

# *THE GOSPEL OF CHRIST*

SPREADING THE SOUL-SAVING MESSAGE OF JESUS

## **JOHN LESSON 7 (Chapters 16-18)**

### **Introduction by narrator accompanied by a cappella singing:**

*THE GOSPEL OF CHRIST.* Spreading the soul-saving message of Jesus. And now, Ben Bailey.

To the Father, Jesus prayed, "Sanctify them by Your truth. Your word is truth" (Jn. 17:17). Welcome to our study of the gospel of John. In today's lesson we are going to be looking at chapters 16-18. In this context, Jesus is preparing His disciples, and no doubt Himself, for His death. The lessons that He gives them are lessons that will help them to remain faithful in the kingdom after His departure so that the Gospel can be spread into all the world.

In John 16:1, Jesus tells His disciples that it is the Word of God that can keep them from stumbling. In a day and age where there are many who are trying to lead people astray, and in a day and age when sin seems to be on every hand, Jesus said that the Word of God is what will keep us from stumbling. In Luke 22:31-32 Jesus said to Peter, "Simon, Simon! Indeed, Satan has asked for you, that he may sift you as wheat. But I have prayed for you, that your faith should not fail." Peter's faith needed to remain sound. Jesus prayed for him, but Peter had to grow in his faith (as 2 Peter 3:18 suggests) in order to be faithful to God and Jesus. The Bible is a preventative for sin. In Psalm 119:9 the question is asked, "How can a young man cleanse his way?" The answer in verse 11 is, "Your word I have hidden in my heart, that I might not sin against You!" If we are trying to do what God says, and if we have good and honest hearts because the Word of God is in our hearts, this will keep us from stumbling because we will know what God wants and does not want from us as His servants. In Psalm 1:1-3 we read,

"Blessed is the man who walks not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor stands in the path of sinners, nor sits in the seat of the scornful; but his delight is in the law of the Lord, and in His law he meditates day and night. He shall be like a tree planted by the rivers of water, that brings forth its fruit in its season, whose leaf also shall not wither; and whatever he does shall prosper."

How we need to have the Word of God in our lives to help us overcome stumbling! The power is in the Word. It is "God's power unto salvation" (Rom. 1:16). Hebrews 4:12 says that the Word of God is "living, powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, "piercing even to the division of soul and spirit, and of joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart." It is what can make us complete (2 Tim. 3:16-17). Initially then, Jesus reminds His disciples that if they want to keep from stumbling and remain faithful, then they needed to stay true to His Word.

In John 16:2 Jesus also told the disciples that there would be times of suffering because they day was going to come when people would put them out of the synagogues, thinking that they were doing God a service in doing that. From that we can learn that sincerity without truth will not profit anyone. Those people thought they were doing God a service by hushing up the naysayers. Yet in reality they were not doing what was right. A person can be sincere, yet be sincerely wrong. In Romans 10:1-2 Paul said that the Israelites possessed "a zeal for God, but not according to knowledge." Yes, they were zealous. And yes, they wanted to do what God wanted them to do. Unfortunately, their zeal was not conjoined

with knowledge. There are people all around the world who are sincere in many things. There are people who are sincere in their religion—so much so that they will strap a bomb on their bodies and blow themselves up. They have sincerity. But do they have truth? Absolutely not! The truth is in Jesus (Eph. 4:26). God's Word is truth, and Jesus is the only way to the truth (Jn. 14:6; 17:17). In Proverbs 14:12 the writer said, "There is a way that seems right to a man, but its end is the way of death." It may be what we think or feel, but until we find it in the Bible, it is not true according to God's Word. Sincerity without truth will not profit anyone anything.

