

v. 15:1 I am the true vine, and my Father is the husbandman.

Jesus presents an allegory to the apostles. The main theme of this allegory is that they are totally dependent upon Him. Spiritual fruit can only be produced through abiding in Him

- a) Israel, in the Old Testament scriptures, was referred to as both a vineyard and a vine. The comparison was not new but one that they should have been familiar with. (Is. 5:7; Ps. 80:8; Jer. 2:21)
- b) The first point that Jesus makes is that He is the true or genuine vine. The nation of Israel was a mere shadow. He and He alone is the only source of spiritual life. The Father is given the position of the caretaker or the overseer. The idea is that it is the Father's wish that all blessings come through Jesus Christ and all spiritual fruit is a product of the grace that He supplies as the vine.

v. 15:2-3 Every branch in me that beareth not fruit he taketh away: and every [branch] that beareth fruit, he purgeth it, that it may bring forth more fruit. Now ye are clean through the word which I have spoken unto you.

According to the allegory every branch connected to the vine that does not bear fruit the husbandman cuts off. The branches that do bear fruit are pruned by the husbandman so that their yield will increase.

- a) Jesus has already identified himself as the vine and the Father as the husbandman. The branches are those who are "connected" to the vine or to Jesus. The words "in me" cannot be interpreted as Paul's phrase "in Christ".
- b) The branches are all those who are connected to Jesus in some way. Many professed to be His disciples at one time or another. Many had ties to Him. A short week ago the whole city of Jerusalem proclaimed Him to be the Messiah. In the broadest sense, all men are connected to Him for He is the source of physical life. He is the Life and the Light of all men. (v. 1:4)
- c) The Father knows those who do not bear fruit and will not bear fruit. He cuts them off and takes them away. In other words, they eventually fall away from the vine and the fruit bearing branches. They do not continue with the vine. (1 John 2:19) Judas is a prime example of one who was of the vine but now cut-off.
- d) Those that bear fruit are pruned by the keen eye of the husbandman so that they will in time bear even more fruit. This refers to the hand of God in the believer's life that guides them, instructs them and chastises them. He takes things out of the believer's life that will hinder their growth and so they become more fruitful.
- e) The apostles had already been undergoing this process through the instruction of Jesus. They were purged or "cleaned". They still were not saved or indwelt by the Spirit, but by the pruning of the husbandman were headed in the right direction. By the words of Jesus they were steered away from religion, the philosophies of the times and the views of the world. They were being conformed to the truth. They would be ready to receive the coming Spirit and to bear much fruit.

Author's note:

We cannot take this allegory further than it was intended to go. It cannot be used to argue that one

can lose their salvation. There is no indication that the branches cut away ever bore any fruit. On the contrary, the keen and perfect eye of the husbandman identified them as branches that never would bear any fruit. They were "suckers" on the vine from the start. Those that bear fruit are in the care of the husbandman. It is His responsibility to make certain that they continue to bear. (Remember how it was the shepherd's responsibility to care for the sheep.)

v. 15:4-5 Abide in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine; no more can ye, except ye abide in me. I am the vine, ye [are] the branches: He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit: for without me ye can do nothing.

What was implied in the verses above is now clearly stated, namely, that in the allegory it is they who are the branches. They can bear no more spiritual fruit apart from Jesus than a branch severed from a grapevine could produce physical fruit. In other words, it would be impossible to bear fruit apart from Him.

- a) The exhortation to them as well as their responsibility is to abide or to live in Him. In this way they would be taking care to making their calling and election sure. (2 Peter 1:10) The believer's assurance is born in obedience.
- b) The allegory only goes as far as to compare the saved to the unsaved. To live or to abide in Him, in the context, is to accept Him as Lord and Savior. It is to make this "connection" to Him a permanent one, recognizing that without Him they are spiritually inept. They can be assured that if they live in Him, He also lives in them.

v. 15:6 If a man abide not in me, he is cast forth as a branch, and is withered; and men gather them, and cast [them] into the fire, and they are burned.

Those who do not abide in Christ can do nothing spiritually. They will bear no fruit, for all of their righteousness is as filthy rags and their fruit rotten. There is no spiritual life apart from Christ or the vine.

- a) The thought of these branches being taken away (v. 2) is expanded upon. Rejecting Jesus they are cut-off and soon wither. Those who are "connected" to the world and not to Christ are physically, mentally and spiritually withered.
- b) Life takes its toll on them and they are finally gathered in death, having no hope. The gathering for burning is an allusion to the final judgment and hell. It is interesting to note that the branches are dealt with individually and then in the end are gathered as a group.

v. 15:7 If ye abide in me, and my words abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you.

Still in the upper room or possibly on the way to Gethsemanee, Jesus had just given them the allegory of the vine and the branches. The allegory compared those who abide in Him (saved) with those who are cut-off (unsaved). He now tells them of the benefits granted to those who abide in Him.

- a) The prayers and requests of those who abide in Jesus will be heard. They will pray effectually. If the words of Christ abide in them, they will pray in His will. As we saw in verse thirteen of

chapter fourteen (14:13) this is far from some magical formula that will enable the believer to obtain everything that he may desire but more of an assurance to the believer that he will be heard.

- b) *These words address the relationship that exists between Jesus and those who abide in Him. If the words of Jesus abide in them they will have His mindset and seek only the will of God.*
- c) *They should follow the example of Christ, who as a man, qualified His petitions with the words, "Not my will, but your will be done". Paul realized the frailty of human nature and the importance of handing over our requests and desires to the Spirit of Christ within us. (Rom. 8:26-28)*

[This is one of those verses in which any explanation takes away from what it appears is clearly stated. The fact is that experience as well as common sense tells us that the believer, no matter how faithful, is not given everything that is ask for. The eleven apostles did not get everything they asked for. We have examples of the apostle Paul not receiving a positive response from God to his requests. As mentioned above, even Jesus qualified His requests, subjecting them to the will of God. Statements such as "in His name" and "if my words be in you" likewise subject the believer's requests to the will of God.]

v. 15:8 Herein is my Father glorified, that ye bear much fruit; so shall ye be my disciples.

