

Words of Peace and Joy in the Midst of Persecution

Jesus in John 16

*"I have told you these things, so that in me you may have peace. In this world you will have trouble. But take heart! I have overcome the world"
(John 16:33)*

The Holy Spirit and
His Work as it
relates to the World



“All this I have told you so that you will not fall away. They will put you out of the synagogue; in fact, the time is coming when anyone who kills you will think they are offering a service to God. They will do such things because they have not known the Father or me” (John 16:1-3)

- ✓ Jesus is preparing his closest disciples for the persecution (trouble) they are about to face. He had just previously shared these words – ***“If the world hates you, keep in mind that it hated me first.” (John 15:18)*** and now he will describe what that trouble will look like.
- ✓ In just a few short hours Jesus will be handed over to the Jewish religious leaders by Judas Iscariot, and they will begin a “mock” trial with the purpose of proving Jesus was a blasphemer and this will ultimately end in the crucifixion of Christ.
- ✓ Jesus knew this would happen and although he knew Peter would deny him and the others would briefly scatter, he shared these words so they would still trust him.

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- ✓ Jesus knew that trouble was coming (much of it very severe) and these words were intended as comfort to help them remain in the path of God’s will.
- ✓ Although these words were specifically spoken to the disciples, the reality is that all Christ Followers (Christians) will face persecution and tribulation until they are taken to be with Him in death or “rapture” or until Jesus returns and establishes his final kingdom on earth.

“Then you will be handed over to be persecuted and put to death, and you will be hated by all nations because of me. At that time many will turn away from the faith and will betray and hate each other, and many false prophets will appear and deceive many people. Because of the increase of wickedness, the love of most will grow cold, but the one who stands firm to the end will be saved. And this gospel of the kingdom will be preached in the whole world as a testimony to all nations, and then the end will come” (Matthew 24:9-14)

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- ✓ One of the immediate results from being followers of Jesus that will impact the disciples is the removal of their rights to their synagogue.
 - The synagogue (during the time of Jesus) was a place of local gathering (like a community hub) of Jews for the purposes of study, prayer, debate, legal matters, and other social issues all in support of the Temple in Jerusalem.
 - To be an outcast of the synagogue meant you were branded as a traitor, and the consequences were severe enough to be ostracized from family and jobs.
- ✓ Being an outcast from Jewish society because one is a follower of Christ (Christian) continued throughout the New Testament period and remains the same today.

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- ✓ There will be even more serious persecutions as a result of being a Christ follower:
 - History tells us that they were hunted down and arrested just for believing in Jesus and or teaching the same words that Jesus taught
 - These disciples will be beaten, imprisoned and or killed
 - Peter, Andrew and James (son of Alphaeus) and Bartholomew were crucified (according to church tradition/history)
 - James (son of Zebedee) and Paul were beheaded
 - James (half brother of Jesus), Phillip and Stephen were stoned to death
 - Thomas was stabbed with spears; Mark was dragged to death through the streets of Alexandria, and others like Matthew, Simon the Zealot, Thaddeus, and Timothy were also killed for their commitment to the Lord.

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- ✓ Persecution doesn't stop with the 11 disciples but continued throughout church history. Here are just a few:
 - Ignatius of Antioch (a disciple of Peter and John) was martyred in the Roman Arena
 - Justin Martyr (an apologist/defender of Christian doctrine) was beheaded
 - Polycarp (a disciple of John) who was a Bishop/Overseer of the church in Smyrna was burned at the stake
- ✓ Others were persecuted and killed because they dared to stand against false doctrine
- ✓ Even the church, during its darkest hours persecuted and killed their own because of doctrinal differences, reforms, and other ecclesiastical matters.

