

John 8:21–25

How to Die in Your Sins

John 8:21–25

²¹ Then Jesus said to them again, “I am going away, and you will seek Me, and will die in your sin. Where I go you cannot come.”

²² So the Jews said, “Will He kill Himself, because He says, ‘Where I go you cannot come’?” ²³ And He said to them, “You are from beneath; I am from above. You are of this world; I am not of this world. ²⁴ Therefore I said to you that you will die in your sins; for if you do not believe that I am *He*, you will die in your sins.”

²⁵ Then they said to Him, “Who are You?”

And Jesus said to them, “Just what I have been saying to you from the beginning.”

Introduction

According to Millennials the 10 most concerning problems in the world are :

- 10. Lack of economic opportunity and employment (12.1%)**
- 9. Safety / security / wellbeing (14.1%)**
- 8. Lack of education (15.9%)**
- 7. Food and water security (18.2%)**
- 6. Government accountability and transparency / corruption (22.7%)**

5. Religious conflicts (23.9%)
4. Poverty (29.2%)
3. Inequality (income, discrimination) (30.8%)
2. Large scale conflict / wars (38.9%)
1. Climate change / destruction of nature (48.8%)

This post originally appeared on [Business Insider](#).

The 10 most important personal problems we face according to a survey

from lesser to most important

10. Find inner peace
9. Improve Your Career and Job situation
8. Eliminate Negativity and Be Positive
7. Find and Live Your Passion
6. Being Happy
5. Find and Improve a Relationship
4. Improve Ability to Focus Clearly
3. Develop the Mindset of Personal Growth
2. Increase Self Esteem,
1. Improve Your Money Situation

The reality is that these problems that humanity count as so important really are not important at all.

They pale in comparison to the real problem that mankind faces.

Every day we are reminded of the consequences of this problem.

Birth Rate	Death Rate
• 19 births/1,000 population	• 8 deaths/1,000 population
• 131.4 million births per year	• 55.3 million people die each year
• 360,000 births per day	• 151,600 people die each day
• 15,000 births each hour	• 6,316 people die each hour
• 250 births each minute	• 105 people die each minute
• Four births each second of every day	• Nearly two people die each second

Death is the the major reminder that the biggest problem we face is sin.

AW Tozer wrote

Go to God's Word and you will find that sin is the most pressing, the most compelling, the most imperative problem in human life and society. The most pressing problem is not sickness. It is not war. It is not poverty. Sin is the basic problem because sin has to do with a person's soul. Sin does not relate merely to a person's short years on this earth. It involves that person's eternal future and the world to come.

No one has ever overstated the seriousness of the sin question. It is a question that continues age after age. It comes to every human being: "What am I going to do about sin?" That question takes

precedence over all other questions that we are called upon to answer. Whether we are world famous or an unnamed member of the human race, we must make confession concerning our relationship with sin.

If each of us is willing to be honest, we will answer, "I have been involved in sin. I have played along with it. I have taken it to my bosom and it has stung me. The virus of sin has entered my life stream. It has conditioned my mind; it has affected my judgment. I confess I have been a deliberate collaborator with sin."

But sin is more than a disease. It is a deformity of the spirit, an abnormality in that part of human nature which is most like God's. And sin is a capital crime as well. It is treason against the great God Almighty who made the heavens and the earth. Sin is a crime against the moral order of the universe. Each time a man or woman strikes against God's moral nature and kingdom, he or she acts against the moral government of the entire universe."

Sin has separated you from God and will eventually cause you to be eternally tormented in fire forever.

In case you have ever wondered. You can guarantee your death in sin. In our passage, it states 4 ways to guarantee you will die in your sins

Review

Lesson

I. Be Self-Righteous

²¹ Then Jesus said to them again, “I am going away, and you will seek Me, and will die in your sin. Where I go you cannot come.”

²² So the Jews said, “Will He kill Himself, because He says, ‘Where I go you cannot come’?”

²¹ Then Jesus said to them again, “I am going away, and you will seek Me, and will die in your sin. Where I go you cannot come.”

[Young's Literal Translation](#)

therefore said Jesus again to them, 'I go away, and ye will seek me, and in your sin ye shall die; whither I go away, ye are not able to come.'