In conjunction with the allegory of the vine and the branches, the believer that dwells in the will of God bears fruit. Bearing fruit, in turn, is proof that one is of the vine and so a true disciple of Christ. Bearing fruit does not make one of the vine but shows that one is of the vine.

- a) *Fruit can only be produced by the Spirit of God within the man, therefore, fruit produced in the believer's life is a manifestation of the attributes of God and so brings glory to Him. In this way God was glorified in the work of Jesus. (v. 13:31) In this same way God is glorified in the believer. We are the painting. He is the artist.*

v. 15:9. As the Father hath loved me, so have I loved you: continue ye in my love.

In a great statement of assurance to the disciples, Jesus tells them that He loves them with the same love that the Father has for Him. He loves them in the same manner that the Father loves Him. His love for them is an extension of the Father's love for Him.

- a) *Love can only be seen or known in its manifestations. This love of the Father for the Son was shown in many ways. The Father openly declared His love for the Son. (Matt. 3:17, 17:5) He protected the Son from harm during His ministry. He provided Him with the strength to overcome all temptation. (Heb. 4:15) He gave Him the wisdom to confound His enemies. He backed-up His Son and proved all of His claims with signs, wonders and miracles. He comforted Him and communed with Him in prayer. He would yet raise Him from the dead, give Him glory beyond measure and put all things under His feet.*
- b) *Jesus loved the disciples and would continue to love them with the same love. He had and would continue, even in a greater degree, to comfort them, assure them and protect them. He would give them wisdom and strength. He calls them His own and would give His life for them, going before them in death and securing for them eternal life. He had left the glory that He shared with His Father in their behalf.*

- c) Jesus urges them to abide or to dwell in this love. The love is ever present for those that are His, but it is their responsibility to derive the full benefit. They are to live, breathe and bask in the light of His love for them.

v. 15:10 If ye keep my commandments, ye shall abide in my love; even as I have kept my Father's commandments, and abide in his love.

The secret of continuing or abiding in His love, in the manner explained above, is obedience. If they keep His commandments they will dwell in the full light of His love.

- a) This does not say that His love is conditioned on their obedience; on the contrary, His love for them is ever present. Parents have a full and natural love for their children but obedience on the children's part will allow that love to be manifested in its fullest, while disobedience hinders loves manifestation.
- b) So obedience on their part will allow Jesus to manifest this great love to its fullest extent. It will allow them to see and to experience the limitless bounds of His love for them. (1 John 2:1-5)
- c) Jesus presents, as an example, His perfect obedience, as the Son, to the will and commands of the Father. Through His perfect obedience the love of the Father could be perfectly manifested in His behalf.

v. 15:11 These things have I spoken unto you, that my joy might remain in you, and [that] your joy might be full.

Jesus is presenting to them these words of assurance so that His joy would remain in them. He is physically leaving, but He desires to leave His joy with them. Furthermore, this joy is to continue to grow within them until they are filled.

- a) Much like the peace He spoke of earlier in chapter fourteen verse twenty-seven (14:27) this was not joy as the world defined it but His joy; a spiritual joy. It was the joy of knowing that they were of Him, that they would bear fruit, and be able to continue in His love. They could have the assurance that with His departure this was not the ending but the beginning. They had the joy of knowing He would come for them. (Rom. 14:17; 1 Peter 1:6-8) Peace and joy are the fruits of the Spirit that would shortly indwell them and so fill them.

v. 15:12-13 This is my commandment, That ye love one another, as I have loved you. Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends.

Jesus had told them that by keeping His commandments, in other words through obedience, they would dwell in the full light of His love. Abiding in Him they would experience His peace and His joy. He now reminds them of His commandment on which all of His other commands and doctrines revolve.

- a) They were to love one another as He loved them. Earlier Jesus had called this a new commandment; because of the example He set and now told them to follow, completely redefined the commandment of love. Their love for one another was to be a continuing beacon to the world of His love and to be the identifying mark of His followers. (vs. 13:34-35)

- b) *The love between them should be of a self-sacrificing nature. The greatest thing a man possesses is his life, and so, the greatest sacrifice that one could make would be to give his life. This would be the ultimate manifestation of love for another.*
- c) *Jesus definitely alludes to His upcoming death on their behalf. Although they probably didn't clearly understand, later, through the Holy Spirit, they would recall His words and would understand the extent of the love that they were to have for one another.*

[These words were understood and taken to heart by John because he dedicates an entire letter to them. He speaks of abiding in Christ. (1 John 2:28) He speaks of obedience being the proof that one abides in Him. (1 John 2:3-6) Finally, a major portion of this letter speaks about the importance and necessity of a self-sacrificing love for one another. (1 John 2:10, 3:11, 14, 16, 18, 23, 4:7-8, 11-12)]

v. 15:14-16 Ye are my friends, if ye do whatsoever I command you. Henceforth I call you not servants; for the servant knoweth not what his lord doeth: but I have called you friends; for all things that I have heard of my Father I have made known unto you. Ye have not chosen me, but I have chosen you, and ordained you, that ye should go and bring forth fruit, and [that] your fruit should remain: that whatsoever ye shall ask of the Father in my name, he may give it you.

Jesus further assures them by telling them that they are much more than servants. He calls them His friends. This friendship, however, is unique and so He feels the need to first qualify and then to explain this relationship.

