



Believe

JOHN

MESSAGE

STUDY GUIDE

GROUP MATERIAL

SONGS

Examining the text & our hearts:

1. In a little while, you'll see me" — Resurrection/Easter or Parousia/End of the Age?

a. The Puzzle – the double 'little while'

a. The disciples are puzzled by Jesus' remark that 'In a little while, you will no longer see me; again in a little while, you will see me' (16:16). The saying is repeated in almost a ludicrous fashion to underscore the importance of the instruction & the extent of the disciples' perplexity... [1.] One interpretation is that the disciples will see Jesus after his resurrection in 'a little while', i.e., 2 or 3 days, or [2.] that 'a little while' refers to the Parousia [Jesus' ultimate return]." [James L. Resseguie, *Strange Gospel*, p. 50]

b. Is the 'little while' [1.] the period between the death & resurrection of Jesus, so that the disciples are filled with joy post-resurrection? Or [2.] is the 'little while' the period between the ascension and the return of Christ so that in this life the disciples have sorrow, but joy with the return of Christ [his 'Parousia']? Or is there a possible third reading [encompassing both of the above]?" [Gordon T. Smith, *Called to Be Saints*, p.

b. Primary Meaning — Jesus' Resurrection/Easter

a. The disciples' perplexed (16:16-19)

a. The [disciples] said, "What's this [Jesus'] saying, 'In a little while'? We don't know what he's talking about." (16:18) "The disciples still have no category to allow them to make sense of a Messiah who would die, rise from the dead, and abandon his people in favor of 'another Counselor' (DA. Carson). Nor would they, it appears, until after the resurrection." [L. Scott Kellum, *Preaching the Farewell Discourse*, p.]

b. a little while, you'll see me" — between Jesus' death & resurrection

- a. This 'little while,' between not seeing &...seeing, is...the time between the passion & resurrection"-M.Coloe
- b. This is not intentional ambiguity on Jesus' part... Jesus is not talking about his 2nd coming... Rather, he is simply referring to his return in resurrection. He is departing from the world in his glorification & the world will no longer have access to him. When he returns in resurrection, it will be his followers' final opportunity to see him as he has always been." [Gary Burge, John,p.]
- c. "The language accords better with a reference to Jesus' death & then to the post-resurrection appearances than to anything else (though... there may be a secondary meaning)." [J. R. Michaels, John, p. 623]
- c. 'Prayer' implies normal life on earth (16:23-24)
 - a. The following paragraph [on prayer (16:23-4)] tips the scales in favor of interpreting Jesus' reappearance' in a little while'...in 16:16-19, as primarily a reference to the resurrection, [rather than the Parousia/End of the Age, since] Jesus describes the continuance of... normal life on earth, including the need...[for] requests of God in prayer [16:23-24]." [Craig L. Blomberg, Historical Reliability of John, p. 215]
- d. 'Child-birth': Analogy of sorrow followed by joy (16:20-22)
 - a. The "joy at seeing Jesus...not only result[s] in a renewed relationship with him, but it will have two notable effects: the joy of understanding (16:23a) & the joy of efficacious prayer (16:23b-4)." [Gary Burge, John,p.]
 - b. "Jesus tells the disciples, by way of analogy with a woman in childbirth, that they'll be desolated in sorrow but just as dramatically they will be consoled & come to a new & more wonderful joy. The prophecy is surely about the resurrection appearances ." [George Johnston,Spirit-Paraclete in... John, pp. 49-50]
- e. Reasons for perplexity
 - a. Consider "the historical situation behind these verses.'There is sufficient evidence that... the interval between Christ's crucifixion & resurrection on the one hand, and his second advent [return] on the other was expected to be very short; & it was believed that [Jesus] said it would be [very short]. But by the time this Gospel was written the short interval... was expanding unexpectedly. What had Jesus really meant?' (CH Dodd)" [Dale Allison, "Reflections," in JH. Charlesworth (ed.) Jesus Research: John, p.67]
- f. Are we sure there's no 'secondary meaning'?
 - a. "The whole passage, 16:16-24, has been interpreted as primarily relating to the appearing of Jesus...at the end of the Age... The majority of [scholars] however,recognize...[it] has in view the coming of Jesus to his disciples in the Easter appearances & the new age ...it introduces. There's no thought of the Parousia [Jesus' ultimate return]in 16:16, 20-22, as the sequel...16:23-24 surely makes clear." [Beasley-Murray, John, p.286]