“I am going away,

In large measure, Jesus in v. 21 repeats the thought of 7:33–34 (*cf.* notes), but is more threatening. Worse, he is no more understood this time than the last. By *I am going away* (*hypagō*) Jesus refers to his death, the means by which he ‘goes away’ to his Father.

you will seek Me

zéteó: to seek

Original Word: ζητέω

Part of Speech: Verb

Transliteration: zéteó

Phonetic Spelling: (dzay-teh'-o)

Short Definition: I seek, search for, desire

Definition: I seek, search for, desire, require, demand.

2212 zētéō – properly, to seek by *inquiring*; to investigate to reach a *binding* (*terminal*) resolution; to search, "getting to the bottom of a matter."

John 7:32–36

³² The Pharisees heard the crowd murmuring these things concerning Him, and the Pharisees and the chief priests sent officers to take Him. ³³ Then Jesus said to them, “**I shall be with you a little while longer, and *then* I go to Him who sent Me.** ³⁴ **You will seek Me and not find Me, and where I am you cannot come.”**

³⁵ Then the Jews said among themselves, “Where does He intend to go that we shall not find Him? Does He intend to go to the Dispersion among the Greeks and teach the Greeks? ³⁶ What is this thing that He said, ‘**You will seek Me and not find Me, and where I am you cannot come**’?”

“the search of despair” (Bernard), seeking for the Messiah when it is too late, the tragedy of Judaism today

Robertson, A. T. (1933). *Word Pictures in the New Testament* (Jn 8:21). Nashville, TN: Broadman Press.

In large measure, Jesus in v. 21 repeats the thought of 7:33–34 (*cf.* notes), but is more threatening. Worse, he is no more understood this time than the last. By *I am going away* (*hypagō*) Jesus refers to his death, the means by which he ‘goes away’ to his Father. It is unlikely John thinks the Jews will then seek Jesus personally. He knows perfectly well that most of the leadership were only too glad to see him go, and did their best to quell the persistent accounts of his resurrection. What is meant, rather, is that they will go on looking for the Messiah (which is why Jesus says *you will look for me*). If they do, they cannot possibly find him; they are chasing an ephemeral wisp, for they have rejected the only Messiah there is.

Carson, D. A. (1991). *The Gospel according to John* (p. 341). Leicester, England; Grand Rapids, MI: Inter-Varsity Press; W.B. Eerdmans.

in your sin- first in order of greek sentence

Note singular ἁμαρτία [*hamartiāi*] (sin) here, but plural ἁμαρτιαῖς [*hamartiais*] (sins) when the phrase is repeated in verse 24 (sin in its essence, sin in its acts).

Robertson, A. T. (1933). *Word Pictures in the New Testament* (Jn 8:21). Nashville, TN: Broadman Press.

They will die in their sin: the singular *sin* refers to the particular sin of unbelief, of rejecting Jesus and the revelation he is and brings

Carson, D. A. (1991). *The Gospel according to John* (pp. 341–342). Leicester, England; Grand Rapids, MI: Inter-Varsity Press; W.B. Eerdmans.

This is the the sin of Matt 12 The Blaspheme of the Holy Spirit.

The Sin of Hebrews 6

John 3:18 (NKJV)

¹⁸ “He who believes in Him is not condemned; but he who does not believe is condemned already, because he has not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God.

John 3:36–4:1 (NKJV)

³⁶ He who believes in the Son has everlasting life; and he who does not believe the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God abides on him.”

and will die

599 *apothnēskō* (from **575** /*apó*, "away from," which intensifies **2348** /*thnēskō*, "to die") – properly, die *off* (away from), focusing on the *separation* that goes with the "dying *off* (away from)."

Future middle indicative of ἀποθνήσκω [*apothnēskō*] which is the emphatic word here

Robertson, A. T. (1933). *Word Pictures in the New Testament* (Jn 8:21). Nashville, TN: Broadman Press.

In 8:21 Jesus had warned the self-righteous religious leaders that their unwillingness to believe in Him meant they would die in their sins. Unforgiven, unredeemed, and unprepared to meet God, they had accumulated a lifetime of culpability that would result in an eternity of punishment.

