

# JOHN

## Chapter 16

**“I have said all these things to you to keep you from falling away. 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. 3 And they will do these things because they have not known the Father, nor me. 4 But I have said these things to you, that when their hour comes you may remember that I told them to you.**

**16:1** *all these things* – "All this" refers to 15:18-25, the hatred of the world for Christ and believers. Jesus is referring here to all the lasting familiar talk between Him and His disciples. (Buls)

*keep falling away* - Falling away from saving faith; apostasy. (TLSB)

"Go astray" is also translated as "offended," "from falling away," "the breakdown of your faith," "Not caught unawares." The whole book of Acts attests to what Jesus says in these four verses. (Buls)

**16:2** *they* - Those who belong to the world (15:21-25), specifically the unbelieving Jewish leadership who persecuted Christ.

*put you out of the synagogue*. The world will actually excommunicate Christians, but it is a false excommunication. This is Jewish fanaticism at its height.

So deluded was Saul before his conversion that he actually thought he was serving God by persecuting Christians. (Buls)

*a service to God*. Religious people have often persecuted others in the strong conviction that this was right (see Ac 26:9–11; Gal 1:13–14). (CSB)

This is the same as Paul's attitude prior to conversion (Gal. 1:13-14). (TLSB)

Ignorance of Son is ignorance of Father. Think about 15:18-25 again. (Buls)

Lenski: This is not said to excuse but to reveal their guilt. (Buls)

*nor me*. Again the Father and the Son are linked. Not to know Christ is to be ignorant of the Father. (CSB)

**16:4** *but* – While at their side, it was premature to speak of the special help they would require in their bereaved condition. (PC)

When these things happened later, Jesus' words of prediction actually increased their faith in Him. He is not merely speaking of prediction, but of Jesus' prediction. (Buls)

Kretzmann: What Jesus has told His disciples will serve both as a warning and as a consolation. (Buls)

Jesus told the disciples these things from the beginning of His ministry. During Jesus' ministry the hatred of the enemies was directed only at Him. There was no need to tell the disciples about that, they saw it. But now that He would leave, the hatred toward Christ would be directed at the disciples. Look at 15:19. So it will be with us. We are forewarned. (Buls)

This means that no need existed for telling these things prior to the present hour. Jesus fortifies us when we need to be fortified; He hands us the armor just before the battle begins. (Lenski)

Up to this point in his ministry, Jesus had not said much about this persecution because they were with him “from the beginning,” and he could comfort and aid them personally whenever they encountered rejection and persecution. When the hour, “time” or “hour,” of persecution came, they were to remember that he had, indeed, forewarned them, and they would find added strength in that remembrance. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 14, Part 2)

*when their hour comes* - Those opposed Christ and His followers would have time to freely persecute God's people. Cf. Acts 7-8. Jesus did not explicitly state when this would take place. (TLSB)

**15:18–16:4a** Christ predicts that His disciples will face hostility from the unbelieving world. Those who think it is easy to be a Christian fail to understand the real consequences of following Jesus Christ. In the face of persecution and the world's hatred, Christ promises to strengthen and keep us from falling away • O Lord, let me not be discouraged when I am personally abused because of my faith. Amen. (TLSB)

*The Work of the Holy Spirit*

**“I did not say these things to you from 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. 7 Nevertheless, 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 when he comes, he will convict the world concerning sin and righteousness and judgment: 9 concerning sin, because they do not believe in me; 10 concerning righteousness, because I go to the Father, and you will see me no longer; 11 concerning judgment, because the ruler of this world is judged.**

**16:4b-7** - Jesus now addresses the grief created by his valediction. The disciples, hearing the words of Jesus, know he is departing. In their sorrow they fail to inquire as to his destination. Jesus in his love tries to comfort the disciples by explaining why his departure is to their advantage. He needs to go in order that the disciples may have the Counselor. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 5, Part 2)

**16:5-11** In 16:5–11 was spoken in the Upper Room the night before the crucifixion. Jesus, therefore, was about to finish that part of his work to be done in his earthly body. The disciples will carry on that work after he has ascended—or actually he will carry it on through them. But they will not do so on their own power. That would be impossible. It is not enough that Jesus guide them, he must empower them as well. And so, at this crucial moment, he discusses the Holy Spirit. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 12, Part 2)

In the previous chapter Jesus spoke of the world and its antagonism to his and the disciples' mission, “If the world hates you, keep in mind that it hated me first” (Jn 15:18). He continues that line of thought until Jn 16:11, which explains the particular slant today's Gospel places on the work of the Holy Spirit. In Jn 16:5–11 Jesus discusses the work of the Spirit *with respect to the*

*world*, the world that is and will always be hostile to the Spirit's message. In the verses following our Gospel, Jesus speaks of the Spirit's work in the lives of believers, how he will guide them "into all truth" (16:13) and "bring glory to me" (16:14). Not in our text, though. There he speaks of the work of the Spirit to the world, a work not of comfort or guidance, but of conviction. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 12, Part 2)

**16:5-6** The text begins with what appears to be a mild rebuke of the disciples. Jesus is about to accomplish his most important work and then return to the Father victorious, yet the disciples aren't engaged enough even to ask, "Where are you going?" Instead, they are "filled with grief." (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 12, Part 2)

**16:5** *none of you asks me, 'Where are you going?'* Peter had asked such a question (13:36), but quickly turned his attention to another subject. His concern had been with what would happen to himself and the others and not for where Jesus was going. (CSB)

Thomas had asked such a question earlier (14:5). More recently, the disciples had been too preoccupied with their own loss to ask more perceptive questions about His impending departure. (TLSB)

Lenski: When saying that he is returning to his Sender, Jesus makes a basic statement, one that governs all that follows in this chapter. (Buls)

Luther: We have now often heard what it means 'to go to the Father'; which indeed is not a common expression, such as men usually employ and as they generally understand it, but is the language of the Lord Christ and His Christians. That Christ went forth from, or was sent by, the Father means nothing else than that He, the true Son of God from eternity, became a true man, and revealed Himself on earth in human nature, essence, and form, permitted Himself to be seen, heard, and felt, ate, drank, slept, worked, suffered, and died, like any other person. Again, that He goes to the Father, that means that He will be glorified by His resurrection from the dead, that He sits at the right hand of God and reigns with Him in eternity, as eternal, almighty God. For by His coming down or going from the Father He revealed and proved Himself a true, natural man; but by His return to the Father He declares Himself to be true, eternal God and man, and should be thus known and believed. (Buls)

On this expression look at 14:12; 16:5, 10, 17, 28. (Buls)

Jesus is not contradicting 13:36 and 14:5. Jesus means that, for the moment, the disciples are insensible to His true mission. (Buls)

Jesus emphasizes once again that he would be *uJpavgw*, "going," *pro;* *to;n pevmyantav*, "to the one having sent him," but none of the disciples was asking the obvious question: "Where are you going?" Actually, Peter had asked the question earlier (see Jn 13:36). This appears to be a contradiction in Jesus' remark. The solution probably lies in this, that Peter's former question was an indirect way of asking, "What is going to happen to me and the others?" Also in that particular context Jesus was talking about "going to the cross" and ultimately to his "glory" (see Jn 13:31–38). (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 14, Part 2)

*hupagō*, "to go away, withdraw." More than simply to come or go (i.e., *erchomai*), but the culmination of Jesus' work. A reference not only to the cross or the ascension, but also to the

singular death-resurrection-ascension work of Jesus as a whole, which Jesus is even now (present tense) accomplishing (v 10 also). (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 19, Part 2)

This is Jesus farewell address which denotes the completion of his saving work for mankind.

Our Lord had great difficulty in inducing them to realize the blessedness that would befall them. (PC)

In chapter 13:36, 37 Peter had asked Jesus where He was going and expressed his undying loyalty to follow Jesus anywhere – even to death. But Peter was off track and actually didn't try to learn where and why Jesus was going. Thomas also in frustration spoke out about not knowing where Jesus was going (14:5), but he did not pursue the opening Jesus gave him in response. (PBC)

**16:6** *but* – alla meaning “however.” They should have been happy.

"Because" means "however." They should have been happy. However, they were not. They were obsessed by this grief. (Buls)

sorrow has filled your heart. Because of his announced departure. (CSB)

*peplērōken*, “has filled.” The opposite of joy, sorrow has filled their hearts—leaving room for nothing else. (V 5: Stunned silence?) They do not understand his departure. (Note: In the Introit and Verse, we pray for the Holy Spirit to fill our hearts with his love, and in the Collect of the Day, we pray for the joy of the Spirit's holy consolation.) (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 19, Part 2)

*lupa* means a specific pain or grief. They were obsessed by this grief.

