

# Mark 13:16

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And let him that is in the field not turn back again for to take up his garment.

## Analysis

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**Let him that is in the field not turn back again for to take up his garment—** laborers worked in fields wearing inner tunic, leaving outer cloak at field's edge (valuable garment, used as nighttime covering). Jesus commanded: don't return for it. The urgency supersedes recovering even necessary items. The Greek *mē epistrepsatō* (μὴ ἐπιστρεψάτω, 'let him not turn back') parallels v. 15's prohibition—no delay permitted.

This intensifies the point: value life above clothing, safety above possessions. It echoes Proverbs: 'How long wilt thou sleep, O sluggard?' (Proverbs 6:9)—spiritual urgency demands immediate response. Hesitation proves fatal. Philippians 3:13-14 applies spiritually: 'forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before, I press toward the mark.' Christians must pursue Christ single-mindedly, not distracted by worldly concerns. The field worker leaving his cloak pictures believers abandoning worldly attachments to follow Christ wholeheartedly.

## Historical Context

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First-century Judean agriculture involved day laborers working fields outside villages. Outer garments (*himation*) were valuable—used as collateral (Exodus 22:26-27 required returning by sunset), nighttime covering, protection. Workers left them at field edges for mobility. When danger struck (bandits, invading armies, wild animals), workers fled immediately. Jesus' command: don't risk life retrieving

property. AD 70's siege fulfilled this: those who hesitated to flee, attempting to save belongings, perished. Spiritually applicable throughout church history: Christians must abandon worldly attachments pursuing Christ. Reformers left Catholic Church despite cost; missionaries abandoned comfort for gospel; converts from other religions forsake family, security. Discipleship costs everything—no turning back.

## Related Passages

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**1 Corinthians 13:4** — Characteristics of love

**1 John 4:8** — God is love

## Study Questions

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1. How does the command not to retrieve even necessary items (outer garment) illustrate discipleship's radical cost?
2. What does 'not turning back' teach about Christian life—how does Philippians 3:13-14 apply this spiritually?
3. What 'garments'—worldly securities, comforts, attachments—might Christians need to abandon without looking back to follow Christ fully?

## Interlinear Text

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καὶ	ό	εἰς	τὸν	ἀγρὸν	ών	μὴ	ἐπιστρεψάτω	εἰς
<b>And</b>	G3588	<b>in</b>	G3588	<b>the field</b>	<b>him that is</b>	<b>not</b>	<b>again</b>	<b>in</b>
G2532		G1519		G68	G5607	G3361	G1994	G1519
τὰ	όπίσω	ἄραι	τὸ	ἱμάτιον	αὐτοῦ			
G3588	<b>back</b>	<b>for to take up</b>	G3588	<b>garment</b>	G846			
G3694		G142		G2440				