

## THE GOSPEL OF JOHN

### *JESUS' PRIVATE MINISTRY, JOHN 13:1-17:26*

#### *INTRODUCTION*

- A. Outline of the *Gospel of John* (1:1-4:42)
1. Prologue (1:1-18)
  2. Preparation for Jesus' ministry (1:19-51)
  3. Jesus' early ministry (2:1-4:54)
  4. Rising opposition to Jesus' ministry (5:1-12:50)
  5. Jesus' private ministry (13:1-17:26)
    - a. Jesus' ministry to His disciples with Judas Present (13:1-30)
    - b. Jesus' ministry to His disciples without Judas (13:31-16:33)
    - c. Jesus' prayer to His Father (17:1-26)
- B. Comments on John 13 -17
- John 13–17 is our Lord's "farewell message" to His beloved disciples, climaxing with His intercessory prayer for them and for us.
  - Edwin Blum, *Chapters 13–17 concentrate on His teachings on that fateful night in which He was arrested. Before the instruction, Jesus washed His disciples' feet and predicted His betrayal.*
  - Charles Swindoll, *As evening fell on the Upper Room, Jesus had many lessons to teach; but before anything else, He would teach them the all-important, noble art of bowing low.*

### *JESUS' MINISTRY TO HIS DISCIPLES WITHOUT JUDAS, JOHN 13:31-16:33*

#### *JESUS' TEACHING ON RELATIONSHIPS, JOHN 15:1-27*

- A. The relationship of believers to the Father and the Son (1-11)
1. The role of the Son and the Father (1), ***"I am the true vine, and my Father is the vinedresser.***
    - a. Related verses
      - 1) Jeremiah 2:21, *Yet I planted you a choice vine, wholly of pure seed. How then have you turned degenerate and become a wild vine?*
      - 2) 1 Corinthians 3:9, *For we are God's fellow workers. You are God's field, God's building.*
    - b. Introductory notes
      - 1) Thomas Constable, *Jesus often used a grapevine to describe the nation of Israel (cf. Matt. 20:1–16; 21:23–41; Mark 12:1–9; Luke 13:6–9; 20:9–16). The Old Testament writers frequently used this plant to describe Israel (Ps. 89:9–16; Isa. 5:1–7; 27:2; Jer. 2:21; 12:10; Ezek. 15:1–8; 17:1–21; 19:10–14; Hos. 10:1–2) ...This is the last of Jesus' "I am" claims in this Gospel. Jesus and His Father occupy different roles in this extended metaphor.*
      - 2) A metaphor is a figure of speech that makes a direct comparison between two unlike things by stating one is the other. It helps describe something more vividly or to explain a complex idea by creating a mental image or connection between two things (Google AI).
      - 3) Kenneth Gangel, *This chapter emphasizes two great truths—our personal relationship with the Lord and our divinely appointed mission to go and bear fruit—fruit that will last.*
      - 4) Leon Morris, *The passage is the Johannine counterpart of the Pauline view of the church as the body of Christ and of believers as "in" Christ. Both are ways of bringing out the vital connection that exists between Christ and his own.*

- 5) Charles Swindoll, *As we examine 15:1–11, four observations will help our interpretation. First, this passage has meaning for believers only. Any nonbeliever trying to apply these truths will become hopelessly confused. Jesus was not describing how one becomes a Christian, but how one lives as a Christian after placing trust in Him. Second, Jesus draws heavily on the metaphor of a vineyard, a powerful symbol with roots running deep into the soil of Israel's history (Ps. 80:8–9; Isa. 5:1–7; Ezek. 15:1–5; Hos. 10:1). No illustration touched the Hebrew soul like the image of a vinedresser and his vineyard. Third, the primary subject of Christ's teaching is abiding, not bearing fruit. At no point in the discourse is the believer commanded to produce fruit. Instead, we are promised that if we abide, fruit will result. Vinedressers encourage healthy growth through a process called "training," in which new branches are lifted up and carefully tied to the horizontal wire of a trellis. Fourth, the illustration Jesus chose would have been familiar to every disciple and virtually all of John's readers, but it is unfamiliar to most of us today. Therefore, we must be careful not to milk every detail for symbolic meaning. Illustrations allow us to see the big picture; that must be our focus here.*

c. Comments

- 1) Thomas Constable, *Israel's failure to produce fruit, and its consequent impending divine judgment, are in view whenever the vine represents Israel in the Old Testament. Because of this identification and emphasis, it is clearly with unfruitful and guilty Israel that Jesus contrasted Himself as the "true" vine. He would produce good fruit as God intended Israel should (cf. Ps. 80:7–9, 14–17). No vine can produce good fruit unless it is good stock and, of course, Jesus' "stock" was God the Father ... No vine will produce good fruit unless someone who is competent cares for it. God the Father cared for His Son.*
- 2) Kenneth Gangel, *The Father owns the garden, Jesus is the vine, and his followers are the branches.*
- 3) Edward Klink, *The qualification "true" is intended to contrast forcefully Jesus with Israel (cf. 10:11). Jesus is the fulfillment of the Israel-vine and the one who completes its mission.*
- 4) Edwin Blum, *Israel was God's choice vine on which he lavished care and attention (Ps. 80:8; Isa. 5:1–7; Jer. 2:2; 6:9; Ezek. 15; 17:5–10; 19:10–14; Hosea 10:1; 14:8). He longed for fruit, but the vine (Israel) became degenerate and produced rotten fruit. Therefore Jesus, as "the true Vine," fulfills what God had intended for Israel. The Father is the Gardener who cultivates and protects the Vine.*
- 5) Warren Wiersbe, *The present Vine is our Lord Jesus Christ, and, of course, the vine includes the branches. He is the "true Vine," that is, "the original of which all other vines are a copy." ... the symbolism of the Vine and branches is similar to that of the Head and the body: we have a living relationship to Christ and belong to Him.*
- 6) Leon Morris, *In a way characteristic of the Fourth Gospel there is an immediate reference to the Father. Father and Son are never regarded as separate entities each going his way regardless of the other. John sees them as at work together. So when he reports that Jesus spoke of himself as the true vine he immediately goes on to the thought that the Father is the "gardener."*
- 7) William Barclay, *Over and over again in the Old Testament, Israel is pictured as the vine or the vineyard of God. 'The vineyard of the Lord of hosts is the house of Israel' (Isaiah 5:7). 'Yet I planted you as a choice vine' is God's message to Israel through Jeremiah (Jeremiah 2:21) ... The vine had actually become the symbol of the nation of Israel. It was the emblem on the coins of the Maccabees ... Jeremiah complains that the nation has turned 'degenerate and become a wild vine'. It is as if Jesus said: 'You think that because you belong to the nation of Israel you are a branch of the true vine of God. But the nation is a degenerate vine, as all your prophets saw. It is I who am the true vine. The fact that you are Jews will not save you. The only thing that can save you is to have an intimate living fellowship with me, for I am the vine of God and you must be branches joined to me.'*
- 8) Charles Swindoll, *God had originally planted Israel in the Promised Land to be a means of revealing His Word to the world and for teaching all nations about His grace. Israel was to flourish as a living example of how obedience bears the fruit of righteousness. Moreover, the Lord promised to bless Israel as the nation's relationship of trust grew stronger. But Israel failed ... By declaring Himself the "true vine," Jesus took the place of Israel, claiming to be the authentic, healthy vineyard the nation failed to become (Isa. 5:1–7). Just as the Father had tended the unproductive vineyard of Israel, so He would tend the flourishing vineyard of the Son.*

2. The role of the Father to the disciples (2), **Every branch in me that does not bear fruit he takes away, and every branch that does bear fruit he prunes, that it may bear more fruit.**
- a. Related verses
- 1) John 15:6, *If anyone does not abide in me he is thrown away like a branch and withers; and the branches are gathered, thrown into the fire, and burned.*
  - 2) Matthew 3:10, *Even now the axe is laid to the root of the trees. Every tree therefore that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire.*
  - 3) Matthew 7:19, *Every tree that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire.*
  - 4) Matthew 15:13, *He answered, "Every plant that my heavenly Father has not planted will be rooted up.*
  - 5) Matthew 13:12, *For to the one who has, more will be given, and he will have an abundance, but from the one who has not, even what he has will be taken away.*
- b. Comments
- 1) Thomas Constable
    - a) *Jesus earlier taught about the mutually indwelling of believers with Himself (14:20). Therefore it seems clear that Jesus was speaking here of genuine believers such as the Eleven, not simply professing believers ... This identification finds support in the illustration itself. Branches (Gr. klema, lit. tendrils) of a vine share the life of the vine ... Jesus taught that some believers in Him do not bear fruit (cf. Luke 8:14). Fruit-bearing is the normal but not the inevitable consequence of having divine life. This is true of grapevines too. Grapevines have branches that bear fruit, but they may also have some branches that presently bear no fruit but are growing stronger so that they will bear fruit in the future. There can be genuine life without fruit in a vine, and there can be in a Christian as well ... a true believer who experiences the inner transforming work of the Spirit at conversion may not necessarily give external evidence of that transformation by his or her character or conduct immediately. It would be very rare for a Christian to resist the Spirit's promptings so consistently and thoroughly that he or she would never bear any fruit, but Jesus allowed for that possibility here ...*
    - b) *What happens to the believer who bears no fruit? The Greek word airo can mean "to take away" or "to lift up." Those who interpret it here as meaning to take away (in judgment), believe that either the believer loses his or her salvation, or the believer loses his or her reward, and possibly even his or her life, or the opportunity to serve the Lord. Those who interpret airo to mean "to lift up," believe that these branches get special attention from the vinedresser so they will bear fruit in the future ... The second alternative seems better, since in the spring, vinedressers both lift up unfruitful branches and prune (or cleanse, Gr. kathairo) fruitful branches of grapevines ... Jesus was teaching that the Father gives special support to believers who are not yet bearing fruit. In viticulture (the cultivation of grapevines), this involves lifting the branch off the ground, so that it will not send secondary roots down into the ground, which would prove counterproductive. Lifting the branch off the ground onto a pole or trellis also enables air to dry the branch and prevent it from getting moldy and becoming diseased and unfruitful ... The Father also prunes (Gr. kathairo) or cuts back the branches that bear fruit so they will produce even more fruit. This apparently corresponds to the disciplining process that God has consistently used to make His people more spiritually productive (Num. 14:22–24; Heb. 12:4–11; et al.). It does not involve removing the believer's life but rather his or her sinful habits, and purifying his or her character and conduct, often through trials (James 1:2–4). No fruit-bearing branch is exempt from this important though sometimes uncomfortable process. The Father's purpose is loving, but the process may be painful.*
  - 2) Charles Swindoll, *I favor the definition "to lift up" for a couple reasons. First, these two verses introduce the illustration in summary fashion, describing the general care of a vinedresser nurturing a vine. Vinedressers are rarely seen cutting off branches during the growing season. Instead, they carry a bundle of strings and pair of pruning shears as they work their way down a row. They carefully lift sagging branches and tie them to the trellis—a procedure called "training." They also strategically snip smaller shoots from branches in order to maximize their yield of fruit, which is called "pruning.*

