

John 16:33

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

These things I have spoken unto you, that in me ye might have peace. In the world ye shall have tribulation: but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world.

Analysis

These things I have spoken unto you, that in me ye might have peace. In the world ye shall have tribulation: but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world. This verse concludes Jesus' Farewell Discourse with a profound promise and command. The Greek word *thlipsis* (θλῖψις, "tribulation") denotes pressure, affliction, and distress—not mere inconvenience but genuine suffering that characterizes life in a fallen world. Jesus doesn't promise immunity from suffering but guarantees peace in the midst of it.

The peace (*eirēnē*, εἰρήνη) Jesus offers differs radically from worldly peace; it's not absence of conflict but the presence of His person. The phrase "in me" (en emoi) indicates that peace is found through union with Christ, not through favorable circumstances. This peace transcends understanding (Philippians 4:7) because it rests on Christ's objective victory, not subjective experience.

"I have overcome the world" (*egō nenikēka ton kosmon*) uses the perfect tense, indicating completed action with ongoing effects. Christ's victory over sin, death, and Satan—accomplished through His death and resurrection—guarantees believers' ultimate triumph. The command "be of good cheer" (*tharseite*) is imperative, meaning courage isn't optional but commanded. Christians can face tribulation courageously because Christ has already secured the victory.

Historical Context

Jesus spoke these words in the upper room on the night before His crucifixion, just hours before His arrest. The disciples faced impending persecution—most would die as martyrs. Within decades, Roman persecution under Nero (AD 64) and later emperors would test this promise severely. Early Christians found this verse profoundly relevant as they faced lions in arenas, confiscation of property, and social ostracism.

The Gospel of John was written around AD 85-95, when the church faced both Jewish excommunication (being put out of synagogues) and Roman suspicion of this new sect. John's readers needed assurance that their suffering had meaning and purpose. The promise of tribulation would have resonated with Christians experiencing the fulfillment of Jesus' prophecy firsthand.

The contrast between Christ's peace and the world's tribulation reflected the early church's experience of inner spiritual rest despite external persecution. This wasn't theoretical theology but practical reality for believers who literally risked death for confessing Christ. The perfect tense of "have overcome" reminded them that despite present suffering, Christ's victory was already accomplished.

Related Passages

John 3:16 — God's love and salvation

Romans 10:9 — Confession and belief for salvation

Study Questions

1. How does understanding Christ's completed victory over the world change your perspective on current trials and tribulations?
2. In what specific areas of life are you seeking worldly peace instead of Christ's peace found 'in Him'?
3. What practical steps can you take to 'be of good cheer' when facing tribulation, knowing Christ has overcome?

4. How does Jesus' promise of both peace and tribulation challenge prosperity gospel teaching or expectations of suffering-free Christianity?
5. How can you minister Christ's peace to others facing tribulation without minimizing their real suffering?

Interlinear Text

ταῦτα	λελάληκα	ὑμῖν	ἵνα	ἐν	ἐμοὶ	εἰρήνην
These things	I have spoken	unto you	that	In	me	peace
G5023	G2980	G5213	G2443	G1722	G1698	G1515
ἔχετε	ἐν	τῷ	κόσμον	θλῖψιν	ἔχετε	ἀλλὰ
ye might have	In	G3588	the world	tribulation	ye might have	but
G2192	G1722		G2889	G2347	G2192	G235
θαρσεῖτε	ἐγὼ	νενίκηκα	τὸν	κόσμον		
be of good cheer	I	have overcome	G3588	the world		
G2293	G1473	G3528		G2889		

Additional Cross-References

John 14:27 (Peace): Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you: not as the world giveth, give I unto you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid.

1 John 5:4 (Parallel theme): For whatsoever is born of God overcometh the world: and this is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith.

1 John 4:4 (Parallel theme): Ye are of God, little children, and have overcome them: because greater is he that is in you, than he that is in the world.

2 Thessalonians 3:16 (Peace): Now the Lord of peace himself give you peace always by all means. The Lord be with you all.

Philippians 4:7 (Peace): And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.

John 14:1 (Parallel theme): Let not your heart be troubled: ye believe in God, believe also in me.

1 Peter 5:9 (Parallel theme): Whom resist stedfast in the faith, knowing that the same afflictions are accomplished in your brethren that are in the world.

2 Timothy 3:12 (Parallel theme): Yea, and all that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution.

Acts 14:22 (Parallel theme): Confirming the souls of the disciples, and exhorting them to continue in the faith, and that we must through much tribulation enter into the kingdom of God.

Revelation 3:21 (Parallel theme): To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with me in my throne, even as I also overcame, and am set down with my Father in his throne.

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