SMITH FOR CHRIST

TEACHING THE WORD · WATCHING THE TIMES



DEEP DIVE

John

Chapter Sixteen, Verses 1–33

Sorrow Turned into Joy — the Helper who convicts and guides, the little while, and the Victor over the world

NASB 1995 | VERSE BY VERSE | FOUR VOICES | WITH DIAGRAMS

On the last night Jesus tells His friends the worst — synagogue doors closed, death at the hands of the religious — and the best: His going will bring the Helper, their grief will become joy like a mother's after labor, and He has already overcome the world. Read through four teachers — **David Guzik**, **R.C. Sproul**, **C.H. Spurgeon** and **Matthew Henry** — with the Greek behind John's key words.

THE PASSAGE

John 16:1–33

warning · Helper · little while · victory

THE METHOD

Verse by Verse

Color-coded by teacher

WHAT'S INSIDE

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Four movements from "kept from stumbling" to "I have overcome the world"

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"Therefore you too have grief now; but I will see you again, and your heart will rejoice, and no one will take your joy away from you." — John 16:22

SECTION I · THE PASSAGE

John 16:1–33

Sorrow Turned into Joy — Kept from stumbling, helped by the Spirit, grief turned to joy — and peace in the One who has overcome the world

† How to Read This Study

This study walks John 16 in 4 movements, in John's own order. Each movement opens with the full NASB 1995 text of those verses, marked with the Berean colors and shapes; then the Greek behind the key words; then the teachers, each in his own color — **David Guzik**, the pastor who walks the text verse by verse; **R.C. Sproul**, the theologian who presses every word for its doctrine; **C.H. Spurgeon**, the preacher who turns the doctrine into a call to the heart; and **Matthew Henry**, the Puritan commentator who gathers it into plain, practical counsel. The figures draw the passage so you can see where John is going. Read the Scripture first; then let each voice add its angle.

DAVID GUZIK · Enduring Word R.C. SPROUL · Ligonier · St. Andrew's
C.H. SPURGEON · Metropolitan Tabernacle MATTHEW HENRY · Commentary on the Whole Bible

HOW THIS STUDY IS MARKED God — His character & actions Command / instruction Key repeated word Sin / warning Promise / blessing Time / place / contrast

KEY VERSE · JOHN 16:33

"These things I have spoken to you, so that in Me you may have peace. In the world you have tribulation, but take courage; I have overcome the world."

† Before the Passage

John 16 is the end of Jesus' farewell teaching; chapter 17 is His prayer, and 18:1 takes Him across the Kidron to the garden where Judas will find Him. Chapter 15 ended with the world's hatred and the Helper's testimony (15:18–27). Chapter 16 carries both forward: the hatred will turn violent (vv. 1–4), and the Helper will not only testify but convict the world and guide the disciples into all the truth (vv. 5–15). Then the tone turns tender. The disciples, confused and grieving, hear about "a little while" (vv. 16–24), and the chapter ends with the most quoted promise of the night: "I have overcome the world" (v. 33).

Jesus speaks this way "so that you may be kept from stumbling" (v. 1). Within hours the Eleven would scatter (v. 32; Zechariah 13:7), Peter would deny Him, and they would hide behind shut doors "for fear of the Jews" (20:19). Within weeks they would be arrested and flogged (Acts 4–5), and within a few years Saul of Tarsus would do exactly what verse 2 describes — killing believers and thinking he served God (Acts 26:9).

Already in John the synagogue ban was a live threat (9:22; 12:42). These words were given so that when it came, they would remember He had told them (v. 4).

The center of the chapter is the Spirit. This is the fourth and fifth of the Helper sayings (14:16–17, 26; 15:26; 16:7–11, 13–15). Jesus says something that must have sounded impossible: "it is to your advantage that I go away" (v. 7). The same words — *sympherei hymin*, "it is expedient for you" — had been used by Caiaphas when he plotted Jesus' death (11:50). Caiaphas meant that one man's death would save the nation from Rome; Jesus means His death, resurrection and ascension will bring the Spirit to His people. Pentecost (Acts 2:33) is the fulfillment: "having received from the Father the promise of the Holy Spirit, He has poured forth this."