- 3) John Mitchell, *Some Christians don't bear fruit. What's the matter with them? They need to have the Son shining on them. When a believer is out of fellowship with God and is occupied with the things of the world, he is not bearing fruit. The husbandman must come along and lift the branch, raising it up and bringing the individual believer back into fellowship in order that he or she might bear fruit.*
  - 4) B. F. Westcott, *Increased fruitfulness is the end of discipline, and to this all care is directed.*
  - 5) On translating *takes away* (airo) meaning *lifts up*, James M. Boice states, *This translation makes better sense of the passage in every way, and in addition it is much better theology. First, the emphasis of this opening section of the parable is, quite rightly, upon the care of the vine by the Father. It would be strange, granting this emphasis, if the first thing mentioned is the carrying away of unproductive branches. But it is not at all strange to emphasize that the vinedresser first lifts the branches up so that they may be better exposed to the sun and so the fruit will develop properly.*
  - 6) Leon Morris, *The part of the Father here is decisive. He watches over the vine and takes action like that of a vinedresser to secure fruitfulness. Every fruitless branch he takes away (cf. Matt. 3:10). We should not regard this as a proof that true believers may fall away. It is part of the viticultural picture, and the point could not be made without it. The emphasis is on the bearing of fruit. That is the only reason for growing a vine ... Left to itself a vine will produce a good deal of unproductive growth. For maximum fruitfulness extensive pruning is essential. This is a suggestive figure for the Christian life. The fruit of Christian service is never the result of allowing the natural energies and inclinations to run riot ... The action of the Father is such as to cleanse his people so that they will live fruitful lives. The "fruit" is not defined here, but we need not doubt that qualities of Christian character are in mind as elsewhere in the New Testament (Matt. 3:8; 7:20; Rom. 6:22; Gal. 5:22; Eph. 5:9; Phil. 1:11, etc.).*
3. The proper relationship of the disciples to the Son (3-5)
- a. Be connected (3), ***Already you are clean because of the word that I have spoken to you.***
    - 1) Related verses
      - a) John 13:10, *Jesus said to him, "The one who has bathed does not need to wash, except for his feet, but is completely clean. And you are clean, but not every one of you."*
      - b) John 17:17, *Sanctify them in the truth; your word is truth.*
    - 2) Comments
      - a) Thomas Constable, *Jesus assured His disciples that they were indeed already clean. The Father's treatment of them was not to make them clean. Jesus again used the figure for possessing eternal life that He had used earlier when He had washed these disciples' feet (13:10). Divine care and discipline follow the granting of eternal life. Jesus did not want the Eleven to conclude, as many people do, that the absence of fruit or the presence of difficulties indicates the absence of salvation.*
      - b) Kenneth Gangel, *The disciples, however, needed neither cutting off nor trimming clean (a nice handling of the Greek word by the NIV) because they had already been cleansed by the Lord's word. One thing is clear at the outset of the chapter: this is not a passage on salvation, a topic John covered in earlier chapters. Here he dealt with requirements for a fruitful life on the part of believers.*
      - c) Leon Morris, *The disciples are not to think that they are being singled out for criticism. They are already clean on account of Jesus' word (i.e., his whole message) spoken to them. He is not reproaching them, but encouraging them. He is pointing out the way in which they may continue to progress spiritually.*
      - d) William Hendriksen, *Already you are clean because of the word which I have spoken to you. By faith (3:16; 12:37; Acts 10:43; Rom. 3:22) in the word (3:54; 5:47; 12:48; Acts 2:41) of Christ, the eleven had become clean (see on 13:10), that is, had been justified (Rom. 5:1). This grace they had received already. The process of gradual cleansing (sanctification) would be continued.*
      - e) Edward Klink, *Jesus is declaring that the disciples are already "in" him and are already branches in the vine ... Jesus explains that this has already happened "because of the word which I have spoken to you" ... Jesus is the Word, and his work has been to make God known (1:18). This has been done for his disciples. Here, then, they are simply encouraged to understand their relationship to and identity in him and, as the next verses will make clear, to "remain" in him.*

- f) Charles Swindoll, *The Lord reassured the disciples that they had already been pruned. The adjective translated “clean” is based on the same verb for “prune” in verse 2.*
  - g) Grant Osborne, *He has been developing them spiritually throughout his ministry, and they have been slowly learning to be fruitful. This might specifically refer to his teaching at the Last Supper (13:10, “you are clean”), finalizing the process of the previous months. The main point, however, is the necessity of Jesus’ teaching (and for us, the word of God as a whole) in producing spiritual growth. We must help those in our churches and ministries to “crave pure spiritual milk” of the word (1 Pet 2:2).*
  - h) F. F. Bruce, *It may be implied that his word is the means used by the Father to perform his work of pruning.*
- b. Abide in Jesus (4-5), ***Abide in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit by itself, unless it abides in the vine, neither can you, unless you abide in me. 5 I am the vine; you are the branches. Whoever abides in me and I in him, he it is that bears much fruit, for apart from me you can do nothing.***
- 1) Related verses
    - a) 1John 2:6, *whoever says he abides in him ought to walk in the same way in which he walked.*
    - b) Romans 6:5, *For if we have been united with him in a death like his, we shall certainly be united with him in a resurrection like his.*
    - c) John 15:16, *You did not choose me, but I chose you and appointed you that you should go and bear fruit and that your fruit should abide, so that whatever you ask the Father in my name, he may give it to you.*
    - d) Colossians 1:10, *so as to walk in a manner worthy of the Lord, fully pleasing to him: bearing fruit in every good work and increasing in the knowledge of God;*
  - 2) Comments
    - a) *Abide can refer to saving faith as found in John 6:56, Whoever feeds on my flesh and drinks my blood abides in me, and I in him. It is found in this verse to mean to continuing fellowship by the believer to his Savior.*
    - b) Thomas Constable, *It is natural, though not inevitable, that a branch that has vital connection with the vine bear some fruit. The way to bear much fruit is for the branch to maintain unhindered fellowship with the vine, by allowing the vine to have its way with the branch. The alternative would be resisting the Holy Spirit’s work by neglecting and disobeying God ... the verb abide (Gr. meinate) is an imperative, and the possibilities surrounding this verse indicate that not abiding is a real possibility for a believer. Jesus, on the other hand, would always abide in the believer by His Spirit, even if the believer did not abide in Him (14:17; cf. 2 Tim. 2:12–13).*
    - c) Charles Spurgeon, *If I were asked what is the sweetest frame within the whole compass of human feeling, I should not speak of a sense of power in prayer, or abundant revelation, or rapturous joys, or conquest of evil spirits; but I should mention, as the most exquisite delight of my being, a condition of conscious dependence upon God” ... Dependence upon God is the flowing fountain of success.*
    - d) Zane Hodges, *How strange that in our day and time we have been told so often that fruitlessness is a sure sign that a person is unsaved. Certainly we did not get this idea from the Bible. Rather, the Bible teaches that unfruitfulness in a believer is a sure sign that one is no longer moving forward, no longer growing in Christ. It is a sign that the Christian is spiritually sick, and until well again, cannot enjoy spiritual success.*
    - e) Warren Wiersbe, *This abiding relationship is natural to the branch and the vine, but it must be cultivated in the Christian life. It is not automatic. Abiding in Christ demands worship, meditation on God’s Word, prayer, sacrifice, and service—but what a joyful experience it is! Once you have begun to cultivate this deeper communion with Christ, you have no desire to return to the shallow life of the careless Christian.*
    - f) Kenneth Gangel, *In my view, John 15 is not a passage on evangelism and the fruit does not describe new believers. This passage probably deals with discipleship and fruit describes godly behavior.*

- g) Leon Morris, *Those who so abide in Christ and have Christ abiding in them keep on bearing fruit in quantity. The verse concludes with an emphatic declaration of human helplessness apart from Christ. In isolation from him no spiritual achievement is possible. For the complementary truth compare "I can do everything through him who gives me strength" (Phil. 4:13).*
- h) William Hendriksen, *It is certainly true that once a man is truly saved, he remains saved forever; yet, God does not keep a man on the way of salvation without exertion, diligence, and watchfulness on man's part. And the strength thus to persevere in the faith is ever from God, from him alone! ... To expect that fruit-bearing would be possible for the man who does not remain in Christ is even more foolish than to expect that a branch that has been severed from the vine can bring forth grapes!*
- i) George Beasley-Murray, *The application of the figure is clear: to "remain" in Christ is to become fruitful, but "without me you can do nothing." The statement echoes that of Jesus' relating to his own dependence on his Father and his helplessness without him (5:19, 30); the utterance is even more plainly applicable to the believer in relation to the Redeemer: apart from Christ "nothing," in Christ "much fruit."*
- j) Edward Klink, *This command serves to introduce the primary category by which the Christian relates and communes with God. This is the foundational manner of Christian existence; this is the nature of salvation. It is what the church has long described and defined by several theological terms, perhaps primarily "union with Christ."*
- k) William Barclay, *The secret of the life of Jesus was his contact with God; again and again he withdrew into a solitary place to meet him. We must keep contact with Jesus. We cannot do that unless we deliberately take steps to do it. To take but one example—to pray in the morning, even if it is for only a few moments, is to have an antiseptic for the whole day; for we cannot come out of the presence of Christ to touch the evil things. For a few of us, abiding in Christ will be a mystical experience which is beyond words to express. For most of us, it will mean a constant contact with him. It will mean arranging life, arranging prayer, arranging silence in such a way that there is never a day when we give ourselves a chance to forget him.*
- l) Charles Swindoll, *Christians often assume that producing fruit is their responsibility, something they must do in gratitude for what Christ has done for them. They strive to produce fruit only to fail, pick themselves up, promise to do better, try again, and then continue this wretched cycle of failure. Jesus instructed His followers to focus their attention on abiding rather than production.*
- m) Grant Osborne, *We are responsible to live entirely in union with Jesus and in dependence on his presence. Branches have life only to the extent to which they are attached to the vine, and fruitfulness stems only from the life-giving sap provided by the vine. All this illustrates the fact that the extent to which we rely on ourselves and our resources is the extent to which we will fail. So we must dwell entirely in Christ and the Spirit. As both Paul (Eph 2:8–10) and James (2:14–26) firmly state, works cannot produce faith, but faith must produce works. We are responsible to draw sustenance and life from our union with the vine, Jesus.*