You are not looking on the end of my departure, or on the fullness of my glory or on the addition to your own blessedness, but on your own loss, disappointment and chagrin. (PC)

Because of his announcement of “going away,” the disciples were filled with *luvph*, “grief,” “sorrow,” “sadness.” This was a natural response toward Jesus, whom they loved. They had relished the close fellowship they had with Jesus for the past three years. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 14, Part 2)

This is a discouraging situation for Jesus who has so much joy and uplift in these final moments. But this, too, Jesus had to bear, that His own disciples had so little appreciation of what His leaving them really meant. (Lenski)

**16:7** *I tell you the truth* – Jesus is working hard at explaining what will shortly happen in such a way that they not only understand it but are also confident about the future. One of the problems he encounters is that they are only focused in on themselves and much of what he is telling them is going right over their heads. Besides the clear and frequent explanation he now assures them that what he is telling them is the truth and they can depend on it. (Buls)

Here "but" means "nevertheless" or "be that as it may." Jesus is the origin of THE Truth which is that His going away (suffering, death, resurrection, ascension) is to their advantage, an understatement. (Buls)

The Spirit cannot and will not attest to the great redemption of Jesus until the latter has completed it. Pentecost must be preceded by Calvary and the open tomb. Look at Romans 4:25. (Buls)

Jesus carefully and patiently explains in detail. This is the purest Gospel. (Buls)

*to your advantage* - Jesus insists that grief is improper and cheers his disciples with the word that it was *sumfevrei*, or “expedient” for them, “for their good,” that he should go away. The coming of the Counselor was dependent upon Jesus going away. Having gone away, Jesus would send the Counselor to his disciples. In the absence of Jesus (that is, in the sense of not seeing him in a visible, physical sense), another presence would be with them—the Counselor, whom Jesus would send to the disciples and to all future disciples. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 14, Part 2)

Jesus announces that actually it is very much to their benefit that he go away, for then he will send the Spirit, whom he calls the Helper. (Concordia Pulpit Resources – Volume 12, Part 2)

*sumpherō*, “to be of advantage, benefit.” Used only two other times by John: Caiaphas’s prophecies of the crucifixion (11:50; 18:14). Just as it was “better” for Israel for Jesus to be crucified, so it is “better” for the apostles that Jesus die, rise, and ascend. Neither realizes why at the time! So, too, for us in this life—we do not always know what is good for us. But our Lord knows. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 19, Part 2)

Advantageous because Jesus would send the Spirit to His disciples once His work had been accomplished. (TLSB)

Jesus intends to drive out some of this sorrow and to make room for what Jesus wants to put in its place. (Lenski)

Now Jesus needed to redirect their attention to the question they weren’t asking, namely, where He was going. So far Jesus’ words had instead caused a gloomy veil of grief to settle on the disciples. So He reminded them that He was going back to the One who sent Him in the first place. He was going for their own good. (PBC)

*I do not away.* Jesus did not say why the Spirit would not come until he went away, but clearly taught that his saving work on the cross was necessary before the sending of the Spirit. (CSB)

*Helper.* The Holy Spirit could not begin His work of applying Christ’s redemption until Christ Himself had finished it. (TLSB)

Jesus announces that actually it is very much to their benefit that he go away, for then he will send the Spirit, whom he calls *ho paraklētos*, “the Helper” (see In 14:16, 26; 15:26). (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 12, Part 2)

*I will send him to you.* With the coming of the Holy Spirit the great plan of salvation will be gloriously carried to its consummation to the everlasting joy and glory also of the disciples. (Lenski)

**16:8-11** Verse 8 is a key verse in this pericope. What is the Counselor to do when he comes? Both the NIV and NRSV provide two possibilities, but not the identical two: “He will convict the

world in guilt” (NIV); “will expose the guilt of the world” (NIV footnote); “will prove the world wrong” (NRSV). “Guilt” and “wrong” are not found in the Greek text. *Elegchō* can have a variety of nuances, including “expose,” “demonstrate,” “convince,” “convict,” “correct,” and “punish.” The most likely meaning here is “rebuke.” (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 5, Part 2)

When the Counselor comes, he will rebuke the world in three areas: sin, righteousness, and judgment. (1) The Counselor chides the world for its sin of not believing and rejecting Jesus. The world thereby has totally rejected God’s message. (2) The Counselor chastens the world concerning its righteousness, which is the opposite of Christ’s righteousness. All real righteousness comes from Jesus, whom it rejects. (3) The Counselor admonishes concerning judgment, for the world is to be persuaded in its own judgment by what has previously befallen its own sovereigns. “The idea is that, in a reversal of the trial of Jesus, the world is found guilty of *sin* in that it has not acknowledged the *justice* of God in the glorified Jesus, and this very conviction is a *judgment* on the Prince of this world who accused Jesus and put him to death” (Raymond Brown, *The Gospel According to John* (13–21) [Garden City: Doubleday, 1970] 701). (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 5, Part 2)

Jesus begins to discuss the work of the promised Holy Spirit, but his explanation is not quite what we expect. Perhaps we Lutherans are anticipating a neat, tight, catechism-like exposition of the work of the Holy Spirit, something like, “He calls, gathers, enlightens, and sanctifies the whole Christian church on earth, and keeps it with Jesus Christ in the one true faith.” Jesus doesn’t do that, though. His explanation focuses not on the Spirit’s work among believers—what we expect to hear—but rather on the Spirit’s message to the unbelieving *world*. “He will convict the world,” Jesus says. We are not accustomed to that. Yet the Holy Spirit does speak to the world, though the world denies him and everything he has to say. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 12, Part 2)

Jesus proceeds to tell what the work of the Counselor would be. His three important tasks would be (1) to *eilevgxei*, “convict” or “reprove,” the *kovsmon*, “world,” of a *Jmartiva*, “sin,” the world “missing the mark” of the perfection God demands in his Law. Because of his convicting power, the Holy Spirit will lead people to see their sins, which apart from his work through preaching the Law they could never see or acknowledge because of their blind unbelief. He will convict the world of *dikaiousvnh*, “righteousness,” the righteousness that is imputed to those who believe in Jesus (Rom 1:17; 3:21–22). The natural religion of man is that righteousness comes by keeping the Law. Only by the power of the Spirit can they discern that righteousness is theirs as a free gift of God’s grace and that it is not dependent upon good works. The Spirit will convict the world of *krivsi*, “judgment.” Jesus’ explanation indicates that he was speaking of the final justice that would fall upon *oJ a[rwn tou’ kovsmou touvtou*, “the ruler of this world,” Satan, the “old evil foe” who brought sin and death and hell into the world. Satan was totally defeated by the life, vicarious death, and glorious resurrection of Jesus. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 14, Part 2)

**16:8** *when he comes* – The Comforter will have a twofold task when he comes, one in relation to the world (8-11) and the other in his attitude to the believers (12-15)

Ylvisaker: But this Comforter shall have a twofold task when He comes, one in relation to the world (8-11) and the other in His attitude to the believers (12-15). (Buls)

Verses 8-11 refer to ALL men as in John 3:16. Verses 12-15 are spoken specifically to believers. (Buls)

*he will convict the world.* The work the Spirit does in the world. The NT normally speaks of his work in believers. (CSB)

*Elegcho* – To expose, demonstrate, convince with overwhelming evidence or to correct or punish. The idea here is that this is a trial like that of Jesus but reversing participants. The world is found guilty of sin (V. 8), it has not acknowledged the glorified Jesus (V. 9) and the judgment of the devil (V. 10). The tables are now turned.

*elenchō*, “point something out to someone,” “convict” or “convince.” Note the different sense of “convict” and “convince.” A convinced person believes what they are convicted of! (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 12, Part 2)

*elegxei*, “to convict.” A judicial word. Not believing in Jesus (v 9) is a capital offense. The Spirit is not another Moses. He convicts with regard to Christ (First Commandment), for to believe is to be forgiven and saved; not to believe is to be left in sin and condemned. We must first be convicted of our sin, else we have no use for Christ. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 19, Part 2)

Not merely in a legal sense, but will expose to shame before all with the hope of bringing the world to its senses and to repentance. This is the Spirit’s work through the Law. “Christ’s Spirit must not only comfort, but also through the office of the Law ‘convict the world concerning sin’ (John 16:8)” (FC SD V 11). (TLSB)

This implies the refutation of error, the discovery of wrong-doing, the bringing it home to the person convinced, and thus convicted; making such a one see that he is open condemnation of conscience or of men, or of the Law of God. This conviction may in some cases lead to conviction and deliverance, but is distinct from it, and sometimes also may issue after such a manifestation in hardness and impenitence. (PC)

All who do not bow in repentance will, nevertheless, stand convicted like guilty criminals who may still deny the guilt which has been fully proved against them. (Lenski)

*righteousness – dikaiosunēs*, “righteousness.” Christ is the Righteous One, as Luke’s centurion testifies at the cross (Lk 23:47). Meaning not only that he is “innocent” (ESV), but that he is the Lamb without blemish or defect offered for the sin of the world (Jn 3:16). His death is the righteousness of God and gives life to the world. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 19, Part 2)

*judgment - kriseōs*, “judgment.” The work of God on the Last Day, but which has begun even now. In v 11, the verbal form is perfect passive (the ruler of this world *has been* judged), indicating a past action with enduring results. The death and resurrection of Christ has stripped the ruler of this world of his authority. (*All* authority belongs to Jesus, Mt 28:18.) The Spirit will now give this victory judgment to all through Word and Sacrament. When we hear the Gospel of forgiveness, we hear already now what will be spoken on the Last Day: the victory of Christ. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 19, Part 2)

**16:9-11** - The world must know that it is not righteous but trapped in the worst sins: unbelief (v. 9; cf 12:34-50). Further, the world must know that Christ alone is righteous (v. 10) and everything the world worships is doomed (v. 11). The Holy Spirit convicts people of these truths so that they will no longer be part of the world but become Christ’s disciples. (TLSB)

**16:9 concerning righteousness.** Apart from the Spirit's convicting work, people can never see themselves as sinners. (CSB)

In the final analysis, sin is unbelief and the refusal to trust in God. (TLSB)

They will no longer be able to charge upon Adam, not the devil, nor upon nature, nor upon temptations of the flesh, the blame of sin; but will take the guilt home, and see that, in this crowning act of human folly, unbelievers have rendered themselves personally liable to condemnation, and by rejecting infinite love as well as eternal law, have left themselves without excuse. (PC)

The Spirit's work in regard to sin is to confront the world with the terrible fact that this unbelief leaves it in its damnable sin, doomed and damned forever, in other words, that only he who believes escapes from his sin. It will crush some hearts so that they will be frightened at their unbelief and cry out like the 3000 at Pentecost "brothers what shall we do?" Or it will further harden those who resist this conviction. (Lenski)

*because they do not believe.*† May mean that their sin is their failure to believe, or that their unbelief is a classic example of sin. Typically, John may have had both of these in mind. (CSB)

Unbelief is the mother of sins. Where sin prevails there is no hope.

The Spirit teaches people about Jesus through His Word. In Jesus they receive forgiveness of all sins – none excluded. But when the world's followers reject the testimony of the Spirit through the Word and refuse to believe in Jesus, they lose His forgiveness. They stand convicted in their sin. In contrast, John has been exhorting his readers to believe and live, forgiven of all sins. (PBC)

**16:10 concerning righteousness.** The righteousness brought about by Christ's sacrificial death (cf. Ro 1:17; 3:21–22). No one but the Holy Spirit can reveal to a person that a righteous status before God does not depend on good works but on Christ's death on the cross. (CSB)

Though the world considered itself righteous, Christ's glorification proved that He alone was righteous, much to the world's shame. (TLSB)

The Spirit's work for the chosen children of God is to lead them in all truth for their salvation. (PBC)

*because I go to the Father.* The ascension, which as part of Christ's exaltation placed God's seal of approval on Christ's redemptive act. (CSB)

Those who have no savior from sin have to earn God's favor, if they can, by their righteousness. But the Lord demands a righteousness that is equal to the perfection of the Father (Matthew 5:48). Mere human beings cannot claim that righteousness for themselves since Adam's fall. (PBC)

But Jesus lived the perfect life for us. He followed the Father's plan for our salvation to the letter. He returned to the Father in glory, having triumphed over sin, death, and hell. Now each person who believes in Jesus is robed in His righteousness. The Father counts the Son's perfect life as ours because all has been fulfilled in Him. The world's son and daughters, however, who

reject the Son, are left to their own righteousness. Therefore they stand convicted. Again, we can apply the keynote of this Gospel: believe and live, robed in Christ's righteousness. (PBC)

**16:11 concerning judgment.** Jesus was speaking of the defeat of Satan, which was a form of judgment, not simply a victory. More than power is in question. God acts with justice. (CSB)

The world is further convicted of sin because it follows one who has been condemned. (TLSB)

The sin of sins is to reject the person, Word, and work of Jesus Christ. Unbelief is the mother of sins. Where that sin prevails there is no hope. Where there is repentance of that sin there is nothing but hope. (Buls)

Jesus speaks of the forensic righteousness of God in Christ for all men attained by His going to the Father. Look at Romans 4:25. (Buls)

The greatest judgment of all is the defeat of Satan. Note 12:31. (Buls)

The testimony and work of the Holy Spirit, for all men, centers in these three items. The first involves the Law, the second and third the Gospel. If this testimony be constantly rejected, obduracy sets in.

Your Word is a lamp for my feet and a light on my path. Psalm 119:105 (Beck)

The devil's throne is toppled. Only as an outcast does he prowl about and work. (Lenski)

*ruler of this world.* "Prince of this world": rather than pointing simply to Satan or the devil, emphasizes the connection between the devil, who now stands condemned, and the unbelieving world, which is under judgment and in danger of condemnation. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 12, Part 2)

This emphasizes the connection between the devil, who now stands condemned, and the unbelieving world, which is under judgment and in danger of condemnation.

Jesus was on His way to a confrontation with Satan himself. In His death and resurrection, Jesus sealed Satan's doom. Those who reject Jesus choose this world's prince, Satan, for their leader (8:44), and they share their leader's judgment. (PBC)

**12 "I still have many things to say to you, but you cannot bear them now. 13 When the Spirit of truth comes, he will guide you into all the truth, for he will not speak on his own authority, but whatever he hears he will speak, and he will declare to you the things that are to come. 14 He will glorify me, for he will take what is mine and declare it to you. 15 All that the Father has is mine; therefore I said that he will take what is mine and declare it to you.**

**16:12-22** In his farewell discourse on Maundy Thursday (John 14–16), Jesus tells the apostles many things that he knows will be difficult for them to understand. He describes himself as the true vine (15:1). He prepares the apostles for the world's hatred, which first was for him (15:18). He speaks about how he must return to the Father (14:28), but he reassures his apostles that he is not leaving them alone. He is sending the Holy Spirit (16:7). Jesus' teachings undoubtedly have overwhelmed and confused the disciples. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 20, Part 2)

**16:12-15** Our text is a portion of our Lord's farewell address to his disciples on the night before his crucifixion. He has already told them he would be going to the Father's house (14:2), going to the Father (14:28). He has also reminded them that they could expect severe opposition as his witnesses, opposition to the point of death (15:18–21; 16:2–4). Such talk has filled the disciples with grief (16:22). Jesus knows this and goes out of his way to comfort them. "Do not let your hearts be troubled," he says (14:1). He offers them his peace (14:27). He promises to send the Counselor (14:26; 15:26). This Counselor is the Holy Spirit. He will be their ultimate comfort as he brings to their remembrance all that Jesus told them, speaking the truth about Jesus and revealing more fully things yet to come. The result will be that their grief will be turned to joy (16:22). (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 11, Part 3)

**16:12** *I still have many things to say to you* – Jesus resumed teaching after the resurrection (chs 20–21). (TLSB)

"I have" means that these things are on Jesus' heart, and that He would like to speak to the disciples about them. "Much" as "composed of a number of items," indicating these items, "many things." (Lenski)

