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## John 16 New Living Translation (NLT)

[John 16:1–15](#) Jesus continued the thoughts of [15:18–25](#) regarding the world's hatred of his disciples and its opposition to the testimony of the Holy Spirit regarding him as Messiah and Son of God. In this section, he specified in greater detail how the Spirit confronts the world, i.e., not only does he testify about Jesus but he convicts men of sin. Through conviction of sin and testimony of the gospel, the Spirit turns the hostile hearts of men away from rebellion against God into belief regarding Jesus as Savior and Lord. This section may be divided into four parts: 1) the killing of the disciples by the world ([16:1–4](#)); 2) the comforting of the disciples by the Lord (vv. [5–7](#)); 3) the conviction of men by the Holy Spirit (vv. [8–12](#)); and 4) the guidance of the believer into all truth by the Holy Spirit (vv. [13–15](#)).

**16** "I have told you these things so that you won't abandon your faith.

[John 16:1](#) these things. This is what he had just said in [15:18–25](#). falling away. The connotation of this word has the idea of setting a trap. The hatred of the world was such that it would seek to trap and destroy the disciples in an effort to prevent their witness to Jesus as Messiah and Son of God. Jesus did not want them to be caught unaware ([16:4](#)).

<sup>2</sup>For you will be expelled from the synagogues, and the time is coming when those who kill you will think they are doing a holy service for God. <sup>3</sup>This is because they have never known the Father or me. <sup>4</sup>Yes, I'm telling you these things now, so that when they happen, you will remember my warning. I didn't tell you earlier because I was going to be with you for a while longer.

[John 16:2](#) he is offering service to God. Paul, before he was saved, personified this attitude as he persecuted the church, thinking that he was doing service for God ([Acts 22:4–5](#); [26:9–11](#); [Gal. 1:13–17](#); [Phil. 3:6](#); [1 Tim. 1:12–17](#)). After Paul's conversion, the persecutor became the persecuted because of the hatred of the world ([2 Cor. 11:22–27](#); cf. Stephen in [Acts 7:54–8:3](#)).

[John 16:4](#) I was with you. Jesus didn't need to warn them because he was there to protect them.

## The Work of the Holy Spirit

<sup>5</sup>"But now I am going away to the one who sent me, and not one of you is asking where I am going. <sup>6</sup>Instead, you grieve because of what I've told you.

[John 16:5](#) none of you asks. Earlier they had done so ([13:36](#); [14:5](#)), but they were then so absorbed in their own sorrow and confusion that they lost interest in where he was going. They were apparently consumed with what would happen to them ([16:6](#)).

<sup>7</sup>But in fact, it is best for you that I go away, because if I don't, the Advocate<sup>[a]</sup> won't come. If I do go away, then I will send him to you.

[John 16:7](#) the Helper will not come. Again, the promise of the Holy Spirit being sent is given to comfort the disciples. See [note on 15:26–27](#). The first emphasis was on his life-giving power ([7:37–39](#)). The next featured his indwelling presence ([14:16–17](#)). The next marked his teaching ministry ([14:26](#)). His ministry of empowering for witness is marked in [15:26](#).

<sup>8</sup>And when he comes, he will convict the world of its sin, and of God's righteousness, and of the coming judgment.

[John 16:8](#) when he comes. The coming of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost was approximately 40 or more days away at this point (see [Acts 2:1–13](#)). convict. This word has two meanings: 1) the judicial act of conviction with a view toward sentencing (i.e., a courtroom term—conviction of sin) or 2) the act of convincing. Here the second idea is best, since the purpose of the Holy Spirit is not condemnation but conviction of the need for the Savior. The Son does the judgment, with the Father ([John 5:22; 27; 30](#)). In [16:14](#), it is said that the Holy Spirit will reveal the glories of Christ to his people. He will also inspire the writing of the NT, guiding the apostles to write it (v. [13](#)), and he will reveal “the things that are to come,” through the NT prophecies (v. [13](#)).

<sup>9</sup>The world's sin is that it refuses to believe in me.

[John 16:9](#) sin. The singular indicates that a specific sin is in view; i.e., that of not believing in Jesus as Messiah and Son of God. This is the only sin, ultimately, that damns people to hell (see [note on 8:24](#)). Though all men are depraved, cursed by their violation of God's law and sinful by nature, what ultimately damns them to hell is their unwillingness to believe in the Lord Jesus Christ as Savior (cf. [8:24](#)).

<sup>10</sup>Righteousness is available because I go to the Father, and you will see me no more.

[John 16:10](#) righteousness. The Holy Spirit's purpose here is to shatter the pretensions of self-righteousness (hypocrisy), exposing the darkness of the heart ([3:19–21; 7:7; 15:22; 24](#)). While Jesus was on the earth, he performed this task especially toward the shallowness and emptiness of Judaism that had degenerated into legalistic modes without life-giving reality (e.g., [2:13–22; 5:10–16; 7:24; Isa. 64:5–6](#)). With Jesus gone to the Father, the Holy Spirit continues his convicting role.

<sup>11</sup>Judgment will come because the ruler of this world has already been judged.

[John 16:11](#) judgment. The judgment here in context is that of the world under Satan's control. Its judgments are blind, faulty, and evil as evidenced in their verdict on Christ. The world can't make righteous judgments ([7:24](#)), but the Spirit of Christ does ([8:16](#)). All Satan's adjudications are lies ([8:44–47](#)), so the Spirit convicts men of their false judgment of Christ. Satan, the ruler of the world ([14:30; Eph. 2:1–3](#)) who, as the god of this world, has perverted the world's judgment and turned people from believing in Jesus as the Messiah and Son of God ([2 Cor. 4:4](#)), was defeated at the cross. While Christ's death looked like Satan's greatest victory, it actually was Satan's destruction (cf. [Col. 2:15; Heb. 2:14–15; Rev. 20:10](#)). The Spirit will lead sinners to true judgment.

<sup>12</sup>“There is so much more I want to tell you, but you can’t bear it now. <sup>13</sup>When the Spirit of truth comes, he will guide you into all truth. He will not speak on his own but will tell you what he has heard. He will tell you about the future. <sup>14</sup>He will bring me glory by telling you whatever he receives from me. <sup>15</sup>All that belongs to the Father is mine; this is why I said, ‘The Spirit will tell you whatever he receives from me.’”

## Sadness Will Be Turned to Joy

<sup>16</sup>“In a little while you won’t see me anymore. But a little while after that, you will see me again.”

<sup>17</sup>Some of the disciples asked each other, “What does he mean when he says, ‘In a little while you won’t see me, but then you will see me,’ and ‘I am going to the Father’? <sup>18</sup>And what does he mean by ‘a little while’? We don’t understand.”

<sup>19</sup>Jesus realized they wanted to ask him about it, so he said, “Are you asking yourselves what I meant? I said in a little while you won’t see me, but a little while after that you will see me again. <sup>20</sup>I tell you the truth, you will weep and mourn over what is going to happen to me, but the world will rejoice. You will grieve, but your grief will suddenly turn to wonderful joy. <sup>21</sup>It will be like a woman suffering the pains of labor. When her child is born, her anguish gives way to joy because she has brought a new baby into the world. <sup>22</sup>So you have sorrow now, but I will see you again; then you will rejoice, and no one

[John 16:13](#) all the truth. This verse, like [14:26](#), points to the supernatural revelation of all truth by which God has revealed himself in Christ ([16:14–15](#)), particularly. This is the subject of the inspired NT writings. See *note on v. 7*.

[John 16:14](#) He will glorify me. This is really the same as v. 13, in that all NT truth revealed by God centers in Christ ([Heb. 1:1–2](#)). Christ was the theme of the OT, as the NT claims ([John 1:45](#); [5:37](#); [Luke 24:27](#); [44](#); [Acts 10:43](#); [18:28](#); [Rom. 1:1–2](#); [1 Cor. 15:3](#); [1 Pet. 1:10–11](#); [Rev. 19:10](#)).

[John 16:16–19](#) Jesus was referring to his ascension (“you will see me no longer”) and the coming of the Holy Spirit (“you will see me”), emphatically claiming that the Spirit and he are one ([Rom. 8:9](#); [Phil. 1:19](#); [1 Pet. 1:11](#); [Rev. 19:10](#)). Christ dwells in believers through the Holy Spirit—in that sense they see him. See *notes on [John 14:16–18](#)*.