2. Digging for a Deeper Meaning – Jesus' Apocalyptic Allusions

- a. "In a little while, you will no longer see me; again in a little while, you will see me."(Jn. 16:16)
- b. Jesus' Answer is Deeper than the Question
 - a. 'What's the meaning of this double 'little while'? ...[Characteristically,] Jesus doesn't address directly the issue... Rather, [he] raises the issue to a higher level of understanding &...provides an answer that's deeper than the question ...the disciples proposed.' [Thomas G. Weinandy, Jesus Becoming Jesus, V. 3,pp 121-2]
 - b. 'The [meaning] of... 'a little while you'll see me again' are debated. Do they refer to the Parousia, the post-resurrection appearances of Jesus, or [what]? The following remarks of Jesus

help... 16:20-33 talk about events connected with the End of the age: the 'messianic woes' ...apostasy, & holy war... The phrase 'a little while'... frequently occurs in passages anticipating the [End-time] action of God (Isa. 10:25; 29:17 [etc.]) ... These could suggest that Jesus' 2nd coming... [but,] most likely John's realized eschatology is ...at work ... Events associated with the end of history are for [John] a present reality because of the presence of the resurrected Christ by his Spirit... [So,] 'after a little while you'll see me' probably include all three options: Jesus' post-resurrection appearances... [&] the Spirit's arrival at Pentecost, which anticipates the Parousia." [C. Marvin Pate, Writings of John, p.]

c. Jesus' 'Child-birth' Metaphor has Theological Meaning

a. Clues to the deeper meaning of Jesus' analogy may be found in its OT background... of birth imagery (Isa. 13:8; 21:3; 26:17; Mic. 4:10)." [Lamar Williamson, Preaching... John, p. 214]

b. The Metaphor (16:21-22)

a. When a woman is in labor, she has pain because her time has come. But when she has given birth to a child, she no longer remembers the suffering ['tribulation'] because of the joy that a person has been born into the world. So you also have sorrow now. But I'll see you again. Your hearts will rejoice, & no one will take away your joy from you." (Jn. 16:21-22)

c. The Meaning

a. "This [Child-birth] metaphor is biblical in origin & therefore possesses theological meaning. The coming of the Messianic age is portrayed as a woman in labor ... Thus God, speaking through Isaiah, declares:

a. "Wail! For the day of the Lord is near. It'll come as destruction from the Almighty. Therefore everyone's hands will become weak, & every man will lose heart. They'll be horrified; pain & agony will seize them; they will be in anguish like a woman in labor. They will look at each other, their faces flushed with fear." (Isaiah 13:6-8) ..

b. Within this biblical context... Jesus is speaking of the travail & with it the sorrow, of the coming of the Messianic age. But with the arrival of the day of the Lord there'll be rejoicing, for God through his Messiah, will bring salvation to his people." [Thomas G. Weinandy, Jesus Becoming Jesus, Vol. 3, p. 123]

d. "Whose travail will turn to joy? – Both Jesus & the disciples.

a. "In Isaiah ... the birth pangs are experienced by both God & Israel, so in Jn. 16:20-22 Jesus speaks of the labor pains that both he & his disciples will undergo in his impending passion." [Barbara E. Reid, "Birthing ...," in DL. Balch (ed.) Finding A Woman's Place, p. 200]

b. The question arises...: Of whom is Jesus speaking? Whose travail will turn to joy — Jesus' or his disciples. At first glance ... it would seem obvious that he is speaking of [the disciples]. However, I think Jesus has woven himself into his own metaphor... The pregnant woman is in travail because her 'hour' has come. But the 'hour' ... is the 'hour' of Jesus' passion and death. He is in travail: 'Now my soul is troubled. What should I say — Father, save me from this hour? But that's why I came to this hour.' (12:27) ... The Father, in raising Jesus, his Son, from the dead, will bring joy to Jesus ... Because the metaphor applies, in the first instance, to Jesus himself, he can... declare... 'I'll see you again. Your hearts will rejoice, & no one will take away your joy from you.' (16:22) [Note that] 'They will rejoice' because he [Jesus] will see them — 'I will see you again.' ... Both Jesus & his disciples [will undergo] the woman-in-travail-like anguish... and both will rejoice together." [Thomas G. Weinandy, Op. cit., pp. 123-5]

d. Apocalyptic allusions in Jesus' Answer

a. "The common [End-time] associations of this image are critical here... In Jewish literature, these 'birth pangs' [pains] came to

illustrate the period of intense suffering immediately preceding the End, as the final sufferings giving birth to the new world. Here [in Jn. 16] the birth pangs are [End-time], except that they relate to the realized eschatology inaugurated ...through Jesus' resurrection." [Craig S. Keener, John, p. 159]

