

## **Needed Words from a Departing Savior. John 16:1-7**

### **John 16:1–7 (NKJV)**

<sup>1</sup>“These things I have spoken to you, that you should not be made to stumble.

<sup>2</sup>They will put you out of the synagogues; yes, the time is coming that whoever kills you will think that he offers God service.

<sup>3</sup>And these things they will do to you because they have not known the Father nor Me.

<sup>4</sup>But these things I have told you, that when the time comes, you may remember that I told you of them.

“And these things I did not say to you at the beginning, because I was with you.

<sup>5</sup>“But now I go away to Him who sent Me, and none of you asks Me, ‘Where are You going?’

<sup>6</sup>But because I have said these things to you, sorrow has filled your heart.

<sup>7</sup>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 depart, I will send Him to you.

## **Introduction**

On January 8, 1956, Jim Elliot, Nate Saint, Ed McCully, Peter Flemming, and Roger Youderian were speared to death on a sandbar called “Palm Beach” in the Curaray River of Ecuador. They were trying to reach the Huaorani Indians for the first time in history with the gospel of Jesus Christ.

Elisabeth Elliot memorialized the story in her book *Shadow of the Almighty*. That title comes from Psalm 91:1: “He who dwells in the shelter of the Most High will abide in *the shadow of the Almighty*.”

This is where Jim Elliot was slain — in the shadow of the Almighty. Elisabeth had not forgotten the heartbreaking facts when she chose that title two years after her husband’s death. When he was killed, they had been married three years and had a ten-month-old daughter.

The title was not a slip — not any more than the death of the five missionaries was a slip. But the world saw it differently. Around the world, the death of these young men was called a tragic nightmare. Elisabeth believed the world was missing something. She wrote, “The world did not recognize the truth of the second clause in Jim Elliot’s credo: ‘He is no fool who gives what he cannot keep *to gain what he cannot lose.*’”

She called her book *Shadow of the Almighty* because she was utterly convinced that the refuge of the people of God is not a refuge from suffering and death, but a refuge from final and ultimate defeat. “Whoever would save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for my sake will save it” (Luke 9:24) — because the Lord is *God Almighty*.

JANUARY 8, 2016

Slain in the Shadow of the Almighty

The followers of Jesus Christ have always faced the world’s hostility. From the inception of the church, the apostles and those closely associated with them endured intense persecution. They were ridiculed, scorned, denounced, hunted, arrested, beaten, and imprisoned. Many even paid the ultimate price, giving their lives as martyrs (a transliteration of the Greek word meaning “witnesses”) for the sake of their Savior. A brief survey of ancient Christian tradition reveals that Peter, Andrew, and James the son of Alphaeus were all crucified; Bartholomew was whipped to death and then crucified; James the son of Zebedee was beheaded, as was Paul; Thomas was stabbed with spears; Mark was dragged to death through the streets of Alexandria; and James the half brother of Jesus was stoned by order of the Sanhedrin. Philip was also stoned to death. Others, including

Matthew, Simon the Zealot, Thaddeus, Timothy, and Stephen, were also killed for their unwavering commitment to the Lord. As Clement of Rome, a contemporary of the apostles who died around a.d. 100, observed, “Through envy and jealousy, the greatest and most righteous pillars [of the church] have been persecuted and put to death” (*First Epistle of Clement to the Corinthians*, 5).

In the generations that followed, persecution continued. Under the Roman emperors of the first three centuries, thousands of faithful believers were arrested, tortured, and killed.

The persecution of the true church again reached a fever pitch during the Protestant Reformation. Appalled by the moral and doctrinal corruption of the Roman Catholic Church and emboldened by the clear teachings of Scripture, the Reformers denounced the Catholic system of indulgences and the false gospel of works righteousness. The response from Rome was vitriolic and violent.

According to Protestant historian John Dowling, the Roman Catholic Church put to death more than fifty million “heretics” between a.d. 606 (the birth of the papacy) and the mid-1800s (History of Romanism [New York: Edward Walker, 1845], 8:541).

Commenting on Rome’s murderous tactics, Martin Luther remarked, “If the art of convincing

heretics by fire were the right one, then the executioners would be the most learned Doctors on earth” (*Address to the Christian Nobility of the German Nation*, in Henry Clay Vedder, *The Reformation in Germany* [New York: Macmillan, 1914], 119).

Godly leaders like John Huss (c. 1369–1415), Hugh Latimer (c. 1485–1555), William Tyndale (1495–1536), Patrick Hamilton (1504–1528), and George Wishart (1513–1546) were among those martyred for the faith.