Notwithstanding the abundance of the revelations which Christ had given still, He said they had much to learn. (PC)

The dear Lord was eager to strengthen the disciples, to arm them against what would befall them after His departure. (Luther)

*you cannot bear them now.* This may mean "more than you can understand now," or "more than you can perform without the Spirit's help" (to live out Christ's teaching requires the enabling presence of the Spirit). (CSB)

Jesus continues his discourse on the work of the Holy Spirit. This verse has generated various interpretations. Some suggest that the Spirit will impart a more complete revelation in the future, as though Jesus' divine teaching is incomplete. But one chapter earlier Jesus said that he had revealed to the disciples all he heard from the Father (15:15), contradicting that theory. Leon Morris (*The Gospel according to John*, NICNT [Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1971] 699) suggests, "There are vistas of truth set before [the disciples] which they cannot as yet enter, but they will enter when the Spirit comes. More probably it refers to their inability, until the Spirit should come, to live out the implications of the revelation." (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 5, Part 3)

Over the course of three years Jesus said many things to his disciples and promised that the Holy Spirit "will remind you of everything I have said to you" (14:26). But there is much more to say, more than the disciples can bear at this time. *Bastazein*, "bear": the basic meaning of this verb is to bear a burden, and in this context it could be translated "endure" or "tolerate" or even "comprehend." Weighed down with grief and confused in their minds, the disciples simply cannot endure or comprehend further instruction. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 11, Part 3)

*bastazō*, "to bear." The disciples could not understand (bear) what Jesus had been saying at that moment in time, prior to his resurrection. Only after his resurrection, with the help of the Holy Spirit, would the apostles be able to understand Jesus' words. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 20, Part 2)

The coming of the Paraclete would be one method of His Divine approach to them for the purpose of consolation and instruction; consequently He does not allow them to suppose that though separated from them by death, He would cease to instruct them. (PC)

Were the disciples ready for what lay ahead? They couldn't be fully prepared. Jesus could have told them much more, but He stopped then because they would not have been able to bear it. He had said what He could, and still they were confused, as was to become evident. (PBC)

Much more remains to be said, much more Christ would like to tell His disciples, but in their present state of little faith, of immature spirituality, mixed with sorrow and grief over His leaving, they would not be able to grasp, to understand it. Jesus had indeed told His disciples all that they needed for their salvation, and there was and is no need for further arbitrary revelations, no matter from what sources these claim to come. (Kretzmann)

**16:13** *when* – Jesus was not going to abandon the disciples to their own foibles. (PBC)

*Spirit of truth.* The Holy Spirit is called the “Spirit of truth.” He speaks the truth because he does not speak on his own but only what he hears from him who is the truth, that is, Jesus, the Son of God. The NIV translation has “into all truth.” But some manuscripts have *en tēi alētheiai pasēi*, “in all the truth.” Lenski favors this reading and states: “‘Into’ would mean entrance, while ‘in’ assumes that the entrance has already been made and that all that is needed is to explore what lies within the circle of the truth. . . . ‘All the truth’ signifies all the saving realities connected with Jesus and his Father” (R. C. H. Lenski, *Interpretation of St. John’s Gospel* [Columbus: Wartburg Press, 1942] 1090). The divine persons in the Trinity are pictured as communicating with each other. Nothing known to one is ever hidden from the other. Both Jesus and the Father send the Spirit. The Spirit’s revelation will include “what is yet to come.” Jesus had spoken of the last days, but the Spirit will further amplify. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 11, Part 3)

John Marsh comments, “The Spirit will not bring any new truth, as if he were a source independent of the Son. He is not an independent authority, but speaks only what he learns” (*The Gospel of St. John* [New York: Penguin Books, 1968] 538). “All truth” is the truth of the meaning of Jesus’ teaching. It will be fully understood by the disciples only after the crucifixion and resurrection of their teacher and their receipt of the Spirit. The teaching of the Holy Spirit will not be new, as though some essential truth missing from Jesus’ teaching would be revealed to future generations. The Father’s words, spoken by the Son to the first disciples, will be taught to the post-ascension church through the Spirit. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 5, Part 3)

*ou gar lalēsei aph’ heautou, all’ hosa akousei lalēsei*, “for he will not speak on his own authority, but whatever he hears he will speak.” Just as Jesus did not speak or act on his own authority, but said and did what the Father had given him to do (Jn 5:19–20; 7:16–18; 12:49–50), the Holy Spirit does not speak on his own authority, but speaks whatever he hears. *kai ta erchomena anaggelei humin*, “and he will declare to you the things that are to come.” That is to say, the Gospel—the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ, our Lord—written by the Spirit-led apostles in the apostolic writings and proclaimed by the Christian Church. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 20, Part 2)

*declare* – Greek *hodgego*, from *hodos* (“way, “journey”); to lead, as a travel guide. (TLSB)

*hodēgēsei*, “to lead, guide.” Again, not leading in general, but to a specific destination—to all truth in Christ. The Spirit is another Paraclete, not a different one! He proclaims only what he hears, but also all that he hears, leaving nothing out. One cannot “play off” the Spirit against the Word (as many today are wont to do)! (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 19, Part 2)

*into all truth* – “Into” would mean entrance, while “in” assumes that the entrance has already been made and that all that is needed is to explore what lies within the circle of truth. Thus “in” would apply specifically to the disciples whom Jesus had already so fully instructed. “All the truth” signifies all the saving realities connected with Jesus and His Father. The term is concrete and decidedly definite. (Lenski)

*will not speak on his own.* We are not told whether he hears from the Father or the Son, but it obviously does not matter, for the verse stresses the close relationship among the three. (CSB)

Just as Jesus had told them nothing but what came from the Father, so the Spirit would speak only what came from the Father and the Son. And He would tell them things still to come, prophecies they would write down also for us to learn. So God’s truth for us would be revealed. So we too would learn what Jesus’ work has meant and what lies ahead for us and for the world. (PBC)

But the disciples needed further instruction in order to understand the instruction which they had already received from the Master. And this would be provided for by the Spirit of Truth, by the Spirit whose essential function would be the teaching of the truth, the Word of God. He will teach them, serve as their Guide in leading them into the whole truth. He will bring their hearts and minds into the truth, make them familiar with it, let them understand and grasp the truth, have them realize the grace of God in Christ Jesus. And in doing this, the Spirit will not display an arbitrary, independent activity. The relation between the persons of the Godhead is the intimacy of unity and precludes any such possibility. The Spirit can and will lead the believers into all truth, because He will not bring a separate, independent revelation and Gospel, but will speak what He has heard in the council of the Godhead. (Kretzmann)

*things are to come.* Probably means the whole Christian way or revelation (presented and preserved in the apostolic writings), still future at the time Jesus spoke. (CSB)

Not a promise of new revelations, but rather that the disciples would understand how Christ’s death and resurrection applied to the Church after Pentecost. The Spirit will lead believers into a clearer understanding of God’s truth as they make their way into the future. (TLSB)

**16:14** *glorify to me.* The Spirit draws no attention to himself but promotes the glory of Christ. (CSB)

*doxasei*, “will glorify”: the Spirit will invest Jesus with dignity, honor, excellence, majesty. Here we have the one purpose of the Spirit. His work is to place Jesus before all people, to present his person and completed work. The entire New Testament, inspired by the Spirit, presents the truth about Jesus, revealing him as the Son of God who became man, died for our sins and rose for our justification. Through the sacred Scriptures the Spirit leads us into the truth, which brings joy and hope. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 11, Part 3)

*doxazō*, “to glorify.” The work of the Holy Spirit is to glorify Christ, who in turn glorifies the Father. *anaggellō*, “to declare.” The repetition emphasizes this aspect of the Holy Spirit’s work.