MacArthur, J. F., Jr. (2006). *John 1–11* (p. 343). Chicago: Moody Press.

Proverbs 14:32 (NKJV)

³² The wicked is banished in his wickedness,
But the righteous has a refuge in his death.

Where I go you cannot come.”

cannot

Tense: Present

Mood: Indicative

Voice: Middle or Passive

<p>1410 [e] dynasthe δύνασθ ε are able V-PIM/P-2P</p>
--

The reality of this sobering truth, which is repeated throughout Scripture, is that those who reject Christ will

suffer the consequences of their sin—eternal separation from God. By refusing the Light of the world, they doom themselves to the eternal darkness of hell

MacArthur, J. F., Jr. (2006). *John 1–11* (p. 339). Chicago: Moody Press.

Matthew 8:12 (NKJV)

¹² But the sons of the kingdom will be cast out into outer darkness. There will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.”

Matthew 22:13 (NKJV)

¹³ Then the king said to the servants, ‘Bind him hand and foot, take him away, and cast *him* into outer darkness; there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.’

Matthew 25:30 (NKJV)

³⁰ And cast the unprofitable servant into the outer darkness. There will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.’

²² So the Jews said, “Will He kill Himself, because He says, ‘Where I go you cannot come’?”

As in 7:34–35, they are unable to fathom what Jesus means by ‘going away’ (v. 21). There they wondered if he was contemplating a mission to the Gentiles; here they wonder if he is contemplating suicide (thought to be a dark sin by most Jewish scholars: *cf. Jos., Bel. iii. 375*) (375) while the souls of those whose hands have acted madly against themselves, are received by the darkest place in Hades

Josephus, F., & Whiston, W. (1987). *The works of Josephus: complete and unabridged* (p. 656). Peabody: Hendrickson.
Carson, D. A. (1991). *The Gospel according to John* (p. 342). Leicester, England; Grand Rapids, MI: Inter-Varsity Press; W.B. Eerdmans.

His opponents are wrong to think he will achieve his departure by killing himself; unwittingly they are nevertheless profoundly right, for he ‘goes away’ by voluntarily laying down his life (10:18), not in suicide but in submission to his Father’s will, in a violent death meted out by his enemies.

Carson, D. A. (1991). *The Gospel according to John* (p. 342). Leicester, England; Grand Rapids, MI: Inter-Varsity Press; W.B. Eerdmans.

Faced with Jesus’ startling pronouncement in verse 21, the response of **the Jews** (the leaders in particular are in view here) was to turn His sobering warning into a venomous joke. “**Surely He will not kill Himself, will He?**” they asked sarcastically. Ironically, those who were plotting to take His life asked if He intended to commit suicide. They understood that when He said, “**Where I am going, you cannot come,**” Jesus was speaking of His death. The Jews abhorred suicide, and believed that those who killed themselves went to the blackest part of hell. Reflecting this conventional belief, the first-century Jewish historian Josephus wrote, “The souls of those whose hands have acted madly against themselves are received by the darkest place in Hades” (*The Wars of the Jews*, iii. viii. 5). Since they assumed that they were going to heaven, the Jews mockingly suggested that Jesus must be speaking of killing Himself, in which case He would go to hell.

Smugly confident in their self-righteousness, they were not just deaf to Jesus’ words, but they mockingly, blasphemously twisted their meaning. It is true that Jesus,

though not committing suicide, would give up His life voluntarily. In John 10:17–18 He said,

“For this reason the Father loves Me, because I lay down My life so that I may take it again. No one has taken it away from Me, but I lay it down on My own initiative. I have authority to lay it down, and I have authority to take it up again. This commandment I received from My Father” (cf. 6:51; Matt. 20:28).

But He would not die by His own hand, but rather at the hands of those very men who now mocked Him (Acts 2:23). And the place to which He was referring—where He would go but they could not follow—was not hell, but heaven.

Self-righteousness is a deadly deception, and utterly contrary to genuine salvation.

The Judaism of Jesus’ day was an intricate legalistic system of salvation by human achievement. The people based their hope of salvation on performing good works, observing ceremonies and rituals, and, above all, keeping the Law (at least outwardly).

