

## **FATAL ERROR ON JESUS' TEACHING IN JOHN 14 THROUGH 16**

It is a pleasure and an honor to be asked to be on the Spring lectures this year. My assignment is one of the most intriguing sections in the New Testament, as it relates to the heart of the final discourse our Lord had with His disciples in His last week on earth before His death on the cross. Jesus knew He was going to die and leave the apostles, and they would have great sorrow. He wanted to comfort them and prepare them for His absence, by promising them another Comforter to be with them. Their hearts were doubtless troubled. Some eight (8) times He referred to His leaving, in which there was the constant reminder that He was going to come again (mentioned four times). Sometimes his promise to “come again” had to do with His presence through the Holy Spirit, when He would come at the appointed time. Then, there are instances where Jesus said He would “come again” at the end of time, after He had prepared a place for those who love and obey Him.

The One who would come to them after His ascension is identified as the “Comforter,” who is referred to four (4) times in this section of scripture. The word is used synonymously with two other terms: “the Spirit of truth” (14:17; 15:26, and 16:13), and “the Holy Spirit” (14:26).

### **John 14**

We begin our study by looking at John 14 which introduces the promise of the Comforter He was going to send. This chapter consists **mostly** of the words of Christ, but with three (3) interruptions by some of the disciples. Thus, a conversation began. Jesus obviously was addressing all the apostles in verses 1 through 4. Thomas speaks first with a question about where Jesus was going, and since they did not understand just where that would be. He

had alluded to His ascension to where He was before (6:62), but evidently Thomas did not comprehend it at this point. Since they did not understand where He was going, they certainly did not know the way to get there. They should not have been too concerned, for He had said already that He would return for them at the appropriate time. At any rate, this prompted Jesus to make a statement that has equal application to believers in all ages—that **He** (the “I am”) is the way, the truth, and the life, and He is the **only** way to the Father. He explains very clearly, “No man cometh to the Father but by me”. This is exclusive! There is absolutely no way to the Father through Mohammed, Benny Hinn or any other pretender. It is interesting to note that it was “Thomas” who began this inquiry. He was the last of the apostles to fully be persuaded about the resurrection of Jesus (John 20:19-29). Thomas is thorough and wants all the needed information before his taking any action. Slow to learn, but strong in conviction.

No sooner than Jesus answered Thomas, there was another question—this time from Philip. Philip was from Bethsaida, the home of Andrew and Peter, and was the third man chosen to follow Jesus and to become a disciple. Since Jesus had referred to the Father to Thomas, Philip asked Jesus to “show” them the Father. Surely Philip did not expect a direct visit from God at this point, but wanted evidence of Him. Jesus explained that if they had seen Him (Jesus), they had seen the Father, for the Father was in Jesus, and Jesus was in the Father. He added that **they** would do greater works in the future, and that the Comforter, the Spirit of truth, would come to comfort them after His own departure. He said “At that day ye shall know that I am in my Father, and ye in me, and I in you” (v. 20). The kind of language of being in God and God being

in another, is the kind of language employed by John in his first general epistle, as he uses figurative language to describe the fellowship believers have with the indwelling of deity. In verses 13-15, Jesus alludes to their asking anything in His “name”. This may have been provocative to them, but in chapter 16, before the night is over, He will address the matter further, as to asking in His “name” after He has departed from their midst.

Next, Judas (not Iscariot) asks a question about why Jesus was revealing Himself to them and not to the world (v. 22). Again Jesus spoke of His being loved by His disciples, and He also reiterated the importance of their loving Him and keeping His word (v. 23). This statement begins with the language “If a man”--showing that it has application to everyone, and not just to the apostles. Loving God and one another is reiterated over and over again throughout the New Testament. The apostles were not the only ones asked to love the Lord. He is revealed or fully known when people love Him and “keep” His words. After this, Jesus again refers to His going away and His return to them. This promise obviously alludes to His return in the Spirit, when He comes as a Comforter, when He said, “I will come to you.” (v. 18).