Jesus also reminded His disciples about why He had come to the world. In John 16:8-11 we are told that Jesus came into the world to convict it of sin, righteousness, and judgment to come. That sounds a lot like the sermon Paul preached to Felix in Acts 24:25. He preached a three-point sermon to Felix concerning self-control, righteousness, and the judgment to come. Felix's sin also was included in that. Jesus came to convict us of sin because He is the perfect example. In Romans 3:23 we are told that "all have sinned, and fall short of the glory of God." Romans 3:10 says, "There is none righteous, no, not one"—except the Son of God. All people have sinned. But Jesus, the Son of God, came to Earth and lived a perfect life. He was tempted "in all points as we are, yet without sin" (Heb. 4:15). "He committed no sin, nor was guile or deceit found in His mouth" (1 Pet. 2:2). Because Jesus lived a perfect life, because He was tempted like we are, and because He faced all things that we face, He convicts us of sin by His life and by His teaching. Jesus came to convict the world of righteousness. No one else but Jesus could do that. In 2 Corinthians 5:21 we are told that God "made Christ, who knew no sin, to be sin on our behalf." He is the epitome of righteousness. He is the perfect example of that. He convicts us of sin by His life, which is an example of righteousness. Because of what Jesus did, it should make us want to be righteous. But Jesus also convicts us of the judgment to come. Jesus' teaching concerning the resurrection from the dead, and the fact that He was raised from the dead, ought to affirm in people's minds that there will be a Day of Judgment. Jesus said in John 5:28-29, "All who are in the graves will hear His voice and come forth—those who have done good, to the resurrection of life, and those who have done evil, to the resurrection of condemnation." Romans 14:12 says that we must "all appear before the judgment seat of Christ." In 2 Corinthians 10:3-5 we learn that we will all give an account of the things we have done in the body, whether good or evil. Jesus convicts us of sin, righteousness, and judgment to come.

But Jesus did not just come to convict us of those things. He also gave us the cure to the sin problem. Romans 6:23 says that "the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord." Jesus convicts us of righteousness, and then tells us how to be right with God if we follow His commands. He convicts us of the judgment, but tells us that we can stand with boldness in the Day of Judgment if we have remained faithful to His teaching.

In John 16 the apostles also learned a great truth concerning the truth itself. They were promised that in their lifetimes they would receive "all truth." If what they were promised came true, then we have all truth today. In John 16:13 Jesus said, "However, when He, the Spirit of truth, has come, He will guide you into all truth; for He will not speak on His own authority, but whatever He hears He will speak; and He will tell you things to come." The promise that Jesus made was that the Spirit of truth was going to come. When He came, He would guide the apostle "into all truth." He would not speak of His own authority. Instead, whatever He heard from God, He would speak. Thus, whatever the apostles heard from Him, they were to speak—which meant that they would not be speaking of their own authority either. First we need to ask if the Spirit of truth did come. Absolutely He did. In Acts

2:1-16 we see the Spirit descending upon them. Peter then stood up with the eleven, and they all spoke in unknown languages. They quoted Joel 2:28, and said that they were not drunk with new wine, but that this was what had been prophesied. What had been prophesied? It had been prophesied that God would send His Spirit upon His maidservants and upon His menservants. That happened in Acts 2. It was an event that occurred just as Jesus promised it would. Thus, we can know that if the Holy Spirit did come, He guided the apostles into all truth. We today, then, have all truth. All the truth that we need to possess to get to Heaven was revealed through men in the first century. How do we know that? Jude 3 says that we are to contend earnestly for the faith “which was once for all delivered to the saints.” Was the system of faith that we know as “the truth” (or “the Gospel”) delivered once and for all? Yes, God says it was. Thus, we have that truth in the pages of the Bible. We are told in 2 Peter 1:3 that God’s “divine power has given to us all things that pertain to life and godliness, through the knowledge of Him who called us by glory and virtue.” God has given us everything we need. Isn’t that wonderful to know? Within the pages of the Bible we have everything we need to get to Heaven. Psalm 119:160 tells us that the entirety of God’s Word is truth. Jesus said in John 17:17 that God’s Word is truth. That is important because of John 8:32, where Jesus said, “You shall know the truth, and the truth will make you free.” We have all truth that the apostles were given on the Day of Pentecost, and following through to the end of the first century. They wrote down that truth, which gives us everything we need within the pages of the Bible to live a good life and get to Heaven.

What are some applications of this? If those people in the first century received the faith that was “once for all delivered to the saints,” then there will be no latter-day revelations. When Joseph Smith claimed that in Palmyra, New York, the angel Moroni delivered unto him “another gospel of Jesus Christ,” we can know that he was a liar and that what he said was not true. God had already delivered the faith “once for all.” Hebrews 1:1-2 tells us that “God, who at various times and in various ways spoke in time past to the fathers by the prophets, has in these last days spoken to us by His Son, whom He has appointed heir of all things, through whom also He made the worlds.” We have the truth in the Word of God. Another application is this: not only will there be no latter-day revelations, but the only way we can know that we are right with God is if we follow the Bible. We cannot be sure of our salvation unless we remain true to the Word of God. We must do exactly what God has taught us to do in the Scriptures if we are going to be right with Him.