- b. "Jesus' metaphor of the sorrow of birth pains that will give way to the joy of birth [Jn. 16:20-22] is an allusion to the apocalyptic idea of the birth pangs of Messiah (Isa. 26:16-21; Dan. 12:1 [etc.]) That is, the suffering of God's people will be replaced with the joy of the arrival of the Messiah... John's use of the word thlipsis ('tribulation') for the disciples' suffering [16:33] no doubt is to be equated with the Great Tribulation that will immediately precede the return of Christ (Mk. 13:19, 24)." [C. Marvin Pate, Writings of John, p.]
- c. "The Gospel of John portrays the passion, death & resurrection of Jesus in categories taken from Jewish apocalypticism. Jesus' passion & death are likened both to [1.] the 'tribulation' (Greek: thlipsis) suffered by a woman in her birth pangs (Jn. 16:16-22; cf. Mk. 13:5-6) & [2.] to a great 'exorcism' of the chief of the evil angels, in which the 'ruler of this world' will be judged & 'cast out' (Jn. 12:31)." [BJ. Pitre, "Apocalypticism," in JB. Green (ed.) Dictionary of Jesus & the Gospels, p. 630]
- d. "This is what the LORD says: We've heard a cry of terror, of dread—there is no peace... Why...do I see every man with his hands on his stomach like a woman in labor & every face turned pale? How awful that day will be! There will be no other like it! It will be a time of trouble for Jacob [Israel], but he will be saved out of it." (Jeremiah 30:5-7 CSB)
- e. "Jewish literature [the OT, etc.]... vary in the order of events that will unfold before the [Messianic] Age to Come – but this one thing is sure: there will be a tribulation period before the Age to Come is established. That tribulation involves religious apostasy, political upheaval, physical suffering, & cosmic disturbances." [Scot McKnight, Jesus & His Death, p. 129]

3. John's Glaring Omission of Jesus' Apocalyptic Prophecy (Mark 13)

a. John Omits Jesus' Prophetic 'Olivet Discourse' (Mark 13)

a. What's the Omission?

- a. In John's Gospel, "There's no...mission of the Twelve (Mark 6:7-13), no Olivet discourse (Mark 13), no exorcisms, & none of the lengthy parables." [Philip W. Comfort, Gospel of John, 1-3 John, p. 8]
- b. "The omission of Jesus' Olivet Discourse (Mark 13) from John's gospel has puzzled Bible commentators and Christian theologians for centuries." [G. Michael Rowe, Covenant of Dominion, p.]
- c. "Whereas...the Synoptics [display] evident...interest in apocalyptic expectations, in John such strains are hidden & must be sought. John possesses no equivalent to Mark 13." [G. Burge, Anointed Community, p. 115]

b. Why the Omission?

- a. There's a "total absence in the 4th Gospel of [a topic that has a] conspicuous place in the Synoptic Gospels – the great prophecy of the Lord on the Mount of Olives [Mark 13]. The silence of John is more remarkable [since John] was one of the four favored disciples who listened to that discourse (Mark 13:3); yet in his Gospel we find no trace of it whatever. How can this be accounted for?" [James S. Russell, Parousia, p.]
- b. "None of the 3 synoptic writers heard Jesus' discourse on the Mount of Olives, yet they recorded his alarming predictions. John, along with Peter, James, & Andrew, composed the audience for the Olivet discourse (Mark 13:3; Mt. 24; Luke 21), yet John makes no reference to it in his Gospel! Does that strike you as puzzling? Why would he omit Jesus' prophecies?" — Cecil Hook (July 2001)

- c. Rejecting the 'Easy Answer' – "It's in John's book of Revelation" ? "Why doesn't John's Gospel mention the 'Great tribulation'? The easy answer, 'It's in his book of Revelation' faces the difficulty that the author of Revelation likely differs from that of the 4th Gospel.
- a. "That the author of Revelation is the same as the Evangelist [the Gospel's author] or [John] the Elder of the letters (2 John, 3 John) is generally, & I think correctly denied by critical scholarship... The differences in language, literary style, & theology are all too great... [Revelation's] futuristic eschatology... the [4th] Gospel modifies or corrects." [D. Moody Smith, 4th Gospel in 4 Dimensions, pp. 63, 66]
 - b. "The 'John' who wrote Revelation is not John the beloved apostle of Jesus [Gospel author]." — Robert W. Wall
 - c. "Most scholars now agree that the 'John' of Revelation (Rev. 1:4) is neither the author of the 4th Gospel nor the Apostle John. We agree with this conclusion... Some... contend that the theological disagreements ... especially in matters of eschatology & Christology, make it impossible... The John who wrote Revelation is not John the beloved apostle of Jesus." [Robert W. Wall, Revelation, pp.]
- b. Jesus' Apocalyptic Prophecy – the 'Olivet Discourse' (Mark 13)
- a. What's in Mark 13?
 - a. "What do we find in our Lord's prophecy? First & chiefly the 'Parousia'; then wars, famines, pestilence, earthquakes; false prophets & deceivers; signs & wonders; the darkening of the sun & moon; the stars falling from heaven; angels & trumpets, eagles & carcasses, great tribulation & woe; convulsions of nature; the treading down of Jerusalem; the Son of man coming in the clouds of heaven; the gathering of the elect; the reward of the faithful; the judgment of the wicked." [James S. Russell, Op. cit., p.]
 - b. Extracts from Jesus' Prophecy (Mark 13:3-8; 14-20)
 - a. Jesus was ... on the Mt. of Olives across from the temple, Peter, James, John, & Andrew asked him ... "Tell us, when will these things happen? What will be the sign when all these things are about to be accomplished?" Jesus told them, "Watch out that no one deceives you. Many will come in my name, saying, 'I am he,' & they will deceive many. When you hear of wars & rumors of wars, don't be alarmed; these things must take place, but it is not yet the end. For nation will rise up against nation, & kingdom against kingdom. There will be earthquakes in various places, & famines. These are the beginning of birth pains." (Mark 13:3-8)
 - b. "When you see the 'abomination of desolation' standing where it should not be" (let the reader understand), "then those in Judea must flee to the mountains. A man on the housetop must not come down ... to get anything out of his house, & a man in the field must not go back to get his coat. Woe to pregnant women and nursing mothers in those days! "Pray it won't happen in winter. For those will be days of tribulation, the kind that hasn't been from the beginning of creation until now & never will be again. If the Lord had not cut those days short, no one would be saved. But he cut those days short for the sake of the elect ..." (Mark 13:14-20)
 - c. 'Great Tribulation' in the NT (Mark 13:14-20; Matthew 24:15-22; Revelation 3:10; 7:9-13)
 - a. "... The hour of testing that 's going to come on the whole world to test those who live on the earth." (Rev. 3:10)
 - b. "For those will be days of tribulation, the kind that hasn't been from the beginning of creation until now & never will be again. If the Lord had not cut those days short, no one would be saved ..." (Mark 13:14-20)
 - c. The Son of Man's Coming follows the "Great Tribulation" (Mark 13:24-27)

