

The Upper Room (John 16)

The Sustaining of the Comforter (15.26-16.15)

His Reproof (16.7-11)

v.7: Returning to the theme of His provision for their sorrow and weakness, the Lord explains that His going away was for their blessing. It was in fact 'expedient' or 'profitable' for them. The Lord emphasises the 'truth' of His statement as there was no doubt *error* (due to their Jewish thinking) and *misapprehension* in their minds (due to their sorrow).

How could the Lord's departure be for their benefit?

1. If the Lord did not 'go' (to Calvary and the Father), the Spirit could not come to be *with and indwell* them. This was only possible on the basis of His accomplished redemption and glorification (cf. 7.39). They would not now merely have a Divine person *physically* with them, but a Divine person *spiritually* and *permanently* indwelling them! This is profitable!
Pink: Had Christ remained on earth He had been localised, His bodily presence confined to one place: whereas by the Spirit He is now omnipresent – where two or three disciples are gathered together in His name, there is He in the midst.
2. The Spirit would link them with Christ in *glory*. This would eclipse knowing Him as Messiah on earth. This is profitable!
3. The Spirit would be *another* Comforter in addition to Christ. This is profitable!
4. The Spirit would guide them into all *truth* and show them 'things to come' (16.12-13). This is profitable!

v.8: This verse begins a small section which is much misunderstood. The 'reproving' of the Comforter is not primarily in relation to the *conviction* of a lost sinner, but the **prosecution** of a guilty world. The Comforter was sent 'unto you', i.e. the disciples (v.7), not unto the world. The picture is that of an earthly court scene where God presides as *Judge*. The 'world' is on *trial*, charged with guilt in relation to the rejection and crucifixion of Christ. The *counsel for the prosecution* is the Holy Spirit Himself, who, by His very presence on earth, is the proof that Christ has been rejected here, but is now exalted in heaven at the Father's right hand. **MacDonald:** *The Holy Spirit is here in place of a rejected Christ, and this demonstrates the world's guilt. He is witness to the world's crime.*

The Spirit 'having come' unto the disciples 'reproves' of sin, righteousness and judgment (not 'judgment to come', Acts 24.25). The word 'reprove' means to 'bring demonstration' (**JND**), 'bring to the point of recognising wrongdoing' or 'show someone their sin' (Carson). Others have 'to declare guilty' (**AW Pink**). The word is used in John 8.46 in relation to the Lord Jesus: 'Which of you convinceth me of sin?' Of course there was no-one who could demonstrate any wrong doing in Him; no-one who could declare Him guilty of sin! **Leckie:** *He will bring demonstration to the world (not the individual sinner) of these important truths by indwelling and working through the believer. It is a testimony through the believer to the world.* This is illustrated in Hebrews 11.7 where Noah's acceptance of the word of God by faith, and his subsequent building of the ark, condemned an unbelieving world around him.

vv.9-11: The Holy Spirit ought not to be here at all. The fact He was sent and resides in believers is proof of the world's sin of *unbelief* in relation to the Lord Jesus. The world is guilty because they *rejected* God's Son (Acts 4.26-27). **Hamilton Smith:** *The final and absolute demonstration that the world is under sin is that when God was manifested down here in all His grace, love and mercy, the world rejected God by refusing to believe in His Son.* **v.10:** The presence of the Holy Spirit also testifies to the personal 'righteousness' of the Lord Jesus. The last the world saw of Christ, He was a convicted criminal, crucified in shame. The world had declared Him to be a guilty sinner (cf. Isaiah 53.4; John 19.7); but God has vindicated His Son, raising Him from the dead and highly exalting Him at His own right hand. He has gone to the Father and the world sees Him no longer. The presence of the Spirit on earth thus testifies to His exaltation and personal righteousness. **v.11:** The Spirit also testifies to the impending doom of the devil. Satan may appear to have been victorious at Calvary, but instead, through death, Christ has utterly defeated him (Hebrews 2.14). The fact that the Spirit has been given is proof of Christ's victorious **resurrection** and ascension. The 'prince (ruler) of this world' is therefore already judged (the sentence has been *passed*) and will be condemned (future *execution* of the sentence, Revelation 20). **Gooding:** *Satan's spiritual and moral defeat has sounded his death knell; which in turn warns those who persist in taking his side, that they must one day share his doom.*

Whilst the very presence of the Spirit in believers is the declaration of the world's guilt in respect of these things, yet it is still our **responsibility** to testify the same through the Spirit's power. This is the focus of vv.12-15.