In John 16:23-24 Jesus also reminds His disciples (and us) that if we are going to have access to God in prayer, it must be done “in the name of Jesus.” Jesus said,

“In that day you will ask Me nothing. Most assuredly, I say to you, whatever you ask the Father in My name He will give you. Until now you have asked nothing in My name. Ask, and you will receive, that your joy may be full.”

To really take advantage of the blessings that God has given us (and especially the privilege of prayer), we must pray properly. One of the things that Jesus clearly specified regarding prayer is that it must be done “in His name”—meaning by His authority (Col. 3:17; Mt. 28:18) and through Him as the Mediator between God and men (1 Tim. 2:5). Does that mean that we pray to Jesus? No. Matthew 6:9 says that we are to pray, “Our Father who art in heaven.” We pray to the Father through the Son. We cannot get our prayers to God by going through anyone except Jesus. This means that we do not pray to departed saints. That is not authorized in the Bible. We surely do not pray through Mary? Where is that found in the Bible? We do not pray through any individual living today. The only way for God to hear our prayer is that we first must be a child of His because prayer is a privilege reserved only to Christians. And, we must make sure that we are living the way God wants us to live.

Prayer is great tool that we possess, and is one way that we can overcome the world. Jesus taught His disciples, "Be of good cheer; I have overcome the world, and you can overcome it, too." Yes, we live in the world, but we can overcome this old sinful world. How can we do that? We can do that because "He who is in us is greater than he who is in the world." We are on God's side, and because of that, God is on our side. We therefore can overcome the world. Philippians 4:13 says that we can do all things "through Christ who strengthens us."

Also, we can overcome the world through our faith. This is the victory that we have over the world, "even our faith" (1 Jn. 5:4). We can overcome the world because we have been taught the Gospel and know how to live (1 Jn. 2:14). We can overcome the world by being faithful unto death (Rev. 2:10). But to overcome the world, we must realize that Jesus is the sole authority in all matters today. We will not overcome the world until we decide to submit to the will of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. In John 17:2 we are told that Jesus has authority over "all flesh." All people who have ever lived, whether they realize it or not, are under the authority of Jesus Christ. Matthew 28:18 tells us that "all authority" has been given to Him "in heaven and on earth." God has that kind of authority, and Jesus has that kind of authority. They created us. And since that is the case, it is only natural that they would have authority over us. We are God's creation. We did not create God; God created us. As His creation, we are under His authority. God said, "Let us make man in Our image." Then God breathed into man the breath of life, and man became a living being (Gen. 1:26; 2:7). God is the Father of our spirits (Heb. 12:9; Zech. 12:1). All people, whether they realize it or not, will one day bow down and honor the name of Jesus (Phil. 2:5-11). We must all appear before the judgment seat of God, at which time books will be opened, and we will honor and glorify God on that day. For some it will be too late. "Now" is when we have the opportunity to obey the Gospel. Thus, we must realize that Jesus has all authority in matters of religion. If Jesus has all authority, how much does that leave for anyone else? How much does that leave for any religious leader? It leaves none. Jesus has all authority, and we have no authority. We must follow His will

Since Jesus has all authority, He is able to give us eternal life if we will follow His teaching. But have you ever wondered what eternal life is? Does eternal life mean that we will simply live forever? That really is not the idea that the New Testament presents. Jesus defined eternal life in John 17:3 when He said, "This is eternal life, that they may know You, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom You have sent." This is so far from what we sometimes think. We think of eternal life as simply "living forever." But that is not all there is to eternal life. Eternal life is having a Father/child relationship with God—by being a child of His. We must know the truth because it is the truth that makes us free. Jesus is "the way, the truth, and the life" (Jn. 14:6). He is the only way to get to the Father. Eternal life is not just living forever. It is being in a right relationship with God through His Son Jesus Christ. Because of that, then yes, we will live with God in eternity.

