

John 1:11 Commentary

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JESUS' RISE FROM OBSCURITY FOLLOWED BY OPPOSITION IN JOHN'S GOSPEL

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THE LIFE OF JESUS AS COVERED BY GOSPEL OF JOHN (shaded area)

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John 1:11 He came to His own, and those who were His own did not receive Him eis to idia elthen (3SAAI), kai hoi idioi auton ou patelabon (3PAAI) ([NASB: Lockman](#))

- **came:** Mt 15:24 Acts 3:25,26 Acts 13:26 Acts 13:46 Ro 9:1,5 Ro 15:8 Gal 4:4
- **and:** John 3:32 Isa 53:2,3 Lk 19:14 Lk 20:13-15 Acts 7:51,52
- [John 1:11 Ingratitude of Man](#) C H Spurgeon
- [John 1:11-13: The Preacher's Last Sermon for the Season](#) C H Spurgeon
- [John 1:11-13: The Simplicity and Sublimity of Salvation](#) C H Spurgeon
- [John 1:11-13 Faith and Its Attendant Privileges](#) C H Spurgeon
- [John 1:11 Multiple Older Commentaries on this verse](#)

Barclay - It was into his own home that he came, and yet his own people did not welcome him.

KJV John 1:11 He came unto his own, and his own received him not.

NET John 1:11 He came to what was his own, but his own people did not receive him.

ASV John 1:11 He came unto his own, and they that were his own received him not.

BBE John 1:11 He came to the things which were his and his people did not take him to their hearts.

CJB John 1:11 He came to his own homeland, yet his own people did not receive him.

CSB John 1:11 He came to His own, and His own people did not receive Him.

DBY John 1:11 He came to his own, and his own received him not;

ESV John 1:11 He came to his own, and his own people did not receive him.

NAS John 1:11 He came to His own, and those who were His own did not receive Him.

NIV John 1:11 He came to that which was his own, but his own did not receive him.

NLT John 1:11 He came to his own people, and even they rejected him.

GWN John 1:11 He went to his own people, and his own people didn't accept him.

NAB John 1:11 He came to what was his own, but his own people did not accept him.

NJB John 1:11 He came to his own and his own people did not accept him.

NKJ John 1:11 He came to His own, and His own did not receive Him.

NRS John 1:11 He came to what was his own, and his own people did not accept him.

RSV John 1:11 He came to his own home, and his own people received him not.

TNT John 1:11 He cam amonge his (awne) and his awne receaved him not.

WEB John 1:11 He came to his own, and his own received him not.

YLT John 1:11 to his own things he came, and his own people did not receive him;

TRUE LIGHT REVEALED AND REJECTED BY HIS OWN PEOPLE

He came to His own (Greek = idia = neuter)... **His own** (Greek = idioi = masculine) - The first **His own** = His own creation. His own home. His own historical land (Israel). The second **His own** = His own family. His own people. This is phenomenal -- the Creator came to His own planet, the one He had created and the people of that planet could not and would not recognize and acknowledge Jesus because of their spiritual blindness! If your eyes are opened to spiritual truth dear reader, then stop and praise God that His Spirit swept into your heart and wrought a "spiritual circumcision" of your calloused, blind heart inherited from Adam (cf Ro 5:12).

Constable - The specific people whom Jesus visited in the Incarnation were the Jews. They were His own in a double sense. He had not only created them but also bought them for Himself out from the nations. Jesus had created the earth as a house, but when He visited it He found it inhabited by people who refused to acknowledge Him for who He was. In the Incarnation Jesus did not come as an alien; He came home.

This has been called one of the saddest verses in all of Scripture. The Logos went to the Jews lost in sin and there was no "welcome mat" put out for Him, the nation as a whole rejecting His claim as their long expected Messiah! But this rejection did not come as a shock to God or His Son, for over 200 years earlier His prophet Isaiah had asked rhetorically "**Who has believed our message?**" (Isaiah 53:1) As **John MacArthur** observes Isaiah's "question implied that, in spite of these (**Ed**: The great prophecy of the Suffering Servant = Isaiah 53:1-12) and other prophecies, only a few (**Ed**: of the nation of Israel, the **remnant**) would recognize the Servant when He appeared. This anticipation found literal fulfillment at Christ's first advent. Israel did not welcome Him at His first advent (Jn 1:9-11; Jn 12:38). Paul applied the same prophecy to the world at large - "However, they did not all heed the glad tidings; for Isaiah says, "**LORD, WHO HAS BELIEVED OUR REPORT?**" (Ro 10:16-note)."