As the apostle Paul wrote,

(Rom. 10:3). “Not knowing about God’s righteousness and seeking to establish their own, they did not subject themselves to the righteousness of God”

Tragically, they failed to understand what Paul, who had been raised a zealous Pharisee (Acts 23:6; Gal. 1:13–14), later came to understand that

“by the works of the Law no flesh will be justified in [God’s] sight” (**Rom. 3:20**),

because to break the Law in one place, one time, is to be guilty of all (**James 2:10**).

Philippians 3:4–9 (NKJV)

⁴ though I also might have confidence in the flesh. If anyone else thinks he may have confidence in the flesh, I more so: ⁵ circumcised the eighth day, of the stock of Israel, *of* the tribe of Benjamin, a Hebrew of the Hebrews; concerning the law, a Pharisee; ⁶ concerning zeal, persecuting the church; concerning the righteousness which is in the law, blameless.

⁷ But what things were gain to me, these I have counted loss for Christ. ⁸ Yet indeed I also count all things loss for the excellence of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord, for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and count them as rubbish, that I may gain Christ ⁹ and be found in Him, not having my own righteousness, which *is* from the law, but that which *is* through faith in Christ, the righteousness which is from God by faith;

The truth that salvation cannot be attained through self-righteousness should have come as no surprise to anyone familiar with the Old Testament.

In **Psalm 14:2–3** David wrote,

“The Lord has looked down from heaven upon the sons of men to see if there are any who understand, who seek after God. They have all turned aside, together they have

become corrupt; there is no one who does good, not even one.”

(Prov. 16:2) “All the ways of a man are clean in his own sight,” Solomon noted, “but the Lord weighs the motives”
 , **while in 20:9 he added**, “Who can say, ‘I have cleansed my heart, I am pure from my sin’?”

Proverbs 30:12 warns, “There is a kind who is pure in his own eyes, yet is not washed from his filthiness.”

A few chapters later Isaiah expressed the utter inability of sinners to save themselves:

(Isa. 64:5–6 nkjv)

“We have sinned ... and we need to be saved. But we are all like an unclean thing, and all our righteousnesses are like filthy rags”.

The New Testament also teaches that no one can be saved by self-righteousness.

In Matthew 5:20 Jesus told His hearers,

“Unless your righteousness surpasses that of the scribes and Pharisees, you will not enter the kingdom of heaven.”

The Lord scathingly denounced the

Pharisees as those who “outwardly appear righteous to men, but inwardly ... are full of hypocrisy and lawlessness” (Matt. 23:28; cf. vv. 23, 25).

In **Matthew 9:11** the Pharisees demanded of Jesus’ disciples,

“Why is your Teacher eating with the tax collectors and sinners?” They did not approve of His interaction with the riffraff of Jewish society. The Lord’s devastating reply was, “It is not those who are healthy who need a physician, but those who are sick.

Jesus denounced the Pharisees as “those who justify [themselves] in the sight of men, but God knows [their] hearts; for that which is highly esteemed among men is detestable in the sight of God’ ” (Luke 16:15).

Later in Luke’s gospel Jesus
(Luke 18:9–14)

told this parable to some people who trusted in themselves that they were righteous, and viewed others with contempt: “Two men went up into the temple to pray, one a Pharisee and the other a tax collector. The Pharisee stood and was praying this to himself: ‘God, I thank You that I am not like other people: swindlers, unjust, adulterers, or even like this tax collector. I fast twice a week; I pay tithes of all that I get.’ But the tax collector, standing some distance away, was even unwilling to lift up his eyes to heaven, but was beating his breast, saying, ‘God, be merciful to me, the sinner!’ I tell you, this man went to his house justified rather than the other; for everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, but he who humbles himself will be exalted.”

MacArthur, J. F., Jr. (2006). *John 1–11* (p. 345). Chicago: Moody Press.

II. Love the World

²³ And He said to them, “You are from beneath; I AM from above. You are of this world; I AM not of this world.

