

The following is a rough transcript, not in its final form and may be updated.

## Promise of More to Come

### John 16:12-15

**Intro:** In John ch2 we studied the story of Jesus changing the water in 6 stone water pots into wine at a wedding in Cana of Galilee. That story concluded with an interesting final line that summarized what Jesus had done rather succinctly. The master of the feast made this comment to the bridegroom: "Every man at the beginning sets out the good wine and when the guests have well drunk, then the inferior. You have kept the good wine until now!" (Jn 2:10).

I only mention this here because this is the exact same scenario we find in our study of ch16. We are drawing near the end of the Lord's final discourse to His disciples. All that follows our text today is a summary and Jesus' High Priestly prayer in ch17. What's so surprising is that, right here at the close of His discourse; Jesus now introduces a completely new and totally unexpected subject which, in a way, is the best of all that He has said so far.

That's saying a whole lot considering all that Jesus has taught them. He's taught them about heaven and what He's going to be doing when He's there. He also taught them how to get there. He then taught them about the kind of works His disciples should be doing. He even promised them that they would do greater works than He did. He also taught them about prayer and promised that whatever His disciples asked in His name He would certainly do.

The greatest lesson Jesus taught during this discussion was concerning the Holy Spirit; *how He would come* after Jesus returned to heaven, how He would be both a Helper to them and an Advocate for them while also abundantly supplying their every need. He taught them that the Holy Spirit would comfort the disciples, teach them and cause them to be spiritually fruitful. Finally, Jesus taught them of the 2-fold ministry of the Holy Spirit. One part consists of the Spirit's ministry in the world convicting it of sin, of righteousness and of judgment. As we saw last time, these 3 things are to be understood by the way they relate to Jesus Christ. Basically, the Spirit convicts the lost world of *sin* so that it might find true *righteousness* in Jesus Christ and escape God's just *judgment* and He does all of this through the

efforts and ministry of the Body of Christ – the church.

The 2<sup>nd</sup> part of the Holy Spirit's ministry is the focus of our text today (12-15). It's the Spirit's ministry to the apostles.

How can this last subject be the best of all? The answer is in the substance of the topic itself: Jesus is promising even more teachings to come (12-13). Although Jesus had taught the disciples what seem to be many significant doctrines, there were still many more things left to be taught. Although Jesus was about to leave them, it would be the work of the Holy Spirit to communicate these further teachings to the disciples.

Does this conflict with Jesus' statement in 15:15? Not at all! There, Jesus was speaking to them in the context of a relationship of friendship as opposed to that of a master and a slave. Jesus had revealed to them all that the Father had made known to Him but, their knowledge and understanding of all Jesus had said to them was not exhaustive, not yet. They still had much to learn and Jesus would disclose all of this subsequent information to them in due time through the ministry of the Holy Spirit.

**12-13-** Even now, I'm afraid we still haven't really hit on the full wonder of Christ's promise. When we read these verses closely, especially in the original language, we find that it's not just that the Holy Spirit was going to teach the disciples in the same sense that He can be said to teach us. He would do that for the disciples too, just as He does for us, but that's not what this text means. The true sense is revealed when we discover that an important word has been left out of vs13 in several versions. It's the word "the," and it comes before "truth." Now we can see that this is not just some "general" idea of truth that the Holy Spirit will be guiding the apostles into, but rather into all the truth: a definite body of material that is centered on Jesus Christ. This is nothing other than the NT. The promise is that the Holy Spirit would be the vehicle of a new revelation through those men specifically commissioned to this ministry.

This would have been startling to the disciples if they actually understood what Jesus was saying here. They were Jews and as Jews, they were well aware of the unique, divine character of the OT. They knew that God Himself had spoken to their forefathers through the prophets at many times and in various ways (Heb 1:1). They knew that the law had come "through Moses" (John 1:17). They believed that the law was "holy, just and good"

(Rom 7:12). This law was in every Jewish synagogue. It was God's greatest gift to Israel. How could there possibly be any further revelation? It would've seemed unnecessary and unbelievable to them yet this is exactly what Jesus was promising.

We must also understand that this was not intended to be a promise of divine inspiration given to all believers in all periods of the church. Some theologians hold that God's revelation of Himself to mankind is a progressive process. There is a sense in which that is true. God has progressively revealed Himself in the writings that make up our Bible. But some take this to mean that the earlier revelations were either imperfect or wrong and thus, there is no end to God's revelation. If taken together, this idea says that Jesus is still imparting truth today and this truth can **modify**, **correct**, or **supercede** the truth previously given. That's not what Jesus is teaching here, nor is it being suggested or even permitted by the text. No, Jesus is teaching that the Holy Spirit would lead the disciples into an *additional* and still definitive new revelation that would forever after be the authoritative standard of doctrine for the church.