His Revelation (16.12-13)

Leckie notes that the ministry the Lord Jesus had *commenced*, the Spirit *continued* in His absence. For example, Christ is the *truth* (14.6) as is the Spirit (16.13). Christ is the *way* (14.6) and the Spirit guides (16.13). The Son never acted or spoke independently of His Father (5.19; 14.10; 17.8) and neither does the Spirit (15.15; 16.13).

v.12: The Lord had taught the disciples many things, but He was restricted in His teaching because they did not have the capacity to receive it before the coming of the Spirit. Notice that truth is spoken of as a 'burden to bear' (in a positive sense). Thus the Comforter would come alongside to help and strengthen in this regard. May we ever consider the truth we have as a treasure to be enjoyed, protected and passed on to enrich others (2 Timothy 1.13-14).

v.13: 'But' (howbeit) when the Person of the 'Spirit of truth' had come, He would 'guide' and lead them into *all* truth. He is the 'Spirit of truth' as He *communicates* and *teaches* the truth. **Vine:** *Truth is His nature, and this is the guarantee of the character of what He teaches.* 'All truth' is the revelation of the NT writings, especially the epistles. Specifically, it includes 'things to come' (v.13); the glories of Christ, i.e. all truth resulting from His death, resurrection and ascension (v.14) and the whole range of the Father's purposes in relation to Christ (v.15).

The Lord had taught the disciples 'all truth' in embryo form, but the Spirit would fill-out and reveal this truth in full. **McDonald:** *There is a sense in which all truth was committed to the apostles in their lifetime. They, in turn, committed it to writing, and we have it today in our NT. This, added to the OT, completed God's written revelation to man.* There is therefore no new truth to be added to God's complete revelation today. By the time Jude had written, he could describe the faith as having been once and for all delivered (Jude 3). Thus, the Spirit of truth **revealed** to the apostles, whereas He **interprets** to us. The full revelation has already been given.

The Spirit 'guides' into all truth, meaning He *leads the way*. We must follow His leading if we are to enter into the substance of His teaching. This emphasises our responsibility! There must be a yielding on our part, a willingness to be led. **Hamilton Smith:** *The Spirit does not force nor drive us (cf. Rebekah, Genesis 24.58). We often hinder the Holy Spirit by turning aside into some path of our own choosing and thus lose the guiding of the Holy Spirit. The soul's progress into truth may be hindered by unscriptural associations. 'Guiding' into the truth also suggests a gradual progression. Are we progressing in our knowledge and understanding of Scripture?*

The Comforter shall not 'speak **of** (*apo*) Himself', or better '**from** Himself'. The Spirit does, of course, speak **of** Himself quite frequently in the NT, but the thought here is that He does not speak *independently* of the Son (just as Christ did not speak independently of the Father). Whatsoever the Spirit has heard from Christ, He takes and communicates to the apostles. These words we have in the Scriptures. By way of comparison note Revelation 1.1; 2.1, 7.

His Resolve (16.14-15)

vv.14-15: Christ is the subject of the ministry of the Spirit. How the servant must have expounded unto Rebekah the glories and wealth of her future bridegroom (Genesis 24)! As the Son glorified the Father (7.18; 17.4), now the Spirit glorifies the Son. All *Spirit-led* teaching and preaching will conform to this standard – it will ever magnify the Saviour! This was the Spirit's object from the very beginning (cf. Acts 2.33, 36). The Spirit would accomplish this by unfolding and 'announcing' the glories of the person and work of the Lord Jesus ('take of mine'). **Phillips:** *The Lord Jesus had been a living exegesis of the Father; now the Spirit was to be a living exegesis of the Son. All that the Father was had been interpreted by the Son; all that the Son was would be interpreted by the Spirit. The Lord Jesus taught his disciples to think great thoughts about the Father; the Holy Spirit is here to teach us great thoughts about the Son.* Initially, this announcement was given by **direct** divine revelation to the apostles. It is given to us today **indirectly** through the word of God. **v.15:** All that belongs to the Father belongs to the Son, thus the revelation of the glories of a risen Christ, is the revelation of the glories and purposes of the Father. As ever, the Lord Jesus is again seeking the glory of His Father.