

It Is to Your Advantage that I Go Away

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Recorded on July 13, 2019

The last night of Christ's physical life was spent with His disciples. He was the very one whom the disciples recognized as the Messiah. At that point they probably believed He was going to overthrow the Roman Empire. He had washed their feet that night, He had introduced the symbols of the blood and the wine, and He began to tell them something that shook them to the core. He told them He was going to leave them; after three and a half years, He said, I'm going to leave you. This was totally unexpected.

Let's go to John 13 and briefly look at this account. After the bread and the wine, Christ has a lot to say to the disciples. We read these scriptures on Passover evening.

John 13:33 *Little children, yet a little while I am with you. Ye shall seek me: and as I said unto the Jews, Whither I go, ye cannot come; so now I say to you. (KJV)*

Let's pause here for a minute and put ourselves in the disciples' shoes. Look at what these eleven men have given up to follow the Messiah. They've walked away from their jobs, they've left families, parents, brothers and sisters, and even wives. They've likely left their communities and any extended family; they have given up just about everything physical a human being could give up, to follow Christ as He went out and preached the gospel. They also gave up their previous belief system. We often don't think about that but they did. They had to, to follow the one whom they believed to be the Messiah. He was being persecuted by the leaders of their previous belief system so they had to give that up. Now after all of this, Christ is sitting privately with them in the upper room and saying, I'm going to leave you. Put yourself in their position. He's also saying, I'm going to leave you and you can't come with Me. Think of what must have been going through their minds when He said that. Look at verse 36.

36) Simon Peter said unto him, Lord, whither goest thou? Jesus answered him, Whither I go, thou canst not follow me now; but thou shalt follow me afterwards. (KJV)

Then in chapter 14, verse 5, Thomas asks the same thing.

John 14:5 *Thomas saith unto him, Lord, we know not whither thou goest; and how can we know the way? (KJV)*

We see that the disciples are now clearly distraught by what Christ just told them, after all they've been through for three and half years. The one they believed to be the Messiah—the one they have given up everything to follow—now tells them that not only is He leaving, but they can't come with Him—what a shock. Now let's go to John 16,

just a few pages over; I'm going to read this out of the New King James. Christ continues talking to the disciples.

John 16:6 *But because I have said these things to you, sorrow has filled your heart. [Understandably.]*

7) Nevertheless I tell you the truth. [Notice this.] It is to your advantage that I go away; (NKJV)

Obviously what is going through their mind is, how on earth can that be? We have Him right here; we have the Messiah in the room with us; how can He say it's going to help us—it's to our advantage that He goes away? Christ explains.

7 continued) ... for if I do not go away, the Helper will not come to you; but if I depart, I will send Him ... (NKJV)

I'm reading out of the New King James. The word "Him" is a Greek pronoun and it can mean, "he", "she" or "it", and we know it should be "it". We see that Christ is saying, it's to your advantage that I go away, and, He implies, maybe someday soon you will understand. So despite spending night and day with Jesus Christ, the Messiah, for the last three and half years, at this juncture the disciples understandably didn't get it—didn't understand what Christ was talking about. That they would be better off with Him leaving them? They would be better off if the Helper—the Holy Spirit—came to them? Somehow they would be better off? How? The Holy Spirit was with them in the presence of Christ and they were going to lose that. They would have to wait another fifty days—for Pentecost—to begin to understand what Christ the Messiah was beginning to try to get across to them. So the question is, for us today (and until researching I never really thought about this), do we really believe that it's best Christ went away? Do we really believe that?

If we could choose between having Christ right here in this room with us—every Sabbath, during the week, talking with Him, watching Him, maybe watching Him perform miracles, and being with us for three or four years—would we prefer that over having God and Christ in us through the Helper, the Holy Spirit? Would we choose, could we choose, to have God's Spirit dwelling in us rather than have the Spirit of God and the presence of Jesus Christ with us physically? With the coming of God's Holy Spirit on Pentecost, which would we choose? Christ in the room with us or God's Holy Spirit in us—which would we pick?

I think we know what we're supposed to say; we're supposed to say we would rather have God in us, Christ in us, by way of the Holy Spirit, instead of with us in person, but in your heart of hearts, it would be awfully nice (wouldn't it?) to have Jesus Christ right here in the room so we could ask Him to tell us what this scripture means or what happened when He saw Satan fall from heaven—tell us about that. Or this prophecy—can You clarify this for us? Sometimes in our heart of hearts we would rather have Christ here than not have the Holy Spirit in us.