- a) *Friends usually consider themselves to be peers. Their friendship is based on affection and self-sacrifice, but also involves a fair amount of compromise. Jesus is the way, the truth and the life, which leaves absolutely no room for compromise. The friendship between them can only be based on obedience. They are friends but certainly are not peers.*

[Friendships between superiors and subordinates are difficult. People tend to take advantage of such relationships. When one goes to work for a friend the "ground rules" are usually established beforehand. An understanding must exist that in the workplace the superior/subordinate relationship must still exist. Remember the foot-washing? Jesus washed their feet but affirmed His position as their Lord and Master. (v. 13:13) Here He calls them friends but tells them the friendship is based on obedience. God will condescend to man in friendship, even to the point of it costing Him a great price, but His position as God will never be compromised.]

- b) *The apostles were much more than servants for they were made privy to all of His affairs. A servant is commanded to obey and entitled to no explanations, but Jesus explained himself to them. They knew all that there was to know about Him.*
- c) *He had told them who He was, why He came, where He was going and that He would return. The Holy Spirit would yet enlighten them to all that He had told them. This intimacy between them is the mark of friendship. Understanding Him as the way the truth and the life, their obedience would be born in love.*
- d) *Friendships as they knew them were based on a mutual coming together of two people, but Jesus makes it known that He had chosen them. They could be assured that as God, He chose them with intent and for a purpose according to a plan.*

- e) *He would not abandon them because He had chosen them for a mission. They were ordained or set apart to spread the gospel and to have the life of Christ manifested in them. It was ordained that they would be successful. The fruit that they produced would remain. It would permanently impact man.*
- b) *Finally, this was of God. It was He, who in the name of Jesus, would cause these things to be. They were ordained and engaged in the business of God. He would answer their prayers according to His will.*

v. 15:17 *These things I command you, that ye love one another.*

This verse literally says, "The things that I have just told you, know them and practice them, so that you will keep on loving one another." This represents the third time since the supper had ended that Jesus speaks to them on the important subject of loving one another. (vs. 13:34-35, 15:12)

- a) *The apostles can keep on loving one another by abiding in Jesus (v. 4), by keeping His commandments (v. 10), and by reflecting on His self-sacrificing love for them (vs. 13-14). By walking in the light of His love and in obedience to His word, the Spirit that He had promised would teach them brotherly love. (1 Thes. 4:9)*

"The logic here is simple and clear. I, being myself unlovable, cannot keep on loving my brother, who also is often unlovable (at least as I see him), unless I constantly reflect on (and remain in) the love of Christ for myself." Hendrickson

v. 15:18-19 *If the world hate you, ye know that it hated me before [it hated] you. If ye were of the world, the world would love his own: but because ye are not of the world, but I have chosen you out of the world, therefore the world hateth you.*

The importance of their love for one another, is seen in the fact stated by Jesus, that the world would hate them. Jesus gives them a glimpse of what to expect after His departure so that they would be somewhat prepared and also so that when they would later reflect on these words they would be assured in that He knew these things beforehand.

- a) *If the disciples still entertained any thoughts of ruling with Him over an earthly kingdom these words should have shown them that they were mistaken. His kingdom was not of this world. On the contrary, He, as well as His followers, were at odds with the world.*
- b) *By "the world" is meant all those that are not of the truth, and seeing that Jesus is The Truth, it means all those that are not of Him. It is those who are motivated and controlled by man's ideas, philosophies, beliefs and traditions. One is either of Jesus or of the world; of the truth or believing a lie; of the light or of the darkness.*
- c) *As seen above, Jesus and the world are totally and completely incompatible. The truth of Christ points out the world's error, and yet the world cannot comprehend it or come to accept it. (v. 1:5, 3:19-20; 1 Cor. 1:19-20; 1 Cor. 2:14) Because it confounds them, they come to hate it.*
- d) *The world hated Jesus and his disciples should expect the same treatment. They were not of the world only because He had chosen them and set them apart from the world. The fact that they were different from the world could be attributed to a direct act of God.*

- e) *A declaration of election that was made in eternity was now being accomplished in time. (Eph. 1:4) Jesus enlightened them, making them different and so the world hated them.*

v. 15:20-21 *Remember the word that I said unto you, The servant is not greater than his lord. If they have persecuted me, they will also persecute you; if they have kept my saying, they will keep yours also. But all these things will they do unto you for my name's sake, because they know not him that sent me.*

Not only did the world hate Jesus but also acted on that hate and so persecuted Him. A servant is not greater than his master so if they persecuted Him how much more could they expect the same treatment. (Earlier He had used this same example to teach them that they were not exempt from practicing humility among themselves. (v. 13:16))

- a) *When they feel the wrath of the unbelieving world it is solely because they are His. In their persecutions they would be identified with Him. Jesus had told them these things very early in His ministry and now His words would soon become reality. (Matt. 10:16-24)*
- b) *The reason given for the hatred and persecution that He, as well as they experienced, is simply that the world does not know God. Man was lost in sin and given over to its consequences. (Rom. 1:18, 21, 28)*
- c) *On a positive note, Jesus tells them that there will be some, who like them, will hear His word, by their lips, and obey. Again, assurance that the movement would continue in them and not end with the departure of Jesus.*

[In light of these words, the things they would go through would give them reason to spiritually rejoice, for it was proof that they were not of the world but belonged to Christ. These would have eternal life (Matt. 5:11-12)]

v. 15:22 *If I had not come and spoken unto them, they had not had sin: but now they have no cloke for their sin.*

Jesus had come and declared the will of God and the message of the true righteousness. The truth He proclaimed was truly a light that shone on their darkness and exposed their evil deeds. His words removed the covering that hid their unrighteousness.

