

John 16:16–33  
All things New: Jesus' Swan Song

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John 16:16–33 records a portion of Jesus' discourse with His disciples shortly before His crucifixion.

"Swan song" is a metaphor that refers to the final performance, act, or gesture of a creative person before they retire or die. The Upper Room Discourse is considered as Jesus' swan song.

In the Upper Room discourse we are invited into a profound and intimate discourse where Jesus prepares His disciples for the approaching climax of His earthly mission.

The departure of Jesus might seem sorrowful, but it marked the advent of a new era where the Holy Spirit becomes the advocate, guide, and revealer of truth to every believer.

It is Christ's reassurance that while His physical presence might be departing, God's presence and guidance through the Spirit will be even more intimate, transformative, and empowering.

Through this passage, we're reminded that Christ's work on the cross is not the end but a beautiful beginning. It sets in motion the age of the Spirit, where believers are not left as orphans but are embraced and led by the ever-present Comforter, ensuring that the message and love of Christ thrive and spread across the world.

In this passage...

Jesus continues to speak of His impending departure, which will lead to his disciples' sorrow but ultimately to joy.

He uses the analogy of a woman in labor, explaining that while they will grieve at His death, their sorrow will turn into uncontainable joy when they see Him risen again.

He promises that after His departure, He will send the Holy Spirit, the Helper, who will guide them in truth, convict the world of sin, and glorify Jesus.

He assures them that He will overcome the world, and though they will face trials and tribulations, they can take heart because He has already conquered the world.

Chapter 16, as a whole:

encapsulates Jesus' teachings on the nature of His departure,  
the coming of the Holy Spirit,  
the transformative power of His resurrection,  
and the believers' endurance through challenges by placing their faith  
in Him.

## Outline

### The Promise of Jesus' Return (John 16:16-18)

In a little while you will see Me no more, and then after a little while you will see Me." Then some of His disciples asked one another, "Why is He telling us, 'In a little while you will not see Me, and then after a little while you will see Me' and 'Because I am going to the Father'?" They kept asking, "Why is He saying, 'a little while'? We do not understand what He is saying."

Jesus promised His disciples that He would return to them after He went to the Father.

This promise is echoed in the Old Testament in the prophecy of Zechariah, who said that the Messiah would be "pierced for our transgressions" and "raised on the third day" (Zechariah 12:10).

Then I will pour out on the house of David and on the people of Jerusalem a spirit of grace and prayer, and they will look on Me, the One they have pierced.

They will mourn for Him as one mourns for an only child,  
and grieve bitterly for Him as one grieves for a firstborn son.

The promise of Jesus's return is a great hope for who love him.  
It reminds us that Jesus is not gone forever,  
and that He will one day return to bring us everlasting life.

### Sorrow Turned into Joy (John 16:20)

Truly, truly, I tell you,  
you will weep and wail while the world rejoices.  
You will grieve, but your grief will turn to joy.

Jesus told His disciples that they would be sorrowful when He left them, but that their sorrow would be turned into joy.

This promise is fulfilled in the resurrection of Jesus, when the disciples' grief is replaced by joy (Matthew 28:5-8).

But the angel said to the women,

“Do not be afraid, for I know that you are looking for Jesus, who was crucified. He is not here; He has risen, just as He said! Come, see the place where He lay. Then go quickly and tell His disciples, ‘He has risen from the dead and is going ahead of you into Galilee. There you will see Him.’ See, I have told you.” So they hurried away from the tomb in fear and great joy, and ran to tell His disciples.

The sorrow that the disciples experienced when Jesus left them is a reminder of the pain that we all experience when we lose loved ones. However, Jesus's promise that our sorrow would be turned into joy is a promise of hope for the future.

Praying in Jesus's Name (John 16:23)

In that day you will no longer ask Me anything. Truly, truly, I tell you, whatever you ask the Father in My name, He will give you.

Jesus promised His disciples that they would be able to do anything if they prayed in His name.

This is based on the Old Testament teaching that God answers the prayers of those who call on His name (Psalm 91:15).

When he calls out to Me, I will answer him;

I will be with him in trouble. I will deliver him and honor him.

The ability to pray in Jesus's name is a great privilege that believers have.

It allows us to come directly to God through Jesus, and to ask for His help in all our needs.

The Revelation of the Father's Love (John 16:13–14)

However, when the Spirit of truth comes, He will guide you into all truth. For He will not speak on His own, but He will speak what He hears, and He will declare to you what is to come. He will glorify Me by taking from what is Mine and disclosing it to you.

Jesus said that when the Holy Spirit came, He would reveal the Father to the disciples.

This revelation is fulfilled in the New Testament, where the Holy Spirit guides believers into all truth.

The revelation of the Father's love is the greatest gift that Jesus could give us.

It is through the Holy Spirit that we come to know the love of the Father, and to experience His peace and joy in our lives. (John 3:16-17)

For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life. [17] For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but to save the world through him.

The Disciples' Belief and Understanding (John 16:29)

His disciples said, "See, now You are speaking plainly and without figures of speech.

Jesus said that the disciples would eventually believe and understand what He had been teaching them.

This belief and understanding is fulfilled in the book of Acts, where the disciples are filled with the Holy Spirit and begin to preach the gospel with great power (Acts 2:4).

The belief and understanding of the disciples is a model for all believers.

As we continue to follow Jesus, and as we are filled with the Holy Spirit, we will come to a deeper understanding of His love and His truth.

Jesus's Solitude (John 16:32)

"Look, an hour is coming and has already come when you will be scattered, each to his own home, and you will leave Me all alone. Yet I am not alone, because the Father is with Me.

Jesus said that He would be "alone" after the disciples left Him.

This solitude is a foreshadowing of Jesus's death on the cross, when He would be abandoned by His friends and family.

The solitude of Jesus is a reminder of the cost of our salvation. Jesus was willing to be alone, even by His Father, in order to save us from our sins. His solitude is a reminder of the great love that He has for us.

As we have seen, chapter 16, touches on many profound themes, many of which are rooted in Old Testament concepts. Here's a deeper look at these themes from John 16, with relevant passages and allusions from the Old Testament:

Persecution for the Name of Jesus:

John 16:2-3 – "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. And they will do these things because they have not known the Father, nor me."

Old Testament Echo: Psalm 69:7-9

"For it is for your sake that I have borne reproach, that dishonor has covered my face.  
I have become a stranger to my brothers, an alien to my mother's sons.  
For zeal for your house has consumed me,  
and the reproaches of those who reproach you have fallen on me."

The Role of the Messiah and His Departure:

John 16:7 – "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."

Isaiah describes the suffering servant, the Messiah, who would be wounded for our transgressions and bruised for our iniquities.

Isaiah 53:10-12 NIV

Yet it was the LORD's will to crush him and cause him to suffer,  
and though the LORD makes his life an offering for sin,  
he will see his offspring and prolong his days,  
and the will of the LORD will prosper in his hand.

[11] After he has suffered, he will see the light of life and be satisfied;

by his knowledge my righteous servant will justify many, and he will bear their iniquities.

[12] Therefore I will give him a portion among the great,  
and he will divide the spoils with the strong, because he poured out his life unto death,  
and was numbered with the transgressors. For he bore the sin of many,  
and made intercession for the transgressors.

#### The Coming of the Holy Spirit:

John 16:7-8 – "But if I go, I will send him to you. And when he comes, he will convict the world concerning sin and righteousness and judgment."

#### Old Testament Promises:

Joel 2:28-29

"And it shall come to pass afterward, that I will pour out my Spirit on all flesh;  
your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, your old men shall dream dreams,  
and your young men shall see visions.  
Even on the male and female servants in those days I will pour out my Spirit."

Ezekiel 11:19-20

I will give them an undivided heart and put a new spirit in them;  
I will remove from them their heart of stone and give them a heart of flesh.

[20] Then they will follow my decrees and be careful to keep my laws. They will be my people, and I will be their God.

#### The Work of the Holy Spirit:

John 16:13 – "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."

Proverbs 1:23

"If you turn at my reproof, behold,  
I will pour out my spirit to you;  
I will make my words known to you."

The Holy Spirit's role in leading and guiding God's people in obedience is foreshadowed.

Ezekiel 36:27

"And I will put my Spirit within you,  
and cause you to walk in my statutes  
and be careful to obey my rules."

Victory Over the World:

John 16:33 – "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."

The victory of God's people, through God's strength, is a recurring theme in the Old Testament.

Isaiah 41:10

"Fear not, for...  
I am with you;  
be not dismayed, for I am your God;  
I will strengthen you,  
I will help you,  
I will uphold you with my righteous right hand."

Psalm 46 portrays the idea of God's people finding peace amidst chaos, just as Jesus offers peace despite worldly tribulation.

Psalm 46:1-3

"God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble.  
Therefore we will not fear though the earth gives way,  
though the mountains be moved into the heart of the sea,  
though its waters roar and foam."

In summary, John's Gospel, like the other Gospels, intricately weaves in themes and concepts that are deeply rooted in the Old Testament. This interconnectedness reinforces the unity of Scripture and the continuity of God's redemptive plan.