



International Bible Study Commentary

Verse-by-Verse Bible Lessons Thru the Bible

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John 16:1-11 Commentary King James Version

Questions for Discussion and Thinking Further

follow the verse-by-verse [International Bible Study Commentary](#). **Study Hints for Discussion and Thinking Further** will help with class preparation and in conducting class discussion: these hints are available on the *International Bible Study Commentary* website along with the *International Bible Lesson* that you may want to read to your class as part of your Bible study. You can discuss each week's commentary and lesson at the [International Bible Study Forum](#).

(John 16:1) These things have I spoken unto you, that ye should not be offended.

A true disciple of Jesus Christ will follow Him wherever He leads, but Jesus had to tell His disciples that they could not go where He was going. They could not follow Him further yet, for He was soon going back to the Father. Someday, He would come back for them and they would go to be with Him, as He had promised them in John 14:3, "And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and will take you to myself, so that where I am, there you may be also." But between the time He left them and came

back for them to take them to the place He had prepared for them they would face persecution and death themselves—even as He would soon suffer and die on a cross. He needed to forewarn them about what would soon happen to Him and to them so they would not stumble or fall away from believing in and following Him according to the truths He had taught them for three years. If His disciples faced an unknown future and began doubting when all things seemed wrong, they might turn from following Jesus Christ as their Lord and Savior. So, in John chapter 16, Jesus began talking specifically about some of the trials and temptations they would soon face.

(John 16:2) They shall put you out of the synagogues: yea, the time cometh, that whosoever killeth you will think that he doeth God service.

Just as the first followers of Jesus Christ were soon expelled from the synagogue, where they testified about Jesus and worshiped with their fellow Jews, there have been times throughout history when “religious” people in a church have persecuted the true followers of Jesus by excluding them from fellowship and even murdering some. Throughout history some rulers of this world, including some political and religious leaders, have tortured and murdered Jesus’ followers. The life of the Apostle Paul proves the fulfillment and truth of Jesus’ prophecy, for Paul once persecuted many of the first Christians. Before the Apostle Paul changed his name from Saul, he approved the stoning of Stephen. In Acts 8:1, we read, “And Saul

approved of their killing him. That day a severe persecution began against the church in Jerusalem, and all except the apostles were scattered throughout the countryside of Judea and Samaria.” When the Apostle Paul gave his testimony before King Agrippa he spoke of his former persecution of Christians. In Acts 26:4-6 and 9-11, Paul confessed, “All the Jews know my way of life from my youth, a life spent from the beginning among my own people and in Jerusalem. They have known for a long time, if they are willing to testify, that I have belonged to the strictest sect of our religion and lived as a Pharisee. And now I stand here on trial on account of my hope in the promise made by God to our ancestors . . . Indeed, I myself was convinced that I ought to do many things against the name of Jesus of Nazareth. And that is what I did in Jerusalem; with authority received from the chief priests, I not only locked up many of the saints in prison, but I also cast my vote against them when they were being condemned to death. By punishing them often in all the synagogues I tried to force them to blaspheme; and since I was so furiously enraged at them, I pursued them even to foreign cities.” In the name of their god, some have murdered Christians and others. Some in synagogues and churches have persecuted, have excluded, and have murdered those who have tried to follow Jesus Christ according to the Scriptures. When these trials happen to Christians today, Jesus’ followers should not be surprised but remember some of Jesus’ promises about the Holy Spirit’s help in the Gospel of John.

(John 16:3) And these things will they do unto you, because they have not known the Father, nor me.

In the gospels, Jesus foretold all who would follow Him what they could expect in this world from following Him and His moral and spiritual values and teachings. Many do not want to live according to the absolute, objective moral and spiritual standards that God has revealed in the Bible; therefore, in various ways they persecute those who try to follow and obey Jesus. To strengthen their faith in Him rather than have them doubt and stumble with thoughts that He had given them false promises of security and prosperity in the world, Jesus forewarned His disciples. Because they know neither the Father nor the Son (the One who came to make the Father known) unbelievers persecuted Jesus and will persecute all His followers even today because they do not know God—the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. Remember what Jesus said in John 8:19, when the Pharisees asked Jesus, “Where is your Father?” Jesus answered, ‘You know neither me nor my Father. If you knew me, you would know my Father also.’”