- d. "But in those days, after that tribulation: The sun will be darkened, & the moon will not shed its light; the stars will be falling from the sky, & the powers in the heavens will be shaken. Then they will see the Son of Man coming in clouds with great power & glory. He will send out the angels & gather his elect from the four winds, from the ends of the earth to the ends of heaven." (Mark 13:24-27 cf. Matthew 24:29-31)
- e. Heavenly vision: "...I looked, & there was a vast multitude from every nation, tribe, people, & language, which no one could number, standing before the throne & before the Lamb. They were clothed in white robes with palm branches in their hands. And they cried out in a loud voice: 'Salvation belongs to our God, who's seated on the throne, & to the Lamb!' ... One of the elders asked me, 'Who are these people in white robes, & where did they come from?' I said... 'Sir, you know.' ...He told me: These are the ones coming out of the great tribulation. They washed their robes & made them white in the blood of the Lamb." (Rev. 7:9-10, 13-14)
- f. "The great tribulation" (7:14) "The definite articles (Lit. Gk.: 'the tribulation, the great (one)') implying a concept familiar to the original audience... Most versions opt for 'the great tribulation'. The concept of the great tribulation begins in Daniel 7-12. Specifically, Dan. 12:1 refers to a period of persecution... Scholars note Christian persecution throughout history, yet reserve 'the great tribulation' for a final time of intense suffering on earth ...Dispensationalists are the most specific, asserting [it] refers to a distinct, short time-period (often 7 years...) that occurs...before the return of Christ." [Michael Kuykendall, Lions, Locusts, & the Lamb, p. 312]
- d. The Destruction of Jerusalem in AD 70 did not exhaust Jesus' Prophecies
- a. The Destruction of Jerusalem in "AD 70 does not exhaust the significance of [Matt. 24:5-22, par. Mk. 13] which plainly envision [more] eschatological events to come." [J. Muddiman, J. Barton, Gospels, p. 71]
- b. "Robert Grundry [argues] that the events centering on the destruction of Jerusalem in AD 70 did not exhaust Jesus' prophecy [in the Synoptics], with the result that a time of future tribulation immediately before the return of Christ is yet to be fulfilled...[Those] events...did however, constitute a fulfillment precursive to a larger & final fulfillment at the end of the age." [Robert Grundry, Church & the Tribulation, p. 129]
- c. "Anthony Hoekema... suggests that the [prophetic] signs given by Jesus 'had an initial fulfillment at the time of the destruction of Jerusalem [AD 70]...However... [they] will have further fulfillment at the time of the Parousia'." [Anthony Hoekema, Bible & the Future, p. 130]
4. John's Gospel reinterprets the Synoptics' Apocalyptic Prophecies:
- a. "While Jesus uses some of the symbols employed in apocalyptic, he radically reinterprets those symbols." [Bradley Hanson, Introduction to Christian Theology, p. 344]
- b. "John has reinterpreted... the prophecies ...embedded in Mark. 13; he no longer understands them to be properly [End-time]." — Dale Allison
- c. The "apocalyptic discourses of the Synoptic Gospels [(e.g. Mark 13) are] reinterpreted in the Farewell Discourses of [John's] Jesus [who] stands on the soil of the OT... prophets Isaiah, Zachariah, Daniel and other apocalyptic literature." [Paul R. Hinlicky, Between... Philosophy & Apocalyptic Theology, p.]
- d. "For Mark...the time of the church & the time of the great tribulation coincide ... Mark 13 ...is also a prophecy of the church's future ... John knows... in the world there is tribulation, but he also believes that Jesus has overcome the world (16:33), & this makes it difficult for [John] to identify the present [church] age with the birth pangs of the new age... [So,] John has reinterpreted... the prophecies ...embedded in Mk. 13:4-12; he no longer understands them to be properly

