



# Coptic Orthodox Diocese of the Southern United States



## The Holy Gospel According to St. John

### Chapter 16

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# Introduction

- Pain entered the world as one of the fruits of disobedience
- However, God in His love allowed His only begotten Son to become man and to suffer as a sacrifice of love offered on behalf of all humanity
- Consequently, pain changed from being the fruit of sin to becoming a sign of love
- The Lord Jesus Christ spoke to the disciples openly about how much they would suffer and He promised to them His Holy Spirit the Helper who will descend on them, work in them, and grant them His divine comfort



# Introduction

## Chapter Outline

- Jesus Foretells His disciples Their Persecution 16:1-4
- The Work of the Holy Spirit 16:5-15
- Sorrow Will Turn to Joy 16:16-24
- Jesus Christ Has Overcome the World 16:25-33



# Jesus Foretells His disciples Their Persecution 16:1-4



- Jesus had just described many blessings He would provide the apostles after He leaves
- He had also warned that they would face persecution and opposition, and He had warned them of the need to continue to bear fruit for Him
- Here He explained why He had given these instructions
- Jesus was about to leave and He knew the problems the apostles would face
- There would be times of confusion, grief, disillusion, discouragement, and persecution ahead

# Jesus Foretells His disciples Their Persecution 16:1-4



- They would need strength to help them
- He was saying these things so they would not stumble when they faced these problems
- Problems are much easier to bear when we are prepared for them and anticipate them
- We are much more easily discouraged and defeated when problems come that we did not believe would come and are not prepared for

# Jesus Foretells His disciples Their Persecution 16:1-4



- Jesus then described again the persecution facing them, which would tend to cause them to stumble if they were not ready for it
- They would be *put out of synagogues*
- This practice had already begun, 9:22,34, 12:42
- People would refuse to associate with them because of their beliefs, Luke 6:22
- This was a form of social isolation, but its impact would be much more severe than we might imagine
- If one was put out of the synagogue, the harm would affect not only friendships but also business dealings and more



# Jesus Foretells His disciples Their Persecution 16:1-4



- Worse yet, men would kill them thinking they were serving God by so doing
- This is the kind of persecution Saul brought against Christians before he was converted, Acts 26:9-11, 22:3-4
- Of course, this would be done to Jesus first, but later many suffered the same fate, such as Stephen, Acts 7, James, Acts 12, and others
- Jesus repeats that those who reject Him and reject His disciples do so because they have never "known" God the Father; and do not know Him in the context of a covenant relationship

# Jesus Foretells His disciples Their Persecution 16:1-4



- There is a special force in the mention of this ignorance in connection with the previous verse
- Men think that in persecutions, and deaths of men made like themselves in the image of God, they are offering to God an acceptable sacrifice
- They can know nothing of the true nature of the living Father who pities every child, *and wills not the death of a sinner, and gave His only-begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life*
- They know nothing of the long-suffering and compassion of the Son of Man, who pleaded even for His murderers, *“Father, forgive them, they know not what they do.”*



# Jesus Foretells His disciples Their Persecution 16:1-4



- He returns to the thought of verse 1 of why He was telling them these things so they be strong when it happens
- When the persecution comes they will remember His word, and find in it support for their faith and evidence of His presence with them
- *these things I did not say to you at the beginning*, While with them, He would spare them, and in addition, the hatred of His enemies was directed against Himself
- When He will depart to the Father the burden of persecution will rest on them as the leaders of the Church and the spokesmen of the Word of God

# The Work of the Holy Spirit

## 16:5-15



- *and none of you asks Me, 'Where are You going?'*, Why does Jesus rebuke them?
- Both Peter and Thomas have asked this question in 13:36 and 14:5
- Perhaps it is because previously the disciples have been more concerned with how they can follow Him than with the question of His destination
- Some scholars point to the use of the present tense in this passage and suggest that Jesus is saying "Why don't you ask me NOW where am I going?"

# The Work of the Holy Spirit

## 16:5-15



- In fact, the disciples had interrupted Jesus' discourse three times between 14:1 and 31 but no one has asked a question since the beginning of 15:1
- Jesus seems to answer His own question by saying that it is because their hearts are all full of sorrow that they do not ask and yet if they had asked they would be comforted to know that He is going to the Father



# The Work of the Holy Spirit

## 16:5-15



- *I tell you the truth*, The words He is about to utter are words of strange sound for the ears of disciples, and He introduces them by an appeal to His own knowledge and frankness in dealing with them, as in John 14:2
- Despite their sadness, they needed to realize there were advantages that Jesus was leaving
- One advantage is that this would bring about the coming of the Helper, the Holy Spirit, 14:26, 15:26