“I have told you this, so that when their time comes **you will remember that I warned you about them**. I did not tell you this from the beginning because I was with you, but now I am going to him who sent me. None of you asks me, where are you going? Rather, you are filled with grief because I have said these things” (John 16:4-6)

- ✓ Jesus provides this warning to his disciples to strengthen their faith. Over time they will recall his words and through the promptings of the Holy Spirit they will learn to endure this hardship and grow in their confidence in doing his will.
 - The priests and temple guards will seize Peter and John and throw them in jail for preaching about Jesus and his resurrection, but it doesn't stop them. (Acts 4)
 - Once again, the “religious leaders” will arrest the apostles and throw them in jail but this won't stop them from continuing their preaching about Jesus (Acts 5)
 - Stephen will be arrested, tried and stoned to death but this criminal act will only embolden the apostles further and the gospel will begin to spread beyond Jerusalem (Acts 6-8)
- ✓ **Persecution against the church will grow (Acts 8-9) yet the church will flourish**

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- ✓ There was no fear of persecution while Jesus was with them (for he kept it from happening) – but now that he is about to depart and go to the Father, he warned them of the impending persecution they would face. The Holy Spirit would be with them while going through it, yet they would only face what God would allow.
- ✓ His death was just hours away and the disciples would face the full fury of the world's hatred for Jesus and his disciples.
- ✓ The need for Christ to go away (die on the cross) and then return to the Father should have been the focus of the disciples but instead (perhaps because of a mix of fear and selfishness) they were “filled with grief” rather than joy.

“But very truly I tell you, it is for your good that **I am going away**. Unless I go away, the Advocate will not come to you; but if I go, I will send him to you. When he comes, he will prove the world to be in the wrong about sin and righteousness and judgment: about sin, because people do not believe in me; about righteousness, because I am going to the Father, where you can see me no longer; and about judgment, because the prince of this world now stands condemned.” (John 16:7-11)

- ✓ Jesus needed to proceed as God ordained it because it was necessary and beneficial to not just the 11 disciples he spoke to, but to all those who choose to believe in him. Had Jesus not voluntarily gone to the cross there would be no gospel (good news)
- ✓ Sin separates us from a Holy God and needs to be atoned for and that is exactly what is accomplished through Christ’s death on the cross. Christ “redeems” those who believe making them at-one (At-one-ment) with God.
- ✓ The Holy Spirit (our “advocate”) pleads the blood of Christ on our behalf to cover our guilt/shame and applies the blood as an “atoning sacrifice” for those who believe. This allows our guilt to be removed and restores our relationship with the Father.

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- ✓ The Holy Spirit convicts the world (whether they want to or not) concerning three things:
 - **Sin** – in this case Jesus is specifically addressing the sin of refusing to believe in him

“I told you that you would die in your sins; if you do not believe that I am he, you will indeed die in your sins” (John 8:24)
 - **Righteousness** – Although the religious leaders accused Jesus of being “unrighteous”, it would be the resurrection and ascension of Christ that would vindicate him as God’s righteous servant. (Acts 3:13-16, Isaiah 53:1-12)
 - **Judgment** – The death and resurrection of Jesus stood as a condemnation of Satan

The Holy Spirit and
His Work as it relates
to the Believer



“I have much more to say to you, more than you can now bear. But when he, the Spirit of truth, comes, he will guide you into all the truth. He will not speak on his own; he will speak only what he hears, and he will tell you what is yet to come. He will glorify me because it is from me that he will receive what he will make known to you. All that belongs to the Father is mine. That is why I said the Spirit will receive from me what he will make known to you.” (John 16:12-15)

- ✓ Clearly Jesus said more than what has been recorded in the scriptures, for John tells us this at the conclusion of his gospel record:

“This is the disciple who testifies to these things and who wrote them down. We know that his testimony is true. Jesus did many other things as well. If every one of them were written down, I suppose that even the whole world would not have room for the books that would be written.” (John 21:24-25)

- ✓ What was true at this moment was the disciples were facing life without their Messiah walking among them, teaching them, protecting them and guiding them. They were unable to fully grasp the meaning of the cross as well as the events that would come after that and Jesus chose not to burden them any further. Those instructions will come later from the Holy Spirit. (John 14:25-27)

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- ✓ The Apostles and others church leaders will receive their instruction from the Holy Spirit, and those instructions (contained in their written words) will become the truths they will write, which are contained in our 27 books of the New Testament.
- ✓ These writers (like the writers of the Old Testament) will (under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit), write down everything we need, to live as the people of God.