Read the chapter as a night moving toward morning. It opens with outcasts and killers (v. 2) and sorrow filling the heart (v. 6); it passes through a woman's labor (v. 21); and it ends with peace, courage and victory (v. 33). The phrase "These things I have spoken to you" marks the stages (vv. 1, 4, 25, 33). Everything turns on a "little while" — the word appears seven times in four verses — and on the One who goes away "to Him who sent Me" and comes back so that "no one will take your joy away from you" (v. 22).

I
MOVEMENT

JOHN 16:1–6

Kept from Stumbling

Jesus tells them the worst before it comes — and sorrow fills their hearts

1 "*These things I have spoken* to you *so that you may be kept from stumbling*. 2 "*They will make you outcasts from the synagogue*, but an *hour* is coming for everyone who kills you to *think that he is offering service to God*. 3 "*These things they will do because they have not known the Father or Me.* 4 "But *these things I have spoken* to you, so that when their *hour* comes, you may remember that I told you of them. These things I did not say to you at the beginning, because I was with you. 5 "But now I am going to Him who sent Me; and none of you asks Me, 'Where are You going?' 6 "But because I have said these things to you, *sorrow has filled your heart*.

JOHN 16:1–6

> "So then, I thought to myself that I had to do many things hostile to the name of Jesus of Nazareth."
>
> ACTS 26:9

σκανδαλισθῆτε

SKANDALISTHĒTE · "BE KEPT FROM STUMBLING" · G4624

Skandalizō comes from *skandalon*, the trigger-stick of a trap or a stone that trips the foot — our word "scandal." The NASB's "so that you may be kept from stumbling" renders a purpose clause with the negative: "so that you may not be tripped up." The KJV's "that ye should not be offended" uses "offend" in its old sense of "cause to fall." Persecution that comes unannounced can trip a disciple; persecution that was foretold confirms the One who foretold it (v. 4).

ἀποσυναγώγους · λατρείαν

APOSYNAGŌGOUS · LATREIAN · "OUTCASTS FROM THE SYNAGOGUE" · "SERVICE" · G656, G2999

Aposynagōgos, "put out of the synagogue," appears only three times in the New Testament, all in John (9:22; 12:42; 16:2). For a first-century Jew it meant losing worship, family and livelihood at once. *Latreia* is priestly, sacrificial service — the word for Israel's temple worship (Romans 9:4; Hebrews 9:1, 6). The killer will think he is offering God a sacrifice. That is exactly how Saul of Tarsus described his own past (Acts 26:9).

DAVID GUZIK · Enduring Word

Guzik: "Jesus warned His disciples of coming opposition because He did not want them to be surprised and stumbled by it." The prophecy came true quickly — "That time quickly came, as the life of Saul of Tarsus before his conversion showed (Acts 8:1-3, 22:3-5, 26:9-11)" — and it has kept coming: "Since then there have been many who persecute and kill the true followers of Jesus because they think God is pleased." The shock of it is part of why Jesus spoke: "Jesus did well to forewarn, because it comes as a great shock that a gospel so glorious is hated so passionately." Verse 3 names the root: they have not known the Father or the Son.

R.C. SPROUL · Ligonier · St. Andrew's

Ligonier's summary of Sproul's sermon "Redemption Applied" (1 June 2003, on 16:1–11) notes that "Before Dr. Sproul continues with the descriptions of the persecution, he discusses the Trinity that is affirmed by orthodox churches" — the Father, the Son who is going away, and the Helper He will send. In his article "The Ascension," written on this chapter, Sproul dwells on the disciples' grief in verse 6. After three years with Jesus, the announcement crushes them: "They will be overcome with grief." He says "there will be a fullness of sorrow that saturates the chambers of their hearts" — the sorrow that the rest of the chapter promises to turn.

MATTHEW HENRY · Commentary on the Whole Bible

Henry admires Jesus' honesty: "Christ dealt faithfully with his disciples when he sent them forth on his errands, for he told them the worst of it." The ban from the synagogue was the first blow, and "It has often been the lot of Christ's disciples to be unjustly excommunicated." The killers' zeal does not excuse them: "villanies will never be consecrated by putting the name of God to them." Christ spoke now so that afterward they would "remember that I told you" — a forewarning that turns the trial into a confirmation of His word.

