

NT LESSON 24

THIS IS LIFE ETERNAL

(JOHN 16,17)

by Ted L. Gibbons

INTRODUCTION: The Savior knew that the time following his crucifixion would be difficult for his apostles. He seems to be trying to prepare them by his explanations in John 16 and by his prayer in John 17. He was about to leave the kingdom—the mortal vehicle of salvation—in the hands of these twelve men. To them would fall the responsibility of continuing the work he had begun so magnificently. On them would rest the burden of the salvation of men in every nation. From them would come the message of hope that is the gospel of Jesus Christ. Knowing that he had but a few hours left, he gave final instructions and offered a final prayer for them.

If you knew that you had only one more day to spend with your family, how would you use the time? Would you call them together for some final counsel and instruction. Would you pray for them and with them? Would you not appeal to them to carry on in faithfulness in spite of any difficulty that might come? At least in part, this is what the Savior is doing in John 16 and 17.

I. JESUS PROMISES HIS APOSTLES THAT THEY SHALL RECEIVE THE GIFT OF THE HOLY GHOST (John 16)

1 THESE things have I spoken unto you, that ye should not be offended.

2 They shall put you out of the synagogues: yea, the time cometh, that whosoever killeth you will think that he doeth God service.

3 And these things will they do unto you, because they have not known the Father, nor me.

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.

5 But now I go my way to him that sent me; and none of you asketh me, Whither goest thou?

6 But because I have said these things unto you, sorrow hath filled your heart.

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.

8 And when he is come, he will reprove the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment:

9 Of sin, because they believe not on me;

10 Of righteousness, because I go to my Father, and ye see me no more;

11 Of judgment, because the prince of this world is judged.

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

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.

14 He shall glorify me: for he shall receive of mine, and shall shew it unto you.

15 All things that the Father hath are mine: therefore said I, that he shall take of mine, and shall shew it unto you.

Notice the warnings in John 16:

- G [2] They shall put you out of the synagogues
- G [2] Whosoever killeth you will think that he doeth God a service
- G [20] Ye shall weep and lament
- G [20] Ye shall be sorrowful
- G [32] Ye shall be scattered
- G [33] In the world ye shall have tribulation

“Theses things,” the Lord tells them, “I have spoken unto you that ye should not be offended.” (John 16:1) *If you know in advance that these things are coming, then the*

likelihood that they will pull you from the path will be decreased, and your ability to deal with them will be increased.” (See John 16:4)

Why will these things happen to the Twelve? “These things will they do unto you, because they have not know the Father, nor me.” (John 16:3)

Jesus explained that unless he left the Holy Ghost could not come to them

While Jesus ministered among men, the gift [of the Holy Ghost] itself was temporarily withheld; one member of the Godhead dwelling with mortals sufficed. During that period, however, the Holy Ghost frequently spoke to righteous persons, as he did to Peter in the coasts of Caesarea Philippi. Just a few hours before Jesus went to Gethsemane and from there to the cross he told his disciples: "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." (John 16:7.) This promise -- that the constant companionship of the Holy Spirit would be available -- was fulfilled on the day of Pentecost. (Bruce R. McConkie, *A New Witness for the Articles of Faith*, p.280 - p.281)

The importance of the companionship of the Holy Spirit cannot be overemphasized. In John 16:13 Christ promised that when 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.” Earlier the Lord had promised that “the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost . . . shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance.” (John 14:26)

If you are teaching a class, you might involve them in the following activity. If you are teaching yourself, consider doing this on your own. Turn to the Topical Guide heading, **Holy Ghost, Gifts of** or **Holy Ghost, Mission of**. Invite class members to review the material here and to find a verse describing one thing the Holy Ghost can do for a worthy recipient. Let class members share insights and verses with each other. If you are doing this on your own, mark significant blessings that have come and can come to you from this member of the Godhead.

Did you notice the promise in John 16:13 that the Spirit will guide as “in ***all*** truth”? This is reminiscent of the promise in Moroni 10:5. “And by the power of the Holy Ghost, ye may know the truth of all things.” (See also D&C 124:97 and Moses 6:61)

In addition to the promise of the continuing companionship of the Comforter, the Savior makes other wonderful promises to his disciples in this chapter. For example:

- G [7] I will send [the Holy Spirit] unto you
- G [20] Your sorrow shall be turned into joy
- G [22] I will see you again
- G [23] Whatsoever you shall ask the Father in my name, he will give it you
- G [27] The Father himself loveth you, because ye have loved me
- G [33] Be of good cheer, I have overcome the world

II. JESUS FORETELLS HIS DEATH AND RESURRECTION (John 16:16-33)

16 ¶ 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.

17 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?

18 They said therefore, What is this that he saith, A little while? we cannot tell what he saith.

19 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?

20 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.

21 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.

22 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.

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.

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

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.

26 At that day ye shall ask in my name: and I say not unto you, that I will pray the Father for you:

27 For the Father himself loveth you, because ye have loved me, and have believed that I came out from God.

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

29 His disciples said unto him, Lo, now speakest thou plainly, and speakest no proverb.

30 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.

31 Jesus answered them, Do ye now believe?

32 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.

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.

Of all the promises made to the Twelve, the one most heartening and most difficult must have been the promise that they would see him again. But until the time following the resurrection that he appeared to them in small groups and then all together, they did not seem to understand what he was trying to teach them.

But is it not likely that the same promise was made to all of us when we departed from the Father and the Son to embark into mortality: "I will see you again."