# The Work of the Holy Spirit

## 16:5-15



- The Son of Man should complete His work on earth, and offer the sacrifice of Himself for sin, and rise from the dead, and ascend to the Father's throne, before the Advocate should come
- The Son of Man was to be glorified before the Spirit was to be given
- The conviction of sin, righteousness, and judgment could only follow the finished work of Christ
- This conviction of the world is by witness concerning Christ, John 15:26

# The Work of the Holy Spirit

## 16:5-15



- The Holy Spirit reveals the character and work of Christ to the hearts of men, therefore, reject the evil in their hearts
- The result of this conviction either that men will embrace it, accept its chastening discipline, and are saved by it
- Or reject it, and in the rejection harden their hearts, and are thus condemned by it
- This is demonstrated by the sermon Peter preached by the guidance of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost, Acts 2
- The remainder of the verse specifies the three steps in this conviction, which are more fully defined in the three following verses



# The Work of the Holy Spirit

## 16:5-15



- The three elements of this conviction of the world are separately treated
- St. Augustine observes that the greatest sin is disbelief in Christ as the Savior of the world
- For he who does not believe cannot have the blessing of remission of his sins
- Therefore, “He will convict the world of sin” implies urging men to abandon disbelief in Christ and so open the way for forgiveness

# The Work of the Holy Spirit

## 16:5-15



- The essence of all sin is unbelief in Christ
- Christ declares that the Spirit which has always been striving with men to bring them into reconciliation with God, will now convict the world that its sinful tendencies and principles have reached their highest and most willful expression in unbelief towards Him
- *of righteousness*, It is the righteousness of Christ, not that of the world
- The special reason of the conviction of righteousness is the resurrection and ascension of our Lord

# The Work of the Holy Spirit

## 16:5-15



- The Jews had insulted Him as a wicked man, said He was a sinner Himself, and a friend of publicans and sinners; that He was guilty of blasphemy, maintained a familiarity with Satan, that He had a devil
- Now the Spirit of God, by the mouth of Peter, on the day of "Pentecost", proved, to the conviction of the Jews, that all this was slander; that Christ was an innocent, holy, and righteous person, and a man approved of God among them, as they themselves must be conscious of, Acts 2:22; of all which, His going to the Father, and being received by Him, were a full proof and demonstration



# The Work of the Holy Spirit

## 16:5-15



- *you see Me no more*, The going to the Father would cause that they should see His bodily presence no more; but the Spirit's witness of Him, which would convince the world of sin and righteousness, would be, to them a truer presence of their Lord than any which physical eye could see
- *of judgment*, Satan and all those who chose Satan over Christ have condemned themselves and will face God's judgment, John 5:26-29, 12:31
- The tense here is perfect, marking the completion of the condemnation, meaning, "The ruler of this world has been and remains judged."

# The Work of the Holy Spirit

## 16:5-15



- The conviction is regarded from the point of view of the coming of the Advocate when Christ's work shall have been completed
- If the Paraklete by means of His testimony convinces the world of its sin of unbelief, and of Christ's righteousness, then the third refer to him, who rules the unbelieving world, and is the original enemy of Christ and His kingdom, to the devil
- The world might think that 'the power of darkness' conquered at Gethsemane and Calvary
- But the Resurrection and Ascension proved that what looked like victory was most signal defeat: instead of conquering he was judged

# The Work of the Holy Spirit

## 16:5-15



- This result is so certain that from the point of view of the Spirit's coming it is spoken of as already accomplished
- The two kingdoms stand out in clear distinction
- The power of the ruler of this world is overcome by the opening of the kingdom of heaven to all believers
- The King of Righteousness is in victory seated upon His throne, and claims mankind, whose nature He has assumed and whom He has redeemed, to be free from sin and servants of righteousness



# The Work of the Holy Spirit

## 16:5-15



- They are His friends, John 15:15, and there is nothing which He wishes to keep back from them
- But it would be useless to tell them what they cannot understand
- Their minds are not yet fitted to receive
- Christ has already said that the coming of the Paraklete to them would be one method of His own Divine approach to them for purposes of consolation and instruction
- Consequently He does not now allow them to suppose that, though separated from them by death, He would ever cease to instruct them

# The Work of the Holy Spirit

## 16:5-15



- At Pentecost they will receive both understanding and strength
- The Holy Spirit not only convicts and convinces the world, He also enlightens the Apostles respecting Christ and thereby glorifies Him, for to make Christ known is to glorify Him
- He is as a guide, He goes before, leads the way, removes obstructions, opens the understanding, makes things plain and clear, teaches to profit, and leads in the way men should go, without turning to the right hand or left, which, without such a guide, they would be quick to do
- *for He will not speak on His own authority,* As Christ, the Son, spoke not of Himself in opposition to the Father