4. The result of not abiding in the Son (6), ***If anyone does not abide in me he is thrown away like a branch and withers; and the branches are gathered, thrown into the fire, and burned.***

- a. Related verse, John 15:2, *Every branch in me that does not bear fruit he takes away, and every branch that does bear fruit he prunes, that it may bear more fruit.*
- b. Comments
  - 1) Thomas Constable, *Jesus appears to have been continuing to speak of abiding in the sense of believers remaining close to Himself. The "anyone" in the context would be any believer. Therefore what He said applies to believers, not unbelievers ... Jesus was speaking, in this context, of abiding and non-abiding believing disciples ... The point of the verse is that branches with other serious problems, not just non-fruit-bearing branches (v. 2), also experience pruning ... What happens to these branches? Jesus said the vinedresser disposes of them. This has led some interpreters to conclude that they lose their salvation and go to hell, especially since He mentioned burning in fire ... Pruning may involve premature death, or some other form of divine discipline, but certainly not loss of salvation, and perhaps not even loss of reward ... All interpreters believe that Jesus mentioned this pruning in order to encourage His disciples to abide in Him. If they did they would bear much fruit.*

- 2) Everett Harrison, *Since the subject is the bearing of fruit and not eternal life, the burning is a judgment upon fruitlessness, not an abandonment to eternal destruction.*
  - 3) J. Vernon McGee, *I know many who have been set aside today because they were no longer effective for God.*
  - 4) Warren Wiersbe, *Many Christians pray that God will make them more fruitful, but they do not enjoy the pruning process that follows! ... The greatest judgment God could bring to a believer would be to let him alone, let him have his own way. Because God loves us, He “prunes” us and encourages us to bear more fruit for His glory. If the branches could speak, they would confess that the pruning process hurts; but they would also rejoice that they will be able to produce more and better fruit ... Your Heavenly Father is never nearer to you than when He is pruning you. Sometimes He cuts away the dead wood that might cause trouble; but often He cuts off the living tissue that is robbing you of spiritual vigor. Pruning does not simply mean spiritual surgery that removes what is bad. It can also mean cutting away the good and the better so that we might enjoy the best. Yes, pruning hurts, but it also helps. We may not enjoy it, but we need it ... How does the Father prune us? Sometimes He simply uses the Word to convict and cleanse us. (The word translated “purge” in John 15:2 is the same as “clean” in John 13:10. See Eph. 5:26–27.) Sometimes He must chasten us (Heb. 12:1–11). At the time, it hurts when He removes something precious from us; but as the “spiritual crop” is produced, we see that the Father knew what He was doing ... Jesus was teaching one main truth—the fruitful life of the believer—and we must not press the details too much. Just as an unfruitful branch is useless, so an unfruitful believer is useless; and both must be dealt with. It is a tragic thing for a once-fruitful believer to backslide and lose his privilege of fellowship and service.*
  - 5) Charles Swindoll, *The interpretation of John 15:6 can cause heated debate among believers. Some have suggested that those who “do not abide in Me” are believers who have been unfaithful and have lost their salvation, that the Vinedresser decides they should be cut off and thrown away. But Jesus said that no one can be saved and then unsaved (10:27–29). Others suggest that the nonabiding branches represent those who never genuinely believed—people who reject Jesus outright or who merely profess to believe. Jesus’ illustration, however, applies only to believers. We know this because John 15:2 speaks of every branch “in Me,” which presumes that a relationship exists, and because 15:3 specifies Jesus’ audience as those who are “already clean” ... We cannot produce fruit on our own. If, however, we abide in Christ, we will accomplish our created purpose and easily be identified as healthy members of God’s family (15:8).*
5. The result of abiding in the Son (7-8)
- a. Answered prayers for those who abide in the Son (7), ***If you abide in me, and my words abide in you, ask whatever you wish, and it will be done for you.***
    - 1) Related verses
      - a) John 8:31, *So Jesus said to the Jews who had believed him, “If you abide in my word, you are truly my disciples,*
      - b) John 14:13, *Whatever you ask in my name, this I will do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son.*
    - 2) Comments
      - a) Thomas Constable, *Here the second use of “abide” is obviously in view, namely, its use as a synonym for fellowship rather than salvation. Jesus addressed His believing disciples and told them what would happen if they did “abide” in Him. He had already explained that believers may or may not abide in Him (vv. 3–5). Not only do abiding disciples bear much fruit (v. 5), but they also receive what they ask God for in prayer ... This verse has also been a stumbling block to some sincere Christians. It appears to be a blanket promise to grant any request that any disciple may make. Really it is a blanket promise to grant any request that an abiding disciple may make. An abiding disciple will ask for only those things that are in harmony with, or subject to, God’s will—like Jesus did. The wishes of abiding disciples are the same as Jesus’ wishes. To ask anything else would make the praying believer a non-abiding disciple.*

- b) A. T. Robertson, *This astounding command and promise ... is not without conditions and limitations. It involves such intimate union and harmony with Christ that nothing will be asked out of accord with the mind of Christ and so of the Father.*
  - c) Edwin Blum, *Effective prayer is based on faith in Christ and on His words remaining in believers. Christ's words condition and control such a believer's mind so that his prayers conform to the Father's will. Since his prayer is in accord with God's will, the results are certain—it will be given you (cf. 1 John 5:14–15).*
  - d) Leon Morris, *The prayers of those who are truly abiding in Christ will certainly be “in the name of Christ,” that is in accordance with all that Christ stands for. And if they are really abiding in Christ they will live in obedience to the words of Christ. We should not overlook the importance of “my words.” The teaching of Jesus is important and not lightly to be passed over in the interests of promoting religious feeling.*
  - e) William Hendriksen, *It stands to reason that a person who abides in Christ and in whose heart Christ's utterances (including the precepts, of course) are in complete control, will ask nothing that is contrary to Christ's will, for he will always ask in the spirit of, “Not my will but thine be done,” and in complete harmony with all that Christ has revealed concerning himself (that is, he will always ask “in his name”).*
  - f) George Beasley-Murray, *... a believer is assured that his prayers will be answered, for his prayers will be dominated by the desire for the service of the kingdom of God (see 14:12–14).*
  - g) Charles Swindoll, *As the believer abides in, or remains vitally connected to, Jesus Christ, he or she begins to assume a Christlike character. The believer is transformed from the inside out. His or her mind dwells on the kinds of thoughts that God thinks. The believer's heart begins to reflect the values of God (Jer. 31:31–33). As we think as God thinks, we ask for what is consistent with His plan, which results in His giving what we ask.*
  - h) Grant Osborne, *Our prayer life is a reflection of that union with him, and the implication is that our prayers will not be self-centered but will seek God's glory (the thou-petitions of the Lord's prayer, Matt 6:9–10) and leave our needs with him (the we-petitions, Matt 6:11–13).*
- b. Fruit bearing that confirms abiding in the Son (8), ***By this my Father is glorified, that you bear much fruit and so prove to be my disciples.***
- 1) Related verses
    - a) Matthew 5:16, *In the same way, let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father who is in heaven.*
    - b) John 15:5, *I am the vine; you are the branches. Whoever abides in me and I in him, he it is that bears much fruit, for apart from me you can do nothing.*
  - 2) Comments
    - a) Thomas Constable, *The granting of petitions to abiding believers glorifies the Father, as does bearing much fruit (cf. Mark 4:20). Answered prayer is one form of fruitfulness. All fruitfulness springs ultimately from the Son: the Vine. Therefore it is really the Son who is bringing glory to the Father through His abiding disciples (cf. 13:31; 14:13; 17:4). The believer's fruitfulness is one means by which the Son glorifies the Father ... Fruit-bearing demonstrates that a believer is one of Jesus' disciples, as does continuance in Jesus' word (8:31–32) and love for fellow disciples (13:35; cf. Matt. 7:20; Luke 6:43–44). It is possible for a believer to give little or no outward evidence of being a believer in Jesus (v. 2). This is one of the greatest problems in the church today: genuine Christians who make little or no attempt to follow God's will for their lives.*
    - b) C. K. Barrett, *The Father is glorified in the Son—in his obedience and perfect accomplishment of his work. It is therefore but a short step to see the glorification of the Father in the obedience and fruitfulness of those who are united to the Son.*
    - c) Edward Klink, *This prayer is not asked in isolation but in the intimate, mutually indwelling relationship between Jesus and the disciples ... Unique this time is the phrase “and my word remains in you” ... which explains how the prayer, like the relationship, has Christ as the primary cause. This is because it is created in and guided from the entirety of Jesus's message—his person and work.*

- d) Leon Morris, *God is glorified in the work of the Son (13:31–32). Now we have the other truth that God is also glorified in the work of believers who abide in the Son. There is an air of completeness and of certainty about it. The disciples will surely glorify the Father by their continual fruit-bearing; since they cannot bear fruit of themselves (v. 4) their fruitfulness is evidence of the Father at work in them and thus it glorifies him ... discipleship is not static, but a growing and developing way of life. Always the true disciple is becoming more fully a disciple.*
  - e) F. F. Bruce, *The “fruit” of which this parable speaks is, in effect, likeness to Jesus (the same may be said of the ninefold “fruit of the Spirit” in Galatians 5:22 f.). Those who manifest such likeness show conclusively that they are truly disciples of his. The same truth has been set forth already, without the explicit emphasis on fruitbearing, in John 8:31 f., “If you remain in my word (logos), you will truly be my disciples, and you will come to know the truth, and the truth will set you free.”*
  - f) Kenneth Gangel, *The abiding realities of this passage include answered prayer, the Father’s glory, and Jesus’ affirmation of discipleship.*
  - g) William Hendriksen, *... those who, by God’s grace, are already disciples become disciples more and more.*
  - h) Grant Osborne, *... fruitfulness shows “yourselves to be my disciples.” In 13:35 love in the community also shows “everyone ... that you are my disciples.” The world is watching, and the extraordinary life of the true believer will be a beacon light illuminating to all the joy and privilege of being a Christ follower.*
6. Abiding in the Son involves obedience (9-10), ***As the Father has loved me, so have I loved you. Abide in my love. 10 If you keep my commandments, you will abide in my love, just as I have kept my Father’s commandments and abide in his love.***
- a. Related verses
    - 1) John 5:20, *For the Father loves the Son and shows him all that he himself is doing. And greater works than these will he show him, so that you may marvel.*
    - 2) John 13:34, *A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another: just as I have loved you, you also are to love one another.*
    - 3) John 14:15, *“If you love me, you will keep my commandments.*
    - 4) John 14:23, *Jesus answered him, “If anyone loves me, he will keep my word, and my Father will love him, and we will come to him and make our home with him.*
    - 5) John 8:55, *But you have not known him. I know him. If I were to say that I do not know him, I would be a liar like you, but I do know him and I keep his word.*
    - 6) John 17:4, *I glorified you on earth, having accomplished the work that you gave me to do.*
    - 7) Philippians 2:8, *And being found in human form, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross.*
  - b. Comments
    - 1) Thomas Constable, *Jesus proceeded to explain that obedience is the key to abiding (cf. v. 7). The relationship between the Father and the Son is again the paradigm (model) for the relationship between the Son and the believer. God does not stop loving His disobedient children (cf. Luke 15:11–24). It is rather that we can withdraw from the enjoyment and blessings of His love. John stressed Jesus’ obedience to His Father in this Gospel (4:34; 5:19; 6:38; 8:29, 55; 10:17–18; 12:27–28; 14:31). Now Jesus called His disciples to follow His example: to abide in His love by keeping His commandments.*
    - 2) Arthur Pink, *We are living in an age wherein lawlessness abounds. Insubordination is rife on every hand. In many a place even professing Christians will no longer tolerate the word ‘commandments.’ Those who would urge the duty of obedience to the Lord, are regarded as enemies of the faith, seeking to bring Christians into bondage. Satan is very subtle, but we are not ignorant of his devices. He seeks to persuade sinners that they must keep God’s commandments in order to be saved. He tries to make saints believe that they must not keep God’s commandment, otherwise they will be putting themselves ‘under law,’ beneath a yoke grievous to be borne. But let these specious [misleading] lies of the Devil be tested by Scripture, and their falsity will soon appear [cf. 13:34; 14:15; Matt. 28:20; Rom. 7:22–25; 13:10; 1 Cor. 9:21].*