“However, as it is written: “What no eye has seen, what no ear has heard, and what no human mind has conceived” - the things God has prepared for those who love him — these are the things God has revealed to us by his Spirit. The Spirit searches all things, even the deep things of God. For who knows a person’s thoughts except their own spirit within them? In the same way no one knows the thoughts of God except the Spirit of God. What we have received is not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit who is from God, so that we may understand what God has freely given us” (I Corinthians 2:9-12)

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- ✓ The actions and promptings of the Holy Spirit will always be in harmony with the Father as is the case with Jesus. They (Father, Son, and Holy Spirit) are One and therefore their actions and words are consistent with each other.

“Jesus knew their thoughts and said to them, “Every kingdom divided against itself will be ruined, and **every city or household divided against itself will not stand.** If Satan drives out Satan, he is divided against himself. How then can his kingdom stand? And if I drive out demons by Beelzebul, by whom do your people drive them out? So then, they will be your judges. **But if it is by the Spirit of God that I drive out demons, then the kingdom of God has come upon you**” (Matthew 12:25-28)

- ✓ The witness of the Holy Spirit ultimately testifies to the truthfulness of Scripture and the true believer trusts the work of the Spirit and loves the Word of God.

Helping the Disciples Turn From Sorrow to Joy



YOU WILL GRIEVE, BUT YOUR
GRIEF WILL TURN TO *joy*.

John 16:20

John 16:16-33

“I have told you these things, so that in me you may have peace. In this world you will have trouble. But take heart! I have overcome the world” (John 16:33)

“Jesus went on to say, “In a little while you will see me no more, and then after a little while you will see me.” At this, some of his disciples said to one another, “What does he mean by saying, ‘In a little while you will see me no more, and then after a little while you will see me,’ and ‘Because I am going to the Father’?” They kept asking, “What does he mean by ‘a little while’? We don’t understand what he is saying.” (John 16:16-18)

- ✓ It is possible Jesus is speaking only about his death and burial when he says; “In a little while you will see me no more. The second statement; “then after a little while you will see me” could then be speaking only about his resurrection.
- ✓ The most likely interpretation of the phrase; “In a little while you will see me no more” is that Jesus is speaking about the entirety of the events which include his death, burial, resurrection and ascension to the Father. The second statement; “then after a little while you will see me” could be in reference to the indwelling of the Holy Spirit in all who believe . (Acts 2, Romans 8:9, Galatians 4:6)

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(John 16:16-18)

- ✓ If you ever find yourself not understanding certain things about the “Christian Faith”, it is highly probable that you are not alone.
 - Even the most seasoned followers of Christ will at times struggle with a particular passage of Scripture or a Theological concept.
 - New believers or converted skeptics may sometimes need time to catch up
- ✓ The closest disciples of Jesus didn’t always understand and had questions. It’s understandable that you too will have questions. They can be found by seeking God in prayer, meditation and the study of his Word. (II Timothy 2:15, Matthew 6:33)

“Jesus saw that they wanted to ask him about this, so he said to them, “Are you asking one another what I meant when I said, ‘In a little while you will see me no more, and then after a little while you will see me’? Very truly I tell you, you will weep and mourn while the world rejoices. You will grieve, but your grief will turn to joy.” (John 16:19-20)

✓ This entire question about Jesus leaving them (***“in a little while you will see me no more and then after a little while you will see me”***) was at the center of the disciple's confusion.