John used Isaiah's prophecy later in his Gospel commenting...

"But though He had performed so many signs before them, yet **they were not believing in Him**; that the word of Isaiah the prophet might be fulfilled, which he spoke, "**LORD, WHO HAS BELIEVED OUR REPORT? AND TO WHOM HAS THE ARM OF THE LORD BEEN REVEALED?**" (Jn 12:37-38) (**Ed**: The Greek word for "report" is interesting. It is **akoe** which is a noun meaning that by which one perceives sounds and thus is the sound or the thing which is heard, in the context of Jn 12:38 and Romans 10:16, referring to the proclamation of the Gospel which they heard! They are without excuse!)

And again the prophets cry out against the intractable unbelief of God's chosen people (excepting of course the **believing remnant of Israel**)...

Isaiah 65:2; 3 "I have spread out My hands all day long to a rebellious people (Israel), who walk in the way which is not good, following their own thoughts, A people who continually provoke Me to My face, Offering sacrifices in gardens and burning incense on bricks;

Jeremiah 7:25 "Since the day that your fathers came out of the land of Egypt until this day, I have sent you all My servants the prophets, daily rising early and sending them.

John Phillips - The apostle John now recalls the ministry of John the Baptist and marvels at the speed with which Israel's rejection of the announced messiah developed. It will be one of his major concerns in this gospel to show belief and unbelief developing side by side. His prologue gives us an initial glimpse of this. ([Exploring the Gospel of John](#))

Spurgeon - That favored circle, the Jewish nation, where revelation had been given, even there, there was no place for him. He must be despised and rejected even by his own nation.

He came - This clearly speaks of **Jesus' incarnation** which is described more fully in John 1:14.

Westcott says "The Incarnation is regarded in the two places (Jn 1:11, 14) under different aspects. Here it is regarded in relation to the whole scheme of Redemption, as the crowning revelation to the ancient people of God; in Jn 1:14, it is regarded in its distinctive character as affecting humanity. Here it is seen from the side of national failure, there of individual faith." ([The Gospel According to St John](#))

Vincent on He came - The narrative now passes from the general to the special action of the Word as the Light. The verb **came**, in the **aorist tense**, denotes a definite act—the Incarnation. In Jn 1:10 the Word is described as in the world **invisibly**. Now He

appears.

HIS OWN: HE CAME HOME!

Vincent on the first use of the phrase **His own** - The reference is to the land of Israel, which is recognized as God's own in a peculiar sense. See Jer. 2:7; Hosea 9:3; Zech. 2:12; Deut. 7:6. Not a repetition of Jn 1:10. There is a progress in the narrative. He was in the world at large: then He came unto His own home.

Leon Morris echoes Vincent remarking that "We might translate the opening words, '*He came home*'. It is the exact expression used of the beloved disciple when, in response to Jesus' word from the cross, he took Mary '*unto his own home*' (John 19:27; cf. Jn 16:32). When the Word came to this world He did not come as an alien. *He came home*."

Spurgeon - To those who were chosen as "his own" out of all the nations upon the earth, to those to whom he was specially promised of old, to the descendants of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, — to these Jesus came, yet they "received him not."

Westcott says **to His own** conveys the sense of "'to His own home". Compare Jn 16:32, 19:27; Acts 21:6. There can be no reasonable doubt that this phrase, and the corresponding masculine which follows, "**his own**" i.e. "**his own people**," describe the land and the people of Israel as being, in a sense in which no other land and people were, the *home* and the *family* of GOD, of Jehovah. "The holy land" (Zech. 2:12) was "the LORD'S land" (Hos. 9:3; Jer. 2:7, 16:18. Cp. Lev. 25:23); and Israel was His portion (Ex 19:5; Dt. 7:6, 14:2, 26:18, 32:9; Ps. 135:4). ([Ibid](#))

Pulpit Commentary has some interesting thoughts on **He came unto his own possession**. Here all expositors agree to see the special manifestation of the Logos to the house of Israel, which is called in numerous passages of the Old Testament, God's own possession (Ex 19:5; Dt 7:6; Ps 135:4)... the significance of the prologue is to my mind missed, if the earlier age long rejection of the ministry, and light of the Logos... There was a Divine and special sense in which the perpetual coming of the Logos to the world was emphasized by His gracious self-manifestations to the people of Israel. The great Name of Jehovah, the Angel of the presence (**Angel of the LORD**), the manifestations to Abraham, to Moses, to David, to Elijah, to Isaiah, and Ezekiel; the **Shekinah** glories, the whole ministry of grace to the house of Israel, was a **perpetual coming to his own peculiar possession**; but yet the sum total of their history is a continuous repudiation and lapse. They rejected the Lord, they fell in the wilderness, they were turned unto other gods, they went a-whoring after their own inventions. They knew not that God had healed them. The great things of his Law were accounted strange things to them."

