

FINDING THE MESSIAH

THE GOSPEL OF JOHN



JOHN 16:16-33

Living in Victory

DAY ONE Observation

John 1-12 record the public ministry of Jesus to the nation, while chapters 13-17 record the private ministry of Jesus with His disciples. Those who find the Messiah are taught what it means to follow Him.

Pray and ask God to speak to your heart as you read John 16:16-33. Mark words or phrases that stand out to you. Record the main message or your thoughts next to each paragraph.

¹⁶ “A little while, and you will not see Me; and again a little while, and you will see Me, because I go to the Father.”

¹⁷ Then *some* of His disciples said among themselves, “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 go to the Father?’” ¹⁸ They said therefore, “What is this that He says, ‘A little while’? We do not know what He is saying.”

¹⁹ Now Jesus knew that they desired to ask Him, and He said to them, “Are you inquiring among yourselves about what I said, ‘A little while, and you will not see Me; and again a little while, and you will see Me’?” ²⁰ Most assuredly, I say to you that you will weep and lament, but the world will rejoice; and you will be sorrowful, but your sorrow will be turned into joy. ²¹ A woman, when she is in labor, has sorrow because her hour has come; but as soon as she has given birth to the child, she no longer remembers the anguish, for joy that a human being has been born into the world. ²² Therefore you now have sorrow; but I will see you again and your heart will rejoice, and your joy no one will take from you. ²³ “And in that day you will ask Me nothing. Most assuredly, I say to you, whatever you ask the Father in My name He will give you. ²⁴ Until now you have asked nothing in My name. Ask, and you will receive, that your joy may be full.

²⁵ “These things I have spoken to you in figurative language; but the time is coming when I will no longer speak to you in figurative language, but I 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 shall pray the Father for you; ²⁷ for the Father Himself loves you, because you have loved Me, and have believed that I came forth from God. ²⁸ I came forth from the Father and have come into the world. Again, I leave the world and go to the Father.”

²⁹ His disciples said to Him, “See, now You are speaking plainly, and using no figure of speech! ³⁰ Now we are sure that You know all things, and have no need that anyone should question You. By this we believe that You came forth from God.”

³¹ Jesus answered them, “Do you now believe? ³² Indeed the hour is coming, yes, has now come, that you will be scattered, each to his own, and will leave Me alone. And yet I am not alone, because the Father is with Me. ³³ These things I have spoken to you, that in Me you may have peace. In the world you will have tribulation; but be of good cheer, I have overcome the world.”
(NKJV)

Jesus gives two “most assuredly” statements in this passage. Write both of them out.

Most assuredly, I say to you, _____

_____ (16:20).

Most assuredly, I say to you, _____
_____ (16:23).

Jesus summarizes His mission in 16:28. What four actions does Jesus mention in this verse?

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____

What does Jesus promise that we will have in this world? _____

What does Jesus promise that we can have in Him? _____

Why is Jesus able to leave us this gift? _____

DAY TWO
Meditation

Quiet your heart and allow God to speak through His Word. Slowly read Jesus' words in John 16:33 several times. Reflect on each word. Meditate on them over and over until you memorize them.

These things I have spoken to you,
that in Me you may have peace.
In the world you will have tribulation;
but be of good cheer,
I have overcome the world. (NKJV)

Which words, phrases, or images stand out to you? Why?

Offer the passage back to God in the form of a personalized prayer.

DAY THREE
Interpretation

In interpretation, you are digging deeper into the passage in order to better understand its meaning. A word study on a key word and/or looking up parallel passages can help you in your understanding.

Reading John 16:23 in the English translation seems like Jesus presents a contradiction—*And in that day you will ask me nothing. Most assuredly, I say to you, whatever you ask the Father in My name He will give you.* Thus, it appears that Jesus says that the disciples won't ask...and then they will ask. However, in the Greek language, two different words for "ask" are used.

Go to blueletterbible.org and type "John 16:23" into the "Search the Bible" box. Next click on John 16:23 to bring up the verse in the Greek (or select "Interlinear" from the Tools menu). Find the first word translated as "ask" and click on the Strong's number (G2065) to bring up the Greek word, its definition, and its usage in other passages in the New Testament.

What is this Greek word for "ask"? _____ (Use the transliteration.)

How many times is it used in the New Testament? _____ (See KJV Translation Count.)

What is its primary definition? (See I. under Outline of Biblical Usage) _____

Now go back to the interlinear of John 16:23 and find the second word translated "ask" and click on the Strong's number (G154) to bring up this Greek word and definition.

What is this Greek word for "ask"? _____ (Use the transliteration.)

How many times is it used in the New Testament? _____ (See KJV Translation Count.)

What is its primary definition? (See Outline of Biblical Usage) _____

Click on the link for Vine's Expository Dictionary under Dictionary Aids. What additional information do you learn from Vine's on the meaning of this Greek word?