When the chain was put around John Huss, securing him to the stake where he would be burned, he said with a smile, “My Lord Jesus Christ was bound with a harder chain than this for my sake, and why then should I be ashamed of this rusty one?” When asked to recant, Huss declined, saying, “What I taught with my lips I now seal with my blood”  
(John Fox, *Fox's Book of Martyrs* [Philadelphia: J. J. Woodward, 1830], 634). He died singing a hymn as the flames engulfed his body.

In many places around the world today, believers continue to face intense persecution. Muslim controlled countries are especially hostile toward Christianity (currently especially in the Middle East and Africa), though other nations such as Communist states also remain antagonistic. While exact numbers are difficult to reconstruct, historians

estimate the number of Christian martyrs in the last century to be in the tens of millions.

In addition, an incalculable number of faithful believers have been arrested, beaten, or otherwise persecuted short of death—all on account of their loyalty to Jesus Christ.

The theme of persecution, which Jesus introduced in 15:18–25, continues into the opening section of chapter 16. But as He had done in 15:26–27, the Lord was quick to remind His disciples that they would not face the world's hostility alone. Their witness to the world would be accompanied and empowered by the witness of the Holy Spirit. The Spirit would confront the world, not only by testifying to Jesus, but also by convicting sinners of their true heart condition. Because the Helper was coming to them, the disciples could remain confident, knowing that though the world system would always oppose them, many within that system would be delivered from its darkness and transferred into the kingdom of light (cf. Col. 1:13).

Although the content of this section is similar to that of chapter 15, there is a subtle difference in emphasis. In chapter 15, Jesus instructed the disciples as to what they were to do (e.g., vv. 4, 9, 10, 12, 14, 17–20). But in chapter 16 He focused on what God would do for them through the indwelling

power of the Holy Spirit (e.g., vv. 1–4, 7, 13–15). He would comfort, strengthen, and aid the disciples in the midst of their conflict with the world. As Leon Morris writes,

The work of the Holy Spirit in the church is done in the context of persecution. The Spirit is not a guide and a helper for those on a straight way perfectly able to manage on their own. He comes to assist men caught up in the thick of battle, and tried beyond their strength. Jesus makes it quite plain that the way before His followers is a hard and a **difficult way**. (*The Gospel According to John*, The New International Commentary on the New Testament [Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1979], 692)

It is the mission of both the Holy Spirit and believers to bear witness to Jesus (cf. 15:26–27). The Spirit testifies to believers that the gospel is true (1 John 2:20–21, 27; cf. 14:26; 16:13–14), and then empowers them as they proclaim it to the world (Acts 1:8). Though God uses Christians to proclaim the gospel, only the Holy Spirit is able to redeem lost sinners (Titus 3:5). He alone can convict unbelievers of their sin and need for a Savior.

In these verses, Jesus warned the disciples that they would face conflict with the world. But He comforted them with the promised coming of the Holy Spirit, and explained to them that the Spirit

would not only help them, but would also work in unbelievers to convict them of sin. Thus, the passage can be outlined around three distinct but related sections: the conflict with the world, the comforting of the disciples, and the convicting by the Spirit.

MacArthur, J. F., Jr. (2008). [\*John 12–21\*](#) (pp. 188–190). Chicago, IL: Moody Publishers.

## Lesson

The Persecution Predicted  
The Perspective Pronounced  
The Preference Prescribed

### I. The Persecution Predicted

<sup>1</sup>“These things I have spoken to you, that you should not be made to stumble.

<sup>2</sup>They will put you out of the synagogues; yes, the time is coming

that whoever kills you will think that  
he offers God service

v 1 **“These things** I have spoken to  
you,

This is mentioned 5 times in the 7 verses we read.

I have spoken **λελάληκα Perfect Tense.**

I have spoken and continue to speak.

**John 13:17** (NKJV)

<sup>17</sup>If you know these things, blessed are you if you do  
them.

**John 14:25** (NKJV)

<sup>25</sup>“These things I have spoken to you while being  
present with you.

**John 15:11** (NKJV)

<sup>11</sup> “These things I have spoken to you, that My joy  
may remain in you, and *that* your joy may be full.

**John 15:17** (NKJV)

<sup>17</sup>These things I command you, that you love one  
another.

**John 15:21** (NKJV)

<sup>21</sup>But all these things they will do to you for My  
name’s sake, because they do not know Him who  
sent Me.

**John 16:33** (NKJV)

<sup>33</sup>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.”

This refers to all that the Lord has been teaching his disciples from John 13,14, 15 and 16. These are Pre death lessons, to learn for the post Resurrection life. Things are going to change dramatically for them. The World and the way it responds to them will change. The way they respond to the world will change.