As Jesus taught His disciples in order to prepare them for His death, one of the things that He clearly said to them in John 17:9-11 was that they would be "in the world," but they could not become "of the world." Jesus told them that He had called them out of the world. He did not want the world to then conform them to its mold. Rather, He wanted them to be transformed by the renewing of their minds (Rom. 12:2). While it is the case that we live every day in this old world, we cannot become a part of it. We cannot allow the world to shape the way we live. Worldliness and godliness are at enmity with each other. In James 4:4 James said, "Adulterers and adulteresses! Do you not know that friendship with the world is enmity with God? Whoever therefore wants to be a friend of the world makes himself an enemy of God." Satan wants us to be friend with the world. But in John 17:15 Jesus

prayed for His disciples so that they would be kept from Satan, so that they would not be a part of the world, and so that they would be unified in their cause.

One of the things that Jesus wants for us today is that we be unified. In John 17:20-21 Jesus said, "I do not pray for these alone, but also for those who will believe in Me through their word; that they all may be one, as You, Father, are in Me, and I in You; that they also may be one in Us, that the world may believe that You sent Me." Jesus wants His followers to be unified and to be one. Look at the religious world around us. Does it look we are "one"? Absolutely not! People have divided over the names of men and the teachings of men. The only way to have true unity is to make up our minds to do what God has said. We must have unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. There is "one body and one Spirit, just as you were called in one hope of your calling" (Eph. 4:4). There is one church. That is how we can be unified. Did Jesus say, "I will build everybody else's churches"? No. He said, "I will build My church" (Mt. 16:18). There is one plan of salvation (Jn. 14:6). Jesus is "the way"—not "the ways." Until men decide to do God's will and get rid of denominationalism, the unity that God wants will never exist. We must make up our minds to do what the Bible says.

In John 18:1-11 we find the betrayal of Jesus by Judas, just as had been prophesied in Zechariah 11. Judas went to the chief priests and scribes, and then went with their soldiers (with swords) to Jesus. Jesus asked them who they wanted. They said, "Jesus." He then said, "I am He. Here I am." Judas had been planning this for a while. According to John 12, Satan had entered Judas' heart. Luke 22 tells us that Satan had taken control of Judas' life. In Mark 14:33 Judas said, "What will you give me if I turn Him over to you?" They offered him thirty pieces of silver. He took the money, put the death kiss on Jesus (Mt. 26:48), and identified Him as the One for Whom they were looking. All of this was according to God's will. But look at Judas' part in this. Of course, Judas later was sorrowful. In Matthew 27:1-9 we see that when he realized that Jesus was going to be put to death because of his actions, he was remorseful. It was good that he was sorry. But what did he do? He went and returned the money. Good for him! He should have done that. What else did he do? Judas then went and hanged himself. He took the wrong action. He was sorrowful, and he gave back the blood money. But then he went, got a rope, hanged himself, and "went to his own place." (Acts 1:15ff.). Judas took the wrong steps. If he had repented, that would have been what God wanted. Instead, Judas hanged himself. As a result, he had no way to repent of his sin—and was lost. Judas was lost because of what he had done. How sad that is. From Judas' example we need to learn that if we are not careful, Satan can enter into our hearts and use us, too.

In John 18 we learn some important truths about the kingdom that Christ established. In verse 33 Pilate asked Jesus, "Are You the King of the Jews?" In verse 36 Jesus answered, "My kingdom is not of this world. If My kingdom were of this world, My servants would fight, so that I should not be delivered to the Jews; but now My kingdom is not from here." Here we learn a great truth about the kingdom of Christ. Christ's kingdom is not limited to a physical location. It is not a rule over some piece of land on Earth. Rather, Christ's kingdom is a spiritual rule and reign in the hearts and lives of men and women today. Every child who is His is the place where Christ's kingdom is to be found. The kingdom is the church. In Matthew 16:18 Jesus said, "I will build My church, and the gates of hades shall not prevail against it." He then told Peter that He would give him "the keys to the kingdom." The church and the kingdom are synonymous. We know that the church came into existence because Acts 2:47 tells us that the Lord "added to the church." The doors of the kingdom were opened in Acts 2. The kingdom (the church) is composed of people. In 1 Corinthians 12:27 we read, "You are the body of Christ, and members individually." Therefore, every person who submits his life to the will of Christ is a part of the kingdom of Christ. The king-

dom is here now. We are not looking for some future kingdom. In Mark 9:1 Jesus said to His disciples, "Assuredly, I say to you that there are some standing here who will not taste death till they see the kingdom of God present with power." In the Book of Acts we saw the kingdom come with power. The Lord added 3,000 people to the kingdom on the Day of Pentecost in Acts 2, and then 4,000 on another day, and 5,000 on another day. The Bible says that the church grew and multiplied. That is the kingdom present "with power."

