**WHY ON EARTH GOD? WHY GOD ON EARTH?**

**THE GOSPEL OF JOHN: Chapter 16**

***What To Do***

***When Elvis Leaves The Building***

Since Aug. 16, 1977, each day people report seeing "The King." My only sighting was in '52 or 3 in my hometown, Memphis. I played weak keyboard in a country trio at our local "Grand Ole Opry." As we went on one night, a lanky, duck-tailed, sad-eyed loner stood backstage. He was four years older than I, and not there to perform.

As we finished, he was still there, prompting me to ask someone, "Who's that?" "Oh, he goes to Hume High School, works at a laundry and *thinks* he can sing. Name's Elvis."

I was a shy 13-or-so. If only we'd become friends, I could give you an eyewitness account of his life, perhaps including his last words before going underground at Graceland.

That's exactly what John does in writing "The Gospel of John." He was from northern Palestine, near the Sea of Galilee where Jesus walked on water. He and his brother James were full-time fishermen when they heard Jesus say, "Follow Me," and joined His 12-piece band. James would become the first of that dozen to be martyred for telling others about the Messiah.

John's in his 80s as he writes to new Christ-followers and to seekers still wondering who Jesus is, 50 years after He'd left the earth. By now John is the last living apostle, one of few people still alive who'd seen Jesus in person. He's deeply disturbed that many haven't gotten the truth about his amazing Friend, so he tells us flat out *why* he's writing this book. **Let's read it in John 20:31.**

**Now let's read all of John 16, verses 1 thru 33.**

***Surgeon General's Warning***

***John 16:1-4***

Ch. 16 is Jesus' parting words to His disciples. During these final 24 hours before the cross they have their "last supper" where Judas exits to betray his Master. In the garden Jesus spills His guts to His Father, is arrested, tried before Annas and Caiaphas, condemned by the Jewish high court. His pal Peter denies even knowing Him. Judas commits suicide. Jesus is tried by Pilate and Herod, mocked, beaten and nailed to a cross between two criminals. All in half the time it takes Dan Rather to do "48 Hours."

Jesus warns His cohorts that religious people and institutions would blacklist them, even think they're doing God a favor by wiping out Christ's people! Just "being religious isn't the issue," He's saying. The watershed question for all people, all religions is … "What will you do with Jesus?"

***Holy Spirit's Outside Job***

***John 16:5-11***

In these last 24 hours Jesus thinks beyond His death, resurrection and return to heaven, knowing that without Him, His folks would feel lost. So He promises to send them a Comforter (God the Holy Spirit) who'll more than take His place by actually setting up shop *in* their lives! Thus Jesus would be connected to all believers 24/7, not just while He's physically with them.

Jesus says the Spirit will use the changed lives of Christ's followers to demonstrate that each of us is a sinner, that a flawless righteousness (or wholeness) has been paid for for all of us, but that all who reject God's forgiveness must suffer a final, awful judgment.

In spite of God's generous love and patience, here we are, virtual specks in His trackless universe, shaking our puny fists at Him, saying, "I'll do it *MY* way! I don't need you, Big Guy! So what if doing it my way has left a trail of broken homes and lives, failed institutions, warring nations, even churches wracked by heresy and hypocrisy. By god (little "g") we're doin' it *our* way!"

***Holy Spirit's Inside Job***

***John 16:12-15***

Jesus tells His troops that this Comforter will guide them into all truth about who He (Jesus) is -- and about His significance to all mankind, to help them make sense of what's coming, and to focus all attention on Jesus so that His followers can understand and teach others about the Savior. The Holy Spirit did just this within the next few years by leading the disciples and others to write the 27 books of the New Testament. In this guidebook-for-life God reveals what He wants us to know about Him and His agenda.

He uses no other books, prophets, mojo or even churches to deliver any *additional*, breaking news. He makes this clear in the very last paragraph of the Bible when He speaks through John, saying,

"I give fair warning to all who hear the words of the prophecy of this book: If you add to the words of this prophecy, God will add to your life the disasters written in this book; if you subtract from the words of the book of this prophecy, God will subtract your part from the Tree of Life and the Holy City that are written in this book. (Rev. 22:18-19; Duet. 4:2, Prov. 30:5-6)" In short, DON'T MESS WITH TEXAS!

We also learn here that "God the Holy Spirit" was not sent to earth to promote Himself, but to call attention to God the Son.

***The Men from Sad Become***

***The Men from Glad***

***John 16:16-24***

Jesus had repeatedly told His disciples that He'd soon die. But it hadn't sunk in. Many trip over having to accept by faith the Bible's seeming paradoxes, things like….. God *died* so that we can *live* … like Jesus created the universe out of nothing … like what's *unseen* is more real than what's *seen* … like the first shall be last … like believe in God whom you cannot see!

Jesus tells His guys that what's about to make them VERY SAD will soon be that which makes them GLAD! As Ground Zero's rubble has become the logo of heroism, the cross would symbolize history's greatest act of love.