No longer will they be just Galilean fishermen, or a hated tax collector like Matthew. They will be the Apostles, the foundation of the Church. Their ministry will turn the world upside down for Christ.

They will be the means by which the gospel is carried to the ends of the earth.

They will be hated by the world

They will be despised and persecuted by the religious community.

They will be the target of Satan.

Every attempt will be made to banish and to extinguish them from the planet.

All of Hell will be sent out to destroy them.  
So it is for this reason, Jesus tell them all these things.

<sup>1</sup>“These things I have spoken to you, that you should not be made to stumble.

Ταυτα λελαληκα υμιν ινα μη σκανδαλισθητε

**Aorist Passive Subj. caused or made to stumble.**

**skandalizó: to put a snare (in the way), hence to cause to stumble, to give offense**

**Original Word:** σκανδαλίζω

**Part of Speech:** Verb

**Transliteration:** skandalizó

**Phonetic Spelling:** (skan-dal-id'-zo)

**Definition:** to put a snare (in the way), to cause to stumble, to give offense

**Usage:** I cause to stumble, cause to sin, cause to become indignant, shock, offend.

Cognate: 4624 skandalízō – properly, set a snare ("stumbling-block"); (figuratively) "to hinder right conduct or thought; to cause to stumble" – literally, "to fall into a trap" (Abbott-Smith). [See 4625](#) (skandalon).

From

**skandalon: a stick for bait (of a trap), generally a snare, a stumbling block, an offense**

**Original Word:** σκάνδαλον, ου, τό

**Part of Speech:** Noun, Neuter

4625 skándalon – properly, the trigger of a trap (the mechanism closing a trap down on the unsuspecting victim); (figuratively) an offense, putting a negative cause-and-effect relationship into motion.

4625 /skándalon ("the means of stumbling") stresses the method (means) of entrapment, i.e. how someone is caught by their own devices (like their personal bias, carnal thinking).

["4625 (skándalon) is the native rock rising up through the earth, which trips up the traveler, hence, of Jesus the Messiah, to the Jews who refused him" (Souter); "properly, the bait-stick of a trap, a snare, stumbling-block" (Abbott-Smith); "the stick in the trap that springs and closes the trap when the animal touches it" (WP, 1, 46).]

“The events that transpired later that evening showed the timeliness of the Lord’s warning. Despite being told by Jesus to expect persecution, the disciples wilted at the first sign of it—even though it

was aimed not at them, but at Him. On their way to Gethsemane from the upper room, Jesus told them, “You will all fall away because of Me this night, for it is written, ‘I will strike down the shepherd, and the sheep of the flock shall be scattered’ ” (Matt. 26:31). Later that evening, when Jesus was arrested, His prediction came true:

At that time Jesus said to the crowds, “Have you come out with swords and clubs to arrest Me as you would against a robber? Every day I used to sit in the temple teaching and you did not seize Me. But all this has taken place to fulfill the Scriptures of the prophets.” Then all the disciples left Him and fled. (Matt. 26:55–56)”

MacArthur, J. F., Jr. (2008). [John 12–21](#) (p. 191). Chicago, IL: Moody Publishers.

There are a number of things that we can point out about these words that Jesus gave.

### 1. First, There is Context.

Remember, the disciples were at this point pre death, pre crucifixion. They still had not fully processed the reality that Jesus, the Messiah would die. They believed, based on their OT understanding, that when Messiah came, the kingdom on earth would come too.

Like,

### Isaiah 9:6–7 (NKJV)

- 6 For unto us a Child is born,  
 Unto us a Son is given;  
 And the government will be upon His shoulder.  
 And His name will be called  
 Wonderful, Counselor, Mighty God,  
 Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.
- 7 Of the increase of *His* government and peace  
*There will be* no end,  
 Upon the throne of David and over His kingdom,  
 To order it and establish it with judgment and justice  
 From that time forward, even forever.  
 The zeal of the Lord of hosts will perform this.

There are others that they read and misinterpreted to mean the kingdom would be at the first coming.

### **Luke 19:11** (NKJV)

<sup>11</sup> Now as they heard these things, He spoke another parable, because He was near Jerusalem and because they thought the kingdom of God would appear immediately.

### **Acts 1:6** (NKJV)

<sup>6</sup>Therefore, when they had come together, they asked Him, saying, “Lord, will You at this time restore the kingdom to Israel?”

**Luke 24:17–21 (NKJV)**

<sup>17</sup> And He said to them, “**What kind of conversation is this that you have with one another as you walk and are sad?**”

<sup>18</sup> Then the one whose name was Cleopas answered and said to Him, “Are You the only stranger in Jerusalem, and have You not known the things which happened there in these days?”