What we're going to do today is briefly look at four examples—three from the New Testament and one from the Old Testament—as a reminder of why Christ said what He said to His disciples on the last night of His physical life. These four examples teach us four lessons about this fact, that it's to our advantage that we have the Holy Spirit in us—it's much more profitable—to have the Holy Spirit in us rather than with us in the presence of Jesus Christ. The title of the sermon is:

It Is to Your Advantage that I Go Away

We're going to explore this topic today. Let's look at the first of the New Testament examples:

1. The example of Peter.

It's clear from the scriptures that Peter intellectually knew that Christ was the Son of God—no question about that. He knew it long before he had the Holy Spirit dwelling in him on the day of Pentecost. Let's go to Matthew 16 and begin in verse 13 to see that fact. He, in his mind, knew it—that Christ was the Son of God, that Christ was the Messiah. Matthew 16:13—a very familiar scripture.

Matthew 16:13 *When Jesus came into the coasts of Caesarea Philippi, he asked his disciples, saying, [this is a very pregnant question] Whom do men say that I the Son of man am?*

14) *And they said, Some say that thou art John the Baptist: some, Elias; and others, Jeremias, or one of the prophets.*

15) *He saith unto them [that's not what I'm asking], But whom say ye that I am? (KJV)*

Peter, being impetuous, was the one who generally spoke first.

16) *And Simon Peter answered and said, Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God.*

17) *And Jesus answered and said unto him, Blessed art thou, Simon Barjona: for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven [has revealed it unto you]. (KJV)*

God's Spirit revealed it to Peter; God's Spirit was with Peter at that moment, but God's Spirit was not in Peter at that moment. Peter had tremendous motivation. Peter had very good intentions. The same is true for much of mainstream Christianity. Many of them have good motivations and good intentions but we're going to see that good motivations and good intentions, apart from God's Holy Spirit, don't get you very far.

Let's go to Luke 22, verse 31. Anybody who follows God—and in this case, anybody who was following Jesus Christ at that time—has a big target on his or her back. This shows us that.

Luke 22:31 *And the Lord said, Simon, Simon, behold, Satan hath desired to have you, that he may sift you as wheat:*

And just tear you apart down to the microscopic level,

32) *But I have prayed for thee, that thy faith fail not: and when thou art converted [meaning when you have God's Spirit in you—he didn't at that moment—but when you are converted], strengthen thy brethren.*

33) *And he [Peter] said unto him, Lord, I am ready to go with thee, both into prison, and to death. (KJV)*

For a certainty, Peter was 100 percent sincere when he said that. However, there was a gigantic problem. At that juncture, Peter was relying on his own strength—he did not have God's Spirit in him. He was relying on his own strength—his mental, emotional, physical strength. Shortly after Christ washed Peter's feet, what did Peter do? He got into an argument with the other disciples about who was the greatest. Then that night in the garden of Gethsemane, when Christ was sweating blood, what was Peter doing? He was asleep. After Christ was arrested, Peter attempted to kill Malchus, the high priest's servant, in John 18.

Back then (just as an aside) almost everyone was right-handed. Anybody who came into the Roman army—the legions—who was left-handed was forced to change to right-handed so that the shield was in his left hand and his short sword was in his right hand. People who were left-handed were looked upon with suspicion in the Roman Empire. In Judaism, people who were left-handed were also looked down upon because being on the right hand of God was the favored position; the right arm of God was the favored position and there was much speculation about all of that in Christ's day. There was a lot of pressure to change young children—those who were born left-handed—to right-handed. So Peter was almost certainly right-handed.

It says he chopped off the right ear. So if I'm Peter, with a sword, and Malchus is facing me, his right ear is directly opposite my left ear. So how do you chop off the ear over there if you have the sword over here, in your right hand; the only way you do that is if you aim to cut off his head. This Malchus obviously ducked to one side and the blade came down and took off his ear. The point is, Peter was a fisherman, not a soldier, but this instant shows his intent; he was attempting to take off this man's head. That was the mind of Peter at that time. Then, a short time later, what did he do? He denied Christ three times. He was afraid for his life and he esteemed the opinion of a servant girl more so than Jesus Christ. He wept bitterly, he paid a price for it, he felt horrible, but he did it nonetheless. It gets back to the meaning of Pentecost. If we rely on our own human strength to overcome, even if our intentions are good and pure, we will fail if we rely on ourselves instead of looking to God and Christ, and exercising God's Spirit.