Jesus says, "After I leave, you can't ask me to pray to my Father on your behalf. So here's the deal --- just use My name as your PIN, and you can talk to My Father direct! No operators, no holy middlemen alive or dead." You mean, no ISP (Intermediate Spiritual Provider) is required? "Nope, we're talkin' retail here, factory-direct! No other name but Mine will get you this platinum access."

***"You Believe. But Do You* Really*?"***

***John 16:25-31***

In Hamlet Polonius delivers the line that's anathema to a politician: "Brevity is the soul of wit." In one brief sentence Jesus summarizes his entire, eternal itinerary! **Let's read John 16:28.**

Drilling down beneath John 16:28 we find that Christ left the splendor of heaven, from where He'd literally spoken the universe into existence (Gen. 1, John 1). Then 2,000 years ago Christ came to earth, laying aside much of His divine power for 33 years to give us an in-the-flesh view of what God the Father is like, then to die on a cross to fully satisfy His Father's requirement that we be righteous in order to enter His presence, to be buried (signifying that the cross puts to death the penalty of our sin), to rise from the grave on the third day (validating His claim to divinity) and to return to His Father in heaven, sending God the Holy Spirit to literally live in His followers, taking His place 'til He rejoins them (John 14:3).

**TALKING POINT: How has what you've discovered about Jesus this year changed what Christmas means to you?**

***"Hang On, Sloopy!"***

***John 16:32-33***

Who hasn't dreamed of changing the world? Rock'n'Roll Hall of Famer Eric Clapton wrote and sang:

"If I can reach the stars, pull one down for you,

Shine it on my heart so you could see the truth:

That this love I have inside is everything it seems.

But for now I find it's only in my dreams.

And I can change the world,

I will be the sunlight in your universe.

You would think my love was really something good,

Baby, if I could change the world."

Knowing that only John would remain with Him at the cross, that all his disciples would run for cover after His death, Jesus is aware that His ragtag eleven are unlikely candidates to become world-changers!

Imagine trying to market a $300-a-seat seminar with this copy: "Come learn how to win by submitting to your #1 competitor. Learn how to recruit wusses to execute your business plan!" Wrong.

John captures in print for us Jesus' final soliloquy to His pals. This stem-winder makes Knute Rockne sound like Pee Wee Herman.

Jesus says, "Tough times are ahead. I've told you this so that when you're jeered, stoned and thrown to the lions, you can have the brand of peace that only I can give."

Jesus' plan to turn the religious and secular worlds upside down is:

1. Be inwardly transformed; put Christ in charge of your life.
2. Get your marching orders from God's guidebook, the Bible.
3. Trust God to turn your sorrows into joy.
4. Build your life on the unwavering foundation of God's love.
5. Trust God's strength to compensate for your weakness.

***The World Ain't Seen Real Terror Yet***

Since "911" life has forever changed, but God is still the Almighty Sovereign of the universe, still seated on His throne in heaven. And the Bible says satan is still prince of this world.

When Adam and Eve took the serpent's advice, flaunting God's command, God honored man's free will and allowed satan (the fallen archangel Lucifer) to take free penalty shots and corner kicks for a "season." 6,000 years later we're still in that season.

Only God the Father knows when the final buzzer will sound. Not even God the Son knows. But when the Father cues Him with "It's time," the "last days" described in Revelation will commence, culminating in Christ's "second coming" when He'll rid the world of satan and sin once and for all.

A friend recently read the Gospel of John in pamphlet form six times and told me, "That certainly makes things black-and-white clear!" Just as you can't be partially pregnant, God says, "He who is not *with* Me is *against* Me."

Picture Husky Stadium in total darkness. On comes a blinding red spotlight in the south stands. Inside its glow sits every person who's ever lived, all under the penalty of sin.

Now on comes another beam, casting a huge pool of white light over the north stands. Just then the P.A. crackles, "Attention! I have news for all of you. The bad news is that you're all sinners, condemned to eternal judgment, with no hope to *earn* your way out.

"But here's the good news! God the Father loves each of you so much that He sent His Son Jesus to be the only acceptable sacrifice for your sin. That supreme sacrifice has been accepted by God the Father, meaning you've all been reconciled to God! He's made peace with each of you, no longer holding your sin against you, guaranteeing you eternal life, beginning now!

"To receive that forgiveness, God asks you to 'believe' in His Son, admit you're a sinner in need of the Savior, give God the reins of your life (John 3:36). Ladies and gentlemen, why not move now out of the south stands into the north stands?"

God has the best Christmas gift of all for you today. If you haven't accepted it yet, please don’t reject God the Father's generosity….and God the Son's sacrificial love. Just silently say to Him now, "Father, I quit trying to be good enough to get to heaven on a "gosh-I-hope-so" basis. Hey, I know I'm a sinner. I know Jesus died for me so that one day I can stand totally forgiven in Your holy presence. Right now I humbly accept Your forgiveness. Thank You for loving and saving me. Please show me how to live Your way. Thank You, Father. In Jesus' name I pray, amen."

Happy Reconciliation Day (proclaimed by Congress, and by Paul in 2 Cor. 5:18-21)….and Merry Christmas!

His Deal

December 4, 2001

www.HisDeal.org

george@HisDeal.org

Copyright © 2019. George Toles. All Rights Reserved.