<sup>19</sup> And He said to them, “**What things?**”

So they said to Him, “The things concerning Jesus of Nazareth, who was a Prophet mighty in deed and word before God and all the people, <sup>20</sup> and how the chief priests and our rulers delivered Him to be condemned to death, and crucified Him. <sup>21</sup> But we were hoping that it was He who was going to redeem Israel. Indeed, besides all this, today is the third day since these things happened.

A messed up eschatology can cause a whole lot of problems, its has been the source of discouragement, depression, and even defection.

False Religions have been built on wrong eschatological views.

Men and Women have sold their possessions, given away their wealth and quit their jobs because of wrong info or wrong interpretation of scripture.

Paul dealt with it in his day.

## **2 Thessalonians 2:1–3 (NKJV)**

<sup>1</sup>Now, brethren, concerning the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ and our gathering together to Him, we ask you,

<sup>2</sup>not to be soon shaken in mind or troubled, either by spirit or by word or by letter, as if from us, as though the day of Christ had come.

<sup>3</sup>Let no one deceive you by any means; for that Day will not come unless the falling away comes first, and the man of sin is revealed, the son of perdition,

For the disciples, things were going to be a lot different than they had learned. So Jesus tells them these things so when the persecution and hatred come, they won't stumble, fall, trip up.

**2. Second**, there is a real warning here of the potential to stumble in a most severe way. Not everyone who says they are the real thing really are. The disciples, just unwittingly witnesses a defection, an apostasy with Judas Iscariot.

Jesus had warned many times of the potential of apostasy.

Matthew 13:20–21 (NKJV)

<sup>20</sup> But he who received the seed on stony places, this is he who hears the word and immediately receives it with joy; <sup>21</sup> yet he has no root in himself, but endures only for a while. For when tribulation or persecution arises because of the word, immediately he stumbles.

1 John 2:18–19 (NKJV)

<sup>18</sup> Little children, it is the last hour; and as you have heard that the Antichrist is coming, even now many antichrists have come, by which we know that it is the last hour. <sup>19</sup> They went out from us, but they were not of us; for if they had been of us, they would have continued with us; but *they went out* that they might be made manifest, that none of them were of us.

2 Thessalonians 2:3 (NKJV)

<sup>3</sup> Let no one deceive you by any means; for that Day will not come unless the falling away comes first, and the man of sin is revealed, the son of perdition,

## 1 Timothy 4:1–2 (NKJV)

**4** Now the Spirit expressly says that in latter times some will depart from the faith, giving heed to deceiving spirits and doctrines of demons, <sup>2</sup> speaking lies in hypocrisy, having their own conscience seared with a hot iron,

## 2 Timothy 4:3–4 (NKJV)

<sup>3</sup> For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine, but according to their own desires, *because* they have itching ears, they will heap up for themselves teachers; <sup>4</sup> and they will turn *their* ears away from the truth, and be turned aside to fables.

**3. Third,** There is the beauty of the means of Grace.

God is sovereign, and He is in absolute control and plans and ordains everything from the beginning to the end. But that plan does not make us robots, nor is not fatalistic. God has ordained the plan and the end.

He planned and purposed to select these disciples and that they would serve Him and bear fruit and that their fruit would remain.

He reminded us of this in John 15.

**John 15:16 (NKJV)**

<sup>16</sup>You did not choose Me, but I chose you and appointed you that you should go and bear fruit, and that your fruit should remain, that whatever you ask the Father in My name He may give you.

Yet He warns them not to stumble.

If everything is already fixed and determined why give the warnings.

There are many verses that guarantee the end to be completed.

**Romans 8:30–31 (NKJV)**

<sup>30</sup>Moreover whom He predestined, these He also called; whom He called, these He also justified; and whom He justified, these He also glorified.

<sup>31</sup>What then shall we say to these things? If God is for us, who can be against us?

**Romans 8:38–39 (NKJV)**

<sup>38</sup> For I am persuaded that neither death nor life, nor angels nor principalities nor powers, nor things present nor things to come, <sup>39</sup> nor height nor depth, nor any other created thing, shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

**Philippians 1:6 (NKJV)**

<sup>6</sup>being confident of this very thing, that He who has begun a good work in you will complete it until the day of Jesus Christ;

**John 10:28–29 (NKJV)**

<sup>28</sup>And I give them eternal life, and they shall never perish; neither shall anyone snatch them out of My hand.

<sup>29</sup>My Father, who has given them to Me, is greater than all; and no one is able to snatch them out of My Father's hand.

**2 Timothy 4:18 (NKJV)**

<sup>18</sup> And the Lord will deliver me from every evil work and preserve *me* for His heavenly kingdom. To Him *be* glory forever and ever. Amen!

**Jude 24–25 (NKJV)**

<sup>24</sup>Now to Him who is able to keep you from stumbling, And to present you faultless Before the presence of His glory with exceeding joy,

<sup>25</sup>To God our Savior, Who alone is wise, Be glory and majesty, Dominion and power, Both now and forever. Amen.

**1 Thessalonians 5:23–27 (NKJV)**

<sup>23</sup>Now may the God of peace Himself sanctify you completely; and may your whole spirit, soul, and body be preserved blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.

<sup>24</sup>He who calls you is faithful, who also will do it.

<sup>25</sup>Brethren, pray for us.

<sup>27</sup>I charge you by the Lord that this epistle be read to all the holy brethren.

But what is so often missed is that God has determined the end for sure, but he has also determined the means to get there. That would come in the form of warnings, reminders, admonition, encouragement, exhortation, preaching, prayer, church assembly, teaching of the Word, counseling, evangelism, perseverance, failures, mistakes, discipline, education, yes and even sin and evil, etc.

<sup>1</sup>“These things I have spoken to you, that you should not be made to stumble.

<sup>2</sup>They will put you out of the synagogues; yes, the time is coming

that whoever kills you will think that he offers God service.

**αποσυναγωγους** ποιησουσιν υμας αλλ ερχεται ωρα ινα πας ο αποκτεινας υμας δοξη λατρειαν προσφερειν τω Θεω

### **αποσυναγωγους**

They will put you out of the synagogues;

**aposunagógos**: expelled from the congregation

**Original Word:** ἀποσυνάγωγος, ον

**Part of Speech:** Adjective

**Transliteration:** aposunagógos

**Phonetic Spelling:** (ap-os-oon-ag'-o-gos)

**Definition:** expelled from the congregation

**Usage:** away from the synagogue, expelled from the synagogue, excommunicated.

To be made **outcasts from the synagogue** meant far more than merely being forbidden to attend religious services. Those who were excommunicated from the synagogue were cut off from all religious, social, and economic aspects of Jewish society. They were branded as traitors to their people and their God, and faced the likely consequence of

losing both their families and their jobs. Not surprisingly, being unsynagogued was greatly feared

MacArthur, J. F., Jr. (2008). [John 12-21](#) (p. 191). Chicago, IL: Moody Publishers.

John 9:22 (NKJV)

<sup>22</sup>His parents said these things because they feared the Jews, for the Jews had agreed already that if anyone confessed that He was Christ, he would be put out of the synagogue.

John 12:42 (NKJV)

<sup>42</sup>Nevertheless even among the rulers many believed in Him, but because of the Pharisees they did not confess Him, lest they should be put out of the synagogue;

<sup>2</sup>They will put you out of the synagogues; yes, the time is coming that whoever kills you will think that he offers God service.

**αποσυναγωγους** ποιησουσιν υμας αλλ ερχεται ωρα ινα πας ο αποκτεινας υμας δοξη λατρειαν προσφερειν τω Θεω

But even worse than such excommunication, some of Christ's followers would pay with their lives (as was noted earlier). In a bitter irony, the enemies

of Christ sometimes **think that** by killing Christians they are **offering service to God** (the word translated **service** is used in Scripture to speak of religious service, or worship [cf. Rom. 9:4; 12:1; Heb. 9:1, 6]).

There is certainly evidence that some rabbinic authorities held that slaying heretics could be an act of divine worship (*e.g. Numbers Rabbah* 21.3 (191a) [with reference to Nu. 25:13]; Mishnah *Sanhedrin* 9:6

Carson, D. A. (1991). [\*The Gospel according to John\*](#) (p. 531). Leicester, England; Grand Rapids, MI: Inter-Varsity Press; W.B. Eerdmans.

Whether in the first century or in the twentieth, Christians have often discovered that the most dangerous oppression comes not from careless pagans but from zealous adherents to religious faith, and from other ideologues. A sermon was preached when Cranmer was burned at the stake. Christians have faced severe persecution performed in the name of Yahweh, in the name of Allah, in the name of Marx—and in the name of Jesus.

Carson, D. A. (1991). [\*The Gospel according to John\*](#) (p. 531). Leicester, England; Grand Rapids, MI: Inter-Varsity Press; W.B. Eerdmans.

This is true even today in nations where in the name of Allah militant Islam stands violently opposed to Christianity. The folly of attempting to serve a false god by murdering God's people reveals the depths to which sinful darkness blankets the minds of the unconverted.