[End-time] ... We conclude ... that John 15:18-16:11 reflects a tradition [where] the time of the church &... the great tribulation... are coincident [as reflected in Mark 13. But, reapplied by John to Jesus' passion]." [Dale Allison, *End of the Ages Has Come*, pp. 60-61]? Bradley Hanson in "Introduction to Christian Theology" (p. 344) notes that Jesus radically reinterprets apocalyptic symbols.

e. Jesus applies Apocalyptic (End-time) Language to His Death & Resurrection:

- a. "The passion is as the great tribulation, the resurrection as the arrival of the age to come." — Dale Allison
- b. Jesus "clearly connects his own suffering & that of his followers with the tribulation." — Scot McKnight
- c. "That the language of Jn. 16:16-22 is drawn from [End-time] teaching was... recognized by Augustine... He understands the promise that the disciples will see Jesus to refer to the second advent [Christ's return]. (The 'little while' of 16:16 is the time between the Passion & Parousia). This reading gains support from the description of the conditions [existing when] the disciples... see Jesus..." [Dale Allison, *Op. cit.*, p. 58]
- d. "The farewell discourse interprets [Jesus'] passion & resurrection eschatologically. We find language such as Jesus' 'going away' & 'coming back' that refers to his death & resurrection (14:18-23), [applied] to his Parousia (13:31-14:5), or to both events at the same time: in Jn. 16:16 we read, 'In a little while, you will no longer see me; again in a little while, you will see me.' The reference to Easter is obvious when we explain the 'little while' as the time between... Thursday & the resurrection on Sunday... But [scholars] have shown that the terminology of ['In that day you...'] (16:23) belongs to... the [End-time] Parousia... The time of not seeing Jesus is characterized [by] weeping, lamenting, and grieving (16:20) that will give [way to] rejoicing over seeing him (16:20). Recognizing the significance of these words for readers... waiting for Jesus' return, & who are suffering, gives... relevance of the farewell discourse... to 2nd, 3rd & all subsequent generations of believers (cf. 17:20). Thus, Jn. 16:16-24 implies a [double meaning] which aids the [later] reader ... to understand the disciples' [experience]... as... paradigmatic [a pattern] ... that applies to them as well as the first believers." [Lars Kierspel, *Jews & the World in the 4th Gospel*, p. 126]
- e. "John's use of 'the Son of Man' [e.g. Jn. 13:31] illustrates a transfer to the passion narrative of language that... had its proper place in connection with... the arrival of the [End-time] consummation... The transmutation of eschatology [i.e., This transfer of the End-time images] in John's Gospel is perhaps best illustrated in John 16:16-22." [Dale Allison, *Op. cit.*, pp. 56-57]
- f. "The sequence of [John 16:16-22] corresponds to the sequence of the [End-time] transition: tribulation–redemption... The terminology of Jn. 16:16-22 recalls [End-time teaching]. Thlipsis [Greek: 'tribulation,' 'suffering' (Jn. 16:21)] denotes the [End-time] tribulation elsewhere in the NT (e.g. Mk. 13:19, 24 [etc.]). The image of a woman in pain bringing forth her child was a well-known symbol for the [End-time] transition... & it's used [for] the coming of the 'Day of the Lord.' The statement that the disciples will again see Jesus [16:19, 22] recalls... the Parousia of the Son of Man (e.g., Mk. 13:26; 14:62)... In view of all this, Jn. 16:16-22 [is an example] of [John's] use of [End-time] language. [For John,] The passion [of Jesus] is as the great tribulation, the resurrection as the arrival of the age to come." [Dale Allison, *Op. cit.*, p. 57]
- g. Dale "Allison... understand[s] the death of Jesus as atoning as that death is understood to be part of the great tribulation... The

[End-time] tribulation [is] critical for Jesus' perception of his own death." [Scot McKnight, *Jesus & His Death*, p. 58]

f. John's 'Realized Eschatology' – the Future is Now

a. John views as present (realized), what the Synoptics [Matt., Mark, Luke] portray as future:

- a. "John's 'realized eschatology': ...the fact that...in [some 4th] Gospel texts future [End-time] expectations are seen to be fulfilled in present events (5:24; 9:39)." [Wendy ES. North, *Journey Round John*, p. 9]
- b. "Whereas the Synoptics [Matt., Mk., & Luke] stress a future hope & the return of Christ [e.g. 'Good teacher, what must I do to inherit eternal life [future]?' (Mk. 10:17)], John defines eternal life & death as beginning now in this age, based on men's & women's responses to Jesus... compare Jn. 5:24: 'anyone who hears my word & believes him who sent me has [present tense] eternal life & will not come under judgment but has [present] passed from death to life.'" [Craig Blomberg, *Jesus & the Gospels*, p. 189]
- c. "Although the dominant emphasis of [John] is on realized eschatology, future eschatology is not eclipsed entirely, but survives in several passages." [Jorg Frey, *Eschatology in the Johannine Circle*, p.]