- a) *This verse does not say that before He came they were blameless and if He did not come they would have remained blameless. This verse says plainly that they had sin all along but that it was cloaked or covered. Earlier in this gospel we saw that before Jesus came the world stood condemned. He came into the world to save that which was lost. (vs. 3:16-18)*
- b) *Paul, as well as the other New Testament writers, teach that all men were alienated from God as well as slaves to sin and unrighteousness. Ignorance is never an excuse. (Rom. 1:19-20, 2:11-12, 3:10-12, 23)*
- c) *What is meant is that in their eyes, before Jesus came, they had no sin. They believed that they were the children of Abraham, that Moses was their father and that they had righteousness in the law. Through their interpretations and traditions they perverted their religion and it became a mere covering for their unrighteousness and sin.*

- d) *In their system the truth of God was lost and the message of the Messiah misunderstood. They did not need a Messiah to save them from sin but to save them from Rome. They felt that as God's people they deserved to rule. If Jesus had not come the blind would have continued to lead and both fall into the ditch of perdition.*

v. 15:23 *He that hateth me hateth my Father also.*

In their error and self-righteousness they claimed to be of God (v. 8:41) while calling Jesus demon possessed (v. 8:48). They saw their system as being of God and Jesus in opposition to it. Such was the magnitude of their sin and blindness.

- a) *The fact is that it was Jesus who was from God and spoke the truth of His word. He was the manifestation of God in the flesh and so; by hating Him they showed their true feelings for God. Simply put, by hating Him they hated God because He was God. (vs. 10:30-31)*

v. 15:24 *If I had not done among them the works which none other man did, they had not had sin: but now have they both seen and hated both me and my Father.*

In addition to the words of God that Jesus proclaimed, He performed great miracles that also testified to the fact that He was from God and bore witness that His words were truth. In the miracles there could be no mistake for He did things that no man ever did or could do.

- a) *In the plan of God the words were not enough but were supported by the miracles. Together they provided irrefutable evidence that He was God and they had no excuse. Throughout this gospel Jesus pointed to the miracles as proof of His words. (v. 10:38) When the disciples started to doubt He pointed them to the miracles. (v. 14:11) It was the miracles that caused one of the few divisions among the Pharisees concerning Him. (v. 9:16)*
- b) *Jesus understood that according to Jewish law witnesses were often required to establish truth. His testimony alone was not enough to convince them and they had a right to expect other proof. The scriptures and the miracles were the other witnesses or proof. (vs. 5:31-39)*
- c) *They refused to see Jesus in the scriptures or to see the hand of God in the miracles. (v. 12:37) In Jesus the Father was manifested, especially in the miracles He performed. In this way they saw the Father in the Son and by their rejection expressed their hate for Him.*

v. 15:25 *But [this cometh to pass], that the word might be fulfilled that is written in their law, They hated me without a cause.*

Jesus had loved them, healed them and fed them. He reached out to them with compassion, giving them the words of eternal life. He harmed no one in any way and was without sin, yet they hated Him. God knew their hearts in eternity past and so the fact that they would hate Him without cause was prophesied in their own scriptures.

- a) *This thought of being hated without a cause appears in two places, both in the Psalms, and both involving David. In the first instance David is rewarded evil for good. (Ps. 35:7, 12-14, 19) In the second instance David is hated because of his zeal for the Lord. (Ps. 69:4, 7-9)*

- b) *Jesus was now being hated by people to whom He had only done good and for the reason that He had a zeal for the Father's work. These words in the Psalms pointed to Christ and were now finding their final fulfillment in Him.*

v. 15:26-27 But when the Comforter is come, whom I will send unto you from the Father, [even] the Spirit of truth, which proceedeth from the Father, he shall testify of me: And ye also shall bear witness, because ye have been with me from the beginning.

Jesus assures the disciples that He would be vindicated in the face of His enemies through the coming of the Holy Spirit as well as by their witness. The final solution of those who hated Him would not hold up but His message and His works would go on in an even greater sense. His enemies would never be able to extinguish the truth.

- a) *As they were told earlier, the Spirit would come as a Comforter as well as to enlighten them to the truth. (vs. 14:16-17) He would work miracles through their hands and convert souls by their words.*
- b) *They too would bear witness of Him. They would relate their own experiences with Him; what Jesus said and what He did. They had been with Him from the beginning of His ministry and were eyewitnesses to His glory. This gospel is the apostle John bearing witness of Jesus Christ. (Luke 1:1-2)*

Author's note:

We are beginning the third of four chapters, which, except for a few interruptions, give us the narrative delivered by Jesus to His apostles just after the Passover supper. In chapter 14 the rebuke and admonition of the apostles was prevalent, while in chapter 15 the comfort of the shaken apostles was the predominant theme. In chapter 16 the theme is one of prediction. The three main topics covered, namely, their treatment by the world, the coming of the Holy Spirit and the departure of Jesus, are not new. They are however presented in a different light (as predictions) and some new information given as the topics are expanded.

v. 16:1 These things have I spoken unto you, that ye should not be offended.

Jesus tells the apostles that the words of comfort and admonition He had just spoken to them were given for a purpose, namely, so that they would not stumble and fall. Their faith was badly shaken and with His death would have all but collapsed.

- a) To avert what seemed inevitable, Jesus affirmed to them His deity, assured them that He would not abandon them and rebuked them for their unbelief in light of all they had seen and heard. He then exhorted them as to their duty in the face of some very hostile conditions.
- b) Most importantly He promised them enlightenment and peace through a new type of relationship with God through this One called the Comforter and Spirit of Truth.
- c) In this way they had something to cling to, to watch for, and to believe in. These final words of instruction and comfort would get them through this critical period between His death and their Pentecost.

v. 16:2-3 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.

Jesus had told them earlier that the general mood toward them would be one of hatred. He had told them that this hatred would be acted upon and so they would be persecuted for their affiliation with Him. (vs. 15:18-20) Here Jesus tells them specific forms of persecution they could expect to experience.