For further clarity, go back to the first Greek word (G2065) and click on Vine's Expository Dictionary to get a fuller explanation of the difference between these two Greek words.

Based on what you have learned, how would you interpret the meaning of John 16:23?

DAY FOUR Devotion

Read the following excerpt from J.C. Ryle's *Expository Thoughts on John*.

16:16-24. Not all Christ's sayings were understood by His disciples. We are told this distinctly in the passage we have now read. "What is this that he says? We cannot tell what he says." None ever spoke so plainly as Jesus. None were so thoroughly accustomed to His style of teaching as the Apostles. Yet even the Apostles did not always take in their Master's meaning. Surely we have no right to be surprised if we cannot interpret Christ's words. There are many depths in those who we have no line to fathom. But let us thank God that there are many sayings of our Lord recorded which no honest mind can fail to understand. Let us use diligently the light that we have, and not doubt that "to him that has, more shall be given."

We learn, for one thing, in these verses, that ***Christ's absence from the earth will be a time of sorrow to believers, but of joy to the world.*** It is written, "You shall weep and lament, but the world shall rejoice." To confine these words to the single point of Christ's approaching death and burial, appears a narrow view of their meaning. Like many of our Lord's sayings on the last evening of His earthly ministry, they seem to extend over the whole period of time between His first and second advents.

Christ's personal absence must needs be a sorrow to all true-hearted believers. "The children of the bride-chamber cannot but fast when the bridegroom is taken from them." Faith is not sight. Hope is not certainty. Reading and hearing are not the same as beholding. Praying is not the same as speaking face to face. There is something, even in the hearts of the most eminent saints, that will never be fully satisfied as long as they are on earth and Christ is in heaven. So long as they dwell in a body of

corruption, and see through a glass darkly--so long as they behold creation groaning under the power of sin, and all things not put under Christ--so long their happiness and peace must needs be incomplete. This is what Paul meant when he said, "We ourselves, which have the first fruits of the Spirit, groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption, to wit, the redemption of our body." (Rom. 8:23.)

Yet this same personal absence of Christ is no cause of sorrow to the children of this world. ... "We do not want this Christ to reign over us," is the feeling of the world. His absence causes them no pain. Their so-called happiness is complete without Him. ... The world does not want Christ back again, and thinks that it does very well without Him. What a fearful waking up there will be by-and-by!

We learn, for another thing in this verse, that ***Christ's personal return shall be a source of boundless joy to His believing people.*** It is written, "I will see you again, and your heart shall rejoice, and your joy no man takes from you." Once more we must take care that we do not narrow the meaning of these words by tying them down to our Lord's resurrection. They surely reach much further than this. The joy of the disciples when they saw Christ risen from the dead, was a joy soon obscured by His ascension and withdrawal into heaven. The true joy, the perfect joy, the joy that can never be taken away, will be the joy which Christ's people will feel when Christ returns the second time, at the end of this world.

The second personal advent of Christ, to speak plainly, is the one grand object on which our Lord, both here and elsewhere, teaches all believers to fix their eyes. We

ought to be always looking for and "loving His appearing," as the perfection of our happiness, and the consummation of all our hopes. (2 Peter 3:12; 2 Tim. 4:8.) That same Jesus who was taken up visibly into heaven, shall also come again visibly, even as He went. Let the eyes of our faith be always fixed on this coming. It is not enough that we look *backward* to the cross, and rejoice in Christ dying for our sins; and *upwards* to the right hand of God, and rejoice in Christ's interceding for every believer. We must do more than this. We must look *forward* to Christ's return from heaven to bless His people, and to wind up the work of redemption. Then, and then only, will the prayer of eighteen centuries receive its complete answer--"Your kingdom come, Your will be done on earth as it is in heaven."

...We learn, lastly, in these verses, that ***while Christ is absent believers must ask much in prayer.*** It is written, "Hitherto have you asked nothing in My name--ask and you shall receive, that your joy may be full."

We may well believe that up to this time the disciples had never realized their Master's full dignity. They had certainly never understood that He was the one Mediator between God and man, in whose name and for whose sake they were to put up their prayers. Here they are distinctly told that henceforward they are to "ask in His name." Nor can we doubt that our Lord would have all His people, in every age, understand that the secret of comfort during His absence is to be instant in prayer. He would have us know that if we cannot *see* Him with our bodily eyes any longer, we can *talk* with Him, and through Him have special access to God. "Ask and you shall receive," He proclaims to all His people in every age; "and your joy shall be full."

Let the lesson sink down deeply into our hearts. Of all the list of Christian duties there is none to which there is such abounding encouragement, as prayer. It is a duty which concerns all. High and low, rich and poor, learned and unlearned--all must pray. It is a duty for which all are accountable. All cannot read, or hear, or sing; but all who have the spirit of adoption can pray. Above all, it is a duty in which everything depends on the heart and motive within. Our words may be feeble and ill-chosen, and our language broken and ungrammatical, and unworthy to be written down. But if the heart be right, it matters not. He that sits in heaven can spell out the meaning of every petition sent up in the name of Jesus, and can make the asker know and feel that he receives.