Let's look at what happens now. Look what happens when we don't have God's Spirit or don't exercise God's Spirit. We are progressing through this narrative with Peter. Christ gave the apostles a mission that He wanted them to perform. Let's turn to

John, chapter 20. This is after Christ's resurrection, when He miraculously appears to the disciples.

John 20:19 *Then the same day at evening, being the first day of the week, when the doors were shut where the disciples were assembled for fear of the Jews, came Jesus and stood in the midst, and saith unto them, Peace be unto you. 20) And when he had so said, he shewed unto them his hands and his side. Then were the disciples glad, when they saw the Lord. 21) Then said Jesus to them again, Peace be unto you: as my Father hath sent me, even so send I you. (KJV)*

Christ is saying, I'm going to send you to do a job; you need to understand that. I am here with you, I've been resurrected, and I have a job that I want you to do. Look at Peter's response. Let's go to chapter 21, verse 2.

John 21:2 *There were together Simon Peter, and Thomas called Didymus, and Nathanael of Cana in Galilee, and the sons of Zebedee, and two other of his disciples. 3) [After hearing all of this, what did Peter say?] Simon Peter saith unto them, I go a fishing. They say unto him, We also go with thee. (KJV)*

There's nothing inherently wrong with going fishing—we all have to eat, so it's not a problem in that case. But we get the impression with this scripture that Peter is returning to his former life: The game is over, the jig is up, and I'm going to go fishing. This, despite the fact that Christ had miraculously appeared to them just shortly before. He didn't say have a nice day, He said, I have a job for you to do. We get the impression that it just didn't sink in; Peter was saying, I'm going to return to my previous vocation—fishing. Why did he do that?

Why did he tell the others he was going fishing instead of following the commission? He hadn't been told yet to wait in Jerusalem for the coming of the Holy Spirit—he hadn't been told that yet. The point I'm making is this story of Peter is one that demonstrates that no matter how much passion we have—no matter how much zeal and enthusiasm and fire and willpower we have humanly, even if we are in the direct presence of the Son of God for over three years, the Son of God in the flesh—if we rely on our own strength, on our own might, we're going to fail. It's not going to work—it's just not going to work. That's why Christ said, it is more profitable for you if I leave. It's better for you if I leave. Let's go to Philippians 2:12; this gives us a hint as to why it's more profitable to have God's Spirit in us—the same Spirit obviously that was in Jesus Christ—than to have Christ present in the room, in the building, in proximity to us.

Philippians 2:12 *Wherefore, my beloved, as ye have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence [the very familiar scripture], work out your own salvation with fear and trembling. 13) For it is God which worketh in you [through the Holy Spirit, to do two things] both to will and to do of his good pleasure. (KJV)*

Peter had the desire but he couldn't follow up on it; he couldn't execute it—not at that time. Here, God is telling us that through the power of the Holy Spirit, it works in us to do two things: To have the desire—the will—to do it and at the same time be given the power to follow through and do it. Whatever God wants us to do, whether it's obeying God's commandments, or fulfilling a role that He wants us to fulfill in these end days. If we rely on our own strength, we're going to fail just like Peter did. If we don't rely on our own strength and if we rely on God's Holy Spirit, we have that gift and we use the gift—which Peter did. Peter went on to be a very valuable servant to God and to Christ. If we use that same gift and we exercise that same gift, so will we, as valuable servants to God and Christ. So that's the example of Peter—that's the first one.

2. The example of James.

The half brother to Jesus Christ. We don't know if James was next eldest to Jesus. It could be so and it could be possible that he was one or two years younger than Jesus; the Bible is not clear on that. Let's look at the example of James and what happened to him. Let's go to Mark 6, verse 1.