Jesus refused to acknowledge the Jews’ mocking suggestion that He was going to commit suicide and thus condemn Himself to hell (cf. 1 Peter 2:23). Instead, He elaborated on His warning in verse 21 that they would die in their sin and not go where He was going (heaven). The Lord pointed out that their origin, like their destiny, was altogether different than His.

They were from a completely different realm; they were **from beneath**; that is, they were part of **this world**.

The source of the Jews’ antagonism and hostility to Christ was hell itself;

John 8:44–45 (NKJV)

⁴⁴ You are of your father the devil, and the desires of your father you want to do. He was a murderer from the beginning, and *does not* stand in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaks a lie, he speaks from his own *resources*, for he is a liar and the father of it. ⁴⁵ But because I tell the truth, you do not believe Me.

Ephesians 2:1–2 (NKJV)

² And you *He made alive*, who were dead in trespasses and sins, ² in which you once walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit who now works in the sons of disobedience,

23. You are of this world; I am not of this world.

You are ***of*** this world

ek or ex: from, from out of

Original Word: ἔκ, ἐξ

Part of Speech: Preposition

Transliteration: ek or ex

Phonetic Spelling: (ek)

Short Definition: from out, out from among, from

Definition: from out, out from among, from, suggesting from the interior outwards.

1537 *ek* (a preposition, written *eks* before a vowel) – properly, "out from and to" (the *outcome*); *out from within*. **1537** /*ek* ("out of") is one of the most under-translated (and therefore mis-translated) Greek propositions – often being confined to the meaning "by." **1537** (*ek*) has a two-layered meaning ("out from and to") which makes it *out-come* oriented (out of the depths of the source and extending to its impact on the object).

Matthew 2:6 (NKJV)

⁶ *‘But you, Bethlehem, in the land of Judah,
Are not the least among the rulers of Judah;
For ***out of*** you shall come a Ruler
Who will shepherd My people Israel.’ ”*

Matthew 10:29 (NKJV)

²⁹ **Are not two sparrows sold for a copper coin? And not one ***of*** them falls to the ground apart from your Father’s will.**

Kosmos (**world**) is an important New Testament term. It refers in this context to the invisible spiritual system of evil that opposes the kingdom of God, comprises “every lofty thing raised up against the knowledge of God” (2 Cor. 10:5),

and is controlled by Satan (John 12:31; 14:30; 16:11; 1 John 5:19).

1 John 5:19 (NKJV)

¹⁹ We know that we are of God, and the whole world lies *under the sway of the wicked one.*

John 14:30 (NKJV)

³⁰ *I will no longer talk much with you, for the ruler of this world is coming, and he has nothing in Me.*

The world does not recognize Jesus' true identity (1:10), or that of believers (1 John 3:1). It is also ignorant of the Holy Spirit whom Jesus sent (14:17).

Those engulfed in the world “[love] the darkness rather than the Light, for their deeds [are] evil” (John 3:19). As a result, they are utterly blind to spiritual truth (2 Cor. 4:4; cf. Matt. 13:11; John 12:39–40; Rom. 8:5; 1 Cor. 2:14)—having filled themselves with hatred toward Jesus (and His followers; John 15:18–19; 17:14; 1 John 3:13) for confronting their sin (John 7:7; 15:18). Because it hates God, the world rejoices in the death of His Son (16:20; cf. Matt. 21:37–39).

1 John 2:15–18 (NKJV)

¹⁵ Do not love the world or the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. ¹⁶ For all that *is* in the world—the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life—is not of the Father but is of the world. ¹⁷ And the world is passing away, and

the lust of it; but he who does the will of God abides forever.

James 4:4 (NKJV)

⁴ Adulterers and adulteresses! Do you not know that friendship with the world is enmity with God? Whoever therefore wants to be a friend of the world makes himself an enemy of God.

Materialism, liberalism humanism, alcoholism, pornography , prostitution, adultery, fornication, homosexuality abortion sorcery, drugs murder, deceitfulness, slothfulness gluttony lying, cheating, immorality, greed, jealousy, envy, anger, arrogance self righteousness legalism, religion, pride, and selfishness —“the lust of the flesh and the lust of the eyes and the boastful pride of life” (1 John 2:16)—are the world’s hallmarks. It is utterly opposed to divine truth, righteousness, virtue, and holiness.