# The Work of the Holy Spirit

## 16:5-15



- So the Spirit speaks not of Himself in opposition either to the Father, or the Son, but in perfect agreement with both
- Being, as of the same nature and essence, power and glory, so of the same mind, understanding, and will
- These verses are very important as showing the authority of the Apostles' teaching: it is not their own, but the truth of Christ revealed by the Spirit
- The promise has a special meaning for the disciples to whom it was spoken; but it holds good for every disciple who seeks to know the truth



# The Work of the Holy Spirit

## 16:5-15



- In this passage Jesus is revealing some of the aspects of the mystery of the Holy Trinity; the unity of God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit
- He is teaching that the 3 divine Persons have one and the same nature when He says that everything that the Father has belongs to the Son, and everything the Son has belongs to the Father, and that the Spirit also has what is common to both God the Father and God the Son
- *He will glorify Me*, The future guidance of the Spirit promised in John 16:13, will be the revelation of the many things of Christ Himself which they cannot bear now, John 16:12

# The Work of the Holy Spirit

## 16:5-15



- Just as the Son glorifies the Father by revealing Him, John 1:18. 17:4 both in word and work, so does the Spirit glorify the Son by revealing Him
- The Spirit searches all things, even the depths of Deity, and reveals them to those who receive the Holy Spirit
- Our Lord declares that all truth is implicitly contained in Himself
- In John 14 He said, "I am the Truth" about God and about man, and about the relation of man to God

# The Work of the Holy Spirit

## 16:5-15



- The Spirit will remove the veils which hide this truth, will draw forth the hidden harmonies contained in this wondrous Personality
- Such continuous revelation is from glory to glory, 2 Corinthians 3:17-18
- St. Paul at the close of his ministry was aware of infinite treasures still hidden in Christ, and he put before himself, as the goal of his highest ambition, "*that I may know him*" Philippians 3:10



# The Work of the Holy Spirit

## 16:5-15



- *He will take of Mine and declare it to you*, He does not mention the things of the Father, only His own; nor was there any necessity for it, because whatever is His, is the Father's, and whatever the Father has is His
- They are jointly concerned in every thing
- So that when the Spirit of God takes of the things of the One, He takes of the things of the other, and discovers, and applies them

# Sorrow Will Turn to Joy

## 16:16-24



- *A little while, and you will not see Me*, The time here referred to is that between the moment of His speaking to them and His death; His death would occur in a short time
- *again a little while, and you will see Me*, The time here referred to is the interval between His Resurrection and His Ascension; after three days He would rise again and appear to them
- *A little while*, A phrase repeated seven times in this brief passage, strongly encouraging His own disciples to rise above the limitations of time, and enjoy the habits of eternity

# Sorrow Will Turn to Joy

## 16:16-24



- The disciples, however, were very confused by His statements
- They questioned among themselves what He meant by saying they would not see Him and then they would see Him
- This was very confusing to them
- It is beyond their comprehension, and seems to be contradictory
- This of course proves Jesus' point when He had said He had many things to say they would not understand (verse 12)
- They did not understand even what He did say!



# Sorrow Will Turn to Joy

## 16:16-24



- The purpose of His mysterious saying, John 16:29 has been accomplished
- Their attention has been excited, and they have taken the first step towards knowledge
- They inquire among themselves, and this spirit of inquiry which He reads in their hearts, John 2:25, 6:6; He proceeds to answer
- The first part of His answer is concerned with their difficulty about the “little while.” In John 16:28
- He answers their thought about His going to the Father

# Sorrow Will Turn to Joy

## 16:16-24



- This is a proof of Christ's deity, that He is the omniscient God who knows all things, what is in man, even the secrets of the heart
- For He not only knew the whisperings of the disciples, and their inquiries among themselves about the sense of His words, but also their secret desires to ask Him concerning it

# Sorrow Will Turn to Joy

## 16:16-24



- In this verse we see that there is no exact reply to the disciples wondering and confusion, but there is more of prophecy and help than if He had said, "Tomorrow I die and shall be laid in the grave, and on the third day I shall rise again."
- He had often said this, and they refused to understand
- *you will weep and lament*, At His crucifixion, sufferings, and death
- *The world*, Wicked men