- They didn't know why he needed to leave them in the first place because they didn't fully grasp what was about to take place. Some of them may have still expected Jesus to overthrow the Romans and establish the promised kingdom.
- Jesus knew that with the passage of time and with the help of the teaching ministry of the Holy Spirit they would understand

“I have much more to say to you, more than you can now bear. But when he, the Spirit of truth, comes, he will guide you into all the truth. He will not speak on his own; he will speak only what he hears, and he will tell you what is yet to come” (John 16:12-13)

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- ✓ The disciples and all followers of Jesus will soon weep and mourn for they are about to witness the painful trial in which Jesus will be mocked, beaten, tortured and placed on a wooden cross to die a most agonizing death.

Then Pilate took Jesus and had him flogged. The soldiers twisted together a crown of thorns and put it on his head. They clothed him in a purple robe and went up to him again and again, saying, “Hail, king of the Jews!” And they slapped him in the face.” (John 19:1-3)

“Then the governor’s soldiers took Jesus into the Praetorium and gathered the whole company of soldiers around him. They stripped him and put a scarlet robe on him, and then twisted together a crown of thorns and set it on his head. They put a staff in his right hand. Then they knelt in front of him and mocked him. “Hail, king of the Jews!” they said. They spit on him, and took the staff and struck him on the head again and again. After they had mocked him, they took off the robe and put his own clothes on him. Then they led him away to crucify him” (Matthew 27:27-31)

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✓ Why would the world rejoice over Christ’s death – because they don’t know God!

➤ “If the world hates you, **keep in mind that it hated me first**. If you belonged to the world, it would love you as its own. As it is, you do not belong to the world, but **I have chosen you out of the world. That is why the world hates you**. Remember what I told you: ‘A servant is not greater than his master.’ If they persecuted me, they will persecute you also. If they obeyed my teaching, they will obey yours also. They will treat you this way because of my name, **for they do not know the one who sent me**.” (John 15:18-21)

➤ “All this I have told you so that you will not fall away. They will put you out of the synagogue; in fact, **the time is coming** when **anyone who kills you will think they are offering a service to God. They will do such things because they have not known the Father or me**” (John 16:1-3)

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✓ Christ’s death on the cross (a very real event) will not only bring sorrow to the disciples (and all Christ followers) but that same event will also be the cause of joy! **How can that be?**

➤ **Because of the resurrection**

“Now **Mary stood outside the tomb crying**. As she wept, she bent over to look into the tomb and saw two angels in white, **seated where Jesus’ body had been**, one at the head and the other at the foot. They asked her, “Woman, why are you crying?” “They have taken my Lord away,” she said, “and I don’t know where they have put him.” **At this, she turned around and saw Jesus standing there, but she did not realize that it was Jesus.**” (John 20:11-14)

➤ **Because of the Holy Spirit**

“And you also were included in Christ when you heard the message of truth, the gospel of your salvation. **When you believed, you were marked in him with a seal, the promised Holy Spirit**, who is a deposit **guaranteeing our inheritance until the redemption of those who are God’s possession**—to the praise of his glory.” (Ephesians 1:13-14)

“A woman giving birth to a child has pain because her time has come; but when her baby is born she forgets the anguish because of her joy that a child is born into the world. So with you: Now is your time of grief, but I will see you again and you will rejoice, and no one will take away your joy.” (John 16:21-22)

- ✓ The process of childbirth and the anguish/pain that comes along with it is best understood by the women who have given birth. Also, only a women who gives birth can fully describe the joy she experiences after the child is born.
- ✓ Jesus chooses to use the process of childbirth to help illustrate the truth of pain being replaced by joy as it relates to what the disciples are about to experience.
 - The disciples are in pain (grieving) at this moment knowing Jesus is leaving them which will culminate in his death on the cross
 - The disciples joy will come when they see Jesus again (after the resurrection)
- ✓ Although they may not fully understand at this moment - permanent joy will come

“In that day you will no longer ask me anything. Very truly I tell you, my Father will give you whatever you ask in my name. Until now you have not asked for anything in my name. Ask and you will receive, and your joy will be complete.” (John 16:23-24)

✓ **“In that day”** seems to indicate there was going to be a change in how things would function going forward.