Before his conversion, none other than the apostle Paul was a zealous persecutor of Christians. After being rescued by Roman soldiers outside the temple, he told the mob that had been trying to kill him, "I persecuted this Way to the death, binding and putting both men and women into prisons" (Acts 22:4). In his defense before Herod Agrippa, Paul elaborated on that statement:

MacArthur, J. F., Jr. (2008). [John 12-21](#) (pp. 191-192). Chicago, IL: Moody Publishers.

Acts 26:9–12 (NKJV)

<sup>9</sup>"Indeed, I myself thought I must do many things contrary to the name of Jesus of Nazareth.

<sup>10</sup>This I also did in Jerusalem, and many of the saints I shut up in prison, having received authority from the chief priests; and when they were put to death, I cast my vote against them.

<sup>11</sup>And I punished them often in every synagogue and compelled them to blaspheme; and being exceedingly enraged against them, I persecuted them even to foreign cities.

<sup>12</sup>“While thus occupied, as I journeyed to Damascus with authority and commission from the chief priests,

Writing to the churches of Galatia, the apostle explained what had motivated his violent persecution of the church: “For you have heard of my former manner of life in Judaism, how I used to persecute the church of God beyond measure and tried to destroy it; and I was advancing in Judaism beyond many of my contemporaries among my countrymen, being more extremely zealous for my ancestral traditions” (Gal. 1:13–14; cf. Phil. 3:6; 1 Tim. 1:12–13).

After Paul’s conversion the hater became the hated; the hunter the hunted; and the persecutor the persecuted. In virtually every city he visited, Paul faced opposition from Jews, Gentiles, or both, thereby fulfilling the Lord’s prediction concerning him: “I will show him how much he must suffer for My name’s sake” (Acts 9:16). In 2 Corinthians 11:22–27 the apostle summarized how he received the “brand-marks of Jesus” (Gal. 6:17) that he so proudly bore:

Are they [the Judaizing false teachers] Hebrews? So am I. Are they Israelites? So am I.

Are they descendants of Abraham? So am I. Are they servants of Christ?—I speak as if insane—I more so; in far more labors, in far more imprisonments, beaten times without number, often in danger of death. Five times I received from the Jews thirty-nine lashes. Three times I was beaten with rods, once I was stoned, three times I was shipwrecked, a night and a day I have spent in the deep. I have been on frequent journeys, in dangers from rivers, dangers from robbers, dangers from my countrymen, dangers from the Gentiles, dangers in the city, dangers in the wilderness, dangers on the sea, dangers among false brethren; I have been in labor and hardship, through many sleepless nights, in hunger and thirst, often without food, in cold and exposure. (2 Cor. 11:22–27)

MacArthur, J. F., Jr. (2008). [John 12–21](#) (pp. 192–193). Chicago, IL: Moody Publishers.

It is tragic when “religious” people persecute and murder in the name of God. While it is true that “the blood of the martyrs is the seed of the church” (Tertullian), it is also true that their blood is the stain on the pages of history.

Wiersbe, W. W. (1996). [The Bible exposition commentary](#) (Vol. 1, p. 361). Wheaton, IL: Victor Books.

## II. The Perspective Pronounced

<sup>3</sup>And these things they will do to you because they have not known the Father nor Me.

<sup>4</sup>But these things I have told you, that when the time comes, you may remember that I told you of them.

“And these things I did not say to you at the beginning, because I was with you

<sup>3</sup>And these things they will do to you because they have not known the Father nor Me.

και ταυτα ποιησουσιν υμιν οτι ουκ εγνωσαν τον πατερα ουδε εμε

they will do future tense.

they have not known

εγνωσαν Aorist Active past as fact

**Because** (ὅτι [*hoti*]). Definite reason for the religious hatred is ignorance of God and Christ as in 15:21.

Robertson, A. T. (1933). [\*Word Pictures in the New Testament\*](#) (Jn 16:3). Nashville, TN: Broadman Press.

The reason for such opposition is that the oppressors *have not known* (*ouk egnōsan*, possibly ‘have not come to know’, with Bruce, p. 317) either the Father or the Son (*cf.* Rev. 2:9; 3:9). To know the Son truly as the revelation of God is to know God

Carson, D. A. (1991). [\*The Gospel according to John\*](#) (pp. 531–532). Leicester, England; Grand Rapids, MI: Inter-Varsity Press; W.B. Eerdmans.

John 15:21 (NKJV)

<sup>21</sup>But all these things they will do to you for My name’s sake, because they do not know Him who sent Me.

John 7:28–29 (NKJV)

<sup>28</sup>Then Jesus cried out, as He taught in the temple, saying, “You both know Me, and you know where I am from; and I have not come of Myself, but He who sent Me is true, whom you do not know.

