

THE SEVENTH SUNDAY OF EASTER

EXAUDI

Hear, O Lord

Study Notes for the Christian Layperson

by: Rev. Marcus Baikie



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John 15:26–16:4 ESV

Author and Date:

The Holy Spirit caused the Apostle John to write the words of this Gospel in AD 90. These words were compiled in the great farewell discourse of Jesus to His sorrowful disciples in John 14-16. These words were uttered on Holy Thursday, the night Jesus was betrayed. This great farewell discourse is the heart of the preaching in the One Year Lectionary during the last part of the Easter season. This Sunday's Gospel is spoken right before the Gospel for the Fifth Sunday after Easter.

²⁶ [Jesus said,] **“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.**

- Jesus calls the Holy Spirit “the Helper”, which is *parakletos* (Paraclete) in Greek. This title is used by Jesus for the Holy Spirit throughout this passage: John 14:16, 26; 15:26; 16:7. This title is also given to Jesus in 1 John 2:1 (translated “advocate”): “But if anyone does sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous.” Outside of the New Testament, the word is used for a legal advisor in court, one who speaks on behalf of someone before a judge. In the Gospel of John, the Holy Spirit helps the disciples before the world by bearing witness to Jesus. In the First Epistle of John, Jesus helps the Christian before God the Father because “He is the propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world.” (1 John 2:2)

- In the Nicene Creed, we confess that the Holy Spirit “proceeds from the Father and the Son.” The Spirit proceeds from Jesus as also from the Father because Jesus is truly divine, God’s Son, the Second Person in the Holy Trinity. (Formula of Concord, Solid Declaration VIII:73).
- We are blessed, even when we undergo trial, suffer, and are insulted, because the Spirit of glory and God rests upon us, having been sent to us from the Father through the Son. (1 Peter 4:12-14)
- With the sending of the Holy Spirit, God fulfills the promise made to the house of Israel through the prophet Ezekiel, as recorded in this Sunday’s Old Testament reading (36:22-28): “And I will put My Spirit within you, and cause you to walk in My statutes and be careful to obey My rules.”

²⁷ **And you also will bear witness, because you have been with me from the beginning.**

- As the Holy Spirit bears witness about Jesus to the apostles, the apostles also bear witness about Jesus to the nations. Those who are taught by the Holy Spirit confess the truth they have learned. “Teach us to know the Father, Son, and You, from both, as Three in One that we Your name may ever bless and in our lives the truth confess.” (*Lutheran Service Book* 498/499:6)

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- “Bear Witness” – The Greek word used here and in the previous verse is *martyreo*. The same word is used for “witness” and “martyr” in the New Testament. It is used here to refer to the apostles, who literally saw Jesus with their own eyes and testified to Him as the Son of God. It will later be applied to Stephen and other Christians who gave their life on account of their confession of Jesus. (Acts 22:20) Though they were not necessarily eyewitnesses to the life and ministry of Jesus, they are rightly called martyrs because they added the testimony of their blood to their spoken confession of faith. (see Revelation 12:11 and 17:6)

¹ I have said all these things to you to keep you from falling away.

- “Falling Away” – The Greek word used here is *skandalizo*, from which we derive the English word “scandalize”. This word is mostly used by Jesus in the Gospels to refer to offense that leads to unbelief. For example, in the Parable of the Sower, the seed sown on rocky ground “is the one who hears the Word and immediately receives it with joy, yet he has no root in himself, but endures for a while, and when tribulation or persecution arises on account of the word, immediately he *falls* away.” (Matthew 13:21-22).
- Though Jesus said these words to the disciples to keep them from falling away into unbelief, He also knew that they would fall away from His side that night when He was betrayed, arrested, and put on trial: “And Jesus said to them, ‘You will all fall away, for it is written, “I will strike the Shepherd, and the sheep will be scattered.”’” (Mark 14:27)

² They will put you out of the synagogues. Indeed, the hour is coming when whoever kills you will think he is offering service to God.

- The Epistle for this Sunday, 1 Peter 4:7-11 (12-14), reminds us that when we suffer for the name of Christ, we are sharing in His sufferings. Those who killed Jesus thought that they were offerings service to God, thinking Him to be a blasphemer. (Mark 14:63-63) But by Jesus’ sufferings and death we are saved. Therefore if we are insulted for the name of Christ, we are blessed, and we will rejoice and be glad when His glory is revealed.

- “Offering Service” – The Greek word used here is *latreia*, which is also translated “worship” in the New Testament. Contrary to this false service, the proper spiritual worship for the Christian is “to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God.” (Romans 12:1)

³ And they will do these things because they have not known the Father, nor me.

- St. John Chrysostom: “Then He added for their consolation [this statement] as if to say: For your consolation it is enough that you suffer these things for My Father and Me.” (*The Sunday Sermons of the Great Fathers*, vol. 2, 445)

⁴ But I have said these things to you, that when their hour comes you may remember that I told them to you.”

- Johann Spangenberg: “It is a great solace to Christians in the cross when they are reminded of Christ’s words, namely, that it must be thus and cannot be otherwise...But since a Christian knows that his cross and suffering ultimately come from God and are laid on him by God, not for his ruin but rather for his good, he should also know that God is with him in the midst of his cross and suffering. Then he will not succumb to error and attack, but will hold his peace, suffering and enduring the hand of God, continue on in patience, until at last God comforts him with eternal joy and blessedness in the life everlasting. God grant it to us! Amen.” (*The Christian Year of Grace*, 214)

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