

JOHN

Stories Related To The Last Days Of Christ

March 31, 2019

I. Introduction

A. **John 15:26-27** . . . “When the Helper comes, whom I will send to you from the Father, that is the Spirit of truth who proceeds from the Father, He will testify about Me, [27] and you will testify also, because you have been with Me from the beginning.”

B. **John 16:1-11** . . . “These things I have spoken to you so that you may be kept from stumbling. [2] They will make you outcasts from the synagogue, but an hour is coming for everyone who kills you to think that he is offering service to God. [3] These things they will do because they have not known the Father or Me. [4] But these things I have spoken to you, so that when their hour comes, you may remember that I told you of them. These things I did not say to you at the beginning, because I was with you.” [5] But now I am going to Him who sent Me; and none of you asks Me, 'Where are You going?' [6] But because I have said these things to you, sorrow has filled your heart. [7] But I tell you the truth, it is to your advantage that I go away; for if I do not go away, the Helper will not come to you; but if I go, I will send Him to you. [8] And He, when He comes, will convict the world concerning sin and righteousness and judgment; [9] concerning sin, because they do not believe in Me; [10] and concerning righteousness, because I go to the Father and you no longer see Me; [11] and concerning judgment, because the ruler of this world has been judged.

C. Prayer

II. The importance of Jesus in the gospel message, salvation, and godly living

A. **John 15:26-27** . . . “When the Helper comes, whom I will send to you from the Father, that is the Spirit of truth who proceeds from the Father, He will testify about Me, [27] and **you will testify also**, because you have been with Me from the beginning.

1. In the second and third centuries of the Church, the first part of **vs 26** was a source of serious theological debate, division, and even the persecution of Christians by Christians.

a. It is not my intent to make more of this than we ought, but it may be helpful to see some of the struggle Christians have had – in the 2nd and 3rd century especially – trying to understand the origin

of the Holy Spirit, and the relationship between the Holy Spirit and Jesus, and relationship between Jesus and God.

- b. I do want to say that though the doctrine of the Trinity is a human explanation of a mysterious reality that the scriptures do not explain clearly at all, it does give Christians a unifying and reasonable understanding of the relationship between God, Jesus, and the Holy Spirit.
2. The challenges to early Christian theology **begins** with the first four words of **vs 26**, “When the Helper comes.”
 - a. These words imply that the Holy Spirit had not yet been active in the world, but would be in the near future.
 - b. And yet we know from the OT that the Holy Spirit is spoken of as being both present and active – from Genesis onward.
3. The **second** challenge to early church theology and therefore their unity comes from the second part of **vs 26**, which says, “whom **I will send** to you from the Father.” The “I” there obviously refers to Jesus.
 - a. In other words, Jesus is the one sending the HS – and this truth is supported in several other places in the Gospels.
 - b. However, in **John 14:26**, Jesus said, “But the Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the **Father will send** in My name.”
 - c. And in **Luke 11:13**, Jesus said, “If you then, being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your **heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit** to those who ask Him?”
 - d. On the surface, at least, there seems to be a contradiction here, which presented theology problems in the early church.
4. The **third**, and most challenging part of **vs 26** comes from these words, “that is the Spirit of truth who proceeds from the Father.” It is the word “**proceeds**” that brought intense debate, disagreement, division, and even persecution by Christians against Christians.
 - a. You see, the word “proceeds” implies that God created or sent forth the HS much like He created man or send forth angels to do His bidding. This in turn implies the Holy Spirit is less than God.
 - b. Hence, those who drew this conclusion did not hold that the Holy Spirit was God, which in turn led them to conclude that, like the HS, Jesus wasn’t God either.
5. My purpose in talking about this today is only to remind you that our doctrine of the HS, though very functional and reasonable, is but a human explanation of something beyond our human understanding.
 - a. Personally, I have no problem believing that God is God, and that God is Jesus, and that God is the Holy Spirit – all at the same

time. After all, if God is truly God, than He has no limitations, and He can be and do whatever He wills.

