

John 16:1-15
All Things New

Introduction to John 16:1-15
A Christ-Centered New Covenant Perspective

In John 16 we are invited into a profound and intimate discourse where Jesus prepares His disciples for the approaching climax of His earthly mission. Here, Christ is not only foreshadowing His imminent departure but also laying the foundation for the New Covenant. This passage beautifully captures the essence of the transition from the physical presence of Christ with His followers to the omnipresent guiding force of the Holy Spirit, a gift to all believers.

The departure of Jesus might seem sorrowful, but it marks the advent of a new era where the Holy Spirit becomes the advocate, guide, and revealer of truth to every believer.

This section of John's Gospel reinforces the central theme of the New Covenant: the shift from external laws inscribed on stone to the indwelling presence of God through the Holy Spirit, writing His truths on the very hearts of believers. It is Christ's reassurance that while His physical presence might be departing, God's presence and guidance through the Spirit will be even more intimate, transformative, and empowering.

Through this passage, we're reminded that Christ's work on the cross is not the end but a beautiful beginning. It sets in motion the age of the Spirit, where believers are not left as orphans but are embraced and led by the ever-present Comforter, ensuring that the message and love of Christ thrive and spread across the world.

Outline

Forewarning about Persecution (verses 1-4):

"I have told you these things so that you will not fall away. They

will put you out of the synagogues. In fact, a time is coming when anyone who kills you will think he is offering a service to God. They will do these things because they have not known the Father or Me. But I have told you these things so that when their hour comes, you will remember that I told you about them. I did not tell you these things from the beginning, because I was with you.”

Jesus starts by letting his disciples know that they will face difficulties and persecution. By doing this, he's ensuring they are mentally and spiritually prepared for the hardships ahead. He doesn't want them to be taken by surprise or to abandon their faith when confronted with these challenges.

Jesus' Departure and the Spirit's Arrival (verses 5-7):

Now, however, I am going to Him who sent Me; yet none of you asks Me, 'Where are You going?' Instead, your hearts are filled with sorrow because I have told you these things. But I tell you the truth, it is for your benefit that I am going away. Unless I go away, the Advocate will not come to you; but if I go, I will send Him to you.

The disciples are filled with sorrow when Jesus talks about leaving them. Yet, he emphasizes that his departure is necessary for the Advocate (the Holy Spirit) to come to them. This suggests that while his physical absence might be painful, it's part of a bigger divine plan that will empower and comfort them.

The Role of the Holy Spirit (verses 8-11):

And when He comes, He will convict the world in regard to sin and righteousness and judgment: in regard to sin, because they do not believe in Me; in regard to righteousness, because I am going to the Father and you will no longer see Me; and in regard to judgment, because the prince of this world has been condemned.

Jesus describes the pivotal role the Holy Spirit will play. The Spirit will bring conviction about sin, righteousness, and judgment. This is not just about pointing out wrongs but guiding believers in truth and righteousness.

Guidance into Truth (verses 12-15):

I still have much to tell you, but you cannot yet bear to hear it. However, when the Spirit of truth comes, He will guide you into all

truth. For He will not speak on His own, but He will speak what He hears, and He will declare to you what is to come. He will glorify Me by taking from what is Mine and disclosing it to you. Everything that belongs to the Father is Mine. That is why I said that the Spirit will take from what is Mine and disclose it to you.

Jesus acknowledges that he has more to say, but the disciples might not be ready to bear all of it just yet. But with the coming of the Holy Spirit, they will be guided into all truth. The Spirit will not act independently but will continue the work of Jesus, glorifying him and making his teachings clearer to the believers.

Summary of verses 1–15

Jesus warned his disciples about the impending persecution. He emphasized the necessity of his departure so that the Advocate (Holy Spirit) can come.

Jesus highlighted the role of the Holy Spirit: convicting the world of sin, righteousness, and judgment.

The Spirit will guide believers into all truth.

A Needed Comparison

Let's now compare John 16:1–15 with other passages to bring out, to magnify the "all things new" aspect of Jesus' parting words concerning the Spirit.

Galatians 3:13–14

Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law by becoming a curse for us. For it is written: "Cursed is everyone who is hung on a tree." He redeemed us in order that the blessing promised to Abraham would come to the Gentiles in Christ Jesus, so that by faith we might receive the promise of the Spirit.

He has helped His servant Israel, remembering to be merciful, as He promised to our fathers, to Abraham and his descendants forever." Luke 1:54–55 (Mary's Song)

Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law by becoming a curse for

us.

This was to ensure that Abraham's blessing would come to the Gentiles through Christ so that they might receive the promise of the Spirit through faith.

Romans 7:6

But now, having died to what bound us, we have been released from the law, so that we serve in the new way of the Spirit, and not in the old way of the written code.

Believers are released from the law and now serve in a new way of the Spirit, not in the old way of the written code.

Romans 8:1-2

Therefore, there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus. For in Christ Jesus the law of the Spirit of life set you free from the law of sin and death.

There's no condemnation for those in Christ Jesus. The indwelling Spirit sets them free from the law of sin and death. Those who live according to the Spirit have their minds set on what the Spirit desires. The Spirit testifies with our spirit that we are God's children. The chapter emphasizes the pivotal role of the Holy Spirit in the life of a believer, from life in the Spirit to future glory to God's everlasting love.

2 Corinthians 3:6

And He has qualified us as ministers of a new covenant, not of the letter but of the Spirit; for the letter kills, but the Spirit gives life.

Paul discusses the glory of the new covenant, emphasizing its superiority over the old. The letter kills, but the Spirit gives life. The ministry of the Spirit is more glorious and enduring. Where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom.

One great quote to close with...

It's so easy to not see the importance of Jesus's prophecies pertaining to the coming Spirit gave in his Upper Room discourse. I hope this quote will be of help. It's from "God's Kingdom through God's Covenants"; Peter Gentry & Stephen Wellum (2015, page 231).

The writing of the divine instruction upon the heart corresponds to the promise made earlier in Jeremiah of the ark of the covenant would become obsolete:

And when you have multiplied and been fruitful in the land, in those days, declares the LORD, they shall no more say, "The ark of the covenant of the LORD." It shall not come to mind or be remembered or missed; it shall not be made again. At that time Jerusalem shall be called the throne of the LORD, and all nations shall gather to it, to the presence of the LORD in Jerusalem, and they shall no more stubbornly follow their own evil heart. In those days the house of Judah shall join the house of Israel, and together they shall come from the land of the north to the land that I gave your fathers for a heritage. (Jeremiah 3:16-18)

In the new covenant they'll be no ark, because God's instruction will be written on the hearts of human beings. Christians, then are the ark of new covenant, because the church is the temple. The people of God will faithfully keep the new covenant. God's instructions will be internalized; it will be ingrained in their thinking, feeling, and planning. Paul picks us up in 2 Corinthians 3:3 when he speaks of the evidence for the new covenant in the Corinthian Christians:

"And you show that you are a letter from Christ delivered by us, written not with ink but with the Spirit of the living God, not on tablets of stone but on tablets of human hearts." ESV

When read collectively, our passages offer a holistic* (interconnected) understanding of the transition from the old covenant under the law to the new covenant under the grace and guidance of the

Holy Spirit.

The Spirit stands central to the believer's life, guiding, transforming, and testifying God's truths and promises.

Now the Lord is the Spirit, and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom.

2 Corinthians 3:17

holistic: the parts of something are interconnected and can be explained only by reference to the whole