- 3) Edwin Blum, *A believer is motivated by the wonder of Jesus' love, which is patterned after the Father's love in its quality and extent. Remain in My love might seem to be mystical but Jesus makes it very concrete. Obedience to the Father's commands is the same for a disciple as it was for the Son (cf. 14:15, 21, 23; 1 John 2:3; 3:22, 24; 5:3). Active dependence and loving obedience are the proper paths for all of God's children.*
- 4) Kenneth Gangel, *Once again, Jesus placed himself between the Father and the disciples. The Father loves first; then the Son reflects that love; and we, his people, remain in his love. Remaining in the Lord's love also requires obedience and brings joy ... If we thought that abiding in the vine-like branches constitutes some mystical relationship, we learn immediately that it centers on obedience—a theme that John has emphasized before. And when we obey Christ's commands, we follow his example with the Father.*
- 5) Leon Morris, *... Jesus turns to his love for them. He first tells them that his love for them is like the Father's love for him. Then he commands them to continue in his love ... The obligations resting on the disciples intertwine with the thought of the blessings there are in Christ. So now Jesus returns to the thought of keeping the commandments. This is done as an explanation of the way they abide in his love ... It is simple obedience. It is when we keep Christ's commandments that we abide in his love. Once again appeal is made to Christ's own example. He kept the Father's commandments and thus abides continually in the Father's love.*
- 6) George Beasley-Murray, *To "remain" in Jesus is also to remain in his love, just as Jesus throughout his life remained in the Father's love. This must mean primarily remaining in the love that Jesus has for his disciples—rejoicing in its reality, depending on its support, doing nothing to grieve it, but on the contrary engaging in that which delights the Lover. Not surprisingly, then, to "remain" in Jesus further entails keeping the commands of Jesus, as he kept his Father's commands and remained in his love.*
- 7) Edward Klink, *The intersection of love and obedience has been an important theme in the farewell discourse (see 14:15, 21, 23, 31), and it continues to be the two pillars of the Christian life and experience.*
- 8) William Barclay, *God is glorified when we bear much fruit and show ourselves to be disciples of Jesus. The greatest glory of the Christian life is that by our life and conduct we can bring glory to God.*
- 9) Charles Swindoll, *Take note of the parallel relationships established by Jesus. His connection to the Father is the pattern for our connection with Him. He obeys and loves the Father; we obey and love Christ. Because our relationship with Christ is just like His with the Father, we will receive the same benefit, which He called "joy." This Greek word describes someone in a state of gladness, such as at harvest time (4:36) or at a wedding feast (3:29). It's an emotive word intended to be the very opposite of fear.*
- 10) Grant Osborne, *We must be careful to properly understand what it means to remain in Christ. It is much more than resting in Jesus or meditating on him. It is active and must always be reflected in obedience to his commands (15:10). It is obedience that enables us to actually experience that love. Moreover, like love, obedience is built on the relationship between Christ and his Father, as he adds, "just as I have kept my Father's commands and remain in his love" ... Jesus' love is the foundation of our own, and our love for him is the source from which our obedience flows. This doesn't mean that when we fail to obey he stops loving us (see Rom 8:31–39) but rather that disobedience keeps us from experiencing the love of God and Christ.*

7. Jesus emphasized the path of joy (11), ***These things I have spoken to you, that my joy may be in you, and that your joy may be full.***

a. Related verses

- 1) John 3:29, *The one who has the bride is the bridegroom. The friend of the bridegroom, who stands and hears him, rejoices greatly at the bridegroom's voice. Therefore this joy of mine is now complete.*
- 2) John 16:24, *Until now you have asked nothing in my name. Ask, and you will receive, that your joy may be full.*

b. Comments

- 1) Thomas Constable, *The disciple's faithfulness is the product of loving obedience, and joy is its result. The fullness of believers' joy was John's purpose for writing his first epistle, as it was Jesus' purpose in giving this discourse (1 John 1:4). Specifically, Jesus had told His disciples that joy would follow their obedience to His teachings (v. 10). He intended His teachings to produce freedom and joy, not bondage and grief (cf. 10:10; Matt. 11:30).*
- 2) Edwin Blum, *Jesus had great joy in pleasing His Father by living a fruitful life (cf. Heb. 12:2). The purpose of His teaching is to give man an abundant life, not a joyless existence (John 10:10). The commands for His disciples to obey are for their joy (cf. 17:13).*
- 3) Leon Morris, *The joy of Jesus is the joy that arises from the sense of a finished work. It is creative joy, like the joy of the artist. It produces a sense of unexhausted power for fresh creation. This joy in the heart of Jesus is both the joy of victory (15:11), and the sense of having brought His Church into being." It is an inspiring thought that Jesus calls his followers into joy. The Christian life is not some shallow, insipid following of a traditional pattern. It is a life characterized by "unexhausted (and inexhaustible) power for fresh creation.*
- 4) William Hendriksen, *Jesus wants to see this inner delight, this incomparable rejoicing in the hearts of his disciples. They needed this, for at present they were troubled and filled with sorrow (14:1, 27; 16:6). Moreover, not until the cup of joy has at length been filled to the very brim (cf. 16:24; 17:13; 1 John 1:4) will Jesus be satisfied. On this fullness of spiritual joy see also Luke 2:10; Rom. 14:17; Phil. 2:17, 18; and especially 1 Peter 1:6, 8.*
- 5) George Beasley-Murray, *Such a relationship of love leads to joy to the uttermost. Jesus experienced it, even when facing the dread hour of sacrifice; he revealed these things to his disciples that they might have the same joy in fullest measure; they, too, are to know it as they walk in the same path as he ...*
- 6) William Barclay, *However hard the Christian way is, it is, both in the travelling and in the goal, the way of joy. There is always a joy in doing the right thing. Christians are men and women of joy ... It is true that Christians are sinners; but they are redeemed sinners, and therein lies their joy. How can any of us fail to be happy when we walk the ways of life with Jesus?*
- 7) Grant Osborne, *The world's joy is finite and temporary, but God's joy is perfect and eternal. Nothing else in this world can help us to relate to the difficulties of life with joy, and that is made possible by the presence of the Triune Godhead with us as we pass through the dark times.*
- 8) F. F. Bruce, *The assurance of an eternal relationship of mutual love with the Father and himself was well calculated to banish the misgivings which had filled their hearts at the thought of his departure, and to fill them with his own joy.*
- 9) Warren Wiersbe, *How can we tell when we are 'abiding in Christ'? Is there a special feeling? No, but there are special evidences that appear and they are unmistakably clear. For one thing, when you are abiding in Christ, you produce fruit (John 15:2) ... Also, you experience the Father's 'pruning' so that you will bear more fruit (John 15:2). The believer who is abiding in Christ has his prayers answered (John 15:7) and experiences a deepening love for Christ and for other believers (John 15:9, 12–13). He also experiences joy (John 15:11).*

B. The relationship of believers to one another (12-17)

1. Jesus command them to love each other(12), ***This is my commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you.***

a. Related verse, John 13:34, *A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another: just as I have loved you, you also are to love one another.*

b. Comments

- 1) Thomas Constable, *Jesus summarized His teaching with the command to love one another, just as He had loved them (cf. 13:34–35; 1 John 3:16). This was especially relevant because of the disciples' earlier arguments about who of them was the greatest, and their unwillingness to wash each other's feet.*
- 2) A. B. Bruce, *Though He does not say it in so many words, He [Jesus] evidently means the disciples to understand that abiding in each other by love is just as necessary to their success as their common abiding in Him by faith. Division, party strife, jealousy, will be simply fatal to their influence, and to the cause they represent.*

