

Exegesis

Vs. 29-30 – “His disciples said unto him, Lo, now speakest thou plainly, and speakest no proverb. 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.” In vs. 25, the Lord said, “the time cometh when...I shall shew you plainly of the Father,” and he was, of course, referring to the “time” after the resurrection. However, the Eleven thought Jesus was speaking about the present. They seemed to have missed the fact that the Lord said, “the time cometh” (future tense) rather than “has come” (present tense).¹ This was not the first time they would misunderstand the Lord, nor would it be the last (cf. Ac. 1:6).

But, in all fairness, the Eleven did “believe that [Jesus] camest forth from God;” they ought to be commended for this. They likely made this statement of faith in response to Jesus' words in vs. 28.² However, this confession still needs to be improved. It would've been better had the apostles said they believed that “Jesus came from God” and that “he was God.” As things stood, their faith had progressed further than most (cf. 9:16), but it was little better than that of Nicodemus (cf. 3:2). Had the disciples truly understood who Jesus was and what his words meant, they would've reacted differently when the Lord was captured and crucified.³

Vs. 31-32 – “Jesus answered them, Do ye now believe? 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.” Just as he questioned Peter’s resolution (vs. 13:38), Jesus doubted the disciples’ confession.⁴ In fact, rather than framing “Do ye now believe” as a question, it can also be translated as an exclamation (“Now ye believe!”), which makes Jesus’ exasperation even more explicit.⁵

The Lord knew the disciples didn't understand because, just as he foretold of Peter's denial, he predicted being abandoned by the disciples. The Eleven claim to “believe” in Jesus, and yet, according to Jesus, “the hour cometh, yea, is now come, [when they] will be scatter[ed]...and shall leave [him] alone.” Whatever faith the apostles have at this time will soon prove insufficient. Because rather than *stand* with Jesus after he is arrested, they will turn tail and *run*

¹ Klink (2016), p. 700.

² Kruse (2017), p. 390.

³ Morris (1995), p. 631.

⁴ Köstenberger (2008), p. 478.

⁵ Carson (1991), p. 548; Morris (1995), p. 632, notes the repeated use of the term “now” adds emphasis to Jesus’ words.

(cf. Mar. 14:15).⁶ The Eleven will abandon their master, demonstrating that even their faith needs something *more*.

Yet, despite being deserted by his sheep, the Good Shepherd will “not [be] alone, because the Father is with [him].” In 8:29b, Jesus said, “the Father hath not left me alone; for I do always those things that please him.” Jesus’ unity and fellowship with God was absolute.⁷ As such, the Church’s security rests in the faithfulness of God the Son and God the Father, “not on the courage and wit of its first members.”⁸ Our salvation is secure because of God the Father, God the Son, and God the Spirit, not because of Peter, James, and John.

Vs. 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.” The phrase “these things I have spoken unto you” is reminiscent of 16:1, where the Lord predicted that the disciples would be persecuted “to keep [them] from falling away.” Likewise, in vs. 33, Jesus presents a principle that will keep the apostles from losing their faith: in Jesus, they will have “peace,” whereas, in the world, they will have “tribulation.”

Why should this bolster their faith? How could they “be of good cheer,” knowing full well the world will give them trouble? Because despite the tribulation, they will inevitably face, they will also know that the Lord has “overcome the world.” True, the world will oppose the disciple, but make no mistake, it is a contest the world has lost before and will lose again. Why? “because greater is he that is in you, than he that is in the world” (1 Jn. 4:4). Christ has won and the world has lost, and because Christ is in the believer (cf. 15:1-17), the believer shares in Christ’s victory

⁶ There is no contradiction between Jesus’ claim that the disciple “shall be scattered, every man to his own, and shall leave [Jesus] alone” and how, later, John and Peter will witness Jesus’ trial (cf. 18:15) and how John himself will be near the cross (cf. 19:26-27). “The point,” according to Carson (1991), p. 549, “is that all of Jesus’ disciples did flee, and not even the beloved disciple...so identified himself with Jesus as to be arrested and share in his suffering.”

⁷ Even when the Father turns his back on Jesus in Mark 15:34, God was still, in some way, “in Christ...reconciling the world to himself” (2 Cor. 5:19). Thus, ontologically speaking, it is difficult to fully reconcile these two contradictory thoughts. Jesus could not have been entirely separated from God; otherwise, he would’ve ceased to be God during that period of separation. Can part of the Godhead be abandoned and it still be divine? Yet, given the trauma and ridicule he was experiencing while being crucified, the Lord’s cry on the cross must be sincere. To say otherwise ignores the genuine tragedy of the cross and makes Christ’s words little more than a theatrical performance. Though Psalm 22 ends with an expression of trust, Jesus still quotes from the first verse, which expresses abandonment. To say the Lord meant the whole of Psalm 22 ignores the reality of Psalm 22:1 and seems, at least to this writer, to be more speculation than exegesis.

⁸ Morris (1995), p. 632; Carson (1991), p. 549, quoting Dodd, “It is part of the character and genius of the Church that its foundation members were discredited men; it owed its existence not to their faith, courage, or virtue, but to what Christ had done with them; and this they could never forget.”

over this world. As Paul said in Romans 8:37, "We are more than conquerors *through* [emphasis added] him that loved us."

Despite the opposition, through Christ, the believer can be a courageous champion, even in the face of death (cf. 2 Tim. 4:7). Only the reality of Jesus' victory can outshine the genuine threat from the world. Thus, should we fear the world's *tyranny*, may we remember Christ's *triumph*. Though the night may be dark, and the times may be dreary, Jesus' light still shines. Greater is the *peace* that is in Christ than the *tribulation* that is in the world.⁹

⁹ Morris (1995), p. 632, "This statement, spoken as it is in the shadow of the cross, is audacious. The cross would seem to the outsider to be Jesus' total defeat. He sees it as his complete victory over all that the world is and can do to him. He goes to the cross not in fear or in gloom, but as a conqueror."

VIDEO DESCRIPTION

Deep Dive: The Gospel of John | Week 67 | John 16:25-28

SPEAKER: Ben Hyrne, Pastor

Jesus ends the Farewell Discourse with a twofold promise: His followers will have "peace" in him, whereas they will have "tribulation" in the world. And though it might sound like this promise is mixed, it is mostly positive. Yes, the world will be trouble for the Christians, which is cause for some concern; however, the Son of God will, in the face of great opposition, grant his followers an even greater peace. Believers who've internalized this truth have been made courageous, even in the face of certain death (cf. 2 Tim. 4:7).

Only the reality of Jesus' victory can outshine the genuine threat from the world. Thus, should we fear the world's *tyranny*, may we remember Christ's *triumph*. Though the night may be dark, and the times may be dreary, Jesus' light still shines. Greater is the peace that is in Christ than the tribulation that is in the world.

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