Of special note is what the Lord said in John 14:25-26. Jesus had “spoken” a great deal to the apostles about many matters, and they might be prone to not remember some of these things. So, when the Comforter, or Holy Spirit, would come, He would do two things (only two mentioned at this point): First, He would **teach** them all things. What would be revealed through the apostles would be the final and full revelation of God's will for the gospel age. (2 Tim. 3:16-17; 2 Pet. 1:3; Jude 3). Any “revelation” after the apostles would be too late, and would not be from God (Gal. 1:6-9). Second, the Spirit would **remind**

them of those things they had seen and heard, so as to have an accurate account of them to reveal to the world (John 20:30-31). As bro. McGarvey stated a long time ago:

The word "spoken" of the twenty-fifth verse stands in contrast with the word "teach" of the twenty-sixth. Jesus had uttered the truth, but because the divine plan of salvation through the death, burial, resurrection and ascension of our Lord was yet incomplete, all the words which he had spoken were but dimly understood, since they were related to and founded upon this incompleting plan. When the plan was completed the Holy Spirit would reveal or teach the meaning of the words by bringing them to remembrance after full comprehension of the plan to which they related (665).

Think of Christ's promise of the Spirit to the apostles as a **chain** that can not be broken, that links His promise together. There are four (4) links to the chain that is promised in 14:26 and 16:13: (a) Teach, (b) Remind, (c) Guide, and (d) Reveal. To begin the chain, the promise is to those who heard the words Jesus **taught** them. When the Comforter came, He would **remind** those who heard the words He had previously taught them. He would then **guide** them into all truth, as He would **guide** them in receiving these things (cf 2 Pet. 1:3; 1 Cor. 2:9-13). No one today can even fit into the first link, because they were not with Jesus on earth. Only the apostles fit into any of these links.

## **John 15**

In John 15, Jesus further elaborates on His relationship with the Father as He had expressed carefully in John 14. He does so in this chapter under the figure of the vine and the branches. He explains that the Father is the husbandman, and He (Jesus) is the "vine", and those "in him" are the branches. This applies to everyone in Christ, for He states, "If a man" (v. 6) and any of the disciples in particular (v. 8). Then, over and over again Jesus emphasizes the importance of His love for them, and their love for Him. He also speaks of the enmity between the world and Himself in verses 18-25. This

chapter contains no interruption whatsoever from any of the disciples, though some of them will be asking about their not seeing Him, and later being able to see Him.

The denominational world contends that their denominations are but branches of Christ. Jesus is the true vine that does not bear all sorts of fruit or divisions, but only **oneness** among all believers (John 17). The personal pronouns of this text confirms that the “disciples” are the branches, and not conflicting denominations of men that He did not establish.

### **John 16**

John 16 is the final part of Jesus' discourse before He utters the emotional prayer in John 17, as He prayed for Himself, the immediate disciples (apostles), and all who would ever believe on Him through the **word** that He and the Spirit had left with the apostles. Again Jesus speaks of the persecution the apostles would receive, but they would have that Comforter who would come to them. We know that the “teaching,” “guiding,” “reminding,” and “revealing” of truth was fulfilled in the apostles, and not to all believers for all ages.

Before going further with John 16, we take time to point out the Spirit technically began His work long before there were disciples—even before the birth of Jesus. An angel told Joseph and Mary that the Savior, or Son of God was to be born to Mary, **after** the Holy Spirit would overshadow her, and cause her to conceive and bear the only begotten Son of God. Liberal forces have been at work for a long time (especially in the 20<sup>th</sup> century) to minimize the fact that Jesus is the “only begotten” Son of God, and that He was born of a virgin. Both facts are involved in His incarnation, or appearance on earth as a

man, having been born of woman by the power of God. God became His Father, and Mary was His earthly mother. We see no evidence of Jesus having been “begotten” in heaven prior to coming to earth without a mother. When He was born on earth, He then had both a Father and a mother—at the same time. His presence in heaven was as “the Word” (John 1:1-3). That word “became flesh”, as the Spirit, acting as an agent of God, caused Jesus to begin His earthly life as a babe, Who was born to be a king. While I was a student at Freed-Hardeman College (and long before), one could not have found a faculty member who would deny that Jesus became “the only begotten Son of God” at His birth, but what about now? We know of no evidence that would tell us Jesus was the “Son” in heaven (as God sent His Son, John 3:16). God also sent prophets among the people of old, but they were men that **became** prophets. In John 1, it is said that God sent John to be a forerunner for the Lord, but John was **not** sent from heaven as was Jesus, but was born in the flesh as a man, who would then be used in a special way.

The angel told Mary that she was to “bring forth a son” and He would be “called the Son of the Highest” (Luke 1:31-32); and He would be born to her shall be “called the Son of God” (v. 35). His being “called” such is related to the fact that the Spirit of **God** overshadowed her, making that One to be born **the only begotten of the Father**. See John 1:14, 18; 3:16, 18 and 1 John 4:9 for other references identifying Him as such. Nowhere do we ever read in the scripture where Jesus or anyone else ever stated that Jesus was the son of the Holy Spirit. Always, the distinction between the functions of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, need to be kept in mind. Heb. 1:15-6 identifies Jesus as the Son of God when He came into the world when angels worshiped Him (cf Luke

2:13-14).

Some have maintained that Jesus was “figuratively begotten” when He was raised from the dead, crowned King of Kings, and anointed as High Priest—three (3) separate begettals, even **after** His physical begettal and birth to Mary. If these three occasions are “figurative”, **where** is the “physical” begettal that is **illustrated** in a figurative way in His resurrection, coronation, and ordination as high priest?? The **true** “figurative” begettal after the physical begettal of Jesus by the Spirit, is **our** begettal by the Spirit's word, the gospel, as a part of our being born again into the kingdom of God (John 3:3-7). The use of the prophetic passage of Psalms 2:7 does **not** mean that each time it is quoted with reference to the resurrection (Acts 13), the coronation (Heb.1) and ordination as High Priest (Heb. 5:5-6), that He was “begotten” at each occasion. It simply identifies Him **each time**, as the One who was fulfilling each prophecy, **as** Jesus, Who was “begotten” of God. Each time we use the expression, we are alluding to the incarnation, which involved both the begettal and delivery in birth.

The words “only begotten” are from the compound word *monogenes*, which comes from *monos* and *gennao*. It is claimed that when these two (2) words were formed, that an (n) was left off of *gennao* (using only *genos*) and that makes the new combined word mean “only” or “one and only” or “unique”. Why would this be necessary, for the “only” is found **already** in *mono*? Incidentally, the word *monos* has a letter **left off of it**, but for some stranger reason, those who make their “arguments” about “only begotten”, do not say anything about that. Wonder why!! Then, when we check the Greek on *genos*, we find that it has not changed in meaning at all. It **still** means

“offspring”--referring to one who was begotten and born. The One under (woman without the aid of man). True, Jesus is “unique” as the Son of God, but **why** is He unique? The reason for such is because of His birth. The reason for changing the spelling of *monos* and *gennao* is because of the changing of the “form” of the words. *Gennao* is a **verb**, and *genos* is a **noun**. Changing it from verb form to noun form does not change its meaning—it merely changes from action to completion.

Let me give you an illustration. Suppose I own a 1957 Chevrolet, and decide that I want to “gold plate” the car (verb form). Then, in a hundred years someone sees it and says, “That car is gold-plated” (noun form). You see, a letter (d) has been added, and combined with “gold”. That does not change the meaning, it merely tells the result of my action. Would it not be absurd for one to argue that it is only “unique”? It would be unique, if it were the only car that had ever been “gold-plated”, but it is unique **because** it is gold-plated. Jesus **is** indeed “unique”, but He is such because he was **begotten of the Father**. Let's not take that away from Him.

Now we come back to John 16. We are reminded of ten (10) things that the Spirit would do, as stated in John 14-16. 1<sup>st</sup>, He would abide forever, 14:16. 2<sup>nd</sup>, He would dwell with the apostles, 14:17. 3<sup>rd</sup>, He would teach the apostles, 14:26. 4<sup>th</sup>, He would remind the apostles, 14:26. 5<sup>th</sup>, He would testify of Jesus, 15:26. 6<sup>th</sup>, He would reprove the world, 16:8-11. 7<sup>th</sup>, He would guide, 16:13. 8<sup>th</sup>, He would speak, 16;13. 9<sup>th</sup>, He would foretell, 14:26, and 10<sup>th</sup>, He would glorify Jesus, 16:14. These actions involve the Spirit **and** the apostles **only**. B. W. Johnson, in his commentary on John, stated:

In the three chapters Christ presents the fullest delineation of the work of the Holy Spirit, or Comforter, that is found in the Bible. It will be profitable to recapitulate and



systematize the teaching he presents upon this important and imperfectly understood subject. And, first, I wish to present the fact that while the Fourth gospel has more to say of the Holy Spirit than the three preceding, they are by no means silent upon the subject. Not to enter into a summary of passages that speak of his work Note these items: That Luke declares that the miraculous conception was due to the Holy Spirit; the other Gospels declare that Christ shall baptize in the Holy Spirit; they point out sin against the Holy Spirit as the sin that hath no forgiveness; they allude to the promise of the Holy Spirit, which was fulfilled at Pentecost." (249)

The scholarly work of the Pulpit Commentary agrees with this, stating:

The supernatural energy of the memory of the apostles, and their profound insight, is the basis of the New Testament, and the fulfillment of this promise. (229)  
The whole New Testament, so far as it is apostolic, is here declared to be the work inspired by the Spirit's guidance of the apostles' mind into the truth in all the completeness and in all its parts. (306)

In his book on Bible Questions and Answers, Cecil may states:

In this discourse, going all the way back to John 13, Jesus is with just his apostles and is talking to them. That fact alone would not show that today's disciples are not included in the promise, since Jesus said many things to the apostles that were to be passed on to us. All Bible believers recognize, however, that God did grant special powers to the apostles and prophets and used them to reveal truths to subsequent generations. It should not seem strange that some promises relating to that would be given them. The text itself and its context, not the presuppositions we bring to the text, should determine whether this is a special promise to the apostles or a general promise to all disciples.

Note the parallel promise in the same discourse: "But the Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, he will teach you all things and bring to your remembrance all that I have said to you" (John 14:26). This promise obviously only applies to those who had seen Jesus in the flesh and had personally heard him say things that the Spirit could cause them to remember (258).

Much of the teaching Jesus gave in John 14 through 16, do have meaning for us today, such as His teaching on love, obedience, and prayer. Those things that Jesus addressed to the disciples, when He said "You", undoubtedly belong exclusively to them as apostles. Some things in John 14-16 have an application to believers in every dispensation, as they coincide with other teachings in the New Testament on the same points. However, the promise of the coming of the Spirit in John 14-16 was directly to the apostles. It was fulfilled in their lives with the completed revelation of truth, which means revelation and the promise of Jesus regarding that revelation was fulfilled with the apostolic age. If further revelation and guidance into truths is no more than that which was

revealed by the apostles, then **why** have it? If it more than previously revealed through the inspired apostles, it is too much.

Remember the four link “chain” we talked about earlier in this material. As far as “guiding” is concerned, there are many in the world who think that when they learn something new or discover new truth, that they are being guided by the Spirit. Well, they **are**, if we understand that as we study, there are truths that are there that the Spirit has left with us, and as we search with an open mind, we will be “guided” into all truth. However, the **direct** guidance that some think they have does not exist. All of the Spirit's help is given within the content of the words themselves, as we search the scripture to see what is so (Acts 17:11). David was an inspired man, but even he declared that God's general guidance is through His “counsel.” He stated, “Thou shalt guide me with thy counsel, and afterward receive me to glory.”(Psa. 73:24). The “counsel” is the **word** or **will** of God (Luke 7:29-30). Again, “Through thy precepts I get understanding: therefore I hate every false way.” (Psa. 119:104). Any “understanding” apart from God's precepts is false. Paul said that what he wrote (by inspiration, 2 Pet. 3:15; 2 Tim.3:16-17) in in “words” can be “understood”, where by what one learns, would be equal to Paul's knowledge on the same subject. It is the “word of God” that is alive and powerful” (Heb. 4:12; John 6:63). When Simon and the Samaritans heard the word, they understood and believed and were obedient (Acts 8:12-13). They needed no more “guidance” from the Spirit than what He gave through the preaching of the word.

In connection with the “coming” of the Spirit (to teach, reveal, remind and guide) the apostles into all **truth**, Jesus adds that the Spirit was to “reprove” the **world** of sin, righteousness, and judgment (v. 8). Since Jesus was

going to be with the apostles through the coming Comforter, He would be working through the word of the apostles into which they would be guided. The word “reprove” is from the Greek word *elencho*, and simply means to rebuke or convict. The ASV and NKJ render the word as “convict”. When Nathan went to David, he rebuked him, or convicted him of his sin. The words “rebuke”, “convict” and “reprove” are **all** from this same Greek word. Paul said that it is the “scripture” that provides all that is necessary for “reproof” (2 Tim. 3:16-17), and “reprove” and “rebuke” is to be done “with longsuffering and **doctrine**” (2 Tim. 4:2). In this text, Paul uses two kindred words, “reprove” and “rebuke”, which are kindred words that lays special emphasis to the thing to be accomplished—a correction of life. A good example of convicting is that of Peter's preaching the gospel in Acts 2, as he urged them to “know assuredly” what God had done through Jesus. When they heard these inspired “words” of the apostle, they were “pricked in their hearts”, or convicted of their sins. Then, the word of Peter told them how they could be forgiven—by repenting and being baptized in the name of Jesus Christ (vs. 36-38).