Mark 6:1 *And he [referring to Christ] went out from thence, and came into his own country; and his disciples follow him. [Notice how He was received in his own country.]*

2) *And when the sabbath day was come, he began to teach in the synagogue: and many hearing him were astonished, saying, From whence hath this man these things? [Where does He get this knowledge?] and what wisdom is this which is given unto him, that even such mighty works are wrought by his hands?*

3) *Is not this the carpenter, the son of Mary, the brother of James, and Joses, and of Judah, and Simon? and are not his sisters here with us? [Notice this.] And they were offended at him.*

4) *But Jesus said unto them, A prophet is not without honour, but in his own country, and among his own kin, and in his own house. (KJV)*

Under the same roof, Christ is saying. Here Christ is apparently telling us, My family doesn't recognize Me as the Messiah. My family doesn't know who I am. They didn't even realize, apparently, that He was someone special, much less the Messiah. We won't turn there but do you remember the story where Joseph and Mary went to Jerusalem for the Passover? They thought Christ was with them in the caravan and it turned out He wasn't. They were upset and worried, and went back to Jerusalem and found Him in the temple. He was twelve years old and He was reasoning with the scribes, reasoning with the experts of the law. These teachers were astonished at His understanding and His answers even though He was only twelve.

The question you have to ask is, why wasn't James astonished? What happened there? James grew up in the same household and saw Him every day. Here these knowledgeable experts of the law were astonished at what Christ knew as a twelve-year-old; why wasn't James astonished—what was going on? We believe Christ died

over thirty-three years of age and that means there were at least twenty-one years after this incident where the scribes were astonished at Him, so James had twenty-one years of being astonished also—potentially being astonished—by what Christ taught, what He said, and the example that He set. James was there and he saw it, but nothing registered. Let's go to Mark, chapter 3, verse 20; I'm going to read this out of the New International Version because I believe this a more accurate translation.

Mark 3:20 *Then Jesus entered a house, and again a crowd gathered [because he was very famous—I think sometimes we diminish how famous He was in that area], so that he and his disciples were not even able to eat.*

21) *When his family heard about this, they went to take charge of him, for they said, "He is out of his mind." (NIV)*

That shows you their opinion of Him, the lack of respect they had for Him, and their lack of understanding about who He was, and James was in agreement with them. Remember, we have to ask the question, were his brothers at the turning of water into wine (in John 2) at the wedding in Cana?—likely so. What about the raising of the woman's daughter from the dead in Matthew 9? They were probably there; they certainly heard about it. How about a widow's son raised to life in Luke 7? Or in John, when five thousand people followed Him and were miraculously fed? The point is that Christ was the talk of the nation. The buzz was tremendous, going from word of mouth through villages and towns, and to Jerusalem and the leaders of the nation. The point is James had to have known about all of these events. He was either there personally or he talked to people who were there personally.

With that in mind, let's go to John 7—I'll read this out of the New King James. After all of this you would think the lightbulb would have come on.

John 7:2 *Now the Jews' Feast of Tabernacles was at hand.*

3) *His brothers therefore said to Him [the way I read this, I think this is a sarcastic comment from his brothers], "Depart from here and go into Judea, that Your disciples also may see the works that You are doing.*

4) *For no one does anything in secret while he himself seeks to be known openly. If You do these things, show Yourself to the world." (NKJV)*

My feeling is this is a sarcastic statement coming from his brothers.

5) *For even His brothers did not believe in Him. (NKJV)*

As much as we would love to be in the presence of Christ, to have Him here after services, breaking bread together, talking with the Son of God in the flesh, to learn, to listen, to watch, the lesson from James is, he watched, he listened, he heard, but what good did it do him? James grew up in the same household as the Messiah. They played games together, they talked together, they slept together, they ate together; he spent thirty years watching the Messiah grow, watching His example, and he was ignorant of the truth—think about that. He was right there in the house and ignorant of

the truth. He did not believe. Let's go to John 16; this is Christ's last night on earth and He is continuing His narrative with His disciples. Christ knows His time is short and He's trying to cram in as much instruction as He thinks is needful and necessary.

John 16:12 *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:...* (KJV)

He's saying there is a Spirit coming, if you will be patient and wait, that will guide you into all the truth; the truth that James was ignorant of and was totally missing at this point. As an aside, the "he" in verse 13 is Strong's #1565, *ekeinos*, and it means *that one*, or *that thing*, or *it*, and we have to remember that the Bible was translated by trinitarians, so there was always an effort to make the Holy Spirit a separate person. We see here that a gift of the Holy Spirit is coming, it is a gift from God; it's not about our eyes, it's not about our ears, it's not about our brain that teaches the truth, it is about God's Spirit that opens our mind, our ears and our brain to the truth. With that in mind let's go to 1 Corinthians 15, breaking in at verse 4. This is talking about Christ of course.