Bob Utley on **His own... His own** - "**His own**" is used twice in Jn 1:11. The first grammatical form is NEUTER PLURAL and refers to (1) all creation or (2) geographically to Judea or Jerusalem. The second is MASCULINE PLURAL and refers to the Jewish people.

John Piper does not interpret **came to His own** as Jesus coming first to His own people, the Jews but writes that "He came to what belongs to Him by right of creation. He came to His own possession, His own domain, the house of humanity that He had built for a dwelling place."

REJECTED INSTEAD OF RECEIVED

God's chosen people have a long sad history of **not choosing Him**! Some 250 years earlier Isaiah recorded Jehovah's lament...

Listen, O heavens, and hear, O earth; For the LORD speaks, "Sons I have reared and brought up, But they have revolted against Me. "An ox knows its owner, And a donkey its master's manger, But Israel does (absolutely does) not **know** (**Septuagint-Lxx = ginosko**), My people do not understand (**Lxx = sunistemi/sunistao**). (Isaiah 1:2-3-note)

Timothy Keller on the **world did not know Him** (Jn 1:10) and **His own did not receive Him** - Who are those two groups? The **world** means the Gentiles. The **world** means all of the different people of different religions. But who are **His own**? It's **His own** religious community. It's the people who believe the Bible. It's the people who believe the Ten Commandments. It's the people who are very good, who pray to the God of Abraham and Isaac and Jacob. What is John saying about these two groups of people? They all miss Jesus. They all equally miss Jesus. There is no difference. Here are the people with the true religion (**His own**), and here are the people with other religions or no religion (**the world**), and they all missed him. This is something the Bible says over and over and over. As Paul puts it in Romans 3:23, "There is no difference. For all have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God."

Phillip Brooks - "These words, 'He came unto His own, and His own received Him not,' are an assertion of the awful ultimateness of the power of free will in man. Behind everything else that settles a man's destiny there lies the power of his own decision whether all that is done upon him and done for him shall be effectual or not. How absolute and terrible that power is! Not even God's coming to a soul that belongs to God is so necessarily powerful that the man may not resist and in his obstinacy turn away."

His own did not receive Him - Jesus born a Jew was not received by the Jews. Think about this for a moment. Had not God through the Old Testament prepared the Jews to receive the **Messiah** by repeatedly giving them prophetic pictures (by some estimates over 300 prophecies) by which they would be able to clearly identify Him? So why did they not recognize and receive **Jesus** as the **Messiah**? The **heart** of the issue is always the **heart**, is it not! Stephen, "a man full of faith and the Holy Spirit" and "full of grace and power" (Acts 6:5,8) gave the answer as to why the Jews **did not receive Him** illustrating the nation's **history of unbelief** -

"You men (addressing the Jewish Council, Greek [sunedrion/synedrion](#) = [Jewish Sanhedrin](#) = Acts 6:9-15) who are stiff-necked ([sklerotrachelos](#) from **skleros** = hard + *trachelos* = the neck) and uncircumcised ([aperitmetos](#)) in heart (cf Lev 26:41, Dt 10:16, 30:6, Jer 4:4, 6:10, 9:25-26, Ro 2:25-note, Ro 2:28, 29-note) and ears are always resisting ([antipipto](#) from *anti* = against + *pipto* = to fall - rush against in hostile manner in the present tense = continually resisting) the Holy Spirit (Note the implication that the Spirit is continually seeking to penetrate hard hearts! Amazing grace!); you are doing just as your fathers did (Neh 9:30, Isa 61:10, cp Acts 6:10). Which one of the prophets did your fathers not persecute? And **they killed those who had previously announced the coming of the Righteous One** (Messianic Prophecies) Whose betrayers and murderers you have now become; you who received (*lambano*) the law as ordained by angels, and yet did not keep ([phulasso](#)) it." (Acts 7:51-53)

And what was the response of the Jewish Council to Stephen's presentation of the Light? "Now when they heard this, they were cut to the quick, and they began gnashing their teeth at him." (Acts 7:54) And of course ultimately they stoned him to death! (Acts 7:55-60).