- Its opinions are wrong;
- its aims are selfish;
- its pleasures are sinful;
- its influences are demoralizing;
- its politics are corrupt;
- its honors are empty;
- its smiles are phony;
- its love is false and fickle.

Though once “without God in the world” (Eph. 2:12), believers are no longer part of the world system (cf. Col. 1:13; 1 John 4:5–6).

“If you were of the world,” Jesus said to His disciples, “the world would love its own; but because you are not of the world, but I chose you out of the world, because of this the world hates you” (John 15:19).

They “are not of the world, even as [Jesus is] not of the world” (17:14, 16).

When they were redeemed, they “escaped the corruption that is in the world by lust” (2 Peter 1:4).

On the other hand, to be “worldly-minded” is to be “devoid of the Spirit” (Jude 19) and thus die in your sins and be consigned to hell

MacArthur, J. F., Jr. (2006). *John 1–11* (pp. 346–347). Chicago: Moody Press.

III. Be Unbelieving

²⁴ **Therefore I said to you that you will die in your sins; for if you do not believe that I am *He*, you will die in your sins.”**

Here Jesus went beyond the self-righteousness and worldliness that damns to the ultimate issue—unbelief. Repeating His warning from verse 21, Jesus declared that those who reject Him **will die in their sins** because they refuse to **believe that I am He**. The Lord’s use of the absolute, unqualified phrase **I am** (the pronoun **He** does not

appear in the Greek text) is nothing less than a direct claim to full deity.

When Moses asked God His name He replied, “I AM WHO I AM” (Ex. 3:14). In the Septuagint (the Greek translation of the Old Testament), that is the same phrase (*egō eimi*) Jesus used here (the Septuagint similarly uses *egō eimi* of God in Deut. 32:39; Isa. 41:4; 43:10, 25; 45:18; 46:4).

Jesus was applying to Himself the tetragrammaton (YHWH, often transliterated as Yahweh)—the name of God that was so sacred that the Jews refused to pronounce it.

Unlike many modern cult groups (such as the Jehovah’s Witnesses), the Jews of Jesus’ day understood perfectly that He was claiming to be God.

In fact, they were so shocked by His use of that name, in reference to Himself (cf. vv. 28, 58), that they attempted to stone Him for blasphemy (v. 59).

Unmistakably, the Lord Himself says that those who reject Him cannot be saved, but will **die in their sins**. To be a Christian one must believe the full biblical revelation about Jesus: that He is the eternal second person of the Trinity, that He entered space and time as God incarnate, that He was born of a virgin, that He lived a sinless life, that His death on the cross is the only sufficient, substitutionary sacrifice for the sins of all who would ever believe in Him, that He rose from the dead and ascended to the Father in heaven, that He now intercedes for His own redeemed people, and that He will one day return in glory.

The word **unless** introduces the only hope of escape from God’s wrath and judgment on sin. R. C. H. Lenski notes,

The sins of these men will destroy them by robbing them of life eternal only if they refuse to believe in Jesus. The “if” clause [in the kjv] is pure gospel, extending its blessed invitation anew. Yet it is again combined with the warning about dying in sins. This note of warning with its terrifying threat persists because these Jews had chosen the course of unbelief. Yet the “if” opens the door of life in the wall of sin. (*The Interpretation of St. John’s Gospel* [Reprint; Peabody, Mass.: Hendrickson, 1998], 614)

Persistent unwillingness to believe the truth about Jesus Christ, by its very nature, precludes the possibility of forgiveness, since salvation comes only through faith in Him (3:15–16, 36; 6:40, 47; Acts 16:31; Rom. 10:9–10; Gal. 3:26; 1 John 5:10–13). Those who continue in unbelief, refusing to embrace in faith all that Jesus is and has done, will die in their sins and be lost forever

MacArthur, J. F., Jr. (2006). *John 1–11* (pp. 348–349). Chicago: Moody Press.