Some still argue the fact that many of the great hymns and fantastic musical compositions like Handel's Messiah are evidence of the Holy Spirit's inspiration and there's no discounting that. Even some of the great sermons that have been written and delivered over the centuries reflect the ministry of the Holy Spirit in the lives of the humble servants who preached them. But that still doesn't mean that God's revelation of Himself is ongoing. In fact, it points to the contrary. Even though each example cited above points to the presence and work of the Holy Spirit, they all still draw their substance from the written revelation of God that's already been provided; they never presume to add to it. The written revelation is complete, authoritative and inerrant – these others are not, not even close.

The truth is, as Paul teaches in **I Cor 12**, the Holy Spirit has given a diversity of gifts to the church and that diversity relates to different positions in the church and church history. God gave the apostles their own particular function and gift, it was their job to receive and record this new revelation (**Eph 3:2-5**). Not only that, but this new revelation was to be embodied in words (**I Cor 2:13**). So, in our text, Jesus is pointing to a day in the not too distant future when the Holy Spirit would speak through these apostles just as He had spoken in time past unto the fathers by the prophets. Meaning, there was to be a New Testament, a new chapter in the history of God's

dealings with men.

Our text also tells us about of the nature of this new revelation. It gives the 3 general categories of its content: historical, doctrinal, and prophetic. This pattern is precisely met and completely fulfilled by the New Testament.

1<sup>st</sup>) There's a historical element to the NT (13a). Jesus says of the Holy Spirit, "He will guide you into all [the] truth" meaning, "He will guide you into all the truth concerning Me." The historical element is made even clearer in 14:26. The disciples would most likely forget a lot of things that happened during Jesus' ministry but the Holy Spirit would bring these historical events to their minds. What events? Clearly, the events connected with Jesus' life, death, and resurrection. Do we have that in the NT? Yes, it's the substance of the 4 Gospels and also the Acts of the Apostles.

Christianity begins with a historical revelation. It's what sets Christianity off from all other religions, from mythology and from philosophy. These other belief systems think of religion mainly as a pattern of ideas and think of salvation as learning certain things. But this is not the essence of Christianity. Christianity has ideas (that's true) but the ideas are based upon facts, and these facts are the foundation of our faith and belief.

This historical basis also cuts Christianity off from an evolutionary concept of religion. This concept believes ancient people had primitive ideas of God but then, as they grew in knowledge, their ideas about God grew and their writings about God showed progression. This went on and on up to the NT period and beyond it to the point where today we can drop certain things we consider unworthy of being a true concept of God and add other things we consider to be valuable. Christianity's historical base destroys all that; the basis of the revelation is the historical action of God in history. This centers primarily in the cross of Christ. God did something at the cross. He did not just teach an idea. He did not just show Himself in some vague way. He atoned for sin at the cross; He also revealed His love and showed His judgment. Any understanding of the faith that departs from that historical basis is heresy.

2<sup>nd</sup>) There's also a doctrinal element in the NT (14b). This is indicated by Jesus when he says, again of the Holy Spirit, "He will take what is Mine and declare it to you" or, as in 14:26, "He will teach you all things." Do we have

that in the NT? Yes, we have it in the Epistles, starting with Paul's great letter to the Romans, which unfolds Christian doctrine in its fullest form; moving through all the Epistles that deal with particular problems in theology and church life and ending with the enlightening and encouraging instruction of the pastoral Epistles.

This doctrinal element is also important, because, while it's true that we must stress facts, and it's also true that Christianity differs from all other religions because God has done something in history, still it's not just the fact that God has done this that's important; it's also what the facts mean. So, we say that God was revealed in Jesus. But the significance of this is that God was revealed in very specific ways. Because of Jesus, we know God to be love, justice, compassion, mercy, and many other attributes. Also, we say that Jesus died. True! But that in itself is not significant. All men die. Why did He die? This is where we need teaching. So the Epistles are given to show us why Jesus died and what the full implications of His death are. He died for sin. He died for our sin, in our place. Plus, He died in order that He might call out a people destined to be conformed to His own image and to be with Him forever. The Epistles teach us all these truths as well as other doctrines we need desperately to learn.

