

Luke 10:12

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

But I say unto you, that it shall be more tolerable in that day for Sodom, than for that city.

Analysis

But I say unto you, that it shall be more tolerable in that day for Sodom, than for that city. The phrase *legō hymin* (λέγω ὑμῖν, "I say unto you") introduces Jesus' authoritative declaration. The comparison to Sodom (*Sodomois*, Σοδόμοις) is shocking—Sodom epitomized wickedness and experienced fiery judgