

John 13:19

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Now I tell you before it come, that, when it is come to pass, ye may believe that I am he.

Analysis

Now I tell you before it come (ἀπ' ἄρτι, ap' arti; πρὶν γενέσθαι, prin genesthai)—Jesus prophesies Judas' betrayal (v. 21) before its occurrence. Predictive prophecy authenticates His deity. **That, when it is come to pass, ye may believe** (πιστεύετε, pisteuēte)—fulfilled prophecy strengthens faith. The purpose clause reveals Jesus' pastoral care: He forewarns to prevent the disciples' faith from collapsing when betrayal occurs.

That I am he (ὅτι ἐγώ εἰμι, hoti egō eimi)—the KJV adds "he," but Greek simply reads "that I AM." This is the divine name from Exodus 3:14 that Jesus repeatedly claims (John 8:24, 28, 58; 18:5-6). Fulfilled prophecy proves Jesus is Yahweh incarnate. The betrayal won't negate His deity but confirm it—He foreknew and permitted it as part of redemptive plan. This echoes Isaiah 41:23, 44:6-8 where Yahweh's ability to predict the future proves His deity against false gods.

Historical Context

Written AD 85-95, John addresses second-generation Christians troubled by Jesus' apparent vulnerability to betrayal. How could deity be betrayed? John shows Jesus predicted and controlled events. Ancient readers familiar with Isaiah's prophecy-fulfillment test for deity would recognize Jesus' claim. The "I AM" formula explicitly identifies Jesus with Yahweh.

Related Passages

Matthew 25:31 — Final judgment

Romans 2:1 — Judging others

Study Questions

1. How does Jesus' foreknowledge of betrayal demonstrate His sovereignty over apparent defeat?
2. What does fulfilled prophecy reveal about Christ's identity as the eternal "I AM"?

Interlinear Text

ἀπ'	ἄρτι	λέγω	ὑμῖν	πρὸ	τοῦ	γένηται	ἵνα	ὅταν
Now	^{G737}	I tell	you	before	^{G3588}	it come	that	when
G575		G3004	G5213	G4253		G1096	G2443	G3752

γένηται	πιστεύσητε	ὅτι	ἐγώ	εἰμι
it come	ye may believe	that	I	am
G1096	G4100	G3754	G1473	G1510

Additional Cross-References

Isaiah 43:10 (Faith): Ye are my witnesses, saith the LORD, and my servant whom I have chosen: that ye may know and believe me, and understand that I am he: before me there was no God formed, neither shall there be after me.

John 14:29 (Faith): And now I have told you before it come to pass, that, when it is come to pass, ye might believe.

John 16:4 (Parallel theme): But these things have I told you, that when the time shall come, ye may remember that I told you of them. And these things I said not unto you at the beginning, because I was with you.

Malachi 3:1 (Parallel theme): Behold, I will send my messenger, and he shall prepare the way before me: and the Lord, whom ye seek, shall suddenly come to his temple, even the messenger of the covenant, whom ye delight in: behold, he shall come, saith the LORD of hosts.

Isaiah 48:5 (Parallel theme): I have even from the beginning declared it to thee; before it came to pass I shewed it thee: lest thou shouldest say, Mine idol hath done them, and my graven image, and my molten image, hath commanded them.

Matthew 11:3 (Parallel theme): And said unto him, Art thou he that should come, or do we look for another?

Matthew 24:25 (Parallel theme): Behold, I have told you before.

John 8:58 (Parallel theme): Jesus said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Before Abraham was, I am.