# Sorrow Will Turn to Joy

## 16:16-24



- The world will rejoice, because to some extent it will be the world's doing, and it will imagine for a little while that it has got its way and succeeded excellently well
- The world will praise the deed of blood; but all this rejoicing will last "a little while"
- Christ reaffirms their grief, but it is for "a little while"
- *your sorrow will be turned into joy*, Clearly because *"you shall see Me"*
- Thus their greatest apparent calamity would be to them, finally, the source of their highest comfort

# Sorrow Will Turn to Joy

## 16:16-24



- The process of childbearing is a common illustration in the prophets, Isaiah 21:3. 26:17-18, and especially Isaiah 66:7-8; Jeremiah 4:31, 22:23, 30:6; Hosea 13:13-14; Micah 4:9-10
- Here Jesus uses it to express that, when a woman is in childbirth, the labor causes pain, sorrow, and suffering
- But after the baby is born, she is so happy that she has given birth to a child that the memory of the pain seems nothing by comparison

# Sorrow Will Turn to Joy

## 16:16-24



- The hour of their suffering and pain was at hand; but it would pass away, and the fullness of joy would come in the constant presence of their Lord
- Their sorrow would be but temporary; their joy would be permanent
- The point of comparison between their state, and the familiar illustration of a woman in labor, is the passage from extreme suffering to extreme joy



# Sorrow Will Turn to Joy

## 16:16-24



- “He mentioned that example to make clear the temporary sorrow and the permanent joy and that the benefit gained from the Savior is great.” **St. John Chrysostom**
- The occasional manifestations of Christ between His Resurrection and His Ascension helped them in a wonderful way to recognize the fact that He was ever watching them, and was at their side under all the circumstances of human life

# Sorrow Will Turn to Joy

## 16:16-24



- *in that day*, The time here referred to is, as we have seen, John 16:16, the time of the gift of the Paraklete, who shall fully illumine them, so that they shall not need to ask the meaning of new thoughts and words as they have done before
- *whatever you ask the Father in My name He will give you*, Some commentators say that the Name of Christ is not only the medium by which the disciples approach the Father (which is obvious enough from verse 24), but the manifestation and ministry by which not only is the prayer heard, but the gift or answer bestowed

# Sorrow Will Turn to Joy

## 16:16-24



- The fact that we pray in His name makes it certain that the prayer will be answered
- *Until now you have asked nothing in My name,* They had not up to this time received the Holy Spirit
- When He comes, He will be as the presence of Christ dwelling in them
- Under His influence their will become the will of Christ, and their thoughts the thoughts of Christ, and their prayers the prayers of Christ
- They had not yet so know Him as to pray in His name
- It would be otherwise in that day



# Sorrow Will Turn to Joy

## 16:16-24



- The future is thought of as already present, and they are directed to ask, as though they had already entered into the new region of spiritual life
- The pain of the present laboring are passing away, John 16:22
- The fullness of joy is already at hand
- “The words that follow, “Until now you have asked nothing in My name” [24] may have two meanings: either that you have not asked in My name because until now you have not known My name as you should. Or, you asked for nothing compared to what you should have asked. What you asked for may be considered as nothing.” Saint Augustine

# Jesus Christ Has Overcome the World 16:25-33



- *These things I have spoken*, It can apply to all Christ's teaching, of which there was much which the multitudes were not allowed, Matthew 13:11 and the Apostles were not able John 2:22 to understand at the time
- For the disciples much of Christ's teaching remained in a parabolic form, until the Spirit brought all things which He had said to the mind, and quickened their minds so that they could grasp its meaning, John 2:20-22
- St. Augustine interprets 'the time' here as meaning the future when we see God face to face

# Jesus Christ Has Overcome the World 16:25-33



- It is as St. Paul says, "For now we see in a mirror, dimly, but then face to face. Now I know in part, but then I shall know just as I also am known," 1 Corinthians 13:12
- "As though the Lord Christ says to them, 'At My resurrection you will understand all My words perfectly.' " **St. John Chrysostom**
- *but I will tell you plainly about the Father*, By pouring forth His Spirit upon them, who should not only take of His things, but of His Father's also, and show them clearly and plainly; so as that they should have a clear understanding of the Father and the Son



# Jesus Christ Has Overcome the World 16:25-33



- *In that day*, For when the Spirit was poured upon them, they not only received His extraordinary gifts, and had a larger measure of His grace bestowed upon them; but were also blessed with Him, as a spirit of grace and supplication, in a more remarkable manner than ever they had been before
- Jesus is still the only mediator between man and God, but the disciples love and belief in Jesus which make them one with Him also unite them to the Father
- The result is perfect mediation between man and God