(John 16:4) But these things have I told you, that when the time shall come, ye may remember that I told you of them. And these things I said not unto you at the beginning, because I was with you.

No follower of Jesus Christ who reads the Bible should be surprised when hardship and persecution come as a direct

result of trying to live faithful to Jesus Christ, of trying to obey Him in all things, of trying to love and serve others as He loved and served others. Jesus warned His disciples (and all who would believe in Him) that they would suffer if they followed Him as He directed. When Jesus was with them in the flesh, He could easily keep His disciples from doubting or stumbling because He could physically stand between them and His persecutors and He could keep teaching them. He could easily answer the questions of both His persecutors and His disciples. The verbal and physical attacks of those who did not know the Father or the Son fell first upon Him and then upon them. After Jesus rose from the dead and empowered His disciples to testify about Him as Lord and Savior of the world, the attacks of unbelievers would naturally fall upon them as the physical and visible representatives of Jesus Christ and His teaching. Those of this world do not want to hear the teachings of Jesus or the Apostle Paul who wrote in Romans 8:5-6, “For those who live according to the flesh set their minds on the things of the flesh, but those who live according to the Spirit set their minds on the things of the Spirit. To set the mind on the flesh is death, but to set the mind on the Spirit is life and peace;” therefore, they persecute and try to silence Jesus’ followers. By doing so, they forfeit the joy, life, love, peace and eternal life that the Holy Spirit gives daily to believers by the grace of God through their faith in Jesus Christ.

(John 16:5) But now I go my way to him that sent me; and none of you asketh me, Whither goest thou?

The revelation of Jesus Christ and the Bible reveal and teach God's people more truths as they obey Jesus' teachings in the Bible over time. After Jesus revealed much about himself and His mission to His disciples, He revealed even more as His death and departure neared. The Holy Spirit that Jesus would soon send to His disciples would reveal more truths to them and through them the Holy Spirit would create the New Testament and the New Testament Church. At that moment, His disciples were so shocked that they might not have thought to ask, "Where are you going?" or they were focused so much on their own needs when they learned that they would lose Jesus' presence to think to ask the question about "where" Jesus was going.

(John 16:6) But because I have said these things unto you, sorrow hath filled your heart.

Sorrow filled their hearts when they learned that Jesus was going to leave them, the One who loved them and the One they had come to love. After being His disciples and enjoying love, peace, and fellowship with Him, they were sorrowful to learn that they would lose fellowship Him and also lose their fellowship with those in the synagogue. Even worse, they learned that some would hate them and want to murder them. And while persecuting them, their

persecutors would think that they were serving God by doing so.

(John 16:7) Nevertheless I tell you the truth; It is expedient for you that I go away: for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you; but if I depart, I will send him unto you.

Even though the coming events would bring them much sorrow, and even though their fearful anticipation of Jesus leaving them filled them with grief, Jesus assured them that the results would be for their own good, for their benefit, to their advantage. Jesus had to go away before He could send the Advocate to them as their ever present “Defense Attorney,” as their indwelling Guide, Helper, Comforter, and Counselor. Jesus had to die an atoning death for them so they could be forgiven for their sins, cleansed from their sins, and prepared to receive the Spirit of holiness and truth into their lives. It would be to their advantage for the Holy Spirit to live within them at all times when they were scattered, persecuted, and murdered. When the world saw them as abandoned and helpless, they would never be powerless, alone, or separated from God. In the flesh, Jesus could not be with all of them everywhere all the time. But the Holy Spirit whom He would send them could be with them all. And the Holy Spirit has been and will be with every follower of Jesus until He comes again. Notice what Jesus said about the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit is a Person, not an “it” or an impersonal power; for Jesus promised, “I will send Him

to you.”