- a) The powers that be within Judaism would not accept their message and they would be rejected by their own people. They would be excommunicated from the Jewish faith. This had major implications where the religion was also the state. They would be cut off not only religiously but also economically and socially. They would be despised and disowned by both friends and family. They would be viewed as worse than pagans or gentiles.
- b) The Jews believed that there was one God. According to their point of view to believe that Jesus was the Son of God and also of the same essence was blasphemy. This was an offence punishable by death.
- c) A principle among the Jews was, "Whoever sheds the blood of the wicked, is equal to one who brings a sacrifice." Killing a Christian would be considered as though doing a work of God. The best example of this mindset was Saul, who was later converted and then known as Paul. The apostle could never get over the actions of his unconverted self. (Acts 7:58-59, 9:1-2, 26:9-12; Gal 1:13; 1 Tim. 1:13)

- d) *They will be treated in this manner because their persecutors do not know God. This is not surprising because the only way they can know the God of their scriptures is in and through Jesus Christ whom they rejected.*
- e) *The Jews had in effect invented their own religion. They circumvented God's law and replaced the truth with their own ideas of salvation and deliverance. They no longer knew God's plan, purpose or direction for them, and so did not know Him. In Jesus Christ they saw a devil.*

v. 16:4 *But these things have I told you, that when the time shall come, ye may remember that I told you of them. And these things I said not unto you at the beginning, because I was with you.*

Jesus had given them these very specific predictions as to the treatment they would receive; so that when they did come to pass they would remember and be strengthened.

- a) *At such a time it would offer them proof of His divinity, showing that He knew these things beforehand. No matter how difficult things might become they would have the assurance that everything was going according to plan. If these sayings were reliable then so were His words of comfort, namely, that at such times He would be with them through the Spirit to answer their prayers and give them peace.*
- b) *He had told them of all these things since the beginning of His ministry but not nearly so pointedly or personally. (Matt. 5:10-12) The reason given is that He was with them.*
- c) *Exactly what is meant by this we do not know. Perhaps at that time it was simply not their burden to bear. Jesus took the brunt of the persecution and so offered them a degree of protection. It was now much closer to the time when the Spirit would help and enable them to bear such a burden.*

v. 16:5-6 *But now I go my way to him that sent me; and none of you asketh me, Whither goest thou? But because I have said these things unto you, sorrow hath filled your heart.*

Peter and then Thomas had earlier asked Jesus where He was going. (v. 13:36, 14:5) Since then, Jesus had given them as clear and as comprehensive an explanation as they could handle at the time. Even though the explanation was designed to bring them peace and comfort, it instead brought them only sorrow.

- a) *The statement, "and none of you ask me, wither goest thou?" implies that the disciples now understand that Jesus is going to die. He is leaving them by death. Instead of asking Him more intelligent and pertinent questions based on their new understanding, they selfishly become depressed and feel sorry for themselves. (v. 14:28)*

v. 16:7 *Nevertheless I tell you the truth; It is expedient for you that I go away: for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you; but if I depart, I will send him unto you.*

Jesus, as a parent trying to convince his depressed children that a painful event will soon work out to their benefit, tells them that His departure is for the best. Nevertheless or "no matter what you may think, it is best that I go." "I who am the truth am telling you the truth."

- a) He reminds them that the coming of the Comforter is dependent on His departure. The reason given to the disciples as to the necessity of His departure in order of the Spirit to come was the veiled; "I go to prepare a place for you." They would be enlightened to the reasons later but now they need to understand that He must go if the Spirit is to come.
- b) At this point, because of their lack of understanding, they would all probably, if given a choice, have asked Him to stay in place of the Spirit who they did not know or comprehend. This was a case where the "children" just had to trust the parent.
- c) Later they would understand the implications of Jesus going to prepare a place. He had to accomplish the work of redemption on which the promise of the Spirit hinged. (Acts 2:33) All had to take place according to the plan of God and in His time frame. If the work was not first completed there would be no merits or grace for the Spirit to apply. (Gal. 4:4-6)

v. 16:8-11 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.

Jesus explains to the apostles the work that the coming Spirit would engage in and complete. The word translated "reprove" means, "to present and expose facts, to convince of the truth." So through the apostles the Spirit would convict and convince the world in three areas, namely, sin, righteousness and judgment.

- a) He is the Spirit of truth and so would convict men of sin in light of the truth. He would destroy their excuses, defeat their arguments and expose their logic as simply a covering for their sin. It is the sin of unbelief that will ultimately lead to condemnation and so the goal and purpose of the conviction of sin is to lead one to belief in Jesus.
- b) The Spirit would convince and convict the world of the righteousness of Christ. The world viewed Jesus as unrighteous, as a devil and as an evil one. The fact that the Father accepted His work, raising Him from the dead and placing Him at His right hand vindicated Him before the world, proving Him to be the Righteous One.
- c) Finally, the Spirit will "wake-up" the world to the fact of impending judgment. There would be consequences for actions and a day of reckoning. Through the cross Satan was judged. The power of sin and death was defeated. The idea seems to be that if the prince was judged and found wanting, how much more his followers. If the prince was defeated in all of his strength, how hopeless is the cause of the doers of evil.

[This threefold work of the Spirit is seen immediately on the day of Pentecost, in the sermon by Peter. Through Peter the Spirit convicted the crowd of their unbelief and rejection of Jesus. (Acts 2:22-23) It convinced them of the righteousness of Christ through His resurrection to the Father. (Acts 2:24, 32-33) He then showed that the enemies of Jesus would be dealt with. (Acts 2:34-36) Many were convinced by the Spirit and converted. (Acts 2:37-38, 41)]

v. 16:12 I have yet many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now.

Jesus tells them that there is so much more that He desires to tell them and to explain to them but at this point they could not understand. They were already in a state of confusion and more information

would overwhelm them. Furthermore, the grounds for everything He needed to tell them, namely, their redemption, had not yet been accomplished in time.

- a) The “things” that Jesus speaks of are the truths contained in the letters of the New Testament. The priesthood of Christ, Jews and gentiles coming together to form the church and the body concept of the church are just a few of the truths He would tell them through the Spirit when all was accomplished.

v. 16:13 *Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth: for he shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, [that] shall he speak: and he will shew you things to come.*

Jesus affirms that the vehicle He will use to enlighten them “to the things they could not now bear” would be the Holy Spirit. (v. 12) Jesus told them the truths of salvation but they did not as of yet have the spiritual capacity to understand. Any background to these truths or any detailed explanation would be for naught. They could not now bear these things.