1 Corinthians 15:4 *And that he was buried, and that he rose again the third day according to the scriptures:*

5) *And that he was seen of Cephas, then of the twelve:*

6) *After that, he was seen of above five hundred brethren at once; of whom the greater part remain unto this present [this present time], but some are fallen asleep. [Some have died.]*

7) *After that, [notice this] he was seen of James; then of all the apostles. (KJV)*

Can you imagine being James, after everything we've talked about, and all of a sudden he's sitting somewhere—he may be out in the country, he may be out plowing a field, he may be in a house—and all of a sudden Christ appears. Hi, remember Me? Look at My hands—you want to put your finger here? Look at My side, you want to feel this? Now do you believe, after all this—now do you believe? Once James received the Holy Spirit, he went on to become one of the leading ministers of the New Testament. He became the pastor of the Jerusalem church, and it happened very quickly—that's interesting. Let's begin in Galatians 1:15 and investigate how quickly it happened. Paul is speaking of his conversion but he also mentions James.

Galatians 1:15 *But when it pleased God, who separated me from my mother's womb, and called me by his grace [God's grace],*

16) *To reveal his Son in me, that I might preach him among the heathen; immediately I conferred not with flesh and blood:*

17) *Neither went I up to Jerusalem to them which were apostles before me; but I went into Arabia, and returned again unto Damascus. (KJV)*

This occurred about 35 to 36 A.D., and because we know that he spent three years in the wilderness, he was likely converted around 32 or 33 A.D., so with that in mind, look at verse 18.

18) Then after three years I went up to Jerusalem to see Peter, and abode with him fifteen days.

19) But other of the apostles saw I none, save James the Lord's brother. (KJV)

By verse 19, James is now an apostle. He is only one of two whom Paul confers with. This is only four to five years after Christ's death, so in that time, James goes from being one who doesn't get it, to being an apostle. The Holy Spirit allowed James to finally recognize who his brother was. Can you imagine? We talk about reading over scriptures (as I've read over Acts 3 for decades and didn't get it) but can you imagine growing up with the Messiah in your own house and you don't recognize that fact? How embarrassing would that be? That's exactly what happened to James, but once he received God's Holy Spirit, the lightbulb went on and things progressed quickly—from a disbeliever to an apostle. The same can hold true for each one of us if we have God's Spirit and use God's Spirit.

Let's look at the third example.

3. Thomas.

In John 14, Thomas was the one who asked Jesus Christ where He was going, when Christ told them He had to go away and they couldn't come. Thomas asked Him, where are You going? Let's go to John 20, verse 18. This is after the resurrection of Christ. We'll pick up the account in verse 18. Mary Magdalene now realizes that a resurrection has occurred.

John 20:18 *Mary Magdalene came and told the disciples that she had seen the Lord, and that he had spoken these things unto her. (KJV)*

You can imagine how astonished the disciples were.

19) Then the same day at evening, being the first day of the week, when the doors were shut where the disciples were assembled for fear of the Jews, came Jesus and stood in the midst, and saith unto them, Peace be unto you.

20) And when he had so said, he shewed unto them his hands and his side. Then were the disciples glad, when they saw the Lord. (KJV)

Let's jump to verse 24 and see what Thomas has to say.

24) But Thomas, one of the twelve, called Didymus, was not with them when Jesus came.

25) *The other disciples therefore said unto him, We have seen the Lord. But he said unto them, Except I shall see in his hands the print of the nails, and put my finger into the print of the nails, and thrust my hand into his side, I will not believe.*

Now he's going to get his chance.

26) *And after eight days again his disciples were within, and Thomas with them: then came Jesus, the doors being shut, and stood in the midst, and said, Peace be unto you.*

27) *Then saith he to Thomas, Reach hither thy finger, and behold my hands; and reach hither thy hand, and thrust it into my side: and be not faithless, but believing. (KJV)*

It's your time to believe.

