for those who are "worldly." Specifically, see the lesson – "SLR_8F_Cosmic One and Two as Momentum Tests" – for a good overview of these two spheres of Satanic influence in the believer's and unbeliever's life. Also, see our previous lessons in this series – "SB_JN15_Jesus is the True Vine;" "SB_JN15B_Privileges of Abiding;" and "SB_JN15C_Hatred of the World" for an examination of John 15 up to this lesson.

periods of human history yet future to our Lord's ministry here on earth, i.e. the period of the "last days" of the Age of Israel, the kingdom age, and the Church Age. It is the similarities of the ministry of the Holy Spirit in each of these periods that has, in my opinion, led many good theologians and Christians to conclude that Jesus anticipated the Church Age in his teaching. This is certainly understandable; however, it is beyond the scope of this study to examine the pros and cons of each view. I will reserve that discussion until we study the book of Acts.

The Inclusio Structure of the Upper Room Discourse

Before proceeding further in our study of the Upper Room Discourse of Jesus to His disciples, it is important to take note of the literary structure that John used to frame this narrative. Our passage in this lesson is set within a set of inclusios that provide boundaries to the subject matter and are important to understand in order to appreciate the flow of the narrative. An inclusio is a set of similar statements in two separate verses that frame the narrative in between those two verses where a consistent theme is presented.²

John 13:1 – Love Motive – Jesus' love expressed for His own

John 13:34 – Love Command - A new commandment given for disciples to love

John 13:35 – Result is proof of discipleship – the world will know

John 15:8 – Result is proof of discipleship – the Father is glorified

John 15:17 – Love command – repeat of command to disciples

John 17:26 – Love Motive – possession of Jesus' love in His own

Within the innermost inclusio, we see Jesus affirm to His disciples that He is the one in whom they are to believe (14:1-11, 29), the promise of answered prayer (14:12-14; 15:7), provision of the "Helper" (14:15-18), promise of His peace (14:25-31), and fruitfulness (15:1-8).³ In 15:9-17, Jesus focuses His teaching upon obedience to His command to love one another as a basis for joy (15:9-13) and friendship with Him based upon obedience to that command (15:14-17). In 15:18-25, Jesus turns His attention to the opposition from the world that the disciples would face as they carried out His commands.

The Coming Holy Spirit (15:26-27)

In these verses, we find the third of five descriptions of the ministry of the Holy Spirit in John's Gospel to the disciples. In the first (14:15-18), Jesus described the Holy Spirit as another "Helper" Who would abide "in" the disciples forever. In the second (14:26), Jesus promised that the Spirit would teach them and remind them of all things that Jesus had taught them. Our passage in this lesson is the third description of the ministry of the Holy Spirit. In 16:7, we find the fourth description of the ministry of the Holy Spirit where Jesus indicates that He will send the Spirit to them and describes His convincing ministry. Finally, in 16:13-14, Jesus promises that the Holy Spirit will guide them into all truth.

In response to the world's hatred of Jesus and His disciples (15:18-25), Jesus teaches the disciples that they still have a responsibility to provide a witness to the love and truth found in Christ alone. It is important to note that the greatest source of opposition to this message is the

² Gary Derickson and Earl Radmacher, *The DiscipleMaker* (Salem, Oregon: Charis Press, 2001), 197-198.

³ *Ibid.*, 197.

religious category of unbeliever (16:2 – “whoever kills you will think that he offers God service”). Several phrases in chapter 15 verses 26 and 27 merit further analysis and discussion.

“But when the Helper comes” – The Greek word for “Helper” is *parakletos* and it can be translated as “Counselor” (NIV, RSV), “Advocate,” “Helper” (NAS, NKJV), or “Comforter” (ASV, KJV). All of these translations are good descriptions of the ministry of the Holy Spirit to the believer in the face of opposition to his testimony concerning Jesus Christ. It is the Holy Spirit Who will maintain the testimony of truth concerning Jesus’ person and work both in and through the disciples as they face opposition from those unbelievers involved in Cosmic 2 arrogance. In this manner, He provides comfort and wise counsel and He is their helper and advocate. In the face of opposition, the believer might be tempted to escape from the world or be silent in it. Certainly, there were times when the disciple was to not “cast his pearls before swine”; however, there were obviously times when the disciple was to provide testimony in the face of opposition (15:27 cf. 16:2). It was the future ministry of the Holy Spirit in that disciple’s life that would provide him with the wise counsel as to the appropriate course of action. As we shall see, as the disciples obey Christ’s commands to be witnesses (15:27 cf. Matt 28:19), the Holy Spirit had (and has) the responsibility to “convince” the world (16:8).

“Whom I shall send to you from the Father, the Spirit of truth Who proceeds from the Father” – This portion of verse 26 has caused some to conclude that this single verse contains more information about the Holy Spirit than any one verse in the Bible.⁴ In this verse, we see the Holy Spirit referred to as a distinct member of the Godhead acting in accordance with the will and direction of the other two members of the Godhead.