- b. What I don't believe has happened yet it that the theologians have provided an explanation of all this in a way that is understandable to our finite understanding **AND** is an accurate description of the relationship between God, Jesus, and the Holy Spirit.
6. Therefore, I believe it is best for us Christians to acknowledge that there are parts of God's word that have been and continue to be a mystery – which we ought to deal with as reasonably as possible while admitting our best explanation is insufficient. In other words, we ought to allow the mysteries surrounding God to remain a mystery without letting them compromise our faith in God and our commitment to live godly here and now.
- B. Moving on, Jesus says, that the Holy Spirit He will testify about Him, and that His disciples – which includes Christians today – will also testify about Him,
1. What I want us to notice here is the importance of Jesus to the gospel message, to having a human example of God, to faith in God, to salvation, and to living a godly life.
 2. Jesus, himself, verifies His importance to these things in **John 14:6**, where He says, “I am the way, and the truth, and the life; no one comes to the Father but through Me.”
 3. Now we know that Jesus is the only God-acceptable sacrifice for sins, that He is our only hope of redemption from the penalty of sin, and that He is the One who frees us from the power and practice of sin.
 - a. But there is more, for Jesus is the human face of God, and the human example of living a life that is pleasing to God.
 - b. And it is for these reasons that the Holy Spirit and the followers of Jesus – like you and me – point to Jesus when evangelizing, when describing what God is like, when talking about how Christians ought to live, and when discipling new believers.
 4. In our own day, one of the ways God verifies the importance of Jesus to the whole of the Christian life is through the visions and dreams He brings – by the Holy Spirit – into the lives of those who have never heard of Jesus, or who are submerged in an Islam controlled cultural where there is no apparent access to an evangelist or the scriptures. From the stories I have personally heard or heard from a third party, these vision and dreams most often are of Jesus coming to them and showing them the reality of God and the way to the true God.

5. For us, as modern day Christians, we can point to the stories about Jesus, to the behavior of Jesus and the ways He interacted with the people around Him, to the attitudes of Jesus, to His compassion for the hurting and needy, and to the teachings of Jesus as a means of showing what God is like, and why He is good, and why He is worthy of our trust, and why we should give Him our allegiance.
 - a. You see, Jesus is the human face of God, and as such, He provides a humanly understandable picture of God.
 - b. Therefore, I encourage you to join the Holy Spirit in pointing to Jesus as you speak to those around you of God.
- C. **John 16:1** . . . “These things I have spoken to you so that you may be kept from stumbling.
1. Being told about something that is coming makes it possible to properly prepare so that when it comes you are able to deal with it in the best way possible.
 - a. For example, being told you will be tested tomorrow evening on today’s teaching makes it possible to properly prepare so that when you take the test you are able to pass it.
 - b. Now we know that tests – and this includes tests at school – can be life effecting.
 - c. However, those people and situations that test our faith in God, or our allegiance and faithfulness to God, are not only life effecting, they are also character effecting, and spiritual growth effecting, and our reputation as a Christian effecting, and possibly even our eternal destiny effecting.
 2. Now in spite of effects of tests on us, not everyone makes good use of foreknowledge. For example, due to laziness or simple negligence, students have failed to properly study for tests they know are coming.
 - a. And though Jesus told Peter a test was coming, it appears his pride kept him from properly preparing so that he failed the test, not only once, but three times.
 - b. And not to pick on Peter, but for the sake of further using him for an example, I do want to remind you that fear is a powerful force that has prompted many Christians to **in some way** deny or hide their faith in God or their relationship to God.
 3. So how does this apply to us today? We have been told, by God in His Holy Scriptures, that temptation will come, that testing and tribulation will come, that we will experience suffering and pain, and that we may even be hated and persecuted for righteous sake,

- a. This is empowering foreknowledge if we will use it to properly prepare now for those times when such things come our way.
 - b. In addition, since the scriptures show us the power of fear to motivate disloyalty to God and ungodly behavior, we can use this foreknowledge to begin – now – working on throwing such fears overboard and replacing them with confident trust in God and allegiance to God so that we do not fail such tests when they come.
4. The important lesson here is that “knowing that something is coming, makes it possible to properly prepare so that when it comes you are able to deal with it in the best way possible.” Therefore, make good use of foreknowledge and proper preparation so that when a test comes, you are prepared to resist the devil, remain faithful to God, and continue living a godly life.

D. **John 16:2-3** . . . They will make you outcasts from the synagogue, but an hour is coming for everyone who kills you to think that he is offering service to God. [3] These things they will do because they have not known the Father or Me.