# Jesus Christ Has Overcome the World 16:25-33



- *I do not say to you that I shall pray the Father for you*, There is no reason to ask the Father concerning them; all has been asked and answered, the intercession is complete; His whole work will have reconciled the Father with His children
- By becoming God Incarnate, Jesus established a bond of union with mankind, and now in leaving the world He returns to His Father, continuing the bond between Himself and mankind and Himself and God the Father
- It is through our union with Christ that we have access to union with the Father

# Jesus Christ Has Overcome the World 16:25-33



- It is only when "His hour" is accomplished and His return is completed that the disciples will be able in confidence to make their petitions in prayer to the Father as He has promised
- *for the Father Himself loves you, because you have loved Me*, Our Lord is leading them to the fuller truths of spiritual communion with God
- As if He is saying, "The Father Himself needs no petition to do you good, for He loves you, and graciously wills to save you to the uttermost, because you have loved Me and believed in Me as coming from God, for the salvation of the world"



# Jesus Christ Has Overcome the World 16:25-33



- This verse is the sum of what the apostle believed
- *I came forth from the Father* With whom He existed from eternity in glory
- *have come into the world* By His incarnation
- *I leave the world* By His death
- *go to the Father* These four words contain the whole economy of the Gospel of man's salvation, and a complete perfect summing up of the Christian faith
- The Son, of one Substance with the Father, was born into the world, suffered, and returned to the Father

# Jesus Christ Has Overcome the World 16:25-33



- Upon the discourse of Christ, such rays and beams of light darted into the minds of the apostles, and things stood so clear in their view, and they so well understood what Christ had said
- *Now we are sure that You know all things*, They think that the day has already come when they shall ask Him nothing, for He knows all things, and communicates to them the fullness of truth
- The idea in their minds does not embrace the full range of human inquiry, nor the depths of Deity, but all the things which are in their hearts to ask him

# Jesus Christ Has Overcome the World 16:25-33



- The time for perfect plainness was yet to come; but having caught a glimpse of His meaning, they eagerly express their satisfaction, as if glad to make anything of His words
- They had believed this before John 16:27, but here, as frequently, St. John remembers the development of their faith
- They find, in His knowledge of their thoughts, John 16:19, and in the full solution which He gives to their difficulties, ground for a new faith; and upon this new proof of His divinity they have a new faith in Him



# Jesus Christ Has Overcome the World 16:25-33



- *Jesus answered them, “Do you now believe? And will you continue to believe?*
- *You are now fully convinced; and will you in the hour of trial retain your conviction, and prove faithful and steady?*
- *This question was evidently asked to put them on a full examination of their hearts*
- *Though they supposed that they had unshaken faith - faith that would endure every trial, yet He told them that they were about to go through scenes that would test them, and where they would need all their confidence in God*

# Jesus Christ Has Overcome the World 16:25-33



- He knew what lay ahead and how they would react to His arrest and crucifixion
- He affirmed that they would all desert Him and be scattered in the hour of difficulty before them
- Yet the Father would be with Him so He would not be alone
- His life was one of constant communion with the Father
- At the conclusion of the discourse, verse 33, He sums up in a single thought what was the object of it, "Peace in Him"
- In the world, indeed, tribulation, but this as conquered in Him, and not interrupting the true peace in Him

# Jesus Christ Has Overcome the World 16:25-33



- The thought is closely allied to that of the last verse, *will leave Me alone. And yet I am not alone* “ Troubled, and yet having peace.”
- The true life is that which is in communion with God through Christ, and that is one of never-failing peace, which no tribulation can ever affect
- The tone of these last triumphant words reminds them of the finest and noblest of His previous assurances, His promises of peace, courage, and victory over all the evil and power of this world, John 14:27-28



# Jesus Christ Has Overcome the World 16:25-33



- *I have overcome the world.*” He speaks of the assured victory as though it were already accomplished, John 16:11 and John 12:31, 13:31
- Here is the reason why they should take courage and be of good cheer
- He is the Captain of their salvation, and has already won the victory
- The enemies they fear, the world in which they have tribulation, are already captives
- Christ triumphantly claims the victory and in His victory His followers conquer also



# Discussion

- How can it be that it is to disciples (and our) advantage that Jesus goes away? What does the Holy Spirit's presence in us signify?
- How could people that would kill the apostles think they are offering service to God?
- Jesus says the Holy Spirit will convict the world concerning righteousness and judgment. What do people in the world need to be convicted about concerning righteousness?



# Discussion

- How does Jesus say we can have peace and joy in the midst of sorrow? What makes peace and sorrow compatible?
- If someone were to ask you about the Holy Spirit, who He is and what He does, what would you say to them based on John 16?
- What things did Jesus speak to them to keep them from stumbling?
- How would telling them this keep them from stumbling?