28) *And Thomas answered [the lightbulb came on] and said unto him, My Lord and my God.*

29) *Jesus saith unto him, Thomas, because thou hast seen me, thou hast believed: blessed are they that have not seen, and yet have believed. (KJV)*

Thomas had good intentions. I'm sure he had a willing spirit but he would not believe until Christ was there, and he could put his finger in the wound in His hand, and put his hand in Christ's side. He couldn't believe until he saw. In that sense he lacked faith. At that moment in time, he did not have God's Spirit in him. The point being that with the coming of the Holy Spirit on Pentecost, Thomas being there on that day, Christ's faith—meaning the literal faith that Christ had when He walked the earth—could now be in Thomas through the power of the Holy Spirit, and it can also be in us. Thomas didn't have it at this point. Let's go now to Galatians 2:20; Paul is teaching us something very important about faith and it relates directly to Thomas. The answers are all in the Bible if we just open our eyes, if we just see it, and, of course, we need God's Spirit for that lightbulb to go on.

Galatians 2:20 [Paul is speaking] *I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God ... (KJV)*

He says I live by Christ's faith—not my own, but by Christ's faith.

20 continued) *... who loved me, and gave himself for me. (KJV)*

The Complete Jewish Bible translates the latter half of this verse as: *the Messiah lives in me, and the life I now live in my body, I live by the same trusting faithfulness that the Son of God had.* What Paul is saying is the faith that Christ had, I now have, because I have His Spirit and the Father's Spirit living in me. The Tyndall translation, the Darby, the Common English, the American Standard, all translate the latter part of verse 20 as the King James does, when it says, *I live by the faith of the Son of God.* The NIV, the

NLT, and the New King James erroneously use the word “in”, which changes the meaning of the verse to say, I have faith because I believe “in” the Son of God. The correct understanding of that is, I live by the faith of Christ—it’s not something that we work up, it’s a gift. Remember faith is a gift of the Holy Spirit, a fruit of the Holy Spirit. So we can have the same faith that Christ had when He walked this earth. When Thomas doubted, he didn’t have God’s Spirit in him at that time. Remember the context at the beginning of verse 20, where Paul is saying, Christ lives in me and because Christ lives in me, I can have His faith in me, just as I have the Holy Spirit of God, and Christ in me. Paul is saying, it’s not me—I can’t take any credit—it’s Christ living in me. It’s Christ’s faith, not my faith.

With that in mind let’s go to Revelation 14:12. The King James and the New King James translate this the same.

Revelation 14:12 *Here is the patience of the saints: here are they that keep the commandments of God, and the faith of Jesus. (KJV)*

The faith that Christ had when He walked the earth. That is possible through the Holy Spirit and through God and Christ living in us, dwelling in us—we can have the faith that Thomas lacked and that we all lacked before conversion.

Let’s look at what the faith of Jesus Christ did for Thomas. There are all kinds of legends about the apostles and what they did after they were scattered abroad. There are websites dedicated to various apostles. There’s one dedicated to the legends of Thomas in India, and there are numerous references that Thomas did indeed go to India. Let me read from this website. It says:

The Saint Thomas Christians. At present there are seven million [in India] who refer to themselves this way [as Saint Thomas Christians] because their tradition holds that their ancestors, who all came from the high castes of Hindu society, were converted by the Apostle Thomas, who landed in India in the year 52 A.D. Church tradition tells us that he preached in ancient Babylon, near the Tigris and Euphrates Rivers, where Iraq is today. He traveled to Persia [present-day Iran] and continued to win disciples to the Christian faith. Then he sailed south to Malabar, on the west coast of India, in 52 A.D. He preached, established churches, won to Christ the high-caste Brahmins, as well as others, and when the Portuguese landed in India in the early 1600s, they found a group of Christians there called the Mar Thoma Church, established through the preaching of Thomas a millennium and a half before. Finally, Thomas traveled to the east coast of India, preaching relentlessly; he was killed near Mylapore, about 72 A.D., near present-day Madras. Tradition tells us that he was thrown into a pit, then pierced through with a spear thrown by a Brahmin.

These are legends, but if even part of this is true, despite his early unbelief, Thomas went on to faithfully, loyally serve God and give his life for God. That faith in God came through God and Christ dwelling in him, not through any power of his own. The Holy

Spirit allows the faith of Christ to be in us, something that would not be possible if Christ were here in the room. God's Spirit would be evident to us because it would be manifested in Jesus Christ, but we wouldn't have God's Spirit in us. That's why Christ said, I have to go away. It's better for you if I go away because if I go away, the Comforter—the Holy Spirit—will come and live in you. We'll see another scripture like that before we close.