McGarvey writes,

It would be the work of the Holy Spirit to take the truths reflecting Christ, and, using the apostles as mouthpieces (Acts 2:1-37), to convince the world as to these truths. This convincing work was entirely in relation to Christ, the sin of disbelieving him, the righteousness revealed in him, and the power of judgment conferred upon him (673).

When a rebuke or conviction takes place from the Spirit's word, then and only then can we say, “The Lord rebuke thee” (Jude 9). A scriptural rebuke from the Spirit's word is a rebuke from “the Lord.”

In John 14, Jesus told the disciples that He was going away, and would prepare a place for them, and later return. He would return in the presence of the Holy Spirit, and would ultimately come again **for** His disciples. From the

time He would be absent from the disciples, He explained how they could ask of the Father in prayer (16:22-28). He explained His absence with the words “that day”, used in verses 23 and 26. He explained that in “that day”, they were no longer going to be able to ask **Him** anything (as they had prior to His departure) but would need to speak to the Father in His (Jesus') name. Prior to His departure) they had **not** been asking anything in His (Jesus') name. In verse 25, Jesus stated that after His departure), they would have access to “the Father”. “In that day” they were to ask in His “name”, or by His authority. He also stated, that “in that day” **He** (Jesus), would **not** any longer pray the Father for them (v. 26). While Jesus was on earth with the apostles, he could and did pray for the apostles and all who would ever believe on Him (17:5-26), but after His departure they would take their petitions directly **to** the Father, but they can do so by His authority, or “in His name”.

Jesus said in Matt. 7:24, that we are to abide by “His sayings”. In John 16, Jesus is “saying” how disciples are to ask: (1) They are to ask of the Father, (2) They are to ask in the name of Jesus, and (3) They are to not expect Jesus to do the asking for them. Jesus is our “mediator”, and as such He does not take our petitions **to** the Father, but tells us to take them to God for ourselves, and to do so in His name, because He authorizes it. The obvious conclusions are, that we can approach the throne of God in prayer, because Jesus has made it possible. If one goes before royalty or a high authority on a mission or with a request, and he has been delegated by another authority to do so, he can then make known the fact that he was asked or told or authorized to do so, “in the name” of the one who authorized his boldness in approaching him.

Note Paul's language in Eph. 5:20, “Giving thanks always for all things

unto God and the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ.” Then, in Col. 3:17, “And whatsoever ye do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God and the Father by him.” Again, “We give thanks to God always” (1 Thes. 1:2). Sometimes we are asked, “Does this mean that anytime we **do** or **say** what Christ wants us to do or say, that we are to always **say** “in the name of Jesus”. Not necessarily, unless opportunity provides for us to say or do something to glorify God, but in the matter of prayer, we are to ask “in the name”, and approaching deity it is appropriate to honor the One who authorized us to speak to Him. It is always appropriate to **say** such in prayer, not only to approach God, but for the benefit of hearers of the prayer while it is being uttered. When Jesus raised Lazarus from the dead, He **said** some things that did not have to be said, but because of those people who were standing there and listening, He said it for their benefit (John 11:41-42). We should always take into consideration others who may be listening. When we baptize someone, Christ does not give us a formula of words to say, but it is always good and appropriate to say something that is good for the audience and the one being baptized—to hear.

Jesus said, “After this manner pray ye, Our Father which art in heaven....” (Matt. 6:9). The denominational world gets its prayers all mixed up. Some pray to God in the name of God, or to Jesus in the name of Jesus, but Jesus says we are to pray to the Father in His (Jesus') name. Some of the instances in the New Testament where someone addressed Jesus in a conversation during the days of miracles, inspiration and revelation, need not be considered examples of praying to Jesus. The action of Stephen addressing Jesus is often used to justify the practice of our praying to Jesus today. Stephen was full of the Holy

and it was indeed appropriate for Stephen's words. Saul conversed with Jesus on the road to Damascus, and Jesus even told him the next thing to do. Is this too an example of prayer to Jesus, and one of direct answer from deity?? Some of these direct communications between the Lord and special men in the day of miracles and inspiration should not be taken as examples for **our** prayers today.

The words of Jesus in John 14-16 are the heart of His message to the apostles a very short while before He was to be crucified, and not many days before His departure into heaven. Surely His words weighed heavily on their hearts. As John penned these words of the last week of Jesus' life before His death, his heart must have been yearning for the ultimate return of Jesus to take him and all the righteous into everlasting life.

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