

Luke 12:11

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And when they bring you unto the synagogues, and unto magistrates, and powers, take ye no thought how or what thing ye shall answer, or what ye shall say:

Analysis

And when they bring you unto the synagogues, and unto magistrates, and powers, take ye no thought how or what thing ye shall answer, or what ye shall say—Jesus shifts from warning about blasphemy to encouraging trust during persecution. The phrase when they bring you (ὅταν εἰσφέρωσιν ὑμᾶς) assumes persecution is inevitable, not hypothetical. Disciples will face trials before synagogues (religious courts), magistrates (ἀρχάς, civil authorities), and powers (ἐξουσίας, governing powers)—a comprehensive list covering religious and political opposition.

The command take ye no thought (μὴ μεριμνήσητε) uses the same verb Jesus employed regarding anxiety about food and clothing (Luke 12:22)—don't be anxious, don't obsess over preparation. This doesn't prohibit reasonable forethought but forbids paralyzing worry about self-defense. The specific concern is how or what thing ye shall answer—disciples shouldn't script elaborate apologetics or rehearse speeches. God will provide words in the moment of need.

Historical Context

Early Christians experienced exactly this scenario. Acts records believers brought before the Sanhedrin (Acts 4:5-22, 5:27-42), local synagogue authorities (Acts 13:50, 14:19), Roman magistrates (Acts 16:19-24, 18:12-17), and provincial governors (Acts 23:24-26:32). Stephen, Peter, John, and Paul all faced trials

without prepared defenses, yet spoke with wisdom their opponents couldn't refute (Acts 6:10, 4:13). Jesus' own trial exemplified this—He answered interrogators with divinely given wisdom, often through silence (Matthew 27:11-14). The early church remembered this promise, encouraging martyrs to trust the Spirit's provision rather than human eloquence. Martyrologies record believers speaking with supernatural boldness and clarity under extreme duress.

Related Passages

Revelation 20:12 — Judgment according to deeds

Romans 2:1 — Judging others

Study Questions

1. How does Jesus distinguish between godly preparation and anxious worry about defending one's faith?
2. What does this promise teach about the Spirit's active involvement in believers' witness under pressure?
3. In what situations today might Christians need to trust the Spirit's provision rather than relying solely on prepared arguments?

Interlinear Text

ὅταν	δὲ	προσφέρωσιν	ὑμᾶς	ἐπὶ	τὰς	συναγωγὰς	καὶ
when	And	they bring	you	unto	^{G3588}	the synagogues	and
G3752	G1161	G4374	G5209	G1909		G4864	G2532
τὰς	ἀρχὰς	καὶ	τὰς	ἐξουσίας	μὴ	μεριμνᾶτε	πῶς
^{G3588}	unto magistrates	and	^{G3588}	powers	ye no	take	how
	G746	G2532		G1849	G3361	G3309	G4459
ἢ	τί	ἀπολογήσησθε	ἢ	τί	εἵπητε·		
or	what	ye shall answer	or	what	ye shall say		
G2228	G5101	G626	G2228	G5101	G2036		

Additional Cross-References

Luke 12:22 (Parallel theme): And he said unto his disciples, Therefore I say unto you, Take no thought for your life, what ye shall eat; neither for the body, what ye shall put on.

Matthew 23:34 (Parallel theme): Wherefore, behold, I send unto you prophets, and wise men, and scribes: and some of them ye shall kill and crucify; and some of them shall ye scourge in your synagogues, and persecute them from city to city:

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