- a) The Holy Spirit would guide them to a complete understanding of redemptive truth. He would expand upon the things that Jesus had said to them and enlighten them to the significance of everything that He said and did.
- b) The Holy Spirit guides or leads. As Hendrickson states, “He exerts His influence upon the regenerated consciousness of the child of God.” The Spirit immediately impressed upon their minds the simple truths of salvation and then guided them to an understanding of the church or body of Christ. Finally, He opened their minds to the things to come or the New Testament prophecies.
- c) The Spirit reminding them of the things that Jesus said and did is seen in the gospels. The letters of the New Testament would be an example of them being led into all truth. The prophetic scripture, especially the Book of Revelation, is their being given knowledge to the things to come.

[Paul writes that it is possible to quench and grieve the Holy Spirit. We see in the New Testament writings that being led into all truth did not come easy. The apostles themselves put up a goodly amount of resistance to the truth that the gentiles would be fellow heirs with the Jews. Peter made many mistakes along the way, however, the Holy Spirit brought them to a point where they could infallibly pen the scriptures, being in full harmony with His guidance.]

- d) John again presents a Godhead that is in harmony. Father Son and Holy Ghost, distinct and yet one in mind and purpose. Everything that the Spirit reveals to them will be in harmony with the words of Christ. Neither the Son nor the Holy Ghost speaks as an individual entity but as representatives of the Godhead of which they are a part. Both the Son and the Spirit speak only the words of the Godhead. (vs. 7:16, 12:49; 1 Cor. 2:10-13)

v. 16:14-15 *He shall glorify me: for he shall receive of mine, and shall shew [it] unto you. All things that the Father hath are mine: therefore said I, that he shall take of mine, and shall shew [it] unto you.*

Everything the Holy Spirit does glorifies Jesus Christ. The Holy Spirit preaches Christ’s word, reflects Christ’s work, proclaims Christ’s virtues and teaches Christ’s doctrines. The Spirit’s job is to exalt Jesus Christ as the way, the truth and the life.

- a) *Everything that the Spirit shows them will be in light of Jesus Christ. Every grace He bestows, every gift He imparts, every insight, strength or comfort He gives, He received from Jesus. Jesus bought and paid for it all. (Eph. 4:7-8) The Spirit takes it from the hands of Christ and gives it to the believer. The Holy Spirit plays the role of ambassador. He only speaks and delivers what He has received from Christ.*

“The Spirit came not to erect a new kingdom, but to advance and establish the same kingdom that Christ had erected, to maintain the same interest and pursue the same design; those therefore that pretend to the Spirit, and vilify Christ, give themselves the lie, for He came to glorify Christ.” Matthew Henry

- b) *Jesus again affirms His deity and so His equality with the Father. All that the Father has was His. He was an extension of the Father and the manifestation of the Godhead to man. He and the Father are one. (vs. 5:19-23, 10:30; Matt. 11:27)*

[Jesus Christ is the central figure in God’s dealings with man. Jesus Christ is the one mediator between God and man. The Father glorifies Him in heaven while the Spirit glorifies Him in the earth. He is the alpha and the omega. He is the beginning and the end. All that man can know of God is Jesus Christ.]

v. 16:16-18 A little while, and ye shall not see me: and again, a little while, and ye shall see me, because I go to the Father. Then said [some] of his disciples among themselves, What is this that he saith unto us, A little while, and ye shall not see me: and again, a little while, and ye shall see me: and, Because I go to the Father? They said therefore, What is this that he saith, A little while? we cannot tell what he saith.

Jesus presents the statement that has become a sort of riddle to the disciples. Very soon they would no longer see Him, but then shortly after, they would see Him. The reason given is that He was going back to the Father. The disciples have become frustrated in trying to understand this saying and a controversy breaks out among them.

- a) *They caucus among themselves as to the meaning of this saying and conclude that they do not know what He is talking about. This time they kept their questions to themselves. Earlier in the evening they, in their unbelief, openly challenged Him. (v. 14:5) Apparently through the words of Jesus their faith had returned or they had been strengthened to the point where they did not want Him to think that they doubted Him.*
- b) *Another possibility is that He had mentioned this saying so many times and explained it in so many ways that there was a certain amount of embarrassment on their part and so they did not openly inquire of Him. Maybe they thought that this saying was one of the things that they could not now bear. (v. 12)*

[The fact that they would not see Him refers to His death and subsequent burial. Their seeing Him again seems to point to His resurrection, however, it may go a little bit deeper. The last two times this saying was repeated it was given in the context of the coming Holy Spirit. (vs. 14:17-20) Going beyond the resurrection, Jesus may be referring to seeing Him through the “spiritual eyes” that the Spirit would give them. Going to the Father was a prerequisite of the coming of the Spirit, the same reason given here for their seeing Him again. (v. 7)]

v. 16:19-20 Now Jesus knew that they were desirous to ask him, and said unto them, Do ye enquire among yourselves of that I said, A little while, and ye shall not see me: and again, a little while, and ye shall see me? Verily, verily, I say unto you, That ye shall weep and lament, but the world shall rejoice: and ye shall be sorrowful, but your sorrow shall be turned into joy.

The disciples cannot keep their thoughts from Jesus by remaining silent. Jesus addresses them telling them that He is very aware of their confusion. Jesus begins a discourse that will shed more light upon this "riddle," but in the process, He finds it more important to deal with their sorrow and uncertainty.