Along with bringing glory to Christ, the Holy Spirit works to make him known (14:26; 1 Jn 2:27). (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 20, Part 2)

What is it that is “yet to come” (v 13)? Does this refer to eschatological events which precede the Parousia? Is it a reference to divine fortune-telling for those “filled with the Spirit”? In v 14 Jesus himself clarifies the meaning of vv 12 and 13, for what will be taught will “bring glory to me by taking from what is mine and making it known to you.” “The teaching ministry of the Spirit builds on and develops the teaching ministry of Jesus himself. By making explicit what in Jesus’ historical teaching was only implicit, the Spirit will prepare the disciples to face new enemies and seize new opportunities to extend Jesus’ mission in the world” (J. Ramsey Michaels, *John: A Good News Commentary* [San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1983] 269). (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 5, Part 3)

*doxasei*, “to glorify.” A rich word. Note for our purposes here that throughout John, the Father glorifies the Son (8:54; 12:28; 13:31; 17:1–4) and the Son glorifies the Father (13:31; 14:13; 17:1) and this is especially exemplified in martyrdom (12:23; 21:19; *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature*, third edition, revised and edited by Frederick William Danker [Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1957, 1979, 2000], 258). The work of the Spirit is to glorify the Son by placing his cross before the eyes of all through the witness-preaching of the apostles. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 19, Part 2)

What comes from Jesus is also the Father’s, so we learn the whole council of God by the Spirit. (PBC)

*take what is mine* – Jesus had received His revelation from the Father, which would now be imparted and explained by the Holy Spirit. (TLSB)

The guarantee of the Spirit’s teaching is that He will utter the words of the Triune God as such. “Here He makes the Holy Ghost a preacher, in order that no one shall stand gaping up into heaven (as the flighty spirits and enthusiasts do) and separate Him from the oral Word or ministry of preaching, but know and learn that He wants to be with and in the Word, and through it lead us into all. truth, that we have faith in it, and fight therewith, and be kept against all lies and deceit of. the devil, and conquer in all tribulations.” 71) Thus the Spirit, in the Word, reveals and makes plain the mysteries of God and heaven. And since He is a Spirit of prophecy, He will tell also of things that are to come, that are now coming. The future salvation also belongs to the counsel of God the coming of Christ to judgment, the consummation of the redemption in the Kingdom of Glory. (Kretzmann)

**16:15** *what is mine*. Cf. 17:10. The three Persons are closely related. (CSB)

*he will take what is mine and declare it to you* – Lenski states: “This is added in order to shut out the possible wrong thought that what Jesus so emphatically calls ‘mine’ and by which the Spirit will glorify ‘me’ could be something belonging to him exclusively apart from the Father. All the things of Jesus are ‘whatever the Father has’ ” (Lenski, 1092). (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 11, Part 3)

This verse, along with the rest of the pericope, explicates some of the doctrine of the Holy Trinity and the inter-relatedness of the three persons. When the Spirit takes what belongs to Jesus and makes it known to the disciples (v 14), the Spirit is making known to them what belongs to the Father, because the Father has given all that is his to his Son. The Spirit will make known to the

disciples the Father's Word about his Son. Thus the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit all play a part in communicating the truth of salvation to the New Testament church. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 5, Part 3)

The special outpouring of God's Spirit came at Pentecost. To the end of time, people everywhere will continue to benefit through the Word of God inspired by the Spirit. (PBC)

And in regard to all these facts the Spirit will give the proper information. Moreover, in doing so, His work will redound to the glory of the Savior, since the truth which He will reveal He will receive from Christ for the purpose of preaching. By picturing Christ before the eyes and hearts of the believers, the Holy Spirit provides and gives to Christ the glory which is due Him in His capacity as Savior. And in taking His doctrine from the Son, the Spirit incidentally receives His doctrine from the Father, for since they have the Godhead in common, they have also the divine knowledge in common. Jesus here makes a very bold statement, as Luther says, and one that could not be made by any mere man. All that the Father has, He says, is Mine. He not only has charge of it; it is not only in His possession for a short time, but He has absolute power over its disposition, for He and the Father have everything in common. The Spirit has the unlimited fullness of the Godhead to draw from, all in the interest of the believers. That is the work of the Spirit for and in the believers, that He teaches them to know Jesus Christ, the Savior, aright and with ever-increasing clearness. (Kretzmann)

**16:4b–15** Christ comforts the disciples by promising to send them the Helper (the Holy Spirit), who will guide them into a deeper understanding of Christ's Word. Mistakenly, we sometimes think that Jesus' physical absence places us at a disadvantage. In fact, Jesus is present with us through the witness of the Spirit, who works among us through God's Word and Sacraments. • O Holy Spirit, through the Word, guide us into all truth. Amen. (TLSB)

*Your Sorrow Will Turn into Joy*

**16** "A little while, and you will see me no longer; and again a little while, and you will see me." **17** So some of his disciples said to one another, "What is this that he says to us, 'A little while, and you will not see me, and again a little while, and you will see me'; and, 'because I am going to the Father'?" **18** So they were saying, "What does he mean by 'a little while'?" We do not know what he is talking about." **19** Jesus knew that they wanted to ask him, so he said to them, "Is this what you are asking yourselves, what I meant by saying, '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, you will weep and lament, but the world will rejoice. You will be sorrowful, but your sorrow will turn into joy. **21** When a woman is giving birth, she has sorrow because her hour has come, but when she has delivered the baby, she no longer remembers the anguish, for joy that a human being has been born into the world. **22** So also you have sorrow now, but I will see you again, and your hearts will rejoice, and no one will take your joy from you. **23** In that day you will ask nothing of me. Truly, truly, I say to you, whatever you ask of the Father in my name, he will give it to you. **24** Until now you have asked nothing in my name. Ask, and you will receive, that your joy may be full.

**16:16** *a little while ... a little while.*† Few doubt that the first phrase refers to the interval before the crucifixion. But interpretations differ as to whether the second refers to the interval preceding the resurrection or the coming of the Spirit or the second coming of Christ. It seems that the language here best fits the resurrection; cf. v. 22. (CSB)

Christ describes His burial and resurrection. (TLSB)

*micron . . . mikron*, “a little while . . . a little while.” The first usage doubtlessly refers to Jesus’ death. He had already told the Pharisees (7:33) and his own disciples (13:33) that he must die. The second usage of “a little while” could be referring to the coming of the Spirit (14:23) or perhaps the parousia (14:1–4); however, the second usage should be viewed as referring to the resurrection (v 22). Jesus will be crucified and die, during which time the disciples will not see him, but after “a little while” he will rise from the dead and at that time they will once again see him. Note: Some manuscripts add “because I am going to the Father” at the end of the verse, probably to help in the transition to the disciples’ questioning in v 17. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 20, Part 2)

The separation is to be short. The first “little while” embraces only a few hours, the afternoon of this very day (Friday); the second “little while” shall be equally short. The change in verbs, first “to behold” and then “to see,” is of no special import. However painful a separation may be, if its duration is short, that is great comfort indeed. (Lenski)

Only a little while it was, only a few short hours, and the Savior would be hidden from the eyes of His disciples in the darkness of the tomb, and they would not be able to behold Him. But then it would again be only a short while, a matter of a few days, when their eyes would be gladdened by His reappearance as their living Savior. (Kretzmann)

**16:17** *what is this that he says to us – ti estin touto ho legei hēmin*, “What is this that he says to us.” The disciples were confused by Jesus’ teachings, specifically about what Jesus intended by the words “a little while” and what he meant by the words “going to the Father.” They had yet to grasp the idea of a suffering Messiah who would be put to death and rise again. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 20, Part 2)

*going to the Father*. See v. 10. Jesus had not linked this with “a little while,” but the apostles saw them as connected. (CSB)

But the intention of the Lord seems to be to convey also another great truth to their hearts, since He says that He is going to the Father, making this statement the basis for the others. His ascension was but a few days away, after which they would no longer enjoy the comfort of His personal, physical presence; but His return to glory would follow very shortly after that. In either case, and with either intended meaning, the words were full of comfort and cheer for the disciples. (Kretzmann)

**16:18** *so they were asking – elegon*, “they were saying.” The imperfect tense “kept saying” or “kept asking” implies that the disciples asked one another repeatedly. Jesus was leaving? Where was he going? When would he be back? Yet they were too afraid to bring their questions to Jesus. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 20, Part 2)

*what does this mean* – They are unable to solve the puzzle. The little while sounds so hopeful, but the hope cannot rise as it might because of that other word about going to the Father which sounds like a long, indefinite stay. (Lenski)

But the latter understood nothing of the joyful message. They were aroused from their apathetic dullness only to the extent that they discussed the probable meaning of Christ among themselves. The result of their discussion was that they frankly stated their inability to understand, to know the meaning of, the Master. They were utterly bewildered and alarmed; a dread sense of impending disaster took hold of their hearts. (Kretzmann)