➤ Prior to the crucifixion the disciples openly talked with Jesus

➤ Even after the resurrection they asked many questions of Jesus during the 40 days between the resurrection and his ascension to the Father in heaven

✓ After Jesus ascends to the Father he would no longer be physically present with them and, the Holy Spirit (who will indwell them), will become their teacher.

“But when he, the Spirit of truth, comes, he will guide you into all the truth. He will not speak on his own; he will speak only what he hears, and he will tell you what is yet to come. He will glorify me because it is from me that he will receive what he will make known to you. All that belongs to the Father is mine. That is why I said the Spirit will receive from me what he will make known to you” (John 16:13-15)

“But you have an anointing from the Holy One, and all of you know the truth” | John 2:20)

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- ✓ The disciples had a unique relationship (evidenced throughout the New Testament) as ambassadors/representatives for Jesus and were given the right to ask the Father for whatever they needed to accomplish his will.
- ✓ This was not some “magical formula” for their own personal will to be done but instead a request “in Jesus' name” to accomplish the will of the Father.
- ✓ Up to this point there was no need for the disciples to pray in Jesus' name because he was with them, but that was going to change . Praying in the name of Jesus would become the norm for the believer during the church age.
- ✓ The disciples would at long last understand why Jesus had to die - for the pain they would experience would turn to joy knowing they had the benefit of accessing the Father by the Spirit through praying in the name of Jesus.

“Though I have been speaking figuratively, a time is coming when I will no longer use this kind of language but will tell you plainly about my Father. In that day you will ask in my name. I am not saying that I will ask the Father on your behalf. No, **the Father himself loves you because you have loved me** and have believed that I came from God.” (John 16:25-27)

- ✓ The “figurative” (metaphorical/allegorical) speech Jesus used with the disciples usually had to do with the cross and the work of redemption which was difficult for the disciples to fully grasp.
- ✓ It is also highly probable that the disciples were unable to comprehend the depths of the Father's love which was fully expressed in his willingness to send his Son to die as a sacrifice for sin. This teaching (prior to the cross) often required metaphors or figurative speech to help the disciples understand.
- ✓ The cross; resurrection and ascension will change everything, and things will become clearer to the disciples as to what Jesus had been teaching them all along.

*“Therefore, since we have a great high priest who has ascended into heaven, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold firmly to the faith we profess. For we do not have a high priest who is unable to empathize with our weaknesses, but we have one who has been tempted in every way, just as we are—yet he did not sin. **Let us then approach God’s throne of grace with confidence, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help us in our time of need**” (Hebrews 4:14-16)*

“Therefore, brothers and sisters, since we have confidence to enter the Most Holy Place by the blood of Jesus, by a new and living way opened for us through the curtain, that is, his body, and since we have a great priest over the house of God, let us draw near to God with a sincere heart and with the full assurance that faith brings, having our hearts sprinkled to cleanse us from a guilty conscience and having our bodies washed with pure water. Let us hold unswervingly to the hope we profess, for he who promised is faithful.” (Hebrews 10:19-23)

“I came from the Father and entered the world; now I am leaving the world and going back to the Father.” Then Jesus’ disciples said, “Now you are speaking clearly and without figures of speech. Now we can see that you know all things and that you do not even need to have anyone ask you questions. This makes us believe that you came from God.” (John 16:28-30)

✓ **This is a central doctrine to the Christian faith**

“In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was with God in the beginning” (John 1:1-2)

“The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us. We have seen his glory, the glory of the one and only Son, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth” (John 1:14)

✓ The reason Christ came into the world was to do the work of redemption

*“The true light that gives light to everyone was coming into the world. He was in the world, and though the world was made through him, the world did not recognize him. He came to that which was his own, but his own did not receive him. **Yet to all who did receive him, to those who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God”*** (John 1:9-12)

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- ✓ Jesus will be returning to his place of “full glory” which was at the right hand of the Father in heaven because he is about to complete the mission of redemption to those who believe and trust in him as their Lord and Savior.