- 3) Edwin Blum, *Christians grow by caring for and nurturing each other. The standard for that love is Christ's example of humble sacrificial service: as I have loved you.*
  - 4) Leon Morris, *The "commands" of verse 10 are reduced to one, the command to love one another as Christ has loved them. This is the "new commandment" of 13:34 (where see note) ... If we love, in the sense in which Jesus uses the term, we need no other rule.*
  - 5) William Hendriksen, *From the precept "Abide in me" (15:1–11) Jesus now proceeds to the next one, "love one another." It is only when we abide in Christ—in his words, in his love—that we shall be able to keep on loving one another!*
  - 6) John Hart, *The command to love requires a supernatural component to fulfill, requires faith, and is more a choice than an emotion ... The priority for believers is to love one another first, since every believer is part of the family of God. Love may involve reproof (Gl 6:1–2).*
  - 7) George Beasley-Murray, *The addition "as I have loved you" is important; it includes the manifestation of Christ's love in his death for others, and so reveals the standard of love that should be maintained among believers; it further hints of the motive of such love (again as perceived in 1 John 4:19), and its source in the redemptive love that frees us from restrictive love of self.*
  - 8) Edward Klink, *The love of God for Christians becomes the love of God between Christians ... Love for both God and humanity, especially (according to this text) for brothers and sisters in Christ, is the life of the church. This is not a normal love but one which stems from the love of Christ: "Just as I have loved you."*
  - 9) Grant Osborne, *The third implication of the vine metaphor is the deep love that believers share with one another. This community love completes the three stages of love: love between the Father and the Son leads to love between Jesus and the disciples (vv. 9–10), and now his love for us is reflected in our love for one another (as also in 13:34). This triangular love itself reflects the Trinity. Our relationship with each other grows out of the internal relationship of the three members of the Godhead. All our relationships emerge and draw their energy from our relationship with Christ.*
2. The greatest evidence of love (13), **Greater love has no one than this, that someone lay down his life for his friends.**
- a. Related verses
    - 1) Romans 5:7-8, *For one will scarcely die for a righteous person—though perhaps for a good person one would dare even to die— 8 but God shows his love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us.*
    - 2) Ephesians 5:2, *And walk in love, as Christ loved us and gave himself up for us, a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God.*
    - 3) John 10:11, *I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep.*
  - b. Comments
    - 1) Thomas Constable, *Love for a friend reaches its zenith when one willingly sacrifices his or her life for that friend. Jesus had spoken of His love for His disciples (v. 12). He would shortly show them how great it was by making the supreme sacrifice for them. After that they would not only have His command to obey but also His example to follow ... Actually Jesus did more than lay down His life for His friends. He even died for His enemies (cf. Matt. 5:43–47; Rom. 5:8–10)!*
    - 2) Warren Wiersbe, *How is it possible for Jesus to command us to love one another? Can true love be commanded? You must keep in mind that Christian love is not basically a "feeling"; it is an act of the will. The proof of our love is not in our feelings but in our actions, even to the extent of laying down our lives for Christ and for one another (1 John 3:16).*
    - 3) Leon Morris, *Some have raised the question whether the love that dies for enemies is not greater than that which is concerned for friends, but that is not before us here. In this passage Jesus is not comparing the love that sacrifices for enemies with that which sacrifices for friends. He is in the midst of friends and is speaking only of friends. With respect to them he is saying that one cannot have greater love than to die for them. When it is a question of enemies Jesus did in fact die for them (Rom. 5:10).*

- 4) William Hendriksen, *For these friends Jesus “lays down his life,” that is, not only does he physically die for their benefit, but in their stead he even experiences the torments of hell on the cross (eternal death) ... In these respects that love is completely unique and cannot be copied ... Nevertheless, there is one characteristic of this love which should be reflected in the attitude of one brother to another, namely, its self-sacrificing nature. “In your love for one another you must be willing to deny yourselves,” is what Jesus meant ...*
  - 5) Charles Swindoll, *The ultimate example of love for another is the willingness to give higher priority to the life of a loved one than our own ... This ultimate sacrifice is the ultimate expression of love; we are unlikely, however, to face such a choice. More often we are asked to give up our lives in small measures, day by day, rather than in one grand gesture. In many ways, this is more difficult. Love for a friend doesn’t keep a record of sacrifice; this kind of love values the other more than self so that sacrifice becomes a matter of small significance.*
  - 6) Grant Osborne, *Jesus would yield his life in just a few hours, and as we emulate this love, we must be prepared for a possible future in which we surrender our lives, as many martyrs have done throughout church history. God’s word is clear on this: suffering is a special sharing or “participation in his sufferings” (Phil 3:10), and God will use it redemptively.*
3. Friendship with Jesus (14-16)
- a. It requires obedience (14), **You are my friends if you do what I command you.**
    - 1) Related verses
      - a) Luke 12:4, *“I tell you, my friends, do not fear those who kill the body, and after that have nothing more that they can do.*
      - b) John 15:10, *If you keep my commandments, you will abide in my love, just as I have kept my Father’s commandments and abide in his love.*
    - 2) Comments
      - a) Thomas Constable, *A person can be a casual friend, a close friend, or an intimate friend, depending on his or her love and loyalty. All believers are God’s friends in one sense, but abiding believers are His special friends on a deeper level, because they seek to obey Him consistently (cf. Ps. 25:14).*
      - b) J. Vernon McGee, *Are we doing what Jesus has commanded us to do? Obedience is essential to abiding.*
      - c) Leon Morris, *Jesus makes it clear that the members of the apostolic band are his friends (cf. Luke 12:4). But friendship depends on common aims and outlook and thus Jesus qualifies “You are my friends” by “if you do what I command.” Once again obedience is the test of discipleship. The friends of Jesus are those who habitually obey him.*
      - d) William Hendriksen, *By constantly doing the will of Christ his disciples obtain for themselves the assurance that they are his friends, that is, that they will abide in his love. In the light of the manner in which these men had displayed their character-deficiencies even this very night (see on 13:2, 3, 4; cf. Luke 22:24), it was surely an act of glorious, condescending love for Jesus to say, “You are my friends.”*
      - e) Edward Klink, *This verse does not suggest that we can merit Christ’s friendship by our obedience. Rather, as v. 13 suggested, such friendship requires first and foremost that Christ focus his greatest love upon us, the gift of his life for ours. And as the recipient of such an extension of friendship, what is reciprocated is the giving of ourselves back to God by means of the appropriate response of love and obedience.*
      - f) John Hart, *Here the conditional statement indicates that if one is obedient to Jesus’ commands, it is correct to infer that such a person is Jesus’ friend. James informed us that Abraham’s works (not merely his faith), flowing out of his righteous standing before God by faith, made him a friend of God (Jms 2:22–23).*
      - g) Charles Swindoll, *If we choose to do as Jesus commands, we are identified as His friends and recipients of His sacrifice (v. 13). This is not to suggest we must obey perfectly; after all, we are unable to do so. Instead, this speaks of our intent to pursue His aims by following His instructions ... We are His friends when we support His aims.*

- b. The intimacy of friendship (15), ***No longer do I call you servants, for the servant does not know what his master is doing; but I have called you friends, for all that I have heard from my Father I have made known to you.***

1) Related verses

- a) John 15:20, *Remember the word that I said to you: 'A servant is not greater than his master.' If they persecuted me, they will also persecute you. If they kept my word, they will also keep yours.*
- b) John 8:26, *I have much to say about you and much to judge, but he who sent me is true, and I declare to the world what I have heard from him."*
- c) John 8:40, *but now you seek to kill me, a man who has told you the truth that I heard from God. This is not what Abraham did.*
- d) John 17:26, *I made known to them your name, and I will continue to make it known, that the love with which you have loved me may be in them, and I in them."*

2) Comments

- a) Thomas Constable, *A good slave (Gr. doulos) also obeys his master. What then is the difference between a slave of God and an intimate friend of God? Jesus proved to His disciples that they were His friends as well as His slaves, but He pointed out that a master shares his plans with his friends but not with his slaves. He had told them what was coming and thereby was treating them as His friends ... Slaves customarily receive orders without any explanations or reasons for their orders. One of the differences between friends and slaves is the degree of intimacy that they share with their Master. Jesus raised His disciples from the level of being used as tools to the position of being full partners with Him in His work (cf. 2 Cor. 5:20–6:1).*
- b) William Barclay, *The friends of the king were those who had the closest and the most intimate connection with him, and who had the right to come to him at any time.*
- c) Edwin Blum, *Normally, a slave does what he is told without understanding his master's mind or business ... Jesus called His disciples friends because He had disclosed His Father's revelation to them.*
- d) Kenneth Gangel, *The word friend may have shocked the disciples, since in the Bible only Abraham is called God's friend (Jas. 2:23). It is interesting, too, that Jesus linked this friendship with his teaching. These disciples had become Jesus' friends because of what he had shared with them about the Father's truth.*
- e) Leon Morris, *He has revealed to them all that the Father has made known to him. This is not a contradiction of 16:12. Here Jesus denies that he has treated them like slaves—he has taken them fully into his confidence. There the thought is rather that their knowledge is not as yet exhaustive. They still have much to learn, and Jesus will disclose it in due time through the Spirit.*
- f) William Hendriksen, *Clearly implied in these words of Jesus is the thought that he is not satisfied with merely servile obedience. His friends are motivated by friendship when they do his bidding. Obedience is an expression of their love.*
- g) Edward Klink, *None of this removes the hierarchy between God and his children or removes the need for appropriate responses to God; rather, it actually facilitates such responses as positive, finding their source not merely in law but in love and not merely because of judgment but also because of joy (v. 11).*
- l) Charles Swindoll, *He elevates us to the status of "friend," He shares with us the details of His redemptive plan for the world, and He calls us to stand beside Him in accomplishing it. Through the indwelling Holy Spirit, the Son of God allows us complete access to His mind, freely sharing His deepest thoughts and plans ... The relationship is one in which Jesus elevates us to a higher standing than we deserve; nevertheless, His superiority is never compromised.*
- j) F. F. Bruce, *To his friends, then, Jesus has disclosed all that he himself has learned from the Father. True, there is much that they are not yet able to grasp (John 16:12), but the limitation lies with their capacity for comprehension, not with his willingness to impart the full truth.*

- c. Jesus chooses His friends for a purpose (16), **You did not choose me, but I chose you and appointed you that you should go and bear fruit and that your fruit should abide, so that whatever you ask the Father in my name, he may give it to you.**
- 1) Related verses
    - a) John 13:18, *I am not speaking of all of you; I know whom I have chosen. But the Scripture will be fulfilled, 'He who ate my bread has lifted his heel against me.'*
    - b) John 15:7, *If you abide in me, and my words abide in you, ask whatever you wish, and it will be done for you.*
    - c) John 14:13, *Whatever you ask in my name, this I will do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son.*
  - 2) Comments
    - a) Thomas Constable, *Again Jesus stressed that the initiative in the relationship between Him and His disciples lay with Himself, not them (cf. 1:39, 42–43; 6:70; 10:27). He probably did this because of their tendency to think too highly of themselves and since in their culture it was common for disciples to choose their rabbi. Even today students love to seek out the teacher of their choice and to attach themselves to him or her ... Part of His purpose for them was that they bear fruit and that their fruit would have lasting effects. Evidently the fruit of their missionary outreach was particularly in Jesus' mind, since He linked going with bearing fruit. In this case, new converts are the fruits in view (cf. 20:21) ... Asking the Father in prayer in Jesus' name was necessary for fruit-bearing to happen. Jesus linked prayer and fruit-bearing in a cause and effect relationship. Prayer plays an essential role in the believer's fruitfulness (cf. James 4:2) ... These purposes are coordinate, but logically praying precedes fruit-bearing (cf. 14:12–14; 15:7–8).*
    - b) Edwin Blum, *Jesus had chosen them (cf. John 15:19). The purpose of His choosing was so that they would produce lasting fruit. He chose them for a mission, and His Father would answer their requests in order to accomplish that mission (whatever you ask in My name; cf. v. 7; cf. "in My name" in 14:13–14; 16:23–24, 26).*
    - c) Warren Wiersbe, ... *He chose us and we did not choose Him. We must keep this in mind lest we become proud and presumptuous. It means that we keep our ears open and listen to what He says to us ... the purpose for all of this is that we might obey Him and get His work done. The King has tasks that must be performed; and if we love Him, we will obey His commands. We will seek to bear fruit that will please Him and glorify the Father. Our joy should be to please Him.*
    - d) William Hendriksen, *The Father loves the Son; hence, he loves those who do the Son's bidding.*
    - e) George Beasley-Murray, *The privilege bestowed on the disciples was not on account of their worth but through electing grace. As always in the Bible, the election was for a purpose: "I set you aside that you should go forth and yield fruit...."*
    - f) John Hart, *I chose you does refer both to election to salvation for the eleven disciples and to Jesus' choice of them to be His apostles (Lk 6:13; Ac 1:2) and carry out the Great Commission (Mt 28:18–20). They were appointed to go and bear fruit—a love (cf. v. 17) that brings others to Christ (cf. Ac 2:41–47; 4:32–35). This fruit would remain because salvation is a permanent gift.*
    - g) William Barclay, *When we pray, we must first realize that we never know better than God. The essence of prayer is not that we say to God: 'Your will be changed,' but that we say to him: 'Your will be done.' So often, real prayer must be not that God would send us the things we wish, but that he would make us able to accept the things he wills.*
    - h) Charles Swindoll, *The relationship the Lord called us to share with Him is reciprocal, which becomes clear in this verse. As we obey, we are transformed to think with the mind of Christ and to pray for what God desires to accomplish. Consequently, there is a growing oneness in mind and purpose.*
    - i) Grant Osborne, *Mission to the world is a difficult and dangerous enterprise given the world's hatred and opposition (as we will see in 15:18–16:4), so it is critical for us to bathe it in prayer and receive the Spirit's empowering presence as we go out. Prayer could be called the lubricating fluid for the engine of fruit-bearing; we need it to run smoothly.*