b. Tension between John's 'Realized' and the Synoptics' 'Futurist' Eschatology:

- a. "The tension between realized and futurist eschatology is a common feature in the NT." — Colin Kruse
- b. "The eschatology of the Gospel of John must be studied apart from the Synoptics because its entire emphasis is different...[from] the futurist eschatology of the Synoptics... The difference in emphasis must be frankly admitted... This... does not however mean we have two contradictory theologies." [G. E. Ladd, "Eschatology," in G. W. Bromiley (ed.) *International Standard Bible Encyclopedia*, Vol. 2, p. 136]
- c. "One noticeable difference between the Synoptic Gospels & the Gospel of John is the emphasis on futurist eschatology in the former [Synoptics] & the relative lack of it in the latter... John places significant emphasis upon realized eschatology – that is, the blessings thought to be realized only in the future... can now be experienced in the present. Thus, those who believe have eternal life already, have passed from death to life, have received the promised Spirit & have escaped condemnation/judgment." [Colin G. Kruse, *John*, p.]

c. John's 'Realized Eschatology' – Example #1: Antichrist:

- a. "It is the last hour... You've heard... antichrist is coming, even now many antichrists have come." (1 Jn. 2:18)
- b. Paul: "That day will not come unless the apostasy comes first & 'the man of lawlessness' is revealed, the man doomed to destruction... [who] sits in God's temple, proclaiming that he himself is God." (2 Thess. 2:3-4)
- c. A "number of titles are given to [this figure]... 'the man of lawlessness' (2 Thess. 2:3, 8); 'Antichrist' (1 Jn. 2:18); & 'beast' (Rev. 13:1-4)." [D. J. Bingham, *Dispensationalism*, p.]
- d. "The initial subject here [1 Jn. 2:18] is eschatology, 'the last hour' (2:18)... [meaning] the end of time is at hand... Here, however [it is] the typical Johannine 'realized' eschatology." [David Rensberger, *1, 2, 3 John*, p. 77]
- e. "The phrase 'last hour'... as a technical term... denotes a period of time, whether long or short, that will usher in the culmination of the ages." [Alan S. Bandy, "Tribulation & the Antichrist," *Gospel Coalition*]
- f. In "1 John... the antichrist is preceded by many forerunners... Indeed, some have supposed that... 1 John has... 'rationalized' the expectation of Antichrist by... its fulfillment in the present [period]... This is [an] example of the tension between realized & future eschatology." [Daniel R. Streett, *They Went Out from Us*, p. 146]

- a. Antichrist, 'son of perdition/destruction,' & Judas
- g. "For Paul...Antichrist...has not yet come. Can we say...that for John this 'son of perdition' has already appeared in the person of Judas Iscariot? ...In John's realized eschatology... Judas Iscariot has acquired the significance of Antichrist, the 'son of perdition'... In Jn. 17:12 [Jesus says, 'not one of (the disciples) was lost, except the son of destruction' (i.e. Judas)]... 'It seems probable that John saw in Judas the [End-time] character [Antichrist] who must appear before the manifestation of the glory of Christ' (Barrett)." [Wendy ES. North, Journey Round John, p. 24]
- d. John's 'realized Eschatology' — Example #2: Satan, the world ruler — judged & cast out
- a. Jesus: "...The ruler of the world is coming. He has no power over me." (14:30)
- b. The Spirit convicts the world, "about judgment, because the ruler of this world has been judged." (16:11)
- c. "Now is the judgment of this world. Now the ruler of this world will be cast out." (12:31)
- d. "In a strongly realized eschatology, the [present] struggle between Jesus & the devil becomes part of the final resolution." [Birger Olsson, Commentary on the Letters of John, p. 166]
- e. "As an opposing power, the devil is by no means an equal force; rather, he is subordinated ...In line with the ...'realized' eschatology of John, the devil's effective authority is both restricted & foreshortened: 'Now is the judgment of this world. Now the ruler of this world will be cast out' (12:31)." [Stephen C. Barton, "Johannine Dualism," in R. Bauckham (ed.) John & Christian Theology, p. 15]
- f. "Jesus' passion & death are likened... to a great 'exorcism' of the chief of the evil angels, in which the 'ruler of this world' will be judged & 'cast out' (Jn. 12:31)." [B.J. Pitre, Op. cit. p. 630]
- e. Church & the 'Great Tribulation' — John vs. Mark 13
- a. "With regard to the relationship between the Church & the Great tribulation... John present[s] deliverance now (realized eschatology). [In contrast] Mark... present[s] deliverance [as] not yet [(i.e.,) consistent [future] eschatology)." [Douglas W. Kennard, Critical Realist's Theological Method, p. 434]
- b. John's Gospel "presents the passion [cross] of Jesus as though it were the [End-time] turning point... The realization of [End-time] expectations is, in John, rooted in the passion... The crucifixion is...the hour of [Jesus'] glorification. It's when the Son of man...draws all [people] to himself (12:32) reaching the goal of salvation history... John... understands his... experience [as] the attainment of [End-time] hopes. Eternal life... bestowed, divine sonship granted, the resurrection experienced. ... The [End-time] transition — for him, the passion of Jesus — lies in the past." [Dale Allison, Op. cit., p. 59]
- g. The Childbirth Image of Messianic Woes
- a. "The image of the woman giving birth in 16:20-22 has a long biblical tradition & is used to denote the travail of messianic struggle (Mk. 13:19, 24 [etc.])... Here [in John] it refers to the birth of the new age which is accomplished in Jesus & the accompanying suffering & tribulation [16:21]." [Scott M. Lewis, John, V. 4, p.]
- b. "The common [End-time] associations of ['birth pangs'] are critical here... In Jewish literature, these birth pangs came to illustrate the... intense suffering immediately preceding the End, as the final sufferings giving birth to a new world. Here the birth pangs are [End-time], except that they relate to [John's] realized eschatology inaugurated... In contrast with the Synoptics [e.g. Mark], the messianic woes begin not after Jesus' death (Mk. 13:8) but in it [Jesus' death] (Jn. 16:20-22)." [Craig S. Keener, John, p.]