II
MOVEMENT

JOHN 16:7–15

The Advantage of the Helper

Better that He go — the Spirit will convict the world and guide the disciples into all the truth

7 *"But I tell you the truth, ☆ it is to your advantage that I go away; for if I do not go away, the Helper will not*
come to you; but if I go, I will send Him to you. 8 *"And He, when He comes, will △ convict the world concerning*
sin and righteousness and judgment; 9 *concerning sin, because they do not believe in Me;* 10 *and concerning*
righteousness, because I go to the Father and you no longer see Me; 11 *and concerning judgment, because △ the*
ruler of this world has been judged. 12 *"I have many more things to say to you, but you cannot bear them now.*
13 *"But when He, the Spirit of truth, comes, △ He will guide you into all the truth; for He will not speak on His*

> *own initiative, but whatever He hears, He will speak; and ☆ He will disclose to you what is to come.*
> 14 *"△ He will glorify Me, for He will take of Mine and will disclose it to you.* 15 *"All things that the Father has are Mine; therefore I said that He takes of Mine and will disclose it to you.*
>
> JOHN 16:7–15

FIGURE · THE SPIRIT'S THREEFOLD CONVICTION

"HE … WILL CONVICT THE WORLD" · JOHN 16:8–11

CONCERNING	BECAUSE … (the reason Jesus gives)	WHAT THE WORLD IS SHOWN
SIN (v9)	*"they do not believe in Me"*	unbelief is the root sin — the one that condemns
RIGHTEOUSNESS (v10)	*"I go to the Father and you no longer see Me"*	the rejected Man was right — the Father received Him
JUDGMENT (v11)	*"the ruler of this world has been judged"*	Satan's verdict is in — and his followers share it

Henry: the Spirit's method is "first to convince, and then to comfort."

Read each row across: what the Spirit convicts the world about, the reason Jesus gives in His own words, and the verdict it brings home.

FIGURE · THE HELPER IN JESUS' FAREWELL

THE FIVE HELPER SAYINGS OF THE LAST NIGHT · JOHN 14–16

14:16–17	**with you forever**	another Helper — abides with you, will be in you
14:26	**teaches & reminds**	teaches all things; brings My words to remembrance
15:26–27	**testifies**	will testify about Me — "and you will testify also"
16:7–11	**convicts the world**	concerning sin, righteousness and judgment
16:13–15	**guides & glorifies**	into all the truth; what is to come; "He will glorify Me"

Maroon = this chapter. Every saying points the Spirit's work back to Jesus — His words, His witness, His glory.

John 16 holds the last two of five promises about the Helper; read down the column and watch the Spirit's work move from the disciples' hearts out to the world and back to Christ's glory.

συμφέρει ὑμῖν

SYMPHEREI HYMIN · "IT IS TO YOUR ADVANTAGE" · G4851

Sympherō, "to bring together, to be profitable." John uses the exact phrase three times: Caiaphas said "it is expedient for you that one man die for the people" (11:50; recalled in 18:14), and Jesus says "it is to your advantage that I go away." The high priest spoke a truer word than he knew (11:51). The departure the disciples dread — cross, tomb, ascension — is the very road by which the Helper (*Paraklētos*, G3875) comes.

ἐλέγξει

ELENXEI · "HE WILL CONVICT" · G1651

Elenchō is a courtroom and a conscience word: to expose, prove guilty, refute, bring to light so that the guilty cannot deny it. Jesus used it of Himself: "Which one of you convicts Me of sin?" (8:46); and of the evildoer who hates the light "for fear that his deeds will be exposed" (3:20). The Spirit does not merely accuse the world; He proves the case — concerning sin (unbelief), righteousness (Christ vindicated by the Father) and judgment (the ruler of this world condemned, 12:31; 14:30).

ὁδηγήσει

HODĒGĒSEI · "HE WILL GUIDE" · G3594

Hodēgeō, "to lead the way" (*hodos*, road + *agō*, lead) — the guide who walks the road with you. The Ethiopian asked, "Well, how could I, unless someone guides me?" (Acts 8:31), and the Lamb "will guide them to springs of the water of life" (Revelation 7:17). The Greek Old Testament uses it in Psalm 25:5: "Lead me in Your truth." Here the promise is first to the apostles — what they wrote is the fruit of it — and through their word to us. The Spirit speaks what He hears; He "will take of Mine" and disclose it (vv. 14–15).

DAVID GUZIK · Enduring Word

Guzik calls Jesus' going "an essential step in their growth as disciples": "Jesus meant that the presence and work of the Holy Spirit would actually be better for believers." He takes the three convictions in turn. Sin: "It is unbelief, the rejection of Jesus, which ultimately proves one to be guilty." Righteousness: "The Holy Spirit shows the world the righteousness of Jesus and its own unrighteousness." Judgment: "The Holy Spirit warns the world of this coming judgment." He quotes Merrill Tenney: "The Spirit does not merely accuse men of sin, he brings to them an inescapable sense of guilt." The guiding into truth was first for the apostles, "In another sense the Holy Spirit continues today to personally lead us into truth," and always toward Christ: "The Holy Spirit's ministry is revealing Jesus to us."

R.C. SPROUL · Ligonier · St. Andrew's

In "The Ascension" Sproul explains verse 7: "it is expedient or necessary for Him to go away so that the disciples may be filled with the Holy Spirit." "What sounds like an absolute disadvantage, Jesus promises will turn into an advantage." Christ had to ascend "before Pentecost could come and the Holy Spirit could be poured out upon the church." Ligonier's summary of his sermon "Redemption Applied" says he "comments on the three areas the Holy Spirit will convict: of sin, of righteousness, and of judgment." His *Essential Truths* devotional puts that conviction in courtroom terms: "The Spirit defends us against the world by convicting it of sin."

C.H. SPURGEON · Metropolitan Tabernacle

In “The Holy Spirit’s Threefold Conviction of Men” (25 February 1883) Spurgeon says, “The Holy Ghost does not come to make sinners comfortable in their sins” — “He comes on purpose to convince men of sin,” and above all the sin of unbelief. He then convinces of a righteousness not our own, which “makes him righteous on the spot,” and assures the believer that “the Lord Jesus overthrew the devil for you.” In “The Holy Ghost the Great Teacher” he presses the word “into”: “man can guide us to a truth, but it is only the Holy Spirit who can “guide us into a truth.”” “The Spirit never says one thing at one time and another thing at another.” His counsel: “Whenever you cannot understand a text, pray over it.”

MATTHEW HENRY · Commentary on the Whole Bible

Henry: “Those things often seem grievous to us that are really expedient for us.” Christ in the flesh could be in only one place, but “his Spirit is every where, in all places, at all times.” The Spirit’s order is the order of every true conversion — “first to convince, and then to comfort; first to lay open the wound, and then to apply healing medicines.” He convinces the world of sin, righteousness and judgment, and He guides the apostles so that “The Spirit shall teach nothing but the truth.”

III
MOVEMENT

JOHN 16:16–24

A Little While

Grief now, joy that no one can take — like a mother after the birth

16 *“A little while, and you will no longer see Me; and again a little while, and you will see Me.”* 17 *Some of*
His disciples then said to one another, “What is this thing He is telling us, ‘A little while, and you will not see
Me; and again a little while, and you will see Me’; and, ‘because I go to the Father’?” 18 *So they were saying,*
“What is this that He says, ‘A little while’? We do not know what He is talking about.” 19 *Jesus knew that they*
wished to question Him, and He said to them, “Are you deliberating together about this, that I said, ‘A little
while, and you will not see Me, and again a little while, and you will see Me’? 20 *“Truly, truly, I say to you,*
that you will weep and lament, but the world will rejoice; you will grieve, but your grief will be turned into joy.
21 *“Whenever a woman is in labor she has pain, because her hour has come; but when she gives birth to the*
child, she no longer remembers the anguish because of the joy that a child has been born into the world.
22 *“Therefore you too have grief now; but I will see you again, and your heart will rejoice, and no one will take*
your joy away from you. 23 *“In that day you will not question Me about anything. Truly, truly, I say to you, if*
you ask the Father for anything in My name, He will give it to you. 24 *“Until now you have asked for nothing in*
My name; ask and you will receive, so that your joy may be made full.

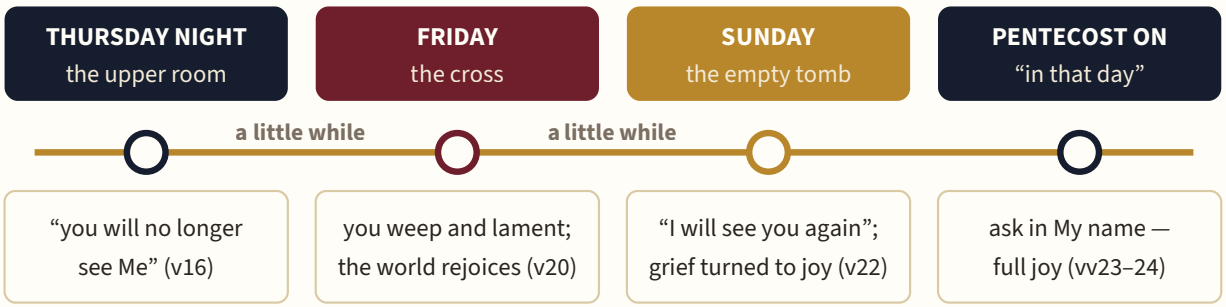
JOHN 16:16–24

“Then you will see this, and your heart will be glad, And your bones will flourish like the new grass; And the hand of the LORD will be made known to His servants, But He will be indignant toward His enemies.”

ISAIAH 66:14

FIGURE · A LITTLE WHILE, AND AGAIN A LITTLE WHILE

"A LITTLE WHILE … AND AGAIN A LITTLE WHILE" · JOHN 16:16–22



THE WOMAN IN LABOR (v21): the pain is real, and the pain is what brings the joy.
Grief is not replaced by joy — it is turned into joy, and "no one will take your joy away from you" (v22).

The disciples could not see the timeline; we can — two short "little whiles" separate the upper room from the empty tomb, and the joy that follows is the joy of asking in His name.

μικρόν

MIKRON · "A LITTLE WHILE" · G3398

Mikros, "small, little," used here of time. It appears seven times in vv. 16–19 — Jesus says it, the disciples repeat it to each other, and Jesus quotes their question back to them. The first little while ran from that night to the cross (hours); the second, from the tomb to Easter morning (three days). Some, with Henry, also hear in it the longer "little while" until His return (compare Hebrews 10:37, "FOR YET IN A VERY LITTLE WHILE, HE WHO IS COMING WILL COME"). The disciples' honest confusion — "We do not know what He is talking about" (v. 18) — is recorded for men like us.

λύπη … χαρά · θλῖψις

LYPĒ … CHARA · THLIPSIS · "GRIEF … JOY" · "ANGUISH" · G3077, G5479, G2347

Lypē is grief, sorrow, pain of heart (vv. 6, 20, 21, 22). The promise is not that joy will *replace* grief but that "your grief will be turned (*genēsetai*, "will become") into joy" (*chara*) — the same event that caused the grief, the cross, becomes the cause of joy. The mother's "anguish" in v. 21 is *thlipsis*, pressure, affliction — the very word of v. 33: "In the world you have tribulation." Birth-pain imagery is Israel's prophetic language for the travail that comes before deliverance (Isaiah 26:17–19; 66:7–14).

DAVID GUZIK · Enduring Word

Guzik notes the irony: "The disciples didn't understand that the arrest of Jesus was only an hour or two away." The promise of v. 20 is precise: "God's work was not to replace their sorrow with joy, but to turn sorrow into joy, as He often does in our lives" — "even as the sorrow of a woman in childbirth is directly connected to her joy." He quotes Spurgeon that "the apostles do not appear in their sermons or epistles to have spoken of the death of our Lord with any kind of regret." And the new access of "that day" is the gift of the cross: "Because of Jesus' great work, disciples have unlimited, undeniable access to God through Him."

R.C. SPROUL · Ligonier · St. Andrew's

Sproul's sermon "Overcoming the World" (29 June 2003, on 16:16–33), as Ligonier summarizes it, "starts this section by explaining what Jesus meant by seeing Him, not seeing Him, and seeing Him again." Renewing Your Mind's note on the broadcast sets the scene: after Jesus was arrested, tried and killed, His disciples were broken and seemingly without hope — and then their sorrow turned into joy. In "The Ascension" he describes where that grief was headed: Jesus promises that their mourning will give way "but to a great and fulfilling joy." The joy is anchored in a risen King, not in improved circumstances.

MATTHEW HENRY · Commentary on the Whole Bible

Henry reads the little while as Christ's death and resurrection, and beyond that His ascension and the Spirit's coming, and at last His second coming. The disciples were slow to understand because "Sorrow had filled their heart." Their mood follows their sight of Christ: "Believers have joy or sorrow according as they have or have not a sight of Christ," and "Christ's returns are returns of joy to all his disciples." He reproves them for praying so little — "Hitherto have you asked nothing in my name" — and teaches that "Asking of the Father includes a sense of spiritual blessings, with a conviction that they are to be had from God only."

IV
MOVEMENT

JOHN 16:25–33

I Have Overcome the World

Plain words about the Father, a faith about to scatter, and peace in the Victor

25 "These things I have spoken to you in figurative language; an hour is coming when I will no longer speak
to you in figurative language, but will tell you plainly of the Father. 26 "In that day you will ask in My name, and
I do not say to you that I will request of the Father on your behalf; 27 for the Father Himself loves you, because
you have loved Me and have believed that I came forth from the Father. 28 "I came forth from the Father and
have come into the world; I am leaving the world again and going to the Father." 29 His disciples said, "Lo, now
You are speaking plainly and are not using a figure of speech. 30 "Now we know that You know all things, and
have no need for anyone to question You; by this we believe that You came from God." 31 Jesus answered them,
"Do you now believe? 32 "Behold, an hour is coming, and has already come, for you to be scattered, each to
his own home, and to leave Me alone; and yet I am not alone, because the Father is with Me. 33 "These
things I have spoken to you, so that in Me you may have peace. In the world you have tribulation, but
take courage; I have overcome the world."

JOHN 16:25–33

"Awake, O sword, against My Shepherd, And against the man, My Associate," Declares the LORD of hosts. "Strike the Shepherd that the sheep may be scattered; And I will turn My hand against the little ones."

ZECHARIAH 13:7

παροιμίαις … παρρησίᾳ

PAROIMIAIS … PARRĒSIA · "FIGURATIVE LANGUAGE … PLAINLY" · G3942, G3954

Paroimia is a proverb, a figure, a veiled saying — the word for the shepherd discourse (10:6) and here for the vine, the little while and the woman in labor (16:25, 29; elsewhere only 2 Peter 2:22). *Parrēsia* is openness, plain speech, boldness — the word Acts uses for the apostles' "confidence" before the council (Acts 4:13, 29, 31). The disciples claim the plain speaking has come (v. 29); Jesus knows their understanding will arrive only after the cross and the Spirit.

θαρσεῖτε, ἐγὼ νενίκηκα τὸν κόσμον

THARSEITE, EGŌ NENIKĒKA TON KOSMON · "TAKE COURAGE; I HAVE OVERCOME THE WORLD" · G2293, G3528

Tharseō, "be of good courage," is a word Jesus speaks to the paralytic (Matthew 9:2), the bleeding woman (9:22), the disciples on the sea (14:27), and later to Paul in custody (Acts 23:11). *Nikaō*, "to conquer," is in the perfect tense — *nenikēka*, "I have overcome and the victory stands" — spoken before the cross as if it were already done. This is the only time John's Gospel uses the verb; his first letter and Revelation take it up again and again: "this is the victory that has overcome the world — our faith" (1 John 5:4).

DAVID GUZIK · Enduring Word

Guzik notes that the Father needs no persuading: "Jesus makes it clear that the Son did not need to persuade an angry Father to be gracious," and he quotes William Barclay, "He did not die to change God into love; he died to tell us that God is love." The disciples' confident "now we know" is premature; within hours they scatter. Yet Jesus was not alone: "In the loneliest moments imaginable, He understood that the Father was with Him." On v. 33: "Peace is offered to us, but tribulation is promised." "Jesus did not promise peace; He offered it." And He comforted them with His victory, going to the cross, as Leon Morris puts it, "not in fear or in gloom, but as a conqueror."