**16:19** *Jesus knew – egnō [ho] Iēsous*, “Jesus knew.” This doesn’t necessarily indicate that Jesus knew what the disciples were thinking by using his omniscience. If the disciples *elegon*, “were saying” (v 18), to each other, Jesus would have been fully aware of what they wanted to ask him. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 20, Part 2)

*you are asking* – Jesus had no difficulty in knowing what passed between the disciples who whispered to each other. Before the disciples muster up courage to inquire, Jesus Himself states their question. Yet He leaves out the part about going to the Father. He does not intend to solve what seemed like a contradiction or at least a puzzle to the disciples. This can rest for the time being, for this will soon become clear in a way far better than words can now instruct the disciples, depressed as they are with sorrow. But this about the little while, with all the sweet comfort it contains, He can make plain so that they will, indeed, feel relieved. (Lenski)

Jesus commonly used rhetorical questions as a teaching method. (TLSB)

Jesus was fully aware of the anxious bewilderment and embarrassment of the disciples, and that they were ashamed to ask for an explanation. In His usual kind manner, therefore, He comes to their assistance by stating the difficulty which was agitating their minds. They could not quite become reconciled to the idea of His leaving them and going to the Father, nor did they fully comprehend what was included in these statements, as well as in the others that He should be removed from their sight for a little while and in just as short a space of time be seen of them once more. We have now often heard what it means 'to go to the Father'; which indeed is not a common expression, such as men usually employ and as they generally understand it, but is the language of the Lord Christ and His Christians. That Christ went forth from, or was sent by, the Father means nothing else than that He, the true Son of God from eternity, became a true man, and revealed Himself on earth in human nature, essence, and form, permitted Himself to be seen, heard, and felt, ate, drank, slept, worked, suffered, and died, like any other person. Again, that He goes to the Father, that means that He will be glorified by His resurrection from the dead, that He sits at the right hand of God and reigns with Him in eternity, as eternal, almighty God. For by His coming down or going from the Father He revealed and proved Himself a true, natural man; but by His return to the Father He declares Himself to be true, eternal God, out of God the Father, and thus remains in one person both God and man, and should be thus known and believed. (Kretzmann)

**16:20** *truly, truly I say to you*. KJV has verily, verily. The special seal of verity (the twofold amen) and of authority (“I say to you”) marks the importance of the statement (See 1:51). And this spoken with a clarity that sees the coming hours and days as though they were already past. (Lenski)

*weep*. The same verb for loud wailing as in 11:33, which carries the idea of deep sorrow and its outward expression. (CSB)

*klausetē kai thrēnēsētē hūmeis*, “you will weep and lament.” This refers to the grief that the disciples would feel at Jesus’ death. While *ho kosmos*, the world, prided itself at how easily it had dispatched Jesus, the disciples would feel the great torment of loss and would mourn the death of their leader. The events would crush their spirits, while the world rejoiced, but, Jesus tells them, “your sorrow will turn into joy.” (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 20, Part 2)

The disciples shall sob, with loud unrestrained weeping, klansete, yea, they shall wail, utter wailing cries and moans for the dead, thanasete. (Lenski)

*sorrow will turn to joy* – This does not mean that eventually the sorrow of the disciples shall subside and that in spite of their former grief they shall again become joyful; but that their very grief, i.e., the very thing that plunged them into such excessive grief, shall turn into joy, i.e., into a glorious cause of joy. The identical event shall plunge them into grief and then lift them into joy. (Lenski)

Very impressively Jesus tells the disciples the natural result of His removal from them, especially under such conditions as would soon be evident. They would weep and lament at the bitterness of His Passion, His crucifixion, and His death, while the world, represented by the unbelieving Jews, especially the leaders of the Church, would be filled with joy. But their sorrow-stricken souls would very quickly find wonderful consolation, which would turn their grief into rejoicing. (Kretzmann)

**16:21** *A woman giving birth.* Giving birth usually causes both pain and joy (cf. Isa 26:17–19; 66:7–14; Hos 13:13–14). (CSB)

Cf Is 21:3; 26:18–19, where the prophet illustrates Israel’s suffering before deliverance with the image of childbirth. (TLSB)

Like an expectant mother soon to give birth, the disciples were beginning to feel pain at Jesus’ words and would feel it acutely in a short time with His crucifixion and death. But they would see Him alive again, like a newborn baby, and their hearts would swell with joy – so much joy that no one could ever take it away from them. (PBC)

The Lord adds an illustration to show in what way the acuteness and intensity of an overwhelming sorrow will be converted into joyful delight. At the time when the sorrow and pains of the mother are greatest and death itself seems imminent, the crisis is practically past; and with the birth of the child there comes the joy over the safe delivery and over the babe itself, causing the remembrance of the great sorrow to vanish. So the sorrow and pain of the disciples would be very acute and harsh, but with the return of their Master their joy would be all the greater; it would be such a joy as would surpass all human happiness, such a joy as could never be taken from them. (Kretzmann)

**16:22** *I will see you again.* As in v. 16, probably a reference to Jesus’ appearances after his resurrection. (CSB)

*no one will take away your joy.* The resurrection would change things permanently, bringing a joy that cannot be removed by the world’s assaults. (CSB)

Christ’s resurrection brings lasting joy, not just joy for a moment (cf 1Pt 1:3–9). (TLSB)

*tēn charan humōn oudeis airei aph’ humōn*, “no one will take your joy from you.” The disciples’ joy will never cease because the resurrection is not just one event, but ushers in a new eschatological era, one in which the resurrected Christ himself says, “I am with you always, to the end of the age” (Mt 28:20). (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 20, Part 2)

Since the time of Pentecost with its wonderful revelation all believers may become partakers of this joy. Sorrow over the death of Christ can no longer affect us; Jesus now comes to us in a

spiritual manner, with His Holy Spirit; He reveals all the glories of His salvation to our hearts. The Christians see and know Jesus by faith as the Son of God and their Savior, and are filled with a joy which will continue as long as His presence continues, to the end of time. (Kretzmann)

**16:23-33** Jesus now comes to the end of his farewell discourse (Jn 14–16). Shortly he will offer his High Priestly Prayer (Jn 17) and be betrayed in the Garden of Gethsemane (18:1–11). Jesus will soon be going to the Father (14:28), but he leaves his disciples with the guarantee that the time is coming when he will no longer use figures of speech but will talk plainly about the Father (16:25). In only a few hours, the apostles “will be scattered” (16:32). Jesus will be betrayed, arrested, crucified, and will die, yet he reassures the apostles that he has already overcome the world (16:33). (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 20, Part 2)

**16:23** *you will ask nothing of me.* Seems to mean asking for information (rather than asking in prayer), which would not be necessary after the resurrection. Jesus then moved on to the subject of prayer. However, Jesus may have been saying that his disciples previously had been praying to Christ, but after his death and resurrection they were to go directly to the Father and pray in Christ’s name. (CSB)

After Christ’s resurrection and ascension, the disciples will pray directly to their heavenly Father. (TLSB)

*erōtaō*, “to ask,” in this phrase means “to ask a question.” Jesus may have been suggesting that when he reappears after his death and resurrection, the truth of what he said and claimed about himself will be clearly visible. *aiteō*, “to ask,” while roughly synonymous with *erōtaō*, refers to the disciples having the ability following Jesus’ death and resurrection to ask the Father directly (see v 24). (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 20, Part 2)

It would not be needed, as it then was, that they should make inquires of him. The Holy Ghost would give them all needful instruction. (CB)

In that day, with the coming of the revelation through the Spirit, there will no longer be need to ask the Lord any questions. Though the personal intercourse between them and their Master had terminated, they would have the benefit and the certainty of a direct communion through the work of the Spirit. (Kretzmann)

### **The Spirit in John’s Gospel**

John frequently describes the work of the Holy Spirit in his Gospel. Study the following chart to receive a clearer understanding of the Holy Spirit’s work in the lives of the apostles and in your life. (TLSB)

#### **Description**

#### **Meaning**

**Dove (1:32)** Doves (pigeons) were sacrificed in the temple as part of the cleansing rituals of the OT (Lv 5:5–10; 15:13–15). Christ gives you the Spirit in Baptism, which cleanses you from all sin (Ti 3:4–7). (TLSB)