4. Jesus re-emphasized the importance of loving one another (17), ***These things I command you, so that you will love one another.***
  - a. Related verse, John 15:12, *This is my commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you.*
  - b. Comments
    - 1) Kenneth Gangel, *Some New Testament scholars believe that verse 17 launches the next section of the chapter rather than closing this one. Loving each other is central to bearing fruit of any kind and will be a significant defense against the onslaught of an evil world.*
    - 2) Thomas Constable, *Again Jesus repeated the absolute importance of His disciples loving one another (cf. 13:34; 15:10, 12, 14; Rom. 12:10; Eph. 4:2–3, 32; Col. 3:13; 1 Pet. 1:22; 2:17; 3:8; 4:8). This was not only a repetition for emphasis, but it set the stage for Jesus’ teaching on the world’s opposition that follows.*
    - 3) Warren Wiersbe, *Jesus closed this part of His message by reminding them (and us) of the most important commandment of all: love one another. There are dozens of “one another” statements in the New Testament, but all of them are summarized in “love one another.” Jesus had already given this commandment to the Eleven (John 13:34–35), and now He has repeated it twice (John 15:12, 17). It will be stated in one way or another many more times in the New Testament letters, especially by John in his first epistle. The friends of the King must not only love Him, but also one another. What joy it brings to His heart when He sees His friends loving one another and working together to obey His commands.*
    - 4) William Hendriksen, *I, being in myself unlovable, cannot keep on loving my brother, who also is often very unlovable (at least as I see him), unless I constantly reflect on (and remain in) the love of Christ for myself. Not only do we love him because he first loved us, but we also love one another because he first loved us. Our love for one another is an extension of Christ’s love for us.*
    - 5) George Beasley-Murray, *The injunction to love is the first and last word of Christ to his friends.*
    - 6) Charles Swindoll, *Failing to love one another makes us like the world, which is characterized by hate. There is no middle ground between love and hate; we must choose one or the other.*
    - 7) Grant Osborne, *The love of the Godhead and of Christ for the believer strengthen each follower to love each other, and that provides impetus for bringing others into the community.*

C. The relationship of believers to the world (18-25)

1. The world hates believers (18-21)
  - a. They are not of the world (18-19), ***“If the world hates you, know that it has hated me before it hated you. 19 If you were of the world, the world would love you as its own; but because you are not of the world, but I chose you out of the world, therefore the world hates you.***
    - 1) Related verses
      - a) 1 John 3:13, *Do not be surprised, brothers, that the world hates you.*
      - b) 1 John 4:5, *They are from the world; therefore they speak from the world, and the world listens to them.*
      - c) John 17:14, *I have given them your word, and the world has hated them because they are not of the world, just as I am not of the world.*
    - 2) Comments
      - a) Thomas Constable, *Jesus wanted to prepare His disciples for the opposition that they would face after His departure. To do this, He announced first that they would encounter opposition from the world (cf. 1 John 3:13). Here the world (Gr. kosmos) refers to the mass of unbelievers generally ... The world hates Jesus because He testified that its deeds are evil (7:7). His abiding disciples draw hatred from the world because they associate with Him and His teachings, and because they seek to advance His mission ... The world does not hate believers because they are superior, but because they are servants of the Lord whom it has rejected.*
      - b) C. K. Barrett, *Because the Christians are in Christ, hatred of them is hatred of Christ, and hatred of Christ is hatred of the Father who sent him. The unpopularity of Christians in the world is due ultimately to the attitude of the world to God.*

- c) A. W. Pink, *The inexperienced Christian supposes that the hatred of the world against him is a reproach. He thinks that he is to blame for it. He imagines that if only he were kinder, more gentle, more humble, more Christlike, the enmity of unbelievers would be overcome. This is a great mistake. The truth is, the more Christlike we are the more shall we be antagonized and shunned. The most conclusive proof of this is found in the treatment which our blessed Saviour received when He was in the world.*
- d) Edwin Blum, *Jesus alerted His disciples to the fact of the world's hatred. The world in John's Gospel is the system of organized society hostile to God, which is under Satan's power (John 14:30). Believers might be surprised by this hostility (1 Peter 4:12–13), but they should remember that Jesus was hated from His birth (when Herod the Great sought to kill Him) to His death on the cross ... A fundamental reason for the world's hatred of a Christian lies in their differences (cf. 1 Peter 4:4; Rom. 12:2). A believer, having left the kingdom of darkness and having been transferred into the kingdom of God's Son (Col. 1:13), has a different joy, purpose, hope, and love. He now has certainty, truth, and a standard for life.*
- e) Warren Wiersbe, *When we trusted Christ, we moved into a new spiritual position: we are now "in Christ" and "out of the world." To be sure, we are in the world physically, but not of the world spiritually ... The world system functions on the basis of conformity. As long as a person follows the fads and fashions and accepts the values of the world, he or she will "get along." But the Christian refuses to be "conformed to this world" (Rom. 12:2). The believer is a "new creation" (2 Cor. 5:17) and no longer wants to live the "old life" (1 Peter 4:1–4). We are the light of the world and the salt of the earth (Matt. 5:13–16), but a dark world does not want light and a decaying world does not want salt! In other words, the believer is not just "out of step"; he is out of place! (See John 17:14, 16, and 1 John 4:5.)*
- f) Leon Morris, *It is not without its significance that the disciples are to be known by their love, the world by its hatred ... it is inevitable that the world reacts against Christians as it did against their Master. It is important to realize this, for we sometimes act as though it is surprising that upright worldly people oppose the things of God. On the contrary, it is inevitable.*
- g) William Hendriksen, *The fact that the world had hated Jesus, and that this hatred had been present almost from the very beginning of his public ministry and had never subsided, is evident from the following passages: 1:5, 10, 11; 3:11; 5:16, 18, 43; 6:66; 7:1, 30, 32, 47–52; 8:40, 44, 45, 48, 52, 57, 59; 9:22; 10:31, 33, 39; 11:50, 57; 12:37–43 ... the reason why they are not of the world lies not in them; on the contrary, it is this, that out of the world of darkness the Lord had elected these men for himself.*
- h) George Beasley-Murray, *Two roots of that hatred are here mentioned: the world's prior hatred for Jesus, which inevitably becomes directed to the disciples through their connection with him; and its perception that the disciples are not "of" the world, i.e., that their origin is in another world and that they belong to that other world (on the two "worlds" cf. 3:31; 8:23; 18:36–37).*
- i) Edward Klink, *Nothing about the world's hate toward them should surprise them or make them expect anything different ... this hate is directed primarily at Jesus and only secondarily at the disciples. The disciples will experience real hate, but it is hate that is rooted in their affiliation with and participation in Jesus.*
- j) William Barclay, *When John wrote, this hatred had long since begun. The Roman historian Tacitus spoke of the people 'hated for their crimes, whom the mob call Christians'. His contemporary Suetonius had spoken of 'a race of men who belong to a new and evil superstition'. Why was this hatred so virulent? ... The Roman government hated the Christians because it regarded them as disloyal citizens.*
- k) Charles Swindoll, *Jesus originally came to redeem the world (John 3:17; 12:47), but the world rejected Him (3:18; 12:48); therefore, He began to separate "His own" from the world (10:14, 26–27; 13:1; 15:19). His crucifixion would formally declare the dividing line between the kingdoms of God and Satan, and His resurrection would demand a choice from each individual.*
- l) F. F. Bruce, *Jesus' followers have been described in John 13:1 as "his own people who were in the world," on whom he set his love. He chose them "out of the world" to be "his own people," and therefore they no longer belonged to the world. The world looked on them as aliens, and treated them accordingly.*

- b. They will be treated the same as their Master (20), **Remember the word that I said to you: 'A servant is not greater than his master.' If they persecuted me, they will also persecute you. If they kept my word, they will also keep yours.**

1) Related verses

- a) John 13:16, *Truly, truly, I say to you, a servant is not greater than his master, nor is a messenger greater than the one who sent him.*
- b) Matthew 10:24, *"A disciple is not above his teacher, nor a servant above his master.*
- c) John 16:33, *I have said these things to you, that in me you may have peace. In the world you will have tribulation. But take heart; I have overcome the world."*
- d) 2 Timothy 3:12, *Indeed, all who desire to live a godly life in Christ Jesus will be persecuted,*