1. These words warn us of the commitment of human nature to reach even to God for reasons to justify its wayward, self-serving, position-preserving, power-hungry, financially greedy, prideful, unloving, mean, and even vengeful behavior.
2. And these words also warn us of the powerful influence of sin and the world that operates **within** the church – for as Jesus says, there are those who claim to believe in God and to serve God who will persecute and kill those who truly do believe in God, and are humbly serving God, and are living according to the word of God. And these churched people will justify this evil behavior by claiming – and probably even believing – that they are acting on behalf of God, and for the glory of God, and for the preservation of God’s Church.
3. However, even though there are far more unbelievers than believers, and far more enemies of God and the ways of God than friends, and far more who are committed to gaining approval and acceptance for their sin than who are committed to being salt and light in the world,
 - a. Jesus said, “In the world you have tribulation, but take courage; I have overcome the world” (**John 16:33**).
 - b. And John wrote that “greater is He who is in you than he who is in the world,” and “whatever is born of God overcomes the world” (**1 John 4:4; 5:4**).

4. Therefore, if we will prepare now to face the coming challenges to our faith, our allegiance to God, and our commitment to godly living, we can, by the grace and empowerment of God, overcome. We can, by following the example of Jesus, be victorious. We can, by the indwelling and in-working of the HS, pass the test.
- E. Jesus continues on by reinforcing the empowerment of foreknowledge. We read in **John 16:4**, “But these things I have spoken to you, so that when their hour comes, you may remember that I told you of them. These things I did not say to you at the beginning, because I was with you.”
- F. Moving on to **John 16:5-7**, “But now I am going to Him who sent Me; and none of you asks Me, 'Where are You going?' [6] But because I have said these things to you, sorrow has filled your heart. [7] But I tell you the truth, it is to your advantage that I go away; for if I do not go away, the Helper will not come to you; but if I go, I will send Him to you.”
1. Jesus seems to be saying that the coming of the Holy Spirit will be better than His current presence with them. Why? Let me give you two reasons –
 - a. **First**, because Jesus, as a human being, was confined to a specific local whereas the HS is able to be everywhere present all the time.
 - b. **Second**, because Jesus, as a human being, is external whereas the HS is internal. Though Jesus was with His disciples, the HS was going to be in them, just as He is in us – and this is to our advantage because there is never any distance between us and the HS when He is within and we are walking with and by Him.
 2. Jesus goes on to affirm the universal presence of the HS in His next statement about the work of the HS.
- G. **John 16:8-11** . . . And He, when He comes, will convict the world concerning sin and righteousness and judgment; [9] concerning sin, because they do not believe in Me; [10] and concerning righteousness, because I go to the Father and you no longer see Me; [11] and concerning judgment, because the ruler of this world has been judged.
1. The HS convicts the world concerning sin, because they do not believe in Jesus.
 - a. In other words, as long as you don't consider yourself a sinner in need of salvation, you have no reason to believe in the One who died to redeem you or to live according to the One who purchased your salvation.

- b. Though it is not so common, there are those who use the Ten Commandments as their basis for evangelism. Why? Because the Commandments expose our rebellion against God, our breaking the laws of God, and therefore our sinfulness.
 - c. My point here is that the starting point of the HS is the conviction of sin in order to bring the unbeliever to the place of seeing himself as a sinner who now sees his need for a savior. Possibly this should be our starting point or at least a point we get to early on in our evangelism efforts.
2. The HS convicts the world concerning righteousness, because Jesus has gone to the Father and we no longer see Him.
- a. As the perfect human model and mouthpiece of righteousness, Jesus' presence was convicting. But once He left, the HS took over the task of convicting sinners.
 - b. He convicts sinners for not doing what they know is right,
 - c. and for not living up to the standard of love and justice that they expect others to live by,
 - d. and for not living according to the righteousness of God.
3. And the HS convicts the world concerning judgment, because the ruler of this world has been judged.
- a. The stark reality is, the devil is operating in the period of time that is between **having been condemned and sentenced** and **going to prison**.
 - b. Therefore, to side with him is to side with a condemned and soon to be imprisoned leader. Whatever promises he makes, he can only fulfill them until he begins his sentence.
 - c. But worse than that, his promises of good are merely well-crafted deceptions intended to pull you into his eternal damnation and so prevent you from living with God forever.
 - d. Oh that willfully ignorant sinners knew the truth about the path they are traveling. And yet, there is one who is constantly at work trying to bring them to their senses before it is too late.
 - e. I believe our love for God and our concern for the well-being of our neighbor should compel us to join the HS in working for this same outcome.

III. Conclusion

A.