<sup>29</sup>But I know Him, for I am from Him, and He sent Me.”

John 8:19 (NKJV)

<sup>19</sup> Then they said to Him, “Where is Your Father?”

Jesus answered, “You know neither Me nor My Father. If you had known Me, you would have known My Father also.”

John 14:7 (NKJV)

<sup>7</sup> “If you had known Me, you would have known My Father also; and from now on you know Him and have seen Him.”

John 17:3 (NKJV)

<sup>3</sup> And this is eternal life, that they may know You, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom You have sent.

Matthew 11:27 (NKJV)

<sup>27</sup> All things have been delivered to Me by My Father, and no one knows the Son except the Father. Nor does anyone know the Father except the Son, and the one to whom the Son wills to reveal Him.

<sup>4</sup> But these things I have told you, that when the time comes, you may

remember that I told you of them.  
“And these things I did not say to  
you at the beginning, because I was  
with you

In verse 4 Jesus gave another reason for His warning to the disciples. **These things I have spoken to you**, He told them, **so that when their hour comes, you may remember that I told you of them**. Persecution would surely come, since “all who desire to live godly in Christ Jesus will be persecuted” (2 Tim. 3:12; cf. Acts 14:22). Years later, in his first epistle, Peter echoed the Lord’s prediction:

1 Peter 4:12–17 (NKJV)

<sup>12</sup>Beloved, do not think it strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you, as though some strange thing happened to you;

<sup>13</sup>but rejoice to the extent that you partake of Christ’s sufferings, that when His glory is revealed, you may also be glad with exceeding joy.

But rather than shatter the disciples’ faith, the hostility they faced would actually deepen and

strengthen their resolve as they saw the Lord's prediction fulfilled (cf. John 14:29).

Jesus had not needed to say **these** words of warning to the disciples **at the beginning, because He was with** them. During His ministry, the Lord not only protected His disciples, but also bore the brunt of the world's attacks—something He would shortly do again for the last time (18:8–9). Because Jesus had been there to receive the assaults Himself and to shield them, the disciples had not experienced the full force of the opposition they would now face in His absence. In such passages as Matthew 5:10–12 and 10:24–25, Jesus had referred to persecution in general terms. But now that His death was only hours away, the disciples would be left to face the full fury of the world's hatred. That reality is what prompted this explicit warning.

Jesus never glossed over the truth when it came to counting the cost of being His disciple. In Luke 9:23–24 He said, “If anyone wishes to come after Me, he must deny himself, and take up his cross daily and follow Me. For whoever wishes to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for My sake, he is the one who will save it.” Later He told a parable illustrating that truth:

## Luke 14:28–33 (NKJV)

<sup>28</sup>For which of you, intending to build a tower, does not sit down first and count the cost, whether he has enough to finish it—

<sup>29</sup>lest, after he has laid the foundation, and is not able to finish, all who see it begin to mock him,

<sup>30</sup>saying, ‘This man began to build and was not able to finish.’

<sup>31</sup>Or what king, going to make war against another king, does not sit down first and consider whether he is able with ten thousand to meet him who comes against him with twenty thousand?

<sup>32</sup>Or else, while the other is still a great way off, he sends a delegation and asks conditions of peace.

<sup>33</sup>So likewise, whoever of you does not forsake all that he has cannot be My disciple.

Christ does not offer His followers the way of comfort and ease, but a hard and difficult path. Though the gate is small and the road is narrow, it is certainly well worth the strenuous journey, for it alone “leads to life” and to eternal glory (Matt. 7:13–14). Thus Paul could write, in the midst of his multitudinous trials, “For momentary, light affliction is producing for us an eternal weight of glory far beyond all comparison” (2 Cor. 4:17).

### III. The Preference Prescribed

<sup>5</sup>“But now I go away to Him who sent Me, and none of you asks Me, ‘Where are You going?’

<sup>6</sup>But because I have said these things to you, sorrow has filled your heart.

<sup>7</sup>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 depart, I will send Him to you.

These verses present a sharp contrast between the complete selflessness of Jesus and the utter selfishness of the disciples. As the cross loomed ever larger, they should have been comforting Him. He should have been their focus, since the time had come for Him to accomplish His mission and return to the Father who **sent** Him.