*“**I will remain in the world no longer**, but they are still in the world, and I am coming to you. Holy Father, protect them by the power of your name, the name you gave me, so that they may be one as we are one. While I was with them, I protected them and kept them safe by that name you gave me. None has been lost except the one doomed to destruction so that Scripture would be fulfilled.” (John 17:11-12)*

*“I pray that the eyes of your heart may be enlightened in order that you may know the hope to which he has called you, the riches of his glorious inheritance in his holy people, and his incomparably great power for us who believe. **That power is the same as the mighty strength he exerted when he raised Christ from the dead and seated him at his right hand in the heavenly realms**” (Ephesians 1:18-2)*

*“If you declare with your mouth, “Jesus is Lord,” and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. **For it is with your heart that you believe and are justified**, and it is with your mouth that you profess your faith and are saved” (Romans 10:9-10)*

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- ✓ The disciples began to fully grasp the words of Jesus and although they will scatter after his arrest, they will recall this moment when Jesus spoke these words.
- ✓ While it is true that Nathanael will make the claim; “***Rabbi, you are the son of God, you are the king of Israel***”, and Peter will declare; “***you are the Christ, the Son of the Living God***”, in this moment they may have started to put all things together.
- ✓ Perhaps this is the disciple’s full affirmation of Christ’s omniscience (“all knowing” powers) and his deity. They (in this moment) recognized that Jesus came from God but after he rises from the dead and because of the indwelling of the Spirit at Pentecost, they will come to realize he is a member of the **Godhead**. (**Father, Son, and Holy Spirit**)

“Do you now believe?” Jesus replied. **“A time is coming and in fact has come when you will be scattered, each to your own home. You will leave me all alone. Yet I am not alone, for my Father is with me.”** “I have told you these things, so that in me you may have peace. In this world you will have trouble. But take heart! I have overcome the world.” (John 16:31-33)

- ✓ There is no reason to doubt the claims of affirmation made by the disciples, but Jesus knew their limitations far better than they did for he was “all knowing”.
- ✓ It’s a fair question; **“Do you now believe”**? The disciples didn’t know what was coming but Jesus knew.
- ✓ Jesus took this moment to prepare them for the reality that **they will leave him**, and he **knows that they will** (Matthew 26:56). **Peter will deny him!** But once the trial and crucifixion is all over, Jesus will come to them, and all things will be made clear.
- ✓ The crucifixion will be a “lonely moment” for Jesus – but the Father will be with him

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- ✓ These instructions were given by Jesus to the disciples to sustain them during the trials and tribulations that will soon come their way.

“Peace, I leave with you, My peace I give to you; not as the world gives do I give to you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid.” (John 14:27)

*“Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God; and **the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding**, will guard your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.”* (Philippians 4:6-7)

- ✓ The disciples will be **radically changed** from **men of fear** to **men of courage** shortly after the resurrection and the coming of the Spirit at Pentecost. (Acts 2, Acts 4)

“Do you now believe?” Jesus replied. “A time is coming and in fact has come when you will be scattered, each to your own home. You will leave me all alone. Yet I am not alone, for my Father is with me. **“I have told you these things, so that in me you may have peace. In this world you will have trouble. But take heart! I have overcome the world.”** (John 16:31-33)

- ✓ Neither the disciples (nor us) need to fear persecution or even death because we know the God of hope!

*“Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall **tribulation**, or **distress**, or **persecution**, or **famine**, or **nakedness**, or **peril**, or **sword**? As it is written: “For Your sake we are killed all day long; We are accounted as sheep for the slaughter.” Yet in all these things we are more than conquerors through Him who loved us. For I am persuaded that neither death nor life, nor angels nor principalities nor powers, nor things present nor things to come, nor height nor depth, nor any other created thing, shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.” (Romans 8:35-39)*