



## International Bible Study Commentary

Verse-by-Verse Bible Lessons Thru the Bible

L.G. Parkhurst, Jr.

### **John 16:12-22 Commentary** **News International Version**

**Questions for Discussion and Thinking Further** follow the verse-by-verse [International Bible Study Commentary](#). **Study Hints for Discussion and Thinking Further** will help with class preparation and in conducting class discussion: these hints are available on the *International Bible Study Commentary* website along with the *International Bible Lesson* that you may want to read to your class as part of your Bible study. You can discuss each week's commentary and lesson at the [International Bible Study Forum](#).

**(John 16:12) "I have much more to say to you, more than you can now bear.**

Jesus could have told His disciples all the details about His arrest, flogging, crucifixion, death, and burial prior to His resurrection from the dead, but Jesus knew that in their present state of anxiety they could not bear to learn these facts. He could have explained the meaning and purpose of His atoning sacrifice for sinners, but Jesus decided that the Holy Spirit could remind them of what He had taught them that they did not understand at the time and reveal new truths and meanings after He ascended into heaven. Jesus' policy and that of the Holy Spirit seems to be revealed in this verse: Jesus will not tell His true disciples any more about themselves, others, or the future than they can bear. Jesus will not give any of His disciples any more than they can handle with the help of the Holy Spirit.

**(John 16:13) But when he, the Spirit of truth, comes, he will guide you into all the truth. He will not speak on his own; he will speak only what he hears, and he will tell you what is yet to come.**

The fact that Jesus is “the Truth” and the Holy Spirit is “the Spirit of Truth” indicates that when Jesus’ earthly work in the flesh was finished that the Holy Spirit would come and carry on the work of God the Father and God the Son—the redeeming and sanctifying work of God through the Son and the Spirit within Jesus’ disciples then and forever. Jesus walked beside His disciples when He walked with them on earth. Jesus promised that the Holy Spirit would walk (and now walks) within His disciples. The Holy Spirit lives inside Jesus’ disciples, and the Spirit teaches Jesus’ disciples from within them. The Holy Spirit then (and today) lives closer to Jesus’ disciples than Jesus could himself, because on earth Jesus could only live and work beside His disciples. The Holy Spirit would also teach Jesus’ disciples more about the future (see especially the Book of Revelation).

Today, the Holy Spirit interprets and applies the meaning of the Bible for Jesus’ disciples, the Book written by Jesus’ first-generation disciples as the Holy Spirit led them. He still works within Jesus’ disciples. The Holy Spirit will come into the true disciples of Jesus Christ as Peter taught in Acts 2:38, after some in the crowd believed that Jesus is both Lord and Christ and that they had crucified Him (directly or indirectly with their approval): “Peter said to them, ‘Repent, and each of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins; and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.’” Today, the Holy Spirit will guide Jesus’ disciples into all the truth when He explains and applies what the Bible teaches to those who study the Bible with the intention of obeying Jesus in everything He taught in the Bible. Today, the Holy Spirit teaches Jesus’ disciples whatever the Father and the Son want taught to Jesus’ disciples. These will be truths that further explain, illustrate, and apply the words of Jesus in the Bible. Today, the Holy Spirit will declare some things that will happen in the future to prepare Jesus’ disciples for that future. The Holy Spirit will never teach anything contrary to what the Bible teaches, because the Holy Spirit will not contradict or deny what He inspired the writers to write in the Bible. The disciples of Jesus must discern the spirits, as John taught in 1 John 4:1-3, “Beloved, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits to see whether they are from God; for many false prophets have gone out into the world. By this you know the Spirit of God: every spirit that confesses that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is from God, and every spirit that does not confess Jesus

is not from God. And this is the spirit of the antichrist, of which you have heard that it is coming; and now it is already in the world.” The Holy Spirit will never approve what God has commanded people not to do in the Bible.

**(John 16:14) He will glorify me because it is from me that he will receive what he will make known to you.**

The Father glorified the Son, and the Son glorified the Father when they revealed the truth about each other to the disciples and all who would come to saving faith in Jesus Christ by receiving the truths Jesus revealed. As the Spirit of Truth, the Holy Spirit glorifies Jesus Christ by revealing and rightly applying the truth of the Bible inside the mind and heart of true believers in Jesus. The Holy Spirit helps Jesus’ disciples understand the Bible’s teachings and apply them to their lives so they can obey and serve Jesus courageously and faithfully as they love and live for Jesus as their Lord and Savior. The Holy Spirit will keep teaching the truth as Jesus taught the truth, and the truths He teaches will be consistent with what Jesus taught when He walked on earth. The Holy Spirit will never contradict the commands or the teachings of Jesus Christ in the Bible.

**(John 16:15) All that belongs to the Father is mine. That is why I said the Spirit will receive from me what he will make known to you.”**

Jesus is the only begotten Son of the Father, and the Father loves Jesus and has given Him everything. Think deeply about these words of Jesus. Jesus said, “All that God has is mine!” Everything that belongs to God the Father, which includes everything beyond whatever God has created, belongs to Jesus and the Father together. The Father has an almighty, divine, and holy nature, and so does Jesus Christ, His Son. For any mere man to make such claims would be outrageous and obviously false. The fact that God raised Jesus from the dead after He was crucified, dead, and buried indicates that Jesus told the truth about himself and His relationship with the Father and the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit declares and imparts to Jesus’ disciples everything they need to know about Him as the Way, the Truth, and the Life, and the things that are to come. The Holy Spirit gives them the fruit of the Spirit: “love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, generosity, faithfulness,

gentleness, and self-control” (Galatians 5:22-23). The fact that Jesus’s first disciples received and did bear (and His disciples today still receive and bear) the Spirit’s fruits and gifts also indicates that Jesus told the truth about himself and could do all He said He would do. See Ephesians 4:11-13 for a list of some of Jesus gifts to the Church.

**(John 16:16) Jesus went on to say, “In a little while you will see me no more, and then after a little while you will see me.”**

Following the principle that Jesus declared to His disciples in John 16:12, Jesus did not tell them in advance what He would later explain to them. For example, after His resurrection, Jesus met some of His disciples on the road to Emmaus, and after He left, they said to one another, “Were not our hearts burning within us while he was talking to us on the road, while he was opening the scriptures to us?” (see Luke 24:13-35). After Jesus ascended into heaven, the Holy Spirit explained Jesus words and works even more to His disciples. As Jesus spoke to them in John 16, we know that in a little while Jesus would be arrested, crucified, and buried and they would no longer see Him. We also know that in a little while what Jesus foretold them did happen: Jesus rose from the dead and they saw Him. Today, the disciples of Jesus do not see Jesus face-to-face, but they rejoice as the Holy Spirit indwells them. They will rejoice even more when they see Jesus face-to-face and begin to live forever with Him and all who love Him.

**(John 16:17) At this, some of his disciples said to one another, “What does he mean by saying, ‘In a little while you will see me no more, and then after a little while you will see me,’ and ‘Because I am going to the Father?’”**

Of course, the disciples would not have understood all Jesus said. Jesus only intended to tell them enough for them to remember that what He promised did happen and He spoke truthfully. They did not understand what Jesus would do or how Jesus would go to go to the Father. They did not know why Jesus would want to go to the Father. They would only learn many things after the Holy Spirit came to teach them from within them.

**(John 16:18) They kept asking, “What does he mean by ‘a little while’? We don’t understand what he is saying.”**

By essentially repeating John 16:17, Jesus showed that He knew that these questions had led to considerable discussion among them and that they may have speculated a great deal about what He meant, even as His disciples today would have done if they were there. Certainly today, many of Jesus’ disciples often wish Jesus were visibly present with them—even though the Holy Spirit dwells within them and gives them joy.

**(John 16:19) Jesus saw that they wanted to ask him about this, so he said to them, “Are you asking one another what I meant when I said, ‘In a little while you will see me no more, and then after a little while you will see me’?”**

John indicated that Jesus did not ask His question because He lacked knowledge. Jesus knew what they were talking about and He wanted them to know that He knew what they were talking about. Jesus exactly repeated what they were talking about, so they knew He was not speculating about what they might have been thinking and talking about based on what He had told them.

**(John 16:20) Very truly I tell you, you will weep and mourn while the world rejoices. You will grieve, but your grief will turn to joy.**

Jesus told them what they needed to know without telling them more than they could bear. “Very truly” meant this is certainly so, this is indeed the case, and this certainly will happen. Today, some might use the expression, “Mark my words.” All Jesus foretold them did happen. As Jesus suffered crucifixion, His followers at the foot of the cross wept and mourned and felt pain. When Jesus was buried, those who buried Him and those who knew that He had really died wept and mourned and felt pain. Those of this world, the religious leaders for example, rejoiced that they had silenced Jesus and had scattered His band of followers. They rejoiced that they would never hear anymore from Jesus or His disciples. But Jesus went on to foretell that the disciples’ pain would turn to joy. They would suffer when they could no longer see Jesus, but they would rejoice when they saw Him

again. Knowing the rest of the story, we know that the world did not silence Jesus or His followers. The religious leaders and others of this world did not rejoice for long with the thought that they had killed Jesus. Remember what happened on the Day of Pentecost when Peter preached in Acts 2:36-37, “Therefore let all the house of Israel know for certain that God has made Him both Lord and Christ—this Jesus whom you crucified.’ Now when they heard this, they were pierced to the heart, and said to Peter and the rest of the apostles, ‘Brethren, what shall we do?’” Then, Peter told them in Acts 2:38, “Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ so that your sins may be forgiven; and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit,” and about three thousand persons became disciples.

**(John 16:21) A woman giving birth to a child has pain because her time has come; but when her baby is born she forgets the anguish because of her joy that a child is born into the world.**

Jesus then compared their sorrow and joy to the sorrow and joy of a woman giving birth to her baby. When Jesus died for them, they would experience pain and sorrow, but after Jesus rose from the dead, they would experience joy and new life—they would be born again or born anew. Their blessings would so outweigh their sorrow and pain that they would not remain sorrowful. They would become new people, new courageous Spirit-filled disciples teaching about Jesus in the world. Today, having repented of their sins, Jesus’ disciples live and love as new people, as courageous Spirit-filled disciples in the world who teach about the words and works of Jesus.

**(John 16:22) So with you: Now is your time of grief, but I will see you again and you will rejoice, and no one will take away your joy.”**

Once again, Jesus promised them that their thinking about and later experiencing separation from Him (especially in the ways they would be separated by His death and burial) would cause them pain; however, He also promised that He would see them again and when they did see Him their hearts would rejoice, and no one could take their joy from them. If we ask ourselves how Jesus’ disciples could suffer and face certain death as they did because they followed Him, the answer lies in at least these three facts.

First, the Holy Spirit dwelt within them. Second, they had the joy of Jesus within them. Third, nothing and no one could take their joy from them. After Jesus returned to His Father by ascending into heaven, we read about the disciples' joy in Luke 24:52-53, "And they worshiped him, and returned to Jerusalem with great joy; and they were continually in the temple blessing God." Today, with great joy, Jesus' disciples trust Jesus and all Jesus' promises.

### **Questions for Discussion and Thinking Further**

1. What will the Spirit of Truth do when He comes to the disciples?
2. How will the Spirit of Truth glorify Jesus?
3. Why can (or will) the Spirit of Truth take what belongs to Jesus and declare it to His disciples?
4. Why would the disciples weep and mourn? What would the world do as the disciples wept and mourned?
5. What would happen to Jesus' disciples after their time of pain at the loss of Jesus?

© 2021 by L.G. Parkhurst, Jr. All Rights Reserved.

*Permission Granted for Not for Profit Use.*

Contact: P.O. Box 1052, Edmond, Oklahoma, 73083 and [lgp@theiblf.com](mailto:lgp@theiblf.com).