The Holy Spirit is more than a quality or a property according to Jesus’ own testimony in this passage. He is not merely another manifestation of Christ as some have tried to indicate. This false understanding of the Holy Spirit was at the heart of the modalist heresy that viewed God as manifesting Himself in three forms, rather than being three distinct persons Who shared a single essence. The Holy Spirit acts at the direction and request of the Father and the Son. This is interesting in the sense that the Holy Spirit is seen as acting at the direction of both the Father and the Son; whereas in previous passages, it was only the Father who is pictured as sending the Holy Spirit – in response to prayer (14:16) and in Christ’s name (14:26). Evidently, the sending of the Holy Spirit is an activity that involves both the Father and the Son.

“He will testify of Me” – The verb here is a form of the Greek word *martureo* and it can be interpreted to be in either the imperative or the indicative mood since the case endings for both moods is the same. In the imperative mood, it should be translated “He must testify of Me” whereas in the indicative mood, it should be translated “He will testify of Me.” In either case, the Holy Spirit is seen as providing testimony of Jesus in a future period.

It is also important to note that it is characteristic in John’s Gospel to see the 3rd member of the triune Godhead (Holy Spirit) pointing to the 2nd member of the triune Godhead (Jesus) and the 2nd member of the triune Godhead (Jesus) pointing to the 1st (God the Father). The Holy Spirit never glorifies Himself. This point alone should serve as an indictment against certain movements in the contemporary church that have overlooked this principle.

“And you also will bear witness” – This phrase points to the dual responsibility charged to the disciples in connection with the ministry of the Holy Spirit. As the disciples witnessed, the Holy Spirit would perform His convincing ministry in the world. The Spirit’s work is not to supercede, but to engage and encourage the disciple’s testimony.

“Because you have been with Me from the beginning” – Those who have experienced Christ provide the richest testimony of Him. Later, when the disciples thought it necessary to

⁴ Matthew Henry, *Matthew Henry’s Commentary on the Bible*, electronic edition (Peabody: Hendrickson, 1996).

choose a replacement for Judas Iscariot, one requirement was that that person needed to have been a part of the company of disciples “who have accompanied us all the time that the Lord Jesus went in and out among us, beginning from the baptism of John to that day when He was taken up from us” (Acts 1:21b-22a). The apostles were providing testimony of facts; they were not attempting to create a fictional legend. Without the Holy Spirit’s convincing ministry in the world, their testimony would be powerless. Without the disciples’ witness, the Spirit would be restricted in His means of expression.

Expect Persecution and Death (16:1-4)

The disciples faced persecution through ostracism and death after Jesus’ death. Jesus desires to warn them of this fact so that they might be prepared to deal with it as the Holy Spirit brought to remembrance all that He had said.

“That you should not be made to stumble” – Note the use of the passive voice in this phrase. This implies that they might be victimized by their adverse circumstances if Jesus did not provide them advance warning. Jesus uses the word “stumble” one other time in John’s Gospel (6:61) and it carries the sense in both passages of no longer following Him. Apart from Jesus’ teaching in the Upper Room Discourse, their faith would be shattered and they would most likely give up in defeat. As a matter of fact, that very night they would be scattered temporarily. However, as the Holy Spirit brought to remembrance all that He said during His public ministry prior to His death and His private ministry to His disciples after His death for forty days, they would be transformed into men of phenomenal boldness in the face of persecution and death (see Acts 2-4).

“They will put you out of the synagogues...think that he offers God service” – This type of religious opposition to the Truth offered through Jesus has been demonstrated time and again in the Gospel narratives. One example in John’s Gospel is found in the parents of the man born blind whom Jesus healed and who were afraid to speak for fear of being thrown out of the synagogue. Also, John has made statements (e.g. 12:42) that many of the Jews believed, but remained silent about their faith in Jesus because of this threat. Saul (later Paul) persecuted believers after Christ’s death and resurrection with a zeal similar to that described by Jesus here.

The persecution that true belief and faith has experienced throughout the centuries has been greatest from the religious community. Their zealous activity did not originate from a knowledge of God and His plan; rather, it originated from devotion to their religion.

“And these things I did not say to you at the beginning, because I was with you” – Jesus bore the brunt of the opposition and persecution from the religious types and the world while He was still alive on earth. He had protected them. However, with His departure, they will no longer have this same protection as He deflected the persecution from them and absorbed it Himself. We see the same principle illustrated in Jesus’ teaching in Luke 22:35-37.

Suffering is not indicative that God is not in control or that God has failed us. Rather, suffering is part of God’s plan of training for the believer just like boot camp and advanced military training is for members of our armed forces special teams. The trials and rigors of this training produces confidence and a strength of character to persevere until the mission is accomplished in spite of all obstacles. This truth is reflected in such passages as James 1:2-4 and Romans 5:3-5. This strength of character cannot be gained by reading books, it is only gained by experiencing the benefits of trust in Christ and His word in the midst of pressure.