Hebrews 2:1–3 (NKJV)

2 Therefore we must give the more earnest heed to the things we have heard, lest we drift away. ² For if the word spoken through angels proved steadfast, and every transgression and disobedience received a just reward, ³ how shall we escape if we neglect so great a salvation, which at the first began to be spoken by the Lord, and was confirmed to us by those who heard *Him*,

Hebrews 3:16–4:2 (NKJV)

¹⁶ For who, having heard, rebelled? Indeed, *was it* not all who came out of Egypt, *led* by Moses? ¹⁷ Now with whom was He angry forty years? *Was it* not with those who sinned, whose corpses fell in the wilderness? ¹⁸ And to whom did He swear that they would not enter His rest, but to those who did

not obey? ¹⁹ So we see that they could not enter in because of unbelief.

4 Therefore, since a promise remains of entering His rest, let us fear lest any of you seem to have come short of it. ² For indeed the gospel was preached to us as well as to them; but the word which they heard did not profit them, not being mixed with faith in those who heard *it*.

Hebrews 4:11 (NKJV)

1 John 5:9–10 (NKJV)

⁹ If we receive the witness of men, the witness of God is greater; for this is the witness of God which He has testified of His Son. ¹⁰ He who believes in the Son of God has the witness in himself; he who does not believe God has made Him a liar, because he has not believed the testimony that God has given of His Son.

2 Thessalonians 2:9–12 (NKJV)

⁹ The coming of the *lawless one* is according to the working of Satan, with all power, signs, and lying wonders, ¹⁰ and with all unrighteous deception among those who perish, because they did not receive the love of the truth, that they might be saved. ¹¹ And for this reason God will send them strong delusion, that they should believe the lie, ¹² that they all may be condemned who did not believe the truth but had pleasure in unrighteousness.

IV. Willfully Ignorant

²⁵ Then they said to Him, “Who are You?”

And Jesus said to them, “**Just what I have been saying to you from the beginning.**”

The jailer holding them captive in unbelief was their own obstinate ignorance. The Jews’ incredulous question, “**Who are You?**” was amazing in light of all the miraculous signs Jesus had performed (5:36; cf. Matt. 11:4–5)

John 5:36 (NKJV)

³⁶ **But I have a greater witness than John’s; for the works which the Father has given Me to finish—the very works that I do—bear witness of Me, that the Father has sent Me.**

Matthew 11:4–5 (NKJV)

⁴ Jesus answered and said to them, “**Go and tell John the things which you hear and see:** ⁵ *The blind see and the lame walk; the lepers are cleansed and the deaf hear; the dead are raised up and the poor have the gospel preached to them.*”

and the repeated claims He had already made (cf. 5:17ff.; 6:35ff.; 7:28–38; 8:12).

John 5:17–18

¹⁷ But Jesus answered them, “My Father has been working until now, and I have been working.”

¹⁸ Therefore the Jews sought all the more to kill Him, because He not only broke the Sabbath, but also said that God was His Father, making Himself equal with God.

John 7:28–31 (NKJV)

²⁸ 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.** ²⁹ **But I know Him, for I am from Him, and He sent Me.**”

³⁰ Therefore they sought to take Him; but no one laid a hand on Him, because His hour had not yet come. ³¹ And many of the people believed in Him, and said, “When the Christ comes, will He do more signs than these which this *Man* has done?”

There may have been an undercurrent of more mockery in the question; they may have been, in effect, sarcastically asking a rhetorical question: “Who are You to tell us we are going to die in our sins?” But the query in any case reflects their stubborn, willful ignorance (cf. Matt. 15:14; 23:16–26).

The overwhelming evidence made it patently obvious who Jesus was, so He merely replied that He was who He had been claiming to be **from the beginning** of His ministry. He had nothing more to say to the willful ignorance of hard-hearted unbelief.

MacArthur, J. F., Jr. (2006). *John 1–11* (pp. 349–350). Chicago: Moody Press.

Romans 1:18 (NKJV)

¹⁸ For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who suppress the truth in unrighteousness,

Romans 1:28 (NKJV)

²⁸ And even as they did not like to retain God in *their* knowledge, God gave them over to a debased mind, to do those things which are not fitting;

Hebrews 12:25 (NKJV)

²⁵ See that you do not refuse Him who speaks. For if they did not escape who refused Him who spoke on earth, much more *shall we not escape* if we turn away from Him who *speaks* from heaven,