h. Jesus' Understanding of His Own Death as End-time Tribulation:

- a. "Jesus...expected the final tribulation...imminently... By the time he reached Jerusalem [he] had also concluded that he would have to face the...same tribulation." [James Dunn, Jesus Remembered, p. 808]
- b. "Jesus must have understood his death as an aspect of his eschatology... Since what was about to occur to him was part of the Final Ordeal [Great Tribulation], his death must be understood as...part of the [end-time] scenario about to unfold...[in] Jerusalem's history." [Scot McKnight, Jesus & His Death, p. 119]
- c. "Jesus understood that he would die as part of the eschatological tribulation... Jesus in his death understands himself as Israel's representative... as the first to 'run the gauntlet' of the Final Ordeal [the Great Tribulation], leading his followers through death to vindication." [Scot McKnight, Jesus & His Death, p.]
- d. "'Jesus...went to Jerusalem not just to preach, but to die'. He understood his death as the 'taking of the messianic woes unto himself'." [N. T. Wright, Jesus & the Victory of God, p.]

i. Mark Portrays Jesus' Passion as the Great Tribulation:

- a. Mark connects the death of Jesus with profound apocalyptic imagery, depicting Jesus' death as the turning point of the ages. It signifies the great tribulation and leads to the general resurrection. Jesus experienced the Day of YHWH, the end-time tribulation, and the wrath of God. His death leads the way into the final ordeal and absorbs its brunt forces of assault, paving the way for his followers into the era of vindication. [Scot McKnight, Jesus & His Death, p. 359]

j. Jesus' Death Absorbs the Great Tribulation:

- a. Jesus announced that the tribulation of the last days had set in and that the resurrection of the dead was imminent. He understood that he would meet his end in the tribulation and know vindication in the resurrection. [Dale Allison, Jesus & His Death, p. 3]
 - a. John understands Jesus' death on the cross as absorbing the messianic woes or aspects of the tribulation. Jesus' passion is where the end-time 'holy war' was waged, and his death and resurrection signaled the defeat of the forces of evil. [C. Marvin Pate, Writings of John, p.]
 - b. Christ vicariously embraced the messianic woes, the Great Tribulation, so that his people would not have to. By Christ's defeat of Satan and his embrace of the messianic woes at the cross/resurrection, Christians are saved from the end-time wrath to come. [C. Marvin Pate, From Plato to Jesus, pp. 252-3]
 - c. Jesus thought of his death in terms of the tribulation, and his suffering could be described as atoning. [B. Pitre]

b. Quotes in Context:

