

Matthew 10:17

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

But beware of men: for they will deliver you up to the councils, and they will scourge you in their synagogues;

Analysis

Jesus warns of persecution: 'beware of men: for they will deliver you up to the councils, and they will scourge you in their synagogues' (προσεχετε δε απο των ανθρωπων παραδωσουσιν γαρ υμας εις συνεδρια και εν ταις συναγωγαις αυτων μαστιγωσουσιν υμας). 'Beware' (προσεχετε) means be alert, watchful, cautious. 'Councils' (συνεδρια) were local Jewish courts administering justice and discipline. 'Scourge' (μαστιγωσουσιν) was brutal punishment: thirty-nine lashes with leather whips. That this happens 'in their synagogues'—houses of worship—reveals religious opposition's intensity. Persecution comes not from secular authorities but religious leaders. This pattern continues: Stephen stoned by Sanhedrin, Paul beaten in synagogues, early Christians expelled from Jewish communities. Jesus prepares disciples for costly discipleship—following Him means suffering.

Historical Context

Jewish councils (Sanhedrin at Jerusalem, local councils elsewhere) handled religious and civil matters. Synagogue discipline included excommunication and corporal punishment. Deuteronomy 25:1-3 limited flogging to forty lashes; Jewish practice reduced to thirty-nine as safety margin. Paul received this punishment five times (2 Corinthians 11:24). Jesus Himself faced religious trial before Sanhedrin (Matthew 26:59). Early church's primary persecution came from Jewish authorities before Roman persecution intensified. Jesus' prediction proved accurate: Acts chronicles repeated synagogue opposition.

Related Passages

Hebrews 11:1 — Definition of faith

James 2:17 — Faith and works

Study Questions

1. Why does religious opposition often prove fiercer than secular persecution?
2. How should Christians prepare mentally and spiritually for potential persecution?
3. What does Jesus' warning teach about counting the cost of discipleship?

Interlinear Text

προσέχετε	δὲ	ἀπὸ	τῶν	ἀνθρώπων·	παραδώσουσιν	γὰρ	
beware	But	of		G3588	men	they will deliver	
G4337	G1161	G575			G444	G3860	
γὰρ						for	
G1063							
ὑμᾶς·	εἰς	συνέδρια	καὶ	ἐν	ταῖς	συναγωγαῖς	αὐτῶν
you	to	the councils	and	in	G3588	synagogues	G846
G5209	G1519	G4892	G2532	G1722		G4864	
μαστιγώσουσιν	ὑμᾶς·						
they will scourge	you						
G3146	G5209						

Additional Cross-References

Mark 13:9 (Parallel theme): But take heed to yourselves: for they shall deliver you up to councils; and in the synagogues ye shall be beaten: and ye shall be brought before rulers and kings for my sake, for a testimony against them.

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:

Acts 26:11 (Parallel theme): And I punished them oft in every synagogue, and compelled them to blaspheme; and being exceedingly mad against them, I persecuted them even unto strange cities.

Matthew 5:22 (Parallel theme): But I say unto you, That whosoever is angry with his brother without a cause shall be in danger of the judgment: and whosoever shall say to his brother, Raca, shall be in danger of the council: but whosoever shall say, Thou fool, shall be in danger of hell fire.

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

Luke 12:11 (Parallel theme): 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:

Acts 22:19 (Parallel theme): And I said, Lord, they know that I imprisoned and beat in every synagogue them that believed on thee:

Micah 7:5 (Parallel theme): Trust ye not in a friend, put ye not confidence in a guide: keep the doors of thy mouth from her that lieth in thy bosom.