[John 16:20](#) sorrow will turn into joy. The very event that made the hateful realm of mankind (“world”) rejoice and cause grief to Jesus’ disciples, will be the same event that will lead to the world’s sorrow and the believer’s joy. The disciples would soon realize the marvelous nature of God’s gift of salvation and the Spirit through what he accomplished, and the blessing of answered prayer (v. 24). [Acts](#) records the coming of the Holy Spirit and the power and joy ([Acts 2:4–47](#); [13:52](#)) of the early church

[John 16:22](#) I will see you. After the resurrection, Jesus did see his disciples ([20:19–29](#); [21:1–23](#); cf. [1 Cor. 15:1–8](#)). Beyond that brief time of personal fellowship ([Acts 1:1–3](#)), he would be with them permanently in his Spirit (see *notes on [John 16:16–19](#); [14:16–19](#)*).

can rob you of that joy. <sup>23</sup>At that time you won't need to ask me for anything. I tell you the truth, you will ask the Father directly, and he will grant your request because you use my name.

<sup>24</sup>You haven't done this before. Ask, using my name, and you will receive, and you will have abundant joy.

<sup>25</sup>"I have spoken of these matters in figures of speech, but soon I will stop speaking figuratively and will tell you plainly all about the Father. <sup>26</sup>Then you will ask in my name. I'm not saying I will ask the Father on your behalf, <sup>27</sup>for the Father himself loves you dearly because you love me and believe that I came from God.<sup>[b]</sup> <sup>28</sup>Yes, I came from the Father into the world, and now I will leave the world and return to the Father."

<sup>29</sup>Then his disciples said, "At last you are speaking plainly and not figuratively. <sup>30</sup>Now we understand that you know everything, and there's no need to question you. From this we believe that you came from God."

<sup>31</sup>Jesus asked, "Do you finally believe? <sup>32</sup>But the time is coming—indeed it's here now—when you will be scattered, each one going his own way, leaving me alone. Yet I am not alone because the Father is with me. <sup>33</sup>I have told you all this so that you may have peace in me. Here on earth you will have many trials and sorrows. But take heart, because I have overcome the world."

John 16:23 In that day. This is a reference to Pentecost when the Holy Spirit came (Acts 2:1–13) and sorrow turned to joy. This is a reference also to the "last days," which were inaugurated after his resurrection and the Spirit's coming (Acts 2:17; 2 Tim. 3:1; Heb. 1:2; James 5:3; 2 Pet. 3:3; 1 John 2:18). ask nothing of me. After Jesus' departure and sending of the Spirit, believers will no longer ask him since he is not present. Instead, they will ask the Father in his name (see notes on John 16:26–28; 14:13–14).

John 16:24 joy may be full. In this case, the believer's joy will be related to answered prayer and a full supply of heavenly blessing for everything consistent with the purpose of the Lord in one's life. See note on 15:11.

John 16:25 in figures of speech. The term means "veiled, pointed statement" that is pregnant with meaning, i.e., something that is obscure. What seemed hard to understand for the disciples during the life of Jesus would become clear after his death, resurrection, and the coming of the Holy Spirit (see vv. 13–14; 14:26; 15:26–27). They would actually understand the ministry of Christ better than they had while they were with him, as the Spirit inspired them to write the Gospels and epistles and ministered in and through them.

John 16:26–28 I do not say. Christ was clarifying what he meant by praying in his name. He did not mean asking him to ask the Father, as if the Father was indifferent to believers, but not to his Son. On the contrary, the Father loves Christ's own. In fact, the Father sent the Son to redeem them and then return. Asking in Jesus' name means simply asking on the basis of his merit, his righteousness, and for whatever would honor and glorify him so as to build his kingdom.

John 16:33 in me you may have peace. See note on 14:27. tribulation. This word often refers to eschatological woes (Mark 13:9; Rom. 2:9) and to persecution of believers because of their testimony for Christ (cf. John 15:18–16:4; Acts 11:19; Eph. 3:13). overcome. The fundamental ground for endurance in persecution is the victory of Jesus over the world (John 12:31; 1 Cor. 15:57). Through his impending death, he rendered the world's opposition null and void. While the world continues to attack his people, such attacks fall harmlessly, for Christ's victory has already accomplished a smashing defeat of the whole evil rebellious system. See notes on Rom. 8:35–39.