2) Comments

- a) Thomas Constable, *Jesus reminded the disciples of the principle that He had mentioned ("a slave is not greater than his master") when He washed their feet (13:16). At that time He used this principle to encourage them to serve one another. Now He used it to explain why they would experience persecution ... People normally treat a person's servants as they would treat the servants' master. Since unbelievers persecuted Jesus, His disciples should expect persecution too. Conversely, if some people in the world followed Jesus' teachings, some would also follow His disciples' teachings.*
- b) F. F. Bruce, *... those who repudiated his teaching, refusing to recognize him as the sent one of God, will repudiate the disciples when they come teaching in their Master's name. The close association between his persecution and theirs finds expression in the voice from heaven which Saul of Tarsus heard on the Damascus road, "why do you persecute me?" (Acts 9:4; 22:7; 26:14). The Lord who was personally persecuted on earth continued to be persecuted, even in his exaltation, in the person of his persecuted followers. Their being persecuted for his sake was a sign that they belonged to him, as it was a token of coming judgment on their persecutors (cf. Philippians 1:28; 2 Thessalonians 1:5–10).*
- c) Warren Wiersbe, *He is the Shepherd and we are the sheep; and when they attack the Shepherd, it affects the sheep (Matt. 26:31). He is the Master (Teacher) and we are the disciples, the learners. But it is encouraging to know that when God's people are persecuted, our Lord enters into their suffering, for He is the Head of the body and we are the members.*
- d) Edward Klink, *The call of the Christian is to receive the hate of the world with humility but also with the intention of service.*
- e) Charles Swindoll, *The fruit of hatred is persecution. Jesus promised His closest followers that persecution would be their reward in the world ... In persecution, hatred becomes deliberate, not merely coincidental. The world will pursue Christians for the sake of venting its hatred.*
- f) William Barclay, *There is bound to be a rift between those who regard God as the only reality in life and those who regard God as totally irrelevant for life. In any event, the world has certain characteristics which are always part of the human situation ... (1) The world suspects people who are different ... (2) The world acutely dislikes people whose lives are a condemnation of it ... (3) To put it at its widest—the world always suspects nonconformity ... The basic demand on Christians is the demand that they should have the courage to be different. To be different will be dangerous, but none of us can be a Christian unless we accept that risk, for there must be a difference between the men and women of the world and the men and women of Christ.*

- c. The world does not know the Father (21), **But all these things they will do to you on account of my name, because they do not know him who sent me.**

1) Related verses

- a) John 16:3, *And they will do these things because they have not known the Father, nor me.*
- b) Matthew 24:9, *"Then they will deliver you up to tribulation and put you to death, and you will be hated by all nations for my name's sake.*

## 2) Comments

- a) Thomas Constable, *People rejected Jesus because they did not know God, who had sent Him. They were ignorant of Him because they were spiritually blind (cf. Rom. 1:28). Consequently they could not rightly evaluate the Messenger whom God had sent. Jesus stated that the haters would also reject His disciples, because they likewise would not know God, who was sending them. Again the close unity between the Father and the Son, and between the Son and abiding believers, comes through.*
- b) Edwin Blum, *The root cause of the world's hatred against the disciples is their identification with Jesus. They hate Jesus because they are ignorant of God, the One who sent Him.*
- c) Warren Wiersbe, *If you had asked the religious leaders in Jerusalem if they knew the God they were seeking to defend, they would have said, "Of course we know Him! Israel has known the true God for centuries!" But Jesus said that they did not know the Father and, therefore, they could not know the Son (see John 16:3). The religious leaders knew a great deal about Jehovah God and could quote chapter and verse to defend their doctrines, but they did not personally know God.*
- d) Leon Morris, *The root cause of persecution is now traced to the world's ignorance of God ... The Father ("the One who sent me"; see on 3:17) is known in the mission of the Son. When the world rejects Jesus it accordingly rejects the Father who is made known in Jesus Christ. And when the world rejects the God who is thus revealed, the world proceeds to reject and ill-treat the ministers of that God.*
- e) George Beasley-Murray, *"All these things they will do" relates to the content of vv 18–20 and pinpoints the causes of the opposition, namely "on account of my name" (cf. Mark 13:13), and "because they do not know him who sent me." The thought is expanded in vv 22–24.*

## 2. The world will be judged (22-25)

- a. They are guilty of sin (22), ***If I had not come and spoken to them, they would not have been guilty of sin, but now they have no excuse for their sin.***

### 1) Comments

- a) Thomas Constable, *Jesus obviously did not mean that it would have been better for the world if He had remained in heaven. His point was that by coming into the world, and by preaching and working miracles, He had confronted people with their rebellion against God (cf. Matt. 11:20–24; Luke 11:31–32).*
- b) Warren Wiersbe, *They had seen His works and heard His word, but they would not admit the truth. All of the evidence had been presented, but they were not honest enough to receive it and act on it ... This statement is parallel to what Jesus told the Pharisees after He had healed the blind man (John 9:39–41). They had to admit that Jesus had healed the man born blind, but they would not follow the evidence to its logical conclusion and put their trust in Him. Jesus told them that they were the ones who were blind! But since they admitted that they had seen a miracle, this made their sin even worse.*
- c) Kenneth Gangel, *When people are brought face to face with the gospel message and refuse it to continue in their sin, they bring upon themselves the guilt and consequences of their sin.*
- d) Leon Morris, *The seriousness of rejecting Christ is brought out. Jesus does not mean, of course, that the Jews would have been sinless had he not appeared. But he does mean that the sin of rejecting God as he really is would not have been imputed to them had they not had the revelation of God that was made through him. But now, as things are, they have no excuse. There is no way of covering up their sin.*
- e) John Hart, *If the Messiah had not come to the Jewish people and spoken to them, revealing the nature of God, they could have continued unchallenged to claim their faith in God. But with the appearance of Jesus, it became evident that they were guilty of the sin of rejecting God because they rejected Jesus. They now had no excuse for their sin of rejecting their Messiah.*
- f) Edward Klink, *The first statement does not claim that sin only became an issue with the arrival of Jesus but rather that sin became most apparent with the arrival of Jesus (see Rom 5:13). The true source and authority for the evaluation and condemnation of sin was not the law of Moses but the law of Christ ... The arrival of Jesus made sin known; that is, it made it official that "now they have no excuse."*

- g) William Barclay, *Here, Jesus has returned to a thought which in the Fourth Gospel is never far from his mind, the conviction that knowledge and privilege bring with them responsibility. Until Jesus came, men and women never had the opportunity really to know God; they had never fully heard his voice, and they had never seen perfectly demonstrated the kind of life he wished them to live. They could scarcely be blamed for being as they were ... The more knowledge we have and the more privileges we enjoy, the greater the responsibility laid upon us.*
- h) F. F. Bruce, *It is emphasized repeatedly in the Synoptic Gospels that the generation to which Jesus came bore a greater responsibility than any previous generation, because men and women of earlier days had not heard his teaching or seen his mighty works, as his own contemporaries did. His own contemporaries for the most part rejected his teaching and refused to admit the evidence of his works.*
- b. They hate the Father and the Son (23), ***Whoever hates me hates my Father also.***
- 1) Related verse, John 5:23, *that all may honor the Son, just as they honor the Father. Whoever does not honor the Son does not honor the Father who sent him.*
  - 2) Comments
    - a) Thomas Constable, *Jesus' words and works were the Father's who had sent Him. Therefore the world's rejection of Jesus' words and works constituted rejection of God the Father. To hate Jesus amounted to hating God. This is another strong implication of Jesus' deity.*
    - b) Leon Morris, *Both "me" and "my Father" are emphatic. Jesus leaves no doubt as to the seriousness of the conduct of the people of his day. He lays down the general principle that anyone who hates the Son hates the Father. The two are so closely connected that to hate the one is to hate the other.*
    - c) William Hendriksen, *The Jews were in the habit of thinking that they could claim God as their Father (8:41), while at the same time they regarded Jesus as demon-possessed (8:48). They claimed that they loved the Father, though they evidently hated the Son (see on 15:18). But, in view of the fact that the Father and the Son are one in essence (10:30), such an attitude is impossible. A person may imagine that he loves the Father while he hates the Son, but he deceives himself. Whoever hates the one necessarily hates the other also. And this holds also with respect to the present day and age. Men who scoff at blood-atonement and reject the vicarious death of Christ do not love God!*
    - d) Edward Klink, *By linking himself to the Father, Jesus makes clear that the judgment against the world is no small thing but is the very judgment of God ... When someone hates and therefore rejects Jesus, they are rejecting God himself. The intimate relationship and union between the Father and the Son is one of the primary messages of the Gospel ...*
    - e) Grant Osborne, *They had not just met a so-called prophet and pretend Messiah; they had met the Son of God, the one and only God (1:14, 18; 3:16, 18), and in rejecting him they had turned their backs on God and on final salvation. In responding to the Son and now the disciples with hatred, they have lost all hope.*
    - f) F. F. Bruce, *He had come to show them the love of God, but they reacted to his love with hatred, just as, when he came to them as the light of the world, they chose darkness rather than light (John 3:19). They thus passed judgment on themselves. If they rejected the giver of true life, they shut themselves up to the only alternative—death.*
- c. They rejected the works of Jesus (24), ***If I had not done among them the works that no one else did, they would not be guilty of sin, but now they have seen and hated both me and my Father.***
- 1) Darrell Bock, *In many ways, the remark of John 15:24 summarizes the book of signs [chs. 2–12] in John's Gospel.*
  - 2) Edwin Blum, *Jesus' miracles were so distinctive that their import was unmistakable. The Jewish nation should have honestly confessed, "No one could perform the miraculous signs You are doing if God were not with Him" (3:2). But the nation as a whole rejected both Jesus and the Father because in their sins they loved darkness rather than light (3:19). The nation thought it was serving God in rejecting Jesus (16:2–3) but in reality it was serving Satan (8:44).*