III. JESUS OFFERS THE GREAT INTERCESSORY PRAYER (John 17)

1 ¶ THESE words spake Jesus, and lifted up his eyes to heaven, and said, Father, the hour is come; glorify thy Son, that thy Son also may glorify thee:

2 As thou hast given him power over all flesh, that he should give eternal life to as many as thou hast given him.

3 And this is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent.

4 I have glorified thee on the earth: I have finished the work which thou gavest me to do.

5 And now, O Father, glorify thou me with thine own self with the glory which I had with thee before the world was.

6 ¶ I have manifested thy name unto the men which thou gavest me out of the world: thine they were, and thou gavest them me; and they have kept thy word.

7 Now they have known that all things whatsoever thou hast given me are of thee.

8 For I have given unto them the words which thou gavest me; and they have received [them], and have known surely that I came out from thee, and they have believed that thou didst send me.

9 I pray for them: I pray not for the world, but for them which thou hast given me; for they are thine.

10 And all mine are thine, and thine are mine; and I am glorified in them.

11 ¶ And now I am no more in the world, but these are in the world, and I come to thee. Holy Father, keep through thine own name those whom thou hast given me, that they may be one, as we [are].

12 While I was with them in the world, I kept them in thy name: those that thou gavest me I have kept, and none of them is lost, but the son of perdition;

that the scripture might be fulfilled.

13 And now come I to thee; and these things I speak in the world, that they might have my joy fulfilled in themselves.

14 I have given them thy word; and the world hath hated them, because they are not of the world, even as I am not of the world.

15 I pray not that thou shouldest take them out of the world, but that thou shouldest keep them from the evil.

16 They are not of the world, even as I am not of the world.

17 ¶ Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth.

18 As thou hast sent me into the world, even so have I also sent them into the world.

19 And for their sakes I sanctify myself, that they also might be sanctified through the truth.

20 ¶ Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on me through their word;

21 That they all may be one; as thou, Father, [art] in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us: that the world may believe that thou hast sent me.

22 And the glory which thou gavest me I have given them; that they may be one, even as we are one:

23 I in them, and thou in me, that they may be made perfect in one; and that the world may know that thou hast sent me, and hast loved them, as thou hast loved me.

24 ¶ Father, I will that they also, whom thou hast given me, be with me where I am; that they may behold my glory, which thou hast given me: for thou lovedst me before the foundation of the world.

25 O righteous Father, the world hath not known thee: but I have known thee, and these have known that thou hast sent me.

26 And I have declared unto them thy name, and will declare [it]: that the love wherewith thou hast loved me may be in them, and I in them.

The Lord has often said, “What I say unto one, I say unto all.” (see D&C 25:16; 61:18; 82:5, etc.) We may therefor infer that most of the messages of the scriptures are general in nature, applying not only to the listeners, but to the readers down the end of time. But occasionally he speaks of us directly. Such references have become precious to me. For example, in 3 Nephi 12, following those intimate moments when the survivors touched his hands and side and feet, the Savior spoke of us—of me! He said, “Blessed are ye if ye shall give heed unto the words of these twelve whom I have chosen from among you to minister unto you, and to be your servants; and unto them I have given power that they may baptize you with water; and after that ye are baptized with water, behold, I will baptize you with fire and with the Holy Ghost; therefore blessed are ye if ye shall believe in me and be baptized, after that ye have seen me and know that I am. And again, more blessed are *they who shall believe in your words* because that ye shall testify that ye have seen me, and that ye know that I am. Yea, *blessed are they who shall believe in your words*, and come down into the depths of humility and be baptized, for *they shall be visited with fire and with the Holy Ghost, and shall receive a remission of their sins*. (3 Nephi 12:1,2, *emphasis added*)

In Matthew 21, the apostate leaders of the Jewish nation, responded to the Lord’s question about a parable describing them by saying, “He will . . . let out his vineyard to **other husbandmen**” And Jesus confirmed their words. “The kingdom of God shall be taken from you, and given to *a nation bringing forth the fruits thereof*.” (21:41, 43, *emphasis added*)

In John 17 you can find another such moment, sweet beyond words because the Savior does not merely speak of us, he prays for us:

Neither pray I for these alone, but for *them also which shall believe on me through their word*; That they all may be one; as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us: that the world may believe that thou hast sent me. And the glory which thou gavest me I have given them; that they may be one, even as we are one: I in them,

and thou in me, that they may be made perfect in one; and that the world may know that thou hast sent me, and hast loved them, as thou hast loved me. (John 17:20-23, *emphasis added*)

The emphasis on unity—on *oneness*—in this prayer is significant (see John 17:11,21,22). We are to be *one* as the Father and the Son are one. It is impossible to imagine an angry difference of opinion between these two members of the Godhead, is it not? Who can comprehend a heavenly rebuke to the beloved son over anything? As you contemplate the powerful personalities in the Quorum of the Twelve today, can you imagine anger or displays of temper or pettiness in their deliberations? If the Father and the Son have given us such a pattern in their family, should we not strive with all our hearts to emulate it in our families and relationships? This is at least part of the way in which we come to “know” the Father and the Son, by living the kind of lives they live, and by striving to be one as they are one.

CONCLUSION: Reading the book of Acts is a journey through the fulfillment of everything the Savior taught and prayed for in John 16 and 17. The apostles, often rejected, frequently imprisoned, even stoned and killed, were utterly faithful to their divine commission. They taught and testified and suffered and presided, and waited patiently for the fulfillment of the promise that they would see him again, and that he would give unto them eternal life.

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