The fourth one:

4. The example of Ancient Israel.

The question we have to ask is, how would you feel if you saw the presence of God every day of your life? Would that be enough to allow us to overcome ourselves, our human nature, our sins, faults and weaknesses, and all of that—if we could just see God's glory every day of our life? Ancient Israel did. Let's go to Exodus 40:34. We have covered this many times, talking about God and who He was, and what He did in the Old Testament. Let's imagine ourselves as a typical Israelite in those days. How would we react to seeing what is described here, every day of our life?

Exodus 40:34 *Then a cloud covered the tent of the congregation, and the glory of the LORD filled the tabernacle.*

35) *And Moses was not able to enter into the tent of the congregation, because the cloud abode thereon, and the glory of the LORD filled the tabernacle.*

36) *And when the cloud was taken up from over the tabernacle, the children of Israel went onward in all their journeys:*

37) *But if the cloud were not taken up, then they journeyed not till the day that it was taken up.*

38) *For the cloud of the LORD was upon the tabernacle by day, and fire was on it by night, in the sight of all the house of Israel, throughout all their journeys. (KJV)*

Every single day, since coming out of Egypt, they saw the glory of God—every single day, right up until the entrance to the Promised Land. Think about that. When they came to the Promised Land, after seeing all this for forty years, every day, they got to the Promised Land and they were too scared to go in. They had seen this for forty years and now they are scared to go in? God's presence with them, in the form of His glory and the form of the cloud, didn't help them with their courage or their faith nor did it help them do what they should have been doing, because they didn't have the right spirit, they didn't have the right heart. You know where we're going here—Deuteronomy 5:28—Moses is speaking to Israel. Before he dies, he recaps everything that has happened and he sums it up right here. Despite having seen the glory of God every morning, every evening, all the time, for forty years, here is the legacy.

Deuteronomy 5:28 *And the LORD heard the voice of your words [Israel's words], when ye spake unto me; and the LORD said unto me, I have heard the voice of the words of this people, which they have spoken unto thee: they have well said all that they have spoken.*

29) [God laments] *O that there were such a heart in them, that they would fear me, and keep all my commandments always, that it might be well with them, and with their children for ever!* (KJV)

They didn't have the heart because they didn't have God's Spirit in them, even though every day they saw the glory of God. With that in mind, let's go to Ezekiel 36, and we're going to look at a millennial prophecy of a change in Israel. Ezekiel 36:31—we'll read verse 31 and then we'll skip around a little bit. This is a prophecy that will occur in the Millennium, and if you read the context, the subject is the House of Israel.

Ezekiel 36:31 *Then shall ye [the House of Israel] remember your own evil ways ...* (KJV)

If they are now remembering their evil ways, then they have obviously been resurrected.

31 continued) *and your doings that were not good, and shall loathe yourselves ...*

Israel never loathed themselves. Maybe they felt bad when God was angry with them and let evil fall upon them.

31 continued) *... and shall loathe yourselves in your own sight for your iniquities and for your abominations.* (KJV)

This has never happened before. What causes the great change in the heart of Israel? Go back to verse 25.

25) *Then will I sprinkle clean water upon you, and ye shall be clean: from all your filthiness, and from all your idols, will I cleanse you.*

26) *A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you: and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you a heart of flesh.*

27) [Here's the key] *And I will put my spirit within you ...* (KJV)

Not beside you, not at the Tabernacle or above the Tabernacle, or in a cloud. He is saying, I will put My Spirit within you.

27 continued) *... and cause you to walk in my statutes, and ye shall keep my judgments, and do them.* (KJV)

The Holy Spirit and only the Holy Spirit would cause such a change. We know from experience because it's caused the same change in us. To loathe ourselves, to hate ourselves, to look back in our life—and I just grieve: How could I have said that, how could I have done that, how could I have had that attitude? The older I get, the more I think about my past, if I had to live my life all over again, I would do many things differently because I didn't exercise God's Spirit the way I should have. Israel is going to experience the indwelling of the Holy Spirit. It will cause them to loathe themselves. It will cause them to walk in God's statutes, keep His judgments, keep His

commandments, not because they have a gun to their head and are afraid of some plague or some invasion, but because they want to, and because they love God and want to please Him and serve Him. They will long to walk in God's ways. What a day that will be.