**Wind (3:8)** The Spirit hovered over the face of the waters at the beginning of creation (Gn 1:2) and through God's Word brought forth life. Just as wind moves invisibly and uncontrollably, the Spirit works when and where He pleases through God's Word and Baptism to give life to you and all believers in Christ. (TLSB)

**God (4:24)** The Spirit is not a thing or a power but God Himself (notice how Jesus uses the personal pronoun *He* to refer to the Spirit: 14:26 [based on Gk text]; 15:26; 16:13). You worship the triune God in and through the Spirit of God. (TLSB)

**Words (6:63)** At the beginning of the Gospel, John used *Word* to describe Jesus. Now Jesus uses *words* to describe the Spirit, through whom He gives life. The Spirit of Jesus works in your life through the Word of God. (TLSB)

**Rivers of Living Water (7:38–39)** Jesus refers to the promise given through Isaiah that God would satisfy the thirst of His people (Is 58:11). Because you are a believer, the Spirit dwells in and flows from you, welling up to eternal life (Jn 4:10, 13–14). (TLSB)

**Helper (14:16, 26; 15:26)** The Spirit sent by the Father and Jesus will teach the disciples and remind them of Jesus' words. This would include the way the Spirit guided the apostles and inspired them to record the books of the NT. These passages also describe the inner workings of the Holy Trinity on your behalf. (TLSB)

**Spirit of Truth (15:26; 16:13)** The spirit of falsehood, at work in the sinful hearts of humanity, would deceive the disciples. Therefore, Jesus sends the Spirit of truth to guide the disciples into all truth. Note well that the Spirit does not speak on His own. He speaks on behalf of the Father and Jesus and testifies about Jesus. Note again that Jesus binds the work of the Spirit to His Word. (TLSB)

**Holy (20:22)** The Spirit makes you holy through the forgiveness of sins you receive in the Gospel. Just as Christ called and sent the apostles to proclaim this forgiveness, He calls and sends pastors to proclaim publicly forgiveness of sins (Absolution). (TLSB)

Four passages in John's Gospel describe the work of the Holy Spirit in an even more intimate way than does the Old Testament: 1:33; 7:39; 14:17; 20:22. Whereas the Old Testament repeatedly spoke of the Holy Spirit coming upon someone, Jesus speaks of the Holy Spirit dwelling in a believer. The Spirit dwells in believers through their Baptism into Christ (cf Ezk 36:25–27 for a prophecy of this), through the Lord's Supper, and in the revelation of God's love and salvation in Jesus Christ. In this way, John's Gospel emphasizes the abiding presence of the Holy Spirit, supporting and comforting believers with Christ's gift of peace. (TLSB)

### **God Is Three-in-One**

#### **God Is One**

When Moses asks God for His name, God replies, "I AM WHO I AM.... Say this to the people of Israel, 'I AM has sent me to you' " (Ex 3:14). He is the only true God. All other gods are imaginary, idols that mislead people from the true God. God is truth; idols are lies. God calls people to faith, while idols confirm lost souls in their estrangement from the Creator. God challenges people to live holy lives. In contrast, idols give permission for sinners to sin with abandon. Even though the world thinks that many gods and many lords exist (as Paul notes in 1Co 8:5), only one God truly lives (as Paul goes on to confirm in v 6). (TLSB)

In His High Priestly Prayer (Jn 17), Jesus confesses the fundamental truth that only one God exists (v 3). He describes eternal life as knowing the only true God and the One He has sent, Jesus Christ. He also talks about God as His Father and speaks about the Holy Spirit as someone distinct from the Father and the Son. (TLSB)

#### **God in Three Persons**

Jesus often speaks of God as Father. (John records uses of "Father" some 60 times in chs 12–21.) He mentions God the Holy Spirit five times in this section. In prayer, Jesus also calls Himself the Son of God (17:1). Both the evangelist (20:31) and Jesus' enemies (19:7) recognize the fact that Jesus claims a unique Sonship with the Father. His relationship with the Father is so close that He is able to say, "I and the Father are one" (10:30). (TLSB)

In 3:16–18, Jesus identifies Himself as the "only begotten" Son (the translation "only Son" somewhat misses the point). The Father "begets" the Son and always has. Yet the Son is truly God (1:1). John even calls Him the "only begotten God" (1:18, author's translation). The Spirit, on the other hand, proceeds from the Father (15:26) and the Son (Rm 8:9–11; Ac 16:7; Php 1:19; 1Pt 1:11). (TLSB)

In this way, God reveals Himself as one God. The Son of God is begotten of the Father from eternity. No matter how far back we look, the Son lives with the Father. Likewise, the Spirit proceeds eternally from the Father and the Son. The Spirit carries out the will of the Father by leading people to the Son (16:13). (TLSB)

#### **Triune Savior**

God's ways are higher than our ways. Though He reveals Himself to us in the Scriptures, we cannot fully grasp who He is. But a mathematic illustration may help us begin to understand.  $1 + 1 + 1$  cannot equal 1. However,  $1 \times 1 \times 1$  does equal 1! (TLSB)

Just as multiplication is a higher form of math than addition, so God's ways are higher than ours. Our heavenly Father does not ask us to understand His triune nature. He asks us to trust in Him and leave the details to Him. (TLSB)

As you ponder the mystery of who God is, also turn your attention to what God does. God has not revealed His triune nature in order to confuse you. He desires to show you the many aspects of His love and work of salvation. (TLSB)

**16:24** *Until now.* Previously they had asked the Father or Christ, but they had not asked the Father in Christ's name. (CSB)

The disciples had asked questions and favors of Jesus but had not prayed to the Father in Jesus' name. (TLSB)

*ouk ēitēsate ouden en tōi onomati mou*, “you have asked nothing in my name.” Up until this time, the disciples had not asked for anything in Jesus' name. But now the disciples are urged: *aiteite kai lēmpsesthe*, “ask, and you will receive.” The disciples would no longer have Jesus with them, so they must seek his help in a new way, by asking the Father in Jesus' name. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 20, Part 2)

They had not been accustomed before this to pray in the name of Christ; but after this they would be, and for his sake God would bestow whatever they needed. (CB)

And solemnly Jesus assures them that their relation to the Father will be of a nature permitting them to go directly to Him with all their desires and needs, for their prayers will all be made in the name of Jesus. Because the atonement of Jesus has effected peace with the Father, has restored the believers to their position as children of God, they have but to refer to Jesus and His work, to appeal to His redemption, to be assured of the hearing of their prayers. The work of the Mediator and Savior had not been completed, and therefore the disciples had not prayed in His name. But now the road to the Father's heart has been opened, and they shall entreat, they shall ask, knowing that they will receive, and thus have also the fulfillment of their joy. The efficacy of prayer depends upon faith in the Savior as the Substitute of mankind, by whom we have free access to the Father. (Kretzmann)

**16:16–24** Christ promises to return after His resurrection and turn the disciples' sorrow into joy. Human sorrow can become an expression of self-pity, hindering genuine prayer for God's help and deliverance. Yet, God knows how to turn our sorrow into joy, and He promises to hear our prayers for Jesus' sake. • Hear us, O heavenly Father, and give us joy in Jesus' name! Amen. (TLSB)

*I Have Overcome the World*

**25 “I have said these things to you in figures of speech. The hour is coming when I will no longer speak to you in figures of speech but will tell you plainly about the Father. 26 In that day you will ask in my name, and I do not say to you that I will ask the Father on your behalf; 27 for the Father himself loves you, because you have loved me and have believed that I came from God. 28 I came from the Father and have come into the world, and now I am leaving the world and going to the Father.” 29 His disciples said, “Ah, now you are speaking plainly and not using figurative speech! 30 Now we know that you know all things and do not need anyone to question you; this is why we believe that you came from God.” 31 Jesus answered them, “Do you now believe? 32 Behold, the hour is coming, indeed it has come, when you will be scattered, each to his own home, and will leave me alone. Yet I am not alone, for the Father is with me. 33 I have said these things to you, that in me you may have peace. In the world you will have tribulation. But take heart; I have overcome the world.”**