- a) Jesus tells them that it is a truth that they will go through some trying times of unbelievable sorrow. The striking difference between how they perceive Jesus and how the world sees Him is pointed out. They will be overcome with sorrow while the world (represented by the Jewish leaders) rejoices.
- b) Jesus immediately offers them comfort by telling them that their great sorrow will be turned into joy. The phrase "turned into" suggests to them that the same event that caused their sorrow would also cause their joy.
- c) It is implied that the world's joy would turn into sorrow based on the same turn of events. The idea is that appearances would be deceiving. Things would turn around quickly and unexpectedly. They, so to speak, would come out on top.

v. 16:21-22 A woman when she is in travail hath sorrow, because her hour is come: but as soon as she is delivered of the child, she remembereth no more the anguish, for joy that a man is born into the world. And ye now therefore have sorrow: but I will see you again, and your heart shall rejoice, and your joy no man taketh from you.

Jesus illustrates what He has just told the disciples concerning their time of trial turning into a time of great joy. He uses a common example that they would be able to identify with and easily understand.

- a) The birth of a child is an event that causes a woman great sorrow (pain), but then great joy. It is an event that at first causes fear, panic and helplessness but then the anguish is suddenly replaced with joy. The joy is such that the pain is forgotten. (At least for the moment.)
- b) The event Jesus is alluding to is His death and departure from them. His death would produce in them sorrow, panic and fear. His death however, would lead to the resurrection and His departure to the coming of the Holy Ghost. Their sorrow would be turned into joy. The dispensation of the Spirit would be ushered in and their joy would be everlasting.

v. 16:23. And in that day ye shall ask me nothing. Verily, verily, I say unto you, Whatsoever ye shall ask the Father in my name, he will give [it] you.

Jesus goes on to give them a glimpse of their relationship to Him and to the Father under the new dispensation. "That day" refers to the day of Pentecost when the Spirit would indwell them and enlighten them. The day of His resurrection made Pentecost possible. It was a prerequisite of the new dispensation of the Spirit.

- a) Their relationship to Jesus would change. He would no longer be there and so they could not

simply ask Him questions or inquire of Him as they did now. It could also refer to the result of their enlightenment; they would no longer need to inquire as to His mission and His teachings. They would understand who He was, why He came and where He had gone. (1 John 2:27)

- b) *Jesus had established a link to the Father. Now they could lay before the Father all of their prayers and petitions. They could ask the Father in Jesus name, or in accordance with the doctrines of redemptive truth that He had revealed to them.*
- c) *Jesus is not abandoning them or distancing himself from them. On the contrary, He is simply telling them that the physical relationship that they now had would evolve into a relationship in the Spirit. They could approach the Godhead in prayer and by His merits they would be heard.*

v. 16:24 *Hitherto have ye asked nothing in my name: ask, and ye shall receive, that your joy may be full.*

Until now they had not asked anything in light of who He was and according to the redemptive truth that He taught. They did not pray in this way because many of the things Jesus spoke of did not yet take place in time and so the disciples lacked understanding. (This will be confirmed in verse 25)

- a) *They did not fully understand who He was. Their concept of the Messiah was still flawed. He was a man, flesh and blood, just as they were. It was difficult for them to view Him, despite His claims and miracles, as the Lord their God, as I AM, as Yahweh.*
- b) *There is a subtle difference in the words translated "ask" in these verses. One has to do with communication between those who are on the same level. The other involves communication of a subordinate to a superior. Jesus is basically telling them that they will no longer be able to ask Him things in the familiar manner that they have become accustomed to doing. They will henceforth obtain their answers by praying to God in accordance with the things He had told them and would accomplish.*
- c) *The disciples had probably prayed to the Father as Jews but the thought hadn't entered their minds to pray to Jesus as God. What they asked, Jesus as God, would provide. (vs. 14:13-14) This they would learn and their joy would be full realizing that His Spirit was within them.*

v. 16:25 *These things have I spoken unto you in proverbs: but the time cometh, when I shall no more speak unto you in proverbs, but I shall shew you plainly of the Father.*

Jesus admits to the disciples that He has not always spoken openly or clearly to them, but has liberally used allegory and figures of speech in proclaiming His doctrine to them. He promises them that the time is coming when He will present to them plainly the things of the Father.

- a) *Jesus is probably referring to the allegory of the vine and the branches as well as the example of the woman in labor. It can however, refer to most of the truth that He has presented to them from the beginning of His ministry. He has told them that He is living water, that they must eat His flesh and drink His blood, that He existed before Abraham, not to mention He said that He would destroy the temple and rebuild it in three days.*
- b) *These were puzzling and confusing statements that were difficult to understand. They did not yet have the spiritual capacity to completely grasp these truths. (v. 12) With the completion of*

His work and the coming of the promised Spirit they would understand. Gospel truth would be plain to them. They would see the truth of all His allegories and examples. (v. 13)

Author's note:

From our vantage point we have seen the promise of Jesus to show them plainly the things of the Father come to pass. In light of the writings of the New Testament the spiritual truths of the teachings of Jesus become clear. Over the years in this bible study we've together come to understand many of these truths as well as the wisdom of the allegories and examples. Through the Holy Spirit He gives the believer both the will and the capacity to understand and leads us into all truth.

v. 16:26-27 *At that day ye shall ask in my name: and I say not unto you, that I will pray the Father for you: For the Father himself loveth you, because ye have loved me, and have believed that I came out from God.*

Jesus tells the disciples of the new relationship that they will enjoy with the Father or Godhead. They will pray in harmony with the redemptive truths and doctrines given to them by Jesus Christ. They will approach God on the basis of the finished work of Christ. They will approach God directly and boldly. (Heb. 4:16)

- a) *Jesus soon will no longer pray to the Father for them as a man. He was returning to the Godhead. He would be of one mind and one purpose with the Godhead. Jesus is the one Mediator and intercessor in regards to salvation. (Heb. 7:24-25) His intercession in this capacity coupled with their belief in Him and acceptance of His doctrine gives them the right to make their requests known to God.*
- b) *The idea seems to be the oneness of the Godhead of which Jesus was a part. They could not ask Jesus who would then ask the Father. This would show an inequality in the persons of the Godhead, for the lesser would need to ask and secure a request from the greater. It would also demonstrate a lack of unity in mind and purpose.*
- c) *The fact is, that after His departure, when they approached the Father, they approached the Son. When they approached the Son, they approached the Father. The Holy Spirit within them was also of one mind with the Father and the Son.*