R.C. SPROUL · Ligonier · St. Andrew's

Ligonier's summary of Sproul's "Overcoming the World" (29 June 2003) says he continues "by explaining Jesus' no longer speaking in figurative language but plain speaking," and that "Jesus again predicts they will scatter and leave Him alone except for His Father"; he closes with Paul confronting the philosophers on Mars Hill. Renewing Your Mind gives the sermon's point in one line: "Christ, by His resurrection, has overcome the world." In "The Ascension" Sproul adds where the Victor went — to His coronation, and to sit "at the right hand of the Father, exercising His lordship over the whole world."

C.H. SPURGEON · Metropolitan Tabernacle

Spurgeon's "Christ the Overcomer of the World" (3 December 1876) notes that Jesus comforts His disciples by pointing them to Himself — "there is no balm for the heart like himself." He defines the world here as the spirit of evil in unconverted humanity, its customs and its trials, and traces Christ's victory through His patient, truthful, humble life, His death — where "the Son of God smote to the heart the principle of selfishness" — and His rising and reign. Because He conquered as our Head and representative, believers conquer in Him; and "he strengthens the hands that hang down and confirms the feeble knees."

MATTHEW HENRY · Commentary on the Whole Bible

Henry: “Divine truths are most likely to do good when they are spoken plainly.” He hears “Do you now believe?” as a gentle check on overconfidence: they would be “scattered every man to his own; not to their own possessions or habitations.” But Christ says, “Yet I am not alone,” and neither are His people when God is with them. “Peace in Christ is the only true peace, and in him alone believers have it,” though “It has been the lot of Christ’s disciples to have more or less tribulation in this world.” The ground of courage is His victory: “Never was there such a conqueror of the world as Christ was.”

V

THEME

CROSS-REFERENCES

The Passage in the Whole Bible

From the struck Shepherd to the wiped-away tear — where John 16 reaches back and forward

“Therefore having been exalted to the right hand of God, and having received from the Father the promise of the Holy Spirit, He has poured forth this which you both see and hear.”

ACTS 2:33

“My little children, I am writing these things to you so that you may not sin. And if anyone sins, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous;”

1 JOHN 2:1

“So they went on their way from the presence of the Council, rejoicing that they had been considered worthy to suffer shame for His name.”

ACTS 5:41

“But in all these things we overwhelmingly conquer through Him who loved us.”

ROMANS 8:37

“For whatever is born of God overcomes the world; and this is the victory that has overcome the world—our faith.”

1 JOHN 5:4

“and He will wipe away every tear from their eyes; and there will no longer be any death; there will no longer be any mourning, or crying, or pain; the first things have passed away.”

REVELATION 21:4

DAVID GUZIK · Enduring Word

Guzik reads verse 2 forward into Acts: “That time quickly came, as the life of Saul of Tarsus before his conversion showed” — the persecutor who later became the apostle.

MATTHEW HENRY · Commentary on the Whole Bible

Henry reads the “little while” all the way to the end: Christ is seen again at His resurrection, by the Spirit, and at His second coming, and “Christ’s returns are returns of joy to all his disciples.”

SECTION II · STUDY HELPS

At a Glance

Four voices, one chapter

Four teachers, four movements. Guzik walks the text and gathers the commentators; Sproul's voice comes through Ligonier's summaries of his 2003 sermons and his article on the ascension, which expounds this chapter; Spurgeon preaches the Spirit's conviction and teaching and Christ's victory; Henry gives the Puritan's plain counsel. Where one of them is not sourced for a movement, the cell says so.

THE MOVEMENT	GUZIK · the text	SPROUL · the doctrine	SPURGEON · the heart	HENRY · the counsel
I · Forewarned (1–6)	Warned so they would not stumble; Saul of Tarsus proved it; still true today.	The Trinity before the persecution; a fullness of sorrow saturating their hearts.	Not sourced for these verses in this study.	He told them the worst of it; villainies are not consecrated by God's name.
II · The Helper (7–15)	Better for believers; unbelief the root sin; the Spirit reveals Jesus.	Expedient — the ascension had to come before Pentecost; the Spirit defends us by convicting the world.	The Spirit doesn't make sinners comfortable; He guides into truth, not just to it.	Grievous things are often expedient; first convince, then comfort.
III · A little while (16–24)	Sorrow turned, not replaced — like a mother's labor; open access in His name.	Not seeing, then seeing again; mourning giving way to a great and fulfilling joy.	Not sourced for these verses in this study.	Joy follows the sight of Christ; His returns are returns of joy.
IV · Overcome (25–33)	No angry Father to persuade; peace offered, tribulation promised; a conqueror.	Plain speaking; scattered but not alone; Christ by His resurrection has overcome.	No balm like Himself; He struck selfishness to the heart; we overcome in our Head.	Peace in Christ the only true peace; never such a conqueror of the world.