...Let prayer in the name of Jesus be a daily habit with us every morning and evening of our lives. Keeping up that habit, we shall find strength for duty, comfort in trouble, guidance in perplexity, hope in sickness, and support in death. Faithful is He that promised, "Your joy shall be full;" and He will keep His word, if we ask in prayer.

16:25-33. We learn, for one thing, that ***clear knowledge of God the Father is one of the foundations of the Christian religion.*** Our Lord says to His disciples, "The time comes when I shall show you plainly of the Father." He does not say, we should mark, "I will show you plainly about myself." It is the Father whom He promises to show.

The wisdom of this remarkable saying is very deep. There are few subjects of which men know so little in reality as the character and attributes of God the Father. It is not for nothing that it is written, "No man knows the Father save the Son, and he to whomsoever the Son shall reveal Him." (Matt. 11:27.) "The only begotten Son, who

is in the bosom of the Father, He has declared Him." (John 1:18.) Thousands imagine that they know the Father because they think of Him as great, and almighty, and all-hearing, and wise, and eternal, but they think no further. To think of Him as just and yet the justifier of the sinner who believes in Jesus--as the God who sent His Son to suffer and die--as God in Christ reconciling the world unto Himself--as God specially well-pleased with the atoning sacrifice of His Son, whereby His law is honored; to think of God the Father in this way is not given to most men. No wonder that our Master says, "I will show you plainly of the Father."

Let it be part of our daily prayers, that we may know more of "the only true God," as well as of Jesus Christ whom He has sent. ... Let us seek to know all three Persons in the blessed Trinity, and give to each One the honor due to him. Let us lay hold firmly of the great truth, that the Gospel of our salvation is the result of the eternal counsels of Father, Son, and Holy Spirit; and that we are as thoroughly debtors to the love of the Father, as to the love of the Spirit, or the love of the Son. No one has learned of Christ so deeply as the man who is ever drawing nearer to the Father through the Son--ever feeling more childlike confidence in Him--and ever understanding more thoroughly that in Christ, God is not an angry judge, but a loving Father and Friend.

We learn, for another thing, in this passage, that *our Lord Jesus Christ makes much of a little grace, and speaks kindly of those who have it*. We see Him saying to the disciples--"The Father Himself loves you, because you have loved Me, and have believed that I came out from God."

How weak was the faith and love of the Apostles! How soon, in a very few hours, they were buried under a cloud of unbelief and cowardice! These very men whom Jesus commends for loving and believing, before the morning sun arose, forsook Him and fled. Yet, *weak* as their graces were, they were *real* and *true* and *genuine*. They were graces which hundreds of learned priests and scribes and Pharisees never attained, and, not attaining, died miserably in their sins.

Let us take great comfort in this blessed truth. The Savior of sinners will not cast off those who believe in Him, because they are babes in faith and knowledge. He will not break the bruised reed or quench the smoking flax. He can see reality under much infirmity, and where He sees it, He is graciously pleased. The followers of such a Savior may well be bold and confident. They have a Friend who despises not the least member of His flock, and casts out none who come to Him, however weak and feeble, if they are only true.

... We learn, lastly, from this passage, that *Christ is the true source of peace*. We read that our Lord winds up all His discourse with these soothing words--"These things have I spoken unto you, that you might have peace." The end and scope of His parting address, He would have us know, is to draw us nearer to Himself as the only fountain of comfort. He does not tell us that we shall have no trouble in the world. He holds out no promise of freedom from tribulation, while we are in the body. But He bids us rest in the thought that He has fought our battle and won a victory for us. Though tried, and troubled, and vexed with things here below, we shall not be destroyed. "Be of good cheer," is His parting charge--"Be of good cheer; I have overcome the world."

What stands out to you from Ryle's words? Why?

DAY FIVE
Application

Re-read John 16:16-33 and consider the truths that you have learned this week. Seek to apply the message of this passage to your daily life.

What thought or truth impacted you this week from your study of John 16:16-33? Why?

Take a moment to evaluate your heart. What burdens and tribulations do you feel right now?

What are you sorrowful about?

What are you fearful of?

In what area(s) of your life do you feel defeated? Overwhelmed? Powerless?

Reflect again on John 16:33. Say Christ's words out loud and remember His peace, power, joy, and victory are available to you...but you must believe them, embrace them, and live them out.

*These things I have spoken to you, that in Me you may have peace.
In the world you will have tribulation;
but be of good cheer, I have overcome the world.*

Lift up your hands and speak out a prayer to God, asking Him for His power, peace, and joy to defeat, replace, and overcome whatever fears, trials, or sorrows are weighing down your heart.