But **none of** them was even concerned enough about the Lord to ask Him, “**Where are You going?**” Though both Peter (13:36) and Thomas (14:5) had asked Him earlier where He was going, the Lord’s point was that their questions had reflected a concern for themselves and not a concern for Him. Those earlier queries were more of a protest over His abandoning them than an expression of genuine interest in what He was about to experience. As R. C. H. Lenski explains:

Peter’s question in 13:36 was of a different kind; it was only a selfish exclamation which would not hear of Jesus’ going away alone. And the assertion of Thomas in 14:5 was nothing but an expression of discouragement and dullness of mind at the thought of Jesus’ going away while leaving the disciples to follow later on a way that Thomas felt he did not know. (*The Interpretation of St. John’s Gospel* [repr.; Peabody, Mass.: Hendrickson, 1998], 1078–79; cf. D. A. Carson, *The Gospel According to John*, The Pillar New Testament Commentary [Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1991], 532–33)

**Because** Jesus had **said these things** (about the coming persecution) **to** them, **sorrow** had **filled** the disciples’ hearts.

**lupé: pain of body or mind, grief, sorrow**

**Original Word:** λύπη, ης, ἡ

**Part of Speech:** Noun, Feminine

**Transliteration:** lupé

**Phonetic Spelling:** (loo'-pay)

**Definition:** pain of body or mind, grief, sorrow

**Usage:** pain, grief, sorrow, affliction.

3077 *lúpē* – properly, distress, vexation; (figuratively) physical or emotional pain; heavy, heart-sorrow (grief) that brings a person down.

What is undeniable is that the disciples are filled with deep grief over their impending loss: the word for *grief* (*lupē*) recurs in vv. 20, 21, 22.

Carson, D. A. (1991). *The Gospel according to John* (p. 533). Leicester, England; Grand Rapids, MI: Inter-Varsity Press; W.B. Eerdmans.

**Sorrow hath filled** (ἡ λυπη πεπληρωκεν [*hē lupē replērōken*]). This word is not used of Jesus in the Gospels, in John only in this chapter. Perfect active indicative of πληρωω [*plēroō*]. They do not see their way to go on without Jesus.

Robertson, A. T. (1933). *Word Pictures in the New Testament* (Jn 16:6). Nashville, TN: Broadman Press.

Their thoughts were not centered on what this moment meant for Jesus, but only on what it meant for them. But instead of being consumed with anxiety, they should have been filled with joy to know

that Jesus' earthly mission was almost over and His return to heavenly glory near. As He had earlier chided them, "If you loved Me, you would have rejoiced because I go to the Father" (14:28).

In actuality, the disciples' sorrow was completely unwarranted. The **truth** is that **it was to their advantage that Jesus go away**. Obviously, apart from Jesus' propitiatory, sacrificial death on the cross, there would be no atonement for their sins. But beyond that, **if Jesus did not go away, the Helper** (the Holy Spirit) would **not come to** them.

**Will not come** (οὐ μὴ ἔλθῃ [*ou mē elthēi*]).

Strong double negative with second aorist active subjunctive of ἔρχομαι [*erchomai*]. The Holy Spirit was, of course, already at work in the hearts of men, but not in the sense of witnessing as Paraclete which could only take place after Jesus had gone back to the Father

Robertson, A. T. (1933). [\*Word Pictures in the New Testament\*](#) (Jn 16:7). Nashville, TN: Broadman Press.

**But** if the Lord left, He would **send Him to** them. Jesus promised that when the Holy Spirit came, He would give them eternal life (7:37–39), indwell them (14:16–17), instruct them (and through them all

believers [14:26]), empower them in their witness, and activate for them the promises of God (see 15:26–27 and the commentary on those verses in the previous chapter of this volume).

There are at least two reasons why the Holy Spirit did not come until after Christ's death, resurrection, and ascension.

First, the Spirit's ministry is to reveal the person and works of Christ. That was not fully possible until after Christ finished His work of redemption on the cross and ascended to His full glory in heaven.

Second, the Father gave the Spirit to the church to vindicate His Son's faithfulness in completing the work of salvation in His death and resurrection

John 7:39 (NKJV)

<sup>39</sup>But this He spoke concerning the Spirit, whom those believing in Him would receive; for the Holy Spirit was not yet given, because Jesus was not yet glorified.

Galatians 3:13–14 (NKJV)

<sup>13</sup>Christ has redeemed us from the curse of the law, having become a curse for us (for it is written, "Cursed is everyone who hangs on a tree"),

<sup>14</sup>that the blessing of Abraham might come upon the Gentiles in Christ Jesus, that we might receive the promise of the Spirit through faith.

In his sermon on the day of Pentecost, Peter, after referring to the death and resurrection Christ (Acts 2:23–32), declared, “Therefore having been exalted to the right hand of God, and having received from the Father the promise of the Holy Spirit, He has poured forth this which you both see and hear” (v. 33).

MacArthur, J. F., Jr. (2008). [John 12–21](#) (pp. 194–195). Chicago, IL: Moody Publishers.