- 3) Kenneth Gangel, *At the end of the passage Jesus redirected the disciples' thinking to the miracles they had seen. He argued that if he had never proclaimed the Father's message, never done any miracles, he could have gotten along just fine in the world. Once they understood that a messianic prophet was among them, they fulfilled Psalms 35:19 and 69:4 by rejecting both the Son and the Father ... So condemnation came because of Jesus' presence, his proclamation, and his miracles.*
  - 4) Leon Morris, *Once again the closeness of the unity between the Father and the Son is stressed. The guilt of the Jews consisted in this, that they rejected the revelation of the Father that was made known in the Son. Jesus does not speak of "the Father" but of "my Father." His special relationship to God is very much to the fore.*
  - 5) George Beasley-Murray ... *the works of Jesus are God's works in and through him; hence it can be said that the world has "seen" God, i.e., seen him in action in the person of his Son, but its response has been to hate both the Son and the Father in him (v 24).*
  - 6) Edward Klink, *At the coming of the person of Jesus and the inauguration of his work, the world was witness to the prophetic "works" and "signs" of God that gave them no excuse to deny their sin; by these works they were officially declared sinners.*
  - 7) Charles Swindoll, ... *when God presented Himself in person, in the flesh of humanity and in fulfillment of every messianic expectation, He left the world without excuse for rejecting Him. The flesh of God's Son became the occasion for the world to expose its hatred for their Creator and, thus, consummate their sin.*
  - 8) Grant Osborne, *The fact that "no one else" has done such works points to his sign-miracles, which proved who he was and revealed his true nature. So as a result of his wondrous words (v. 22) and works (v. 24), they now have no excuse and are proved "guilty of sin" before God.*
- d. Their hatred of Jesus is unjust (25), ***But the word that is written in their Law must be fulfilled: 'They hated me without a cause.'***
- 1) Related verses
    - a) Psalm 35:19, *Let not those rejoice over me who are wrongfully my foes, and let not those wink the eye who hate me without cause.*
    - b) Psalm 69:4, *More in number than the hairs of my head are those who hate me without cause; mighty are those who would destroy me, those who attack me with lies. What I did not steal must I now restore?*
  - 2) Comments
    - a) Thomas Constable, *Its hatred was part of what God predicted would accompany Messiah's mission. The Jews' own Scriptures condemned their unbelief. Probably the quotation comes from Psalm 69:4. David experienced hatred for no reason. How much more would the Son of David experience it.*
    - b) Edwin Blum, *Sin is basically irrational. Their hatred of Jesus was without any rational cause which also fits the pattern of hatred for righteous people, as seen in those who hated David (Pss. 35:19; 69:4; 109:3).*
    - c) Leon Morris, ... *the passage quoted is from Psalm 35:19 (or 69:4, or possibly 109:3). All the suggested passages speak of hatred that lacks any reasonable foundation. It is this kind of hatred that the Jews had exercised toward Jesus ... The Jews saw themselves as the upholders of the Law, but in their zeal for the Law they incurred the condemnation of the Law by rejecting the Christ to whom the Law bore its witness.*
    - d) William Hendriksen, ... *when the enemies of the Christ rejected him, in spite of all his words of grace and miracles of love, they were hating him without a cause!*
    - e) Edward Klink, *By using a psalm of a righteous sufferer who faces baseless accusation and persecution, Jesus not only fulfills that psalm by becoming the fullest expression of the righteous sufferer but also fulfills in his person the deliverance from such injustice.*
    - f) Grant Osborne, *As the Davidic Messiah and righteous sufferer, Jesus suffers the same fate as David, and he fulfills it in himself. The treachery of the Jews who are part of the world is to be expected, and the disciples should not be surprised by it in the least. "Without reason" stresses for the third time (vv. 22, 24, 25) the fact that they have no excuse for what they are doing. Their own Scriptures prove them guilty (as in 5:45–47).*

D. The relationship of the Helper to believers (26-27)

1. Introductory comments

- a. Thomas Constable, *These verses explain how the conflict between Jesus and the world would continue after He departed to heaven. The crux of the conflict would continue to be who Jesus was.*
- b. Edwin Blum, *In the face of the opposition and hatred of the world a believer might be tempted to try to escape from the world or to be silent in it. Monasticism, extreme separation, and lack of witnessing have been too common in the church's history. Jesus encouraged His disciples by the promise of the Spirit's work in the world.*
- c. Leon Morris, *Jesus has a good deal to say about the Holy Spirit in this discourse. Without ceasing to think of persecution he unfolds further teaching on the work of the Spirit. As he is thinking of the attitude of the world to Christians it is perhaps not surprising that he deals here with the one activity of the Spirit toward the world, namely that the Spirit convicts the world of sin, righteousness, and judgment.*
- d. Charles Swindoll, *The Lord's abrupt mentioning of the Holy Spirit was apparently purposeful. His role in the life of the believer is to provide supernatural courage in the face of persecution.*

2. The role of the Holy Spirit (26), ***“But when the Helper comes, whom I will send to you from the Father, the Spirit of truth, who proceeds from the Father, he will bear witness about me.***

a. Related verses

- 1) John 14:16-17, *And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Helper, to be with you forever, 17 even the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it neither sees him nor knows him. You know him, for he dwells with you and will be in you.*
- 2) John 14:26, *But the Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, he will teach you all things and bring to your remembrance all that I have said to you.*

b. Comments

- 1) Thomas Constable, *Even though the world rejected Jesus, the Spirit characterized by truth would bear witness that Jesus was the Son of God (cf. 14:16–17, 26). He would do this when He came on the day of Pentecost ... Verse 26 also contains a strong testimony to the deity of the Holy Spirit, whom Jesus described as proceeding from the Father as He had proceeded from the Father (cf. 14:26). It refers to all three members of the Trinity, and it reveals something of their functional relationships to one another.*
- 2) Edwin Blum, *Jesus encouraged His disciples by the promise of the Spirit's work in the world. As the work of Jesus was to promote the Father and not Himself, so the Spirit will witness to Jesus as the Messiah (He will testify about Me). And what He says is true for He is the Spirit of Truth (cf. 16:13). As the Counselor (cf. 14:26; 16:7), He presents God's truth to the world.*
- 3) Kenneth Gangel, *The Counselor, whom we met in 14:16, 26, will come from the Father and his chief work will be to proclaim the message of Jesus ... We see that the Counselor is far more than just a defense attorney; he energizes us for the work he calls us to do. And part of that work reminds us that the Holy Spirit testifies to the world through witnesses like the disciples—and like us.*
- 4) Leon Morris, *The particular function of the Spirit that occupies us here is that of witness, and specifically of witness to Christ ... When Jesus is taken from the earth, the Spirit will continually bear witness concerning him.*
- 5) F. F. Bruce, *The witness which Jesus had borne, by his words and works, to the grace and truth of God would not come to an end when he was no longer in the world. The Spirit would take up this ministry of witness and carry it on, and he would do so not least through the disciples.*
- 6) William Hendriksen, *The Holy Spirit is here called the Spirit of truth, just as in 14:17 ... In the midst of the wicked world he will testify against the world (16:8, 9). In the midst of mankind he will bear witness concerning mankind's need. In the midst of the Church he will comfort the Church. The sphere of his testimony must not be restricted ... in this work of witnessing the Holy Spirit employs means, as the next verse indicates.*
- 7) George Beasley-Murray, *The witness of the Spirit, conjoined with that of the disciples, is to bring to light the truth of the revelation of Jesus in his word and deed, and death and resurrection; it takes place with and through the witness of the disciples to Jesus in the Gospel.*

- 8) Edward Klink, The Spirit is not merely facilitating the witness of the disciples, even though he is sent ... but offers his own witness to Christ. It might take place in and through the disciples (cf. v. 27), but it is the Spirit's own witness, even as the Father independently testified about Jesus (cf. 5:37–38)... ultimately God is the primary and first-order witness to himself. All other witnesses are secondary and supported by the foundational witness of God himself. Just as the “works” of the church are in reality the works of God (see 14:12–14; 15:4–5), so also is the witness of the church.
  - 9) Grant Osborne, *Note the trinitarian thrust—the Son and the Father send the “Advocate” (Greek: parakletos). Once again, note the progress of authority for mission in this discourse: the Father sends the Son, the Father and Son send the Spirit, and the Triune Godhead sends the church to the world. All of heaven is involved in the mission to the world.*
3. The role of believers (27), ***And you also will bear witness, because you have been with me from the beginning.***

a. Related verses

- 1) John 21:24, *This is the disciple who is bearing witness about these things, and who has written these things, and we know that his testimony is true.*
- 2) 1 John 1:2, *the life was made manifest, and we have seen it, and testify to it and proclaim to you the eternal life, which was with the Father and was made manifest to us—*
- 3) 1 John 4:14, *And we have seen and testify that the Father has sent his Son to be the Savior of the world.*
- 4) Acts 4:20, *for we cannot but speak of what we have seen and heard.”*
- 5) Luke 1:2, *just as those who from the beginning were eyewitnesses and ministers of the word have delivered them to us,*
- 6) Acts 1:21-22, *So one of the men who have accompanied us during all the time that the Lord Jesus went in and out among us, 22 beginning from the baptism of John until the day when he was taken up from us—one of these men must become with us a witness to his resurrection.”*

b. Comments

- 1) Thomas Constable, ... *the disciples would also testify, similarly empowered by the same Spirit. The basis of their testimony would be their long association with, and their intimate knowledge of, Jesus (cf. Acts 1:21–22) ... “The beginning” is the beginning of Jesus’ public ministry, when the disciples first accompanied Him.*
- 2) Edwin Blum, ... *this mysterious work of the Spirit is not done in isolation from the church. The apostles were to bear witness to the facts that they came to know: You also must testify. As the apostles witnessed, the Holy Spirit persuaded, and people were saved. The same combination of human obedience to the divine command (Acts 1:8) coupled with the witness of the Spirit is needed in every generation.*
- 3) Kenneth Gangel, *Jesus reminds the disciples, you also must testify.*
- 4) Leon Morris, *The apostles are linked closely with the Spirit in this activity of witness (cf. Acts 4:33) ... It is the same Christ to whom they bear witness, and it is the same salvation of which they bear witness. At the same time it is their witness. They cannot simply relax and leave it all to the Spirit. They have a particular function in bearing witness in that they were with Jesus from the very beginning. There is a responsibility resting on all Christians to bear witness to the facts of saving grace. They cannot evade this. But the really significant witness is that of the Holy Spirit, for he alone can bring home to people’s hearts the truth and the significance of the truth.*
- 5) William Hendriksen, *Certainly upon the eye-witnesses (those who had been with Christ from the beginning of his ministry) rests the duty of testifying concerning the things which they have seen. To be sure, the Holy Spirit’s work of bearing witness is not limited to the witness-bearing of the disciples.*
- 6) Edward Klink, *Jesus introduces the disciples not only to the persecution they will face but also to the office to which they are appointed as they join the mission of God (through Christ and by the Spirit). The exact nature of this office and the expected response will be explained in what follows (e.g., 16:1–15). This verse simply declares the fact of the future Christian witness.*
- 7) Charles Swindoll, ... *suffering often brings doubt. The Holy Spirit will testify to the truth of Jesus Christ within believers as well as through believers to their persecutors and others who witness their persecution.*

- 8) Grant Osborne, *The disciples in 15:27 join the Spirit in witness and continuing Jesus' mission to the world. They follow the Spirit and become the Spirit's mighty tool in this holy enterprise. The reason their witness is so powerful is that "you have been with me from the beginning." Jesus himself has invested his time and energy in them from the start, and so they are filled to overflowing with these truths. Moreover, they are filled with the Spirit and empowered for this witness.*
- 9) F. F. Bruce, *The witness which Jesus had borne, by his words and works, to the grace and truth of God would not come to an end when he was no longer in the world. The Spirit would take up this ministry of witness and carry it on, and he would do so not least through the disciples.*
- 10) William Barclay, *There are three elements in Christian witness ... (1) Christian witness comes from long fellowship and intimacy with Christ ... (2) Christian witness comes from inner conviction ... (3) Christian witness issues in outward testimony.*