In John 18:36-37 Jesus taught about the kingdom and the truth, and Pilate asked (likely because he was a skeptic), "What is truth" (vs. 38). Jesus tells us what truth is. Here are some things of which you can be sure when it comes to truth. God is truth (Jn. 3:33; Ps. 31:5). God is the true God. He is the only God. Jesus Himself is the truth. According to Ephesians 4:21, the truth is found in Jesus. He is "the way, the truth, and the life" (Jn. 14:6). The Word of God is absolute truth. Jesus said in John 17:17, "Sanctify them by Your truth. Your word is truth." And, of course, the Holy Spirit is the Spirit of truth (Jn. 16:13).

Now the question is this: Have **you** obeyed the truth? Jesus identified what truth is. The question that we must ask ourselves, and then answer according to the Bible, is whether or not we have harmonized our lives with the truth. Are you sure today that you are a part of the kingdom of Christ? Are you sure you have done what the Bible says to do to become a member of the Lord's church? Think about your salvation and what you did in your salvation experience. Then compare that with these passages.

The Bible says that you must hear God's Word. Romans 10:17 says, "Faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God." To whom did you listen when it came to your salvation? Was it the Word of God? Then you must believe in Jesus. The Bible says that unless we believe, we cannot be saved (Jn. 8:24). Having believed, then you must repent. In Acts 3:19 Peter said, "Repent, and turn again, that your sins may be blotted out." You then have to make the good confession. Romans 10:10 tells us, "With the heart one believes unto righteousness, and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation." And, in order to be saved, you then must be baptized in water for the forgiveness of your sins. Jesus said, "He who believes and is baptized will be saved" (Mk. 16:16). John 3:3-5 that if we are not "born of water and the spirit," then we cannot enter the kingdom of God. The kingdom is important. It is essential for us to be a part of it. How do we get into it? We must be born of water and the spirit. It is through obeying the Word of God by being baptized that we enter the kingdom of God. Think seriously today—based on eternity—about whether you are absolutely sure that you have done what God has told you to do. If not, I plead with you today to get your life right before it is too late. Obey the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

### **Narrator accompanied by a cappella singing:**

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## STUDY QUESTIONS FOR JOHN LESSON 7 (CHAPTERS 16-18)

1. In John 16:1, what reason did Jesus give His disciples for the things He was saying to them?
2. In John 16:1, what warning did Jesus offer Peter and the other apostles?
3. In Psalm 119:11, what did the psalmist say regarding how he avoided sinning against God?
4. According to Romans 1:16, what is God's Word?
5. In John 16:2, what point did Jesus make about those people who would opposed the apostles in their duties after Jesus had left the Earth?
6. What important point is found in Proverbs 14:12?
7. According to John 16:8-11, why did Jesus come to Earth?
8. What does Romans 3:23 tell us about humanity?
9. What does Romans 6:23 tell us about God?
10. According to John 16:13, who was Jesus going to send to the apostles, after His death, to guide them into "all truth"?
11. What prophecy is contained in Joel 2:28, and when was it fulfilled?
12. What did Jesus tell His disciples in John 16:23-24?
13. According to 1 Timothy 2:5, who serves as mediator between God and humans?
14. According to Matthew 28:18, to whom has "all authority" been given?
15. According to John 17:2, over whom does Jesus have "all authority"?
16. What, according to John 17:3, is "eternal life"?
17. What does James 4:4 have to say about trying to be friends with both God and the world?
18. For what did Jesus pray in John 17:21?
19. In John 18:1-11 we see someone betraying Jesus. Who was it?
20. What important teaching about Christ's kingdom is found in John 18:36?
21. According to 1 Corinthians 12:27, who composes Christ's church?
22. What does a person have to do to become a member of Christ's church (or kingdom)?