Let's summarize now. As much as we would like to see Christ in the flesh—as much as we'd like that—Christ told His disciples (and by extension, us today) that it was to their benefit that He go away. It is so that He and His Father can make their abode, their dwelling, inside us. Today we've seen four examples that show us why that is true, why it's better for us that Christ went away.

We see the example of Peter, that for all his physical willpower and good intentions, he needed God's Spirit to give him the ability to execute his good intentions. What he humanly wanted to do—and he failed miserably—was to serve the Messiah, the Son of the Living God, but because he didn't yet have God's Holy Spirit, he ran away—he failed. The lesson is, the Holy Spirit gives us not only the will to do it but the power to do it—to follow through on our intentions.

Then the example of James: Despite having grown up in the same house as the Messiah, having grown up right beside Him, he couldn't recognize the Messiah until he had the Holy Spirit dwelling in him. He recognized the truth once God's Spirit was in him, and the lesson for us is, if we too want to recognize the truth, we'd better have God's Spirit and we'd better be exercising God's Spirit.

Then we have the example of Thomas. Despite his good intentions and despite all the miracles that he witnessed firsthand, he didn't believe when it mattered most. He didn't believe that Christ was resurrected; he said, I'm going to have to see it with my own eyes; despite what Christ told him all those three and a half years, he said, I'm not going to believe it until I see it. He has been known for 2,000 years as Doubting Thomas. I wouldn't want that legacy on me but he obviously changed, as we read, and history shows that he was a mighty servant of God. The fact is that after receiving the Holy Spirit on Pentecost, the Father and the Son came to dwell in him, and he now had the faith of Jesus Christ—the same faith that Christ had when he walked this earth—and it transformed him from a doubter into a doer, and look what he did. The point for us is, the same can happen for us. Do we lack faith? Faith is a gift from God, and we have to ask for it, and we have to want it.

Then finally the example of Ancient Israel. Despite seeing God's glory every single day for forty years, and being led by Him to the Promised Land, their hearts didn't change one bit because change needed to happen on the inside. They didn't have God's Holy Spirit on the inside. Yet some day they will receive God's Holy Spirit. They will have new hearts, just as we do today, and they will walk in God's ways. They will love God with all their heart and they will obey because they want to. They will obey because they want to please God.

When we look at these examples, we have to marvel and say, look at what is available to us. Look at the power that's available to us. When we say, I can't change—I can't overcome my sins—that is the world's biggest excuse because look what happened to Peter, look what happened to Thomas, look what happened to James. They changed mightily—they changed. The lesson for us is we can be just like them; we can change just like them. Let's be thankful for Christ's words on the last night of His physical life.

Let's go back to John 14. Here is the promise. We have received that promise, and we need to be thankful for that promise and that gift. Christ says,

John 14:15 *If ye love me [big if], keep my commandments.*

16) *And I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he [or rather, it—ekeinos] may abide with you for ever;*

17) *Even the Spirit of truth; whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth [it] not, neither knoweth [it]: but ye know [it]; for [it] dwelleth with you...*

At that moment when these words were spoken, God's Spirit was with them and allowed them to recognize who the Messiah was, and to give up all the things they gave up to follow Him.

17 continued)... *and [here's the key] shall be in you [looking forward to Pentecost].*

18) *I will not leave you comfortless: I will come to you. (KJV)*

The disciples are thinking, how does that work? He's going to leave us and we can't go with Him, but He's going to come back to us; there's confusion in the ranks here.

19) *Yet a little while, and the world seeth me no more; but ye see me: because I live, ye shall live also.*

20) *At that day [Pentecost] ye shall know that I am in my Father, and ye in me, and I in you. (KJV)*

Christ said, We are going to come and make Our abode in you. When Christ told the disciples He had to go away, saying, it's for your benefit, it's to your advantage, they didn't understand. But we can see, if we look back at this whole narrative, going from Ancient Israel on down to the present day, Christ's leaving was indeed to our advantage and to our benefit.

Instead of God and Christ being with us—meaning in the same room with us, talking directly, one to another—Christ and His Father now dwell in us, now make Their abode in us, through the power of the Holy Spirit. How much greater is that? God's Holy Spirit allows us to be like Him. It allows us to think like Him, to act like Him, to speak like Him; it allows us to have God's instincts, God's intuition, God's wisdom, God's insight, because His Spirit is in us—not with us—but in us. The lesson is for us, God's Spirit is a gift that we need to treasure for the rest of our lives, and we need to use that gift every single day.