JOHN 16:1–33 · A COMPARATIVE READING

† Key Insights to Carry

- **Forewarned is forearmed.** Four times Jesus says "These things I have spoken to you" (vv. 1, 4, 25, 33). He tells the worst ahead of time so that the trial, when it comes, confirms His word instead of breaking their faith. THE TEXT
- **Religious zeal can kill.** *Latreia* (v. 2) is temple service. The persecutor thinks he is offering a sacrifice — Saul of Tarsus did (Acts 26:9). Henry: "villanies will never be consecrated by putting the name of God to them." THE GREEK
- **Caiaphas and Jesus used the same words.** "It is expedient for you" (11:50) and "it is to your advantage" (16:7) are the same Greek. The high priest plotted a death to save a nation; Jesus went to death to send the Spirit. THE GREEK
- **The Spirit proves the case.** *Elenchō* is to expose and prove guilty. Spurgeon: "The Holy Ghost does not come to make sinners comfortable in their sins." Henry: "first to convince, and then to comfort." SPURGEON
- **Unbelief is the sin the Spirit presses.** "Concerning sin, because they do not believe in Me" (v. 9). Guzik: "It is unbelief, the rejection of Jesus, which ultimately proves one to be guilty." GUZIK
- **Into the truth, not just to it.** Spurgeon: man can guide us to a truth, but only the Spirit can guide us into it. And He always points to Jesus — "He will glorify Me" (v. 14). SPURGEON
- **An absolute disadvantage turned into an advantage.** Sproul: "What sounds like an absolute disadvantage, Jesus promises will turn into an advantage." The ascension had to come before Pentecost. SPROUL
- **Grief turned, not replaced.** The thing that caused the grief — the cross — becomes the cause of joy. Guzik: "God's work was not to replace their sorrow with joy, but to turn sorrow into joy." GUZIK

- **The mother's anguish and the world's tribulation are one word.** *Thlipsis* is in v. 21 and v. 33. Our tribulation is labor pain, and the Victor has already spoken the last word. THE GREEK
- **Victory in the perfect tense.** *Nenikēka* — "I have overcome" — spoken the night before the cross. Henry: "Never was there such a conqueror of the world as Christ was." HENRY

† Questions for the Table

1 **What trouble has come into my life that Jesus actually warned me about — and did it shake my faith or confirm His word?**

"These things I have spoken to you so that you may be kept from stumbling."

16:1–4

2 **Where do I need to believe that Jesus' "going away" — something I would never have chosen — is to my advantage?**

Sproul: an absolute disadvantage turned into an advantage.

16:6–7

3 **When has the Holy Spirit convicted me — not just made me feel bad, but proved the case? What did He show me about sin, righteousness or judgment?**

First to convince, then to comfort (Henry).

16:8–11; 8:46

4 **What grief am I carrying that I need to see as labor pain rather than a dead end?**

Grief turned into joy — the woman in labor.

16:20–22; Rev 21:4

5 **Jesus says "Until now you have asked for nothing in My name." What have I stopped asking the Father for?**

"Ask and you will receive, so that your joy may be made full."

16:23–24

6 **Where am I feeling alone and scattered this week — and what does it mean that Jesus was "not alone" and has "overcome the world"?**

Peace is offered, tribulation is promised (Guzik).

16:32–33; 1 John 5:4

John 16 does not pretend the night is short or the world is kind. It promises a Helper who convicts and guides, a grief that turns into joy, and a peace that holds in tribulation. The One who said "I have overcome the world" walked out to the garden the same night — and on the third day the little while was over.

Teaching the Word. Watching the Times. — Smith For Christ

† Sources

Each teacher's section summarizes the pages below in our own words; short quotations are verbatim from them. Matthew Henry (1662–1714) completed his *Commentary* himself through the Gospels and Acts. Henry's Commentary and C.H. Spurgeon (1834–1892) are in the public domain; Guzik and Sproul are summarized — consult each author's own work.

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