- a. In John's Gospel, "Jesus' death on the cross seems to absorb some elements of the 'messianic woes' or aspects of the tribulation. In other words, Jesus' passion is where the end-time 'holy war' was waged, & his death & resurrection began the end of the forces of evil (15:18-16:11)." [C. Marvin Pate, 40 Questions, p.]
- b. "John's eschatology is more realized than futuristic... [1.] The spirit of Antichrist has already entered the world scene to oppose Christ (6:70; 13:2, 27; 14:13 [etc.]) ... [2.] John understands Jesus' death on the cross as absorbing the 'messianic woes,' or the Great Tribulation ...Jesus' passion was where the end-time 'holy war' [with Evil] was waged & his death & resurrection signaled the defeat of the forces of evil... This does not deny... futuristic eschatology... in the 4th Gospel." [C. Marvin Pate, Writings of John, p.]
- c. One "tradition of atonement in...the early church [asserted that] Christ's death & resurrection embraced the 'messianic woes' (the Great Tribulation) on behalf of God's people. This entailed Christ's victory over Satan & his minions...This

view encompasses the 'Christ the Victor' theme of the NT. Not all interpreters...agree that Christ's death... vicariously embraced the messianic woes (Great Tribulation) so that his people would not have to... By Christ's defeat of Satan & His embrace of the messianic woes at the cross/ resurrection, Christians are 'saved from the [End-time] wrath to come'." [C. Marvin Pate, From Plato to Jesus, pp. 252-3]

- d. "Jesus...as both Son of Man & Messiah, deliberately took the sufferings of the tribulation upon himself in order to atone for the sins of Israel..." [Brant Pitre, Jesus, the Tribulation, & the End of the Exile, pp. 505-6]
- c. Apostle Paul views his own tribulations as vicarious, patterned after Christ's (Col. 1:24)
 - a. "I...rejoice in my sufferings...& fill up in my flesh what's lacking in the afflictions of Christ, for...the church."
 - b. Paul "regards his sufferings as even absorbing the messianic woes of the tribulation." — Michael Bird
 - c. "Even though Paul expects all Christians to suffer the 'messianic woes' he does expect that he [Paul] can absorb as much of that affliction as possible so that he can spare the church some measure of tribulation (Col. 1:24; Eph. 3:13; etc.)." [C. Marvin Pate, Apostle of the Last Days: Paul, p. 324]
- d. Don't believers escape the 'Great Tribulation' via Rapture? (Rev. 3:10)
 - a. "Paul speaks of the anti-Christ... the personification of evil – Satan's own personal representative – who will unite the world against God's people for one last battle before the exodus (2 Thess. 2:8-12) ... 'But, wait!' you may be saying. 'I thought we [Christians] would be gone before then! Is not the Church to be raptured before this last great tribulation?' [i.e., 'Pre-tribulation rapture.'] "Some believe we will. Others point to the Scriptural indications... we must endure the coming 'plagues' before our departure... [The] Greek word, thlipsis, often translated 'tribulation'... gives weight to this understanding...this word is used... often to warn believers that they are not exempt from difficult time... 'In this world you will have trouble (thlipsis). But take heart! I've overcome the world.' (Jn. 16:33)." [Don Finto, Your People Shall Be My People, pp.]
 - b. "Overcomers'/Partial Rapture"? "Because you have kept my command to endure, I will also keep you from the hour of testing that is going to come on the whole world to test those who live on the earth. (Rev. 3:10) "This promise...indicates that the saints who keep the word of Lord's endurance will be raptured before the great trial, implying that those who do not keep [it]... will be left in the trial." [W. Lee, Note, Rev. 3:10 2 Rcv.]
 - c. Yet, within John's realized eschatology, in his crucifixion, Christ absorbs the Great Tribulation, vicariously shouldering 'messianic woes' and freeing followers from End-time wrath. This perspective liberates Christians from anxiety about apocalyptic events and fixation with prophetic timelines. For us there's no looming 'mega-tribulation'; despite enduring trials, believers find courage in Jesus' triumph over Satan, sin, and suffering. We can stand courageously in Christ's victory, experiencing solace amid life's challenges. — NT

5. Jesus' Final Word of Exhortation (16:33)

- a. "...You will have tribulation in this world. Be courageous! I have conquered the world." (16:33)
- b. There's a "ringing announcement with which the Farewell discourse closes: 'Be courageous! I've conquered the world.' (16:33b) Here — and only here — [the Gospel of] John employs a motif prominent in 1 John and Revelation, that Jesus is the conqueror who has overcome the hostile world. The promise... is directed to the original disciples, but also to the later disciples in the Johannine community & to all who face

- persecution for their faith... for John [victory] is present." [Robert P. Vande Kappelle, Truth Revealed, pp.]
- c. "Such overcoming of the world [16:33], transfers what for 2nd Temple Judaism was an [End-time] hope into [the present,] a feature of Jesus' realized eschatology." [Douglas W. Kennard, Messiah Jesus, p. 200]
- d. "Jn. 16:33 is the clearest example of the voice of the risen Jesus in the Farewell Discourse... Only the voice of the risen Jesus can speak of the victory over the world in the past tense ['I have ...'] because...it's only after the...crucifixion/resurrection/ascension that the victory is accomplished... [16:33] announces that this is the moment of victory... [It] brings the future into the narrative present... Jn. 16:33 [displays] the realized eschatology... so characteristic of the 4th Gospel... Jesus' announcement, 'I have conquered the world,' asserts that 'future' victory is in fact the present reality." [Gail O'Day, Revelation in the 4th Gospel, pp. 172-3]