Did not receive Him - They did not receive Him with favor or a favorable reception. They did not welcome Him. In a word they did not believe in Him. Compare Jn 1:12 where to **received** Him parallels **believe** in Him. Salvation is free (albeit costly to God) and is a gift but like any gift (if it is truly a gift), it **MUST** be received! They should have put out the welcome mat for Jesus, but instead in effect slammed the door in His face! John says the world did not **know** Him, but that His own did not **receive** Him!

Recall that rejection of Yeshua by His own people, the Jews, despite having shown them many convincing signs of His messiahship is a major subject in the first half of the Gospel, John recording that "though He had performed so many signs before them, **YET** they were not believing in Him." (Jn 12:37)

John MacArthur makes the interesting observation commenting on John 1:12-13 noting that "These verses stand in contrast to Jn 1:10, 11. John softens the sweeping **rejection** of Messiah by stressing a believing **remnant**. This previews the book since the first 12 chapters stress the rejection of Christ, while John 13-21 focus on the believing remnant who received Him." (([MacArthur Study Bible](#))).)

Vine says **paralambano** is "a strong word, "did not give Him a welcome."

F B Meyer - This is a note which we shall hear again; but in the meanwhile, the word seems carefully chosen to suggest that it was not a case of ignorance, but of willfulness. They knew, or might have known, who He was; but they deliberately refused to enquire into his credentials, and they shut the door resolutely in His face.

Boice writes that "When the Lord Jesus Christ came he was received with the same contempt and disdain. Thus, toward the end of his ministry but before his crucifixion he summed up their reaction in the parable of the landowner and his vineyard (Read Matthew 21:33-43)." Later we read that when "the chief priests and Pharisees heard Jesus' parables, they knew he was talking about them" (Mt 23:45). In this parable God himself is the householder. The earth is the vineyard. The people of Israel are the tenant farmers. The prophets are the servants who came with the Lord's message and were beaten, stoned, and murdered. The son is the Lord Jesus Christ. The murder of the son is Christ's crucifixion. The casting out of the wicked servants is the replacement of Israel as a special people by the Church in this age of Gentile blessing. Clearly this is a picture in the Lord's own language of the truths preserved for us in John's prologue. ([Gospel of John, James Montgomery Boice](#))

Receive ([3880](#))(**paralambano** from **para** = beside + **lambano** = appropriate, receive) means to receive from another, to receive alongside or to take to oneself (into close association). There are two basic ideas - to take or to receive. In Jn 1:12 he uses **lambano** instead of **paralambano**. **Westcott** explains that this change of verbs "suggests in this connection the notion of "receiving that which has been handed down by another" (*paralambano*), as distinct from that of "taking." (*lambano*) The divine teachers of Israel, through John their representative, "offered" Christ to the people as Him Whom the Lord had promised; and the leaders of the people refused to acknowledge Him as their King."

Did not receive uses the negative particle (*ou*) indicating absolute negation (they absolutely did not receive Him)! The **aorist tense** marks this rejection as a historical event. The **active voice** indicates that this was their volitional choice! They made a specific choice to not recognize or acknowledge Jesus!

(Acts 13:46) And Paul and Barnabas spoke out boldly and said, "It was necessary that the word of God should be spoken to you

first; since you repudiate it, and judge yourselves unworthy of eternal life, behold, we are turning to the Gentiles.

Steven Cole - Then John heightens the irony of the world not knowing Jesus (Jn 1:11): "He came to His own, and those who were His own did not receive Him." There is a word play in Greek: the first "**His own**" is neuter and refers to "*His own property or home*." The second "**His own**" is masculine and refers to His fellow Jews, the people of Israel. The two phrases both may refer to Israel, with the first emphasizing that Israel belongs to the Lord as His inheritance (Ps. 78:71), and the second emphasizing that they were His own kinsmen. They should have recognized Jesus as their promised **Messiah**, (See also [Josh McDowell's classic "More Than A Carpenter"](#)) prophesied of in their Scriptures. But He wasn't the kind of Messiah that they envisioned or wanted. They were hoping for a political Messiah who would deliver them from Rome's power and provide peace and prosperity. They didn't see their need for a Savior from sin. And so they rejected the true Light who *made* them and who rightfully *owned* them. There are two applications for us: First, make sure that you're not rejecting the true Light in spite of the solid testimony that He is the eternal Word in human flesh. It's easy to be disappointed with Jesus because He didn't give you quick relief from all your problems. It's a short step from there to turning your back on Him altogether. Second, don't be surprised when people do not respond positively to your witness for Christ. People still love the darkness because their deeds are evil. (Jn 3:19-20) ([John 1:6-13 God's Witness, Your Verdict](#))

Vincent on **paralambano** - Most commonly in the New Testament of taking one along with another. See on Matt. 4:5; 17:1; Acts 16:33. But also of accepting or acknowledging one to be what he professes to be, and of receiving something transmitted, as 1 Cor. 11:23; Gal. 1:12, etc. Westcott thinks this latter sense is implied here; Christ having been offered by the teachers of Israel through John. Alford adopts the former sense; "expressing the personal assumption to one's self as a friend or companion." De Wette explains to receive into the house. Godet strains a point by explaining as welcomed. De Wette's explanation seems to agree best with his own home. Here again compare the nice choice of verbs: apprehended (*katalambano*) the Light as a principle, and received (*paralambano*) the Light as a person and the Master of the house.

Richards - The human race did not seek out a family relationship with God. The reaching out was God's, and His alone. In spite of mankind's failure, God drew men and women to Himself and lifted them up, adopting them as His children and heirs. In this act of pure grace, a glorious light bursts into history. In Jesus Christ, the eternal Word, we discover that God's ultimate morality is one of love and of grace. (The Teacher's Commentary)

Kostenberger - As in Jn 3:19, the light was not received but rejected, resulting in judgment (cf. Jn 9:39; 12:46-47) [John Baker Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament](#)

A W Pink - The world is charged with ignorance, but Israel with unbelief, yea, with a positive refusal of Him. Instead of welcoming the Heavenly Visitant, they drove Him from their door, and even banished Him from the earth. Who would have supposed that a people whose believing ancestors had been eagerly awaiting the appearance of the Messiah for long ages past, would have rejected Him when He came among them! Yet so it was: and should any ask, How could these things be? we answer, This very thing was expressly foretold by their own prophet, that He should possess neither form nor comeliness in their eyes, and when they should see Him there would be no beauty that they should desire Him. Ah! would it have been any wonder if He had turned away from such ingrates in disgust! What blessed subjection to the Father's will, and what wondrous love for sinners, that He remained on earth in order that He might later die the death of the Cross! But if the world "knew him not," and Israel "received him not," was the purpose of God defeated? No, indeed, for that could not be. The counsel of the Lord "shall stand": (Pr 19:21).

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Always Accepted - He came to His own, and His own did not receive Him. —John 1:11

Financial expert Warren Buffet, one of the richest people in the world, was rejected by Harvard's Business School at age 19. After a failed admissions interview, he recalls a "feeling of dread," along with concern over his father's reaction to the news. In retrospect, Buffet says, "[Everything] in my life ... that I thought was a crushing event at the time has turned out for the better."

Rejection, though undeniably painful, does not have to hold us back from accomplishing what God wants us to do. The citizens of Jesus' hometown denied that He was the Messiah (John 1:11), and many of His followers later rejected Him (6:66). Just as Jesus' rejection was part of God's plan for His Son (Isa. 53:3), so was Jesus' continued ministry. Enduring earthly rejection and knowing that the Father would turn away from Him at Calvary (Matt. 27:46), Jesus went on to cure the sick, cast out demons, and preach good news to the masses. Before His crucifixion, Jesus said, "[Father], I have finished the work which You have given Me to do" (John 17:4).

If rejection has become a hindrance to the work God has given you to do, don't give up. Remember that Jesus understands, and those who come to Him will always be accepted by Him (Jn 6:37).

No one understands like Jesus.

They Didn't Let Him In - It's been over 60 years since I read the poem The Death of the Hired Man. I still recall these lines: "Home is the place where, when you have to go there, they have to take you in."

Those words are deeply etched in my memory, I believe, because my parents and brothers expressed that kind of love for me. I knew that my own family would warmly receive me whenever I came home.

In sharp contrast to my experience, Jesus "came to His own, and His own did not receive Him" (Jn. 1:11). He was rejected by the ones who should have accepted Him.

He was the one who created them (Jn. 1:3), yet He gave up heaven's glory to be born a human being. He came to His own people to be their Savior and King. He reached out to them and gave them every reason to love Him. But they turned Him away and crucified Him.

That was not the end, however. Even Jesus' death on the cross was an expression of His love. He died to pay the penalty for our sin, and His resurrection guarantees that all who believe in Him will be victorious over death and enjoy eternity in His presence.

Jesus is still reaching out and seeking those who will accept Him into their hearts. Have you let Him in?

Oh, receive Him today who so loved you
That He died on the cross for your sin;
Oh, believe Him and open your heart's door,
Let the Savior who loves you come in.
—Anon.

**Jesus gave His life for us
so we could have His life in us.**

[John 1:10 Commentary](#) <> [John 1:12 Commentary](#)