**16:25** *I have said...in figures.* Throughout the discourse, not just in the immediately preceding words. (CSB)

*en paroimiais*, “in figures of speech.” Jesus had been speaking to his disciples in rather obscure language, not necessarily in metaphor or in parables, but in such a way that the meaning of what he spoke was ambiguous. However, that time was coming to an end. Following the resurrection, Jesus “opened [his disciples’] minds to understand the Scriptures” (Lk 24:45). What had been veiled in figurative speech now would be revealed to them. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 20, Part 2)

Or in parables – somewhat obscurely, and in such manner that they did not fully understand his meaning. (CB)

In order to bring this truth home to the disciples still more strongly, the Lord frankly tells them that His teaching has been, to a large extent, in proverbial, parabolic sayings. But the hour is coming, after He will have entered into His glory, when He will speak to them without pictures or difficult figures, through the work of the Spirit. (Kretzmann)

*the hour is coming.* After the resurrection. (CSB)

This would be after his resurrection, and the gift of the Holy Ghost. (CB)

*I will tell you plainly* – He would more plainly instruct them by his Spirit, and they would more fully understand his truth. (CB)

Then He will also teach them, announce to them plainly, what is meant by knowing the Father, by having the right understanding of His love and mercy. At that time prayer in the name of Jesus will be so strong, so efficacious, that there will not even be need of His special intercession for them. This is necessary, as a matter of course, to establish the right relation between God and the believers. Cf. Rom. 8:34. (Kretzmann)

**16:26-27** “I do not say to you that I will ask the Father on your behalf.” Jesus has urged the disciples to pray to the Father in his name, yet he does not want them to think of God as being distant, as if they must bring their prayers to him first, and he in turn takes them to Father, thus restricting the believer’s access to the Father. Instead, Jesus tells them of the close relationship they have with his Father: “the Father himself loves you” (v 27). Jesus does intercede for humankind (Rom 8:34; Heb 7:25; 1 Jn 2:1), but his great act of intercession, death for the world’s sin, will soon reestablish mankind’s direct relationship to God. The Father is now eager to hear our prayers. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 20, Part 2)

**16:26** *I do not say... that I will ask.* Not a contradiction of Ro 8:34; Heb 7:25; 1Jn 2:1. Those passages mean that Christ’s presence in heaven as the crucified and risen Lord is itself an intercession. Here the teaching is that there will be no need for him to make petitions in our behalf. (CSB)

That is, I say not this simply, but something more. The Savior does not mean to deny that he will intercede with the Father for his disciples; but rather to lead their minds beyond this truth, which he had frequently stated, to another: that the Father is one with him in loving them, so that his intercession for them must prevail. (CB)

**16:27** *the Father himself loves you.* Christ is explaining why the disciples can come directly to the Father in prayer. It is because the disciples have loved and trusted in Jesus, and in love God will hear their requests in Jesus' name.

But so great is the Father's love which has been evoked by the love of the believers in Christ and by their firm belief that He came into the world to reveal the Father, to be His Ambassador, that the Father will deal directly with His children and will grant their prayers. And this the disciples should once more be assured of: Jesus went forth from the Father and came into the world to carry into effect the plan of salvation for all mankind. And now He leaves the world and goes to the Father, thus signifying that the work which He intended to perform has been done. That fact establishes the relation between God and the believers, and renders all their prayers in the name of Jesus acceptable to Him. (Kretzmann)

**16:28** *exēlthon para tou patros*, "I came from the Father." Some manuscripts omit these words, thus v 27 and v 28 would run together "and have believed I came from God, and have come into the world." Yet the longer reading seems more in keeping with John's pattern of repetition. Here we have a summary of Jesus' earthly mission. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 20, Part 2)

16:29-30 *ide*, "ah" or "behold," is used as a deictic particle to draw attention. After many "figures of speech" (v 25), the apostles understood what Jesus said in his last statement (v 28). Actually, they may have mistaken his words in v 25, "The hour is coming when I will no longer speak to you in figures of speech," to be occurring at that very moment, as Jesus spoke clearly about his coming and returning to the Father. This understanding leads them to reaffirm their confession that Jesus "came from God" (v 30). (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 20, Part 2)

**16:29** *not using figures of speech.* The disciples thought that they understood, but their understanding remained inadequate. (TLSB)

The last statements of Jesus had been so clear and unmistakable, of the love of the Father, of Christ's coming from, and going to, the Father, that the disciples thought they understood Him perfectly. There was neither parable nor proverb in these sayings, and they had the conviction, which they also freely expressed, that He had a full knowledge of all things, and that His teaching was free from all obscurity. (Kretzmann)

**16:30-32** Disciples of Christ may at some times possess and manifest strong confidence in him and at others act as if they had none: were it not for his grace, all would utterly forsake him and perish. (CB)

**16:30** *believe that you came from God.* Two recurring themes of this Gospel: believing (see note on 1:7) and Jesus' coming from God. (CSB)

Although their faith was still deficient, the disciples believed that Jesus' knowledge proved His divine origin. (TLSB)

He had in the last few verses so fully met their difficulties about his meaning in verse 16, and that without stating them, that they were more than ever convinced of his omniscience and Messiahship. (CB)

The implication of the disciples is that they need not wait for some future manifestation and revelation, when everything would be clear to their minds. They were persuaded now of His

divine Sonship. But the enthusiasm of the disciples was premature; the time of Pentecost had not yet come; they must first experience sorrow and suffering. (Kretzmann)

**16:31** *arti pisteuete*, “Do you now believe?” The disciples believed that Jesus was from God, but Jesus knows that all too soon they will completely fail to live up to this confession. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 20, Part 2)

**16:32** *the hour is coming – idou erchetai hōra kai elēluthen*, “Behold, the hour is coming, indeed it has come.” Once again, *hē hōra*, the hour, has come, but it is now even closer than the hour for speaking plainly in v 25. His hour *elēluthen*, “has come,” perfect active indicative. Jesus will soon be abandoned by his disciples, yet even in that betrayal, Jesus knows “the Father is with me.” (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 20, Part 2)

*you will be scattered*. The disciples had faith, but not enough to stand firm in face of disaster. Jesus knew they would fail; however, his church is not built on people’s strength but on God’s ability to use people even after they have failed. (CSB)

Jesus tells them that the test of their faith, of which they now seemed so sure, would come very soon. And the result would be most disappointing. They would be scattered, they would flee from His side, leaving Him all alone in His great Passion. Their own interests, their life and safety, would claim their first consideration. So would they fail Him in the critical hour. (Kretzmann)

*each to his own home* – The disciples would temporarily abandon Jesus in the crisis to come. (TLSB)

Notwithstanding the strong faith in him which they had expressed, they would soon desert him, and return to their houses or places of abode; and so far as human friends were concerned, he would be left alone. (CB)

*with me* – Although the Father would forsake Christ on the cross (cf Mt 27:46) as Christ became sin for us (2 Cor 5:21), the Father remained faithful to His Son and His mission in a way that the disciples did not (cf Ac 2:24; 10:40). (TLSB)

**16:33** *I have said these things* – *tauta*, “these things,” refers to the entire farewell discourse. Jesus had spoken “these things,” elaborating them in great detail, so that his disciples may have peace (Jn 14:27). In the hours before Jesus’ Passion, his love for his disciples is unwavering. He knows that they “will have tribulation,” yet he leaves them with words of comfort: “But take heart; I have overcome the world.” *nenikēka*, “have overcome.” Though it has yet to happen, it is as good as completed; Jesus has conquered the world through death and resurrection, just as he has defeated death and Satan. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 20, Part 2)

Persecution and other troubles Christians face. (TLSB)

Notice the contrasts: between “in me” and “in this world” (see note on 1:10) and between “peace” and “trouble.”

*I have overcome*. Just before his death Jesus affirms his final victory. (CSB)

Persecution and other troubles Christians face. (TLSB)

Overcome all your enemies, and obtained for you eternal redemption from their power. (CB)

**16:25–33** The disciples confidently claim they understand Jesus' parting words, but Jesus utters the sober prediction that they will soon abandon Him. Those boasting about spiritual maturity stand in danger of succumbing to human pride and unbelief. When we face temptation and trouble in this world, we can take heart that Christ has overcome the world for our sake. • O Christ, in crisis situations, give me the peace only You can give. Amen. (TLSB)