3<sup>rd</sup>) There's the prophetic element of the NT (13b) Do we have that in the NT? Yes, we have it scattered throughout the NT various places (Matt 24; 25; Mark 13; Rom 11; 1 Cor 15; etc.), but more particularly in the Book of Revelation.

What will happen when Jesus returns in power at the end of the age? There can be a preoccupation with prophecy that is distracting and debilitating. A person can become so enthralled with what's going to happen in the future that they fail to live for Christ in the present.

The importance of prophecy is that it proves God is still at work in history. He doesn't deal with us in some fixed way so that our slice of history is absolutely identical to those who lived before us and those who'll live after us. No, God does unique things in every stage of history, working with people, unfolding His plan. So, what each person does in their own life is important. Plus, these workings of God are leading up to the day when Jesus will return, when God will gather His own out of the world and show that the Christian faith is the only way that anyone can be personally fulfilled and find true blessing.



The prophetic element of the NT is vastly important, if for no other reason than it was given to us by Jesus through the ministry of the Spirit. While it is very important, we must never slip into the false belief that it's more important than the historical or doctrinal elements. It might be more exciting to some but it can never be more important because the categories of the NT only work in conjunction with each other. You cannot properly do justice to one category if you are ignoring or neglecting the others.

**14-** This verse tells us why this new revelation involving history, doctrine, and prophecy has been given. It's not just that we are told certain doctrines in order that we might know things. Nor are the end times revealed so that we can simply have a private inside track to the meaning of history. These things are taught to us in order that the Lord Jesus Christ might be glorified. The very essence of the Holy Spirit's ministry is Christocentric. He will not draw attention to Himself but to Jesus. He will glorify Christ. It's the things of Jesus that He takes and declares to us.

This truth has bearing in our present age. There are countless worship services going on today, all over this country and all claim to be done in the power and at the direction of the Holy Spirit. A lot of songs will be sung and many sermons given. There will also be quite a bit of extracurricular activities done in the name of the Holy Spirit but how do we know if they really are? How do you know if a "tongue" or a "prophecy" or any spiritual experience for that matter, is of and from the Holy Spirit? You will know they are if they result in a better understanding of and a clearer insight into the person and work of Jesus Christ. These things won't be used to promote an individual or their ministry, they will only be used to promote, lift up and glorify Jesus Christ. If they do anything else, they're false.

What does it look like to be filled with the Holy Spirit? We have a modern concept of this but does it line up with Scripture? **Eph 5:18-22a, 25a, 6:1a, 4a, 5a, 9a** – this is what being filled with the Spirit looks like. It doesn't mean that you're supposed to look like some hyper-spiritual buffoon. No, it means you're supposed to look a lot like Jesus. He is the standard for identifying the filling of the Spirit. Judging by that standard, are you Spirit-filled?

**15-** This shows that there is no division in the Godhead. What the Father has, the Son has. Similarly, the work of the Spirit is never divorced from

Jesus Christ or the Word of God. The teachings of the Holy Spirit will never depart from what the Father and Son have already said. He'll never manufacture a different message.

The teaching of the Spirit through the apostles wasn't any different than the teaching of the Spirit through Jesus. Again, some theologians attempt to contrast the Christianity of Jesus with the Christianity of Paul, claiming that Paul ruined Christianity by making it so theological and complicating the simple message of Jesus. That's hogwash and Jesus says as much right here. The Spirit that communicated the truths found in the Gospels is the same Spirit that inspired the Epistles, Revelation and the history and doctrine found in Acts.

Although the Holy Spirit's ministry of inspiration was unique to the apostles for remembering and recording the life and teachings of Jesus, for explaining and disseminating the specifics of Christian doctrine and for the understanding of God's general plan in reconciling all things in Christ; we should still look to the Spirit for guidance into this truth about Jesus that He has provided. In a way, the Holy Spirit wrote the Bible, so wouldn't He be the best source to go to for clarity and explanation? Of course!

As you study the Bible, pray and ask the Holy Spirit to continue to do the work He began in guiding and inspiring the apostles to write the NT manuscripts. The Holy Spirit, who is the true author of these books, will lead you to see the Lord Jesus Christ in its pages and He will bring you into an increasing obedience of and service to Jesus.

The Spirit desires to enrich us with the treasures of God's truth. The Word of God is a rich mine of gold, silver and precious jewels. What a joy it is to have the spirit illuminate His Word in our hearts and minds. Of course, we don't study the bible to better argue religion or show off our knowledge of spiritual things. We study the Bible to see Jesus, to know God better and to glorify Him in our lives. 😊