Author's note:

This refutes Roman Catholic doctrine that makes heaven into a kind of Mount Olympus. The Father, Jesus, Mary and a hoard of saints are not of the same mind but can influence one another into taking some specific action. Mary can supposedly get Jesus to answer requests that He did not initially intend to answer. The saints also are kind of like heavenly lobbyists who can exert influence on the policies and will of the Godhead. The whole system denies the omnipotence, perfection and oneness of the Godhead.

v. 16:28. *I came forth from the Father, and am come into the world: again, I leave the world, and go to the Father.*

Jesus attests to His deity and His oneness with the Father. He, of His own will, came out of the Father or Godhead. He was God in the fullest sense but separated himself for a time and for a purpose.

- a) *To accomplish this purpose, He not only separated himself, but also became a man. The creator took on the nature of the creature. He came into the world to minister among men.*
- b) *The allotted time coming to a close, He would now leave the world, by His death, and return to the Father, by His resurrection and ascension. He would again take His rightful position in the Godhead.*
- c) *This is the gospel message in one simple sentence. Jesus came out of the Father and so was God. He took on the nature of man according to the eternal plan to accomplish the purpose of salvation. He would then return taking His rightful place in the heavens.*

v. 16:29-30 His disciples said unto him, Lo, now speakest thou plainly, and speakest no proverb. Now are we sure that thou knowest all things, and needest not that any man should ask thee: by this we believe that thou camest forth from God.

Jesus had told them in verse 25 that the day would come when He would no longer speak in proverbs. He then went on to declare, rather plainly, where He had come from and where He was going. The disciples mistakenly believed that with His last declaration the time had now arrived and at least for the moment believe that they fully understand.

- a) *All this started with Jesus answering a question that the disciples would not ask. (vs. 18-19) The fact that He knew exactly what they were thinking, coupled with His seemingly plain speech, led the disciples to declare their belief that He was from God.*

Author's note:

Surely the disciples experienced far greater signs and wonders than this that pointed to the deity of Jesus. Why this particular demonstration of foreknowledge on the part of Jesus had such a great impact on them we do not know. At any rate, the disciples caught a glimpse of His deity that they had not previously seen and their faith was strengthened. This declaration of faith is confirmed to be true by Jesus in His prayer to the Father. (v. 17:8)

v. 16:31-32 Jesus answered them, Do ye now believe? Behold, the hour cometh, yea, is now come, that ye shall be scattered, every man to his own, and shall leave me alone: and yet I am not alone, because the Father is with me.

Immediately following the disciples' confession of faith Jesus questions them concerning their profession. In view of the fact that Jesus, in chapter 17, confirms their faith to be genuine this is probably a warning to them against overconfidence.

- a) *The disciples were immature in the faith. Many times the strength of their faith was directly related to the last miracle they saw performed. This very profession was the result of a supernatural demonstration to them of the foreknowledge that He possessed.*
- b) *This warning is very similar to the one given to Peter when He boasted of his faith. (vs. 13:37-38) Then it was directed to Peter, while here it is directed to the disciples as a group. In both instances Jesus questions the statement made and then follows it with a prediction.*
- c) *Jesus tells them that they will be scattered, will go back to their own homes and in the process will totally desert Him. He tells them that this will happen soon, because the things that must occur to bring this prediction to a culmination are already in progress.*

[Although not mentioned by John or Matthew (Matt. 26:31), the prediction that they would be scattered was prophesied in the Old Testament scriptures. (Zech. 13:7) The idea implied by their going to their own homes is that there would be no unity between them as to a plan or purpose. Confusion would reign; they would lose hope, abandon the ministry and attempt to go back to their previous lives. (vs. 21:2-3) Were the two disciples on the road to Emmaus on their way home? (Luke 24:13-14)]

- d) John, the writer of this gospel, was the only one present when Jesus died. Jesus would be forsaken by those whom He called His friends. He would get no support and no sympathy from them in His hour of need.*
- e) Jesus found comfort in the Father. (v. 8:29) He knew the nature of men. (vs. 2:24-25) At the climax of His suffering He would feel isolated even from the Father who had always been there. (Mark 15:34)*

v. 16:33 These things I have spoken unto you, that in me ye might have peace. In the world ye shall have tribulation: but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world.

Having just presented them with yet another dire prediction as to their behavior in the hour that would soon come upon them, Jesus closes this discourse with words of comfort and a personal proclamation of victory. They would have peace in Him based on His victory over the world.

- a) Jesus gave them these predictions so that when they came to pass the apostles could find peace in Him. They would know that He held nothing against them but understood their weakness. It would prove to them that He knew beforehand that they would desert Him; nevertheless, He still chose them and called them His friends. In Him they could find relief from any guilt they may experience and be at peace.*
- b) Jesus had already explained to them that they were not of this world. (v. 15:19) He now reminds them that the world will cause them nothing but trouble. They will not only be persecuted physically and mentally but also spiritually. They must fight discouragement and depression as they contend with their flesh. (Eph. 6:11-13)*
- c) They can find peace of mind and persevere only in Jesus. He has overcome the world. He has conquered sin and death. He understands all of their infirmities. They cannot find peace in their own efforts but only in Him can they rejoice and be of good cheer. (1 John 2:1; 1 Cor. 15:55-57)*
- d) In the statement "I have overcome the world" Jesus predicts His victory. He had lived a sinless life but His greatest hour of temptation still lay ahead. He knows that He will stay the course and that all will be accomplished.*

Authors note:

One can imagine Jesus smiling as He ends this somber discourse with the words, "Be of good cheer." If He did, it probably conveyed to the disciples the fact that when all was said and done, everything would work out fine. (Rom. 8:28, 37-39)