(John 16:8) And when he is come, he will reprove the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment:

The Holy Spirit is an Advocate or Defense Attorney for the one who follows Jesus as His disciple. To the world or to the one who follows the ruler of this world and the world's way of life, the Holy Spirit is a Prosecuting Attorney. Most people do not like to hear that what they are doing is wrong, but the Holy Spirit through the life, works, and words of those who follow Jesus reveals to those of this world that they are doing wrong—which can lead to the persecution of Christians in some way. The world is wrong about sin, righteousness, and judgment. The Holy Spirit will work to convince an unbeliever that they are wrong about sin and death in order to lead them to saving faith in Jesus Christ. The Holy Spirit will work on the conscience of an unbeliever, but the unbeliever may harden their conscience and in a hateful response persecute Christians and the Church. On the other hand, learning the truth about Jesus Christ along with the work of the Holy Spirit can lead an unbeliever to repent of their sins and turn to Jesus Christ for salvation from sin to receive the gift of eternal life from Him.

(John 16:9) Of sin, because they believe not on me;

Those of this world do not believe in Jesus as the Way, the Truth, and the Life. But Jesus is the Savior of the world, and He came to reveal the Father. Through the believer's moral and spiritual way of life (though not yet perfect), in their truthful words, and by their joyful, loving, and peaceful way of life, the Holy Spirit proves the world is wrong about the best way to live and how people can live the best way by following Jesus. Despite overwhelming evidence and the work of the Holy Spirit to lead them to believe and repent, many of those who live according to the ways of the devil and who love this world will persist in unbelief and rebellion against God.

(John 16:10) Of righteousness, because I go to my Father, and ye see me no more;

The world is wrong about righteousness because living rightly according to the commands and teachings of Jesus is a righteous way to live. Since all have sinned, no one can be righteous apart from the saving work of Jesus Christ on the cross, apart from accepting Jesus Christ as their Savior and Lord, and apart from the Holy Spirit living and working within those who follow Jesus. When God raised Jesus Christ from the dead, God proved that all Jesus said and did was true and right. The Holy Spirit will help believers teach these facts about Jesus Christ to the world. The world may think righteous living does not matter, but the world is wrong and there is a coming judgment when Jesus Christ returns according to His timing.

(John 16:11) Of judgment, because the prince of this world is judged.

Jesus Christ came into the world to save sinners from their sins and from the just punishment that all sinners deserve—judgment that all His followers once deserved. The Holy Spirit uses the truth of God’s word and the life of Jesus’ followers to lead sinners to saving faith in Jesus Christ. God has condemned the ruler of this world for his rebellion against God and for his many works of evil in the world—evil words and works that he still uses to lead those of this world to believe in evil thoughts, use evil words, and do evil. Sinners can choose to follow the ways of the condemned ruler of this world; or with the help of the Holy Spirit, sinners can turn from the devil, turn from a sinful way of life, and choose to follow Jesus Christ and His teachings in the Bible. The Holy Spirit shows the world the Way of salvation. He works in the world through the Truth that He has revealed in the Bible’s teachings and through the Life of Jesus. He abides with and works within the hearts and minds of those who try to imitate Jesus morally and spiritually so they can teach people about Jesus. When the followers of Jesus are persecuted or tempted to walk once again in the ways of the world, the Holy Spirit empowers them and helps them remember that though the ruler of this world still rules some under the sovereignty of God, this ruler has been judged and condemned by the King of kings and the Lord of lords who sits at the right hand of God the Father in heaven.

Questions for Discussion and Thinking Further

1. What can keep us from stumbling?
2. What might you say to someone who said that they became a Christian because they wanted security and all of their daily needs and requests to be met by Jesus?
3. Why do some people ridicule and persecute Christians?
4. Why was it an advantage or benefit for Jesus to go away?
5. What did Jesus say the Holy Spirit would do in the world?

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