

# John 16:20

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Verily, verily, I say unto you, That ye shall weep and lament, but the world shall rejoice: and ye shall be sorrowful, but your sorrow shall be turned into joy.

## Analysis

**Verily, verily, I say unto you** (ἀμὲν ἀμὲν λέγω ὑμῖν/amēn amēn legō hymin)—Jesus's solemn double ἀμὲν (amēn) introduces critical truth, used 25 times in John's Gospel. What follows demands attention.

**Ye shall weep and lament** (κλαύσετε καὶ θρηνήσετε/klausete kai thrēnēsete)—κλαίω (klaiō) means to weep audibly, shed tears of grief; θρηνέω (thrēneō) means to wail, lament, mourn formally. Jesus predicts the disciples' anguish at His crucifixion. Good Friday saw their hopes crucified with Christ.

**But the world shall rejoice** (ὁ δὲ κόσμος χαρήσεται/ho de kosmos charēsetai)—the fallen world system opposed to God celebrates Christ's apparent defeat. Satan, religious leaders, mockers rejoiced at the cross, thinking they'd silenced God's Son.

**Your sorrow shall be turned into joy** (ἡ λύπη ὑμῶν εἰς χαρὰν γενήσεται/hē lypē hymōn eis charan genēsetai)—the passive verb γενήσεται (genēsetai, "shall become") indicates divine transformation. God will convert grief to gladness through resurrection. Not merely relief after sorrow, but sorrow itself metamorphosed into joy—the suffering becomes meaningful, purposeful, even glorious in retrospect.

## Historical Context

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Jesus spoke these words Thursday night; by Friday evening, they were tragically fulfilled. The disciples watched Jesus beaten, mocked, crucified, and buried. They scattered, hid, wept—all hope seemingly dead (Luke 24:21). Meanwhile, the world rejoiced: Pharisees congratulated themselves, Roman soldiers gambled for His garments, mockers ridiculed (Matthew 27:39-44). Saturday's Sabbath was the darkest day in redemptive history. But Sunday morning, resurrection transformed everything. Grief became gladness, death became victory, shame became glory. The early church, facing persecution and martyrdom, clung to this pattern: present suffering would be transformed to eternal joy (Romans 8:18, 2 Corinthians 4:17).

## Related Passages

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**Revelation 20:12** — Judgment according to deeds

**Matthew 25:31** — Final judgment

## Study Questions

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1. How does understanding that sorrow will be 'turned into joy' (not merely followed by joy) change your perspective on present suffering?
2. What does the world's rejoicing at Christ's crucifixion reveal about fallen humanity's hostility toward God, and how should this shape Christian expectations?
3. In what ways does the crucifixion-to-resurrection pattern appear in believers' lives—times when apparent defeat becomes glorious victory?

## Interlinear Text

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ἀμὴν	ἀμὴν	λέγω	ὑμῖν	ὅτι	κλαύσετε	καὶ	θρηνήσετε
Verily	Verily	I say	unto you	That	shall weep	and	lament
G281	G281	G3004	G5213	G3754	G2799	G2532	G2354
ὑμεῖς	ὁ	δὲ	κόσμος	χαρήσεται	ὑμεῖς	δὲ	λυπηθήσεσθε
ye	G3588	and	the world	shall rejoice	ye	and	shall be sorrowful
G5210		G1161	G2889	G5463	G5210	G1161	G3076
ἀλλ'	ἡ	λύπη	ὑμῶν	εἰς	χαρὰν	γενήσεται	
but	G3588	sorrow	your	into	joy	shall be turned	
G235		G3077	G5216	G1519	G5479	G1096	

## Additional Cross-References

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**James 1:2** (Parallel theme): My brethren, count it all joy when ye fall into divers temptations;

**Matthew 5:4** (Parallel theme): Blessed are they that mourn: for they shall be comforted.

**Mark 16:10** (Parallel theme): And she went and told them that had been with him, as they mourned and wept.

**2 Corinthians 6:10** (Parallel theme): As sorrowful, yet always rejoicing; as poor, yet making many rich; as having nothing, and yet possessing all things.

**Jeremiah 31:25** (Parallel theme): For I have satiated the weary soul, and I have replenished every sorrowful soul.

**Jude 1:24** (Parallel theme): Now unto him that is able to keep you from falling, and to present you faultless before the presence of his glory with exceeding joy,

**Psalms 30:11** (Parallel theme): Thou hast turned for me my mourning into dancing: thou hast put off my sackcloth, and girded me with gladness;

**Psalms 30:5** (Parallel theme): For his anger endureth but a moment; in his favour is life: weeping may endure for a night, but joy cometh in the morning.

**Luke 24:21** (Parallel theme): But we trusted that it had been he which should have redeemed Israel: and beside all this, to day is the third day since these things were done.

**Isaiah 61:3** (Parallel theme): To appoint unto them that mourn in Zion, to give unto them beauty for ashes, the oil of joy for mourning, the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness; that they might be called trees of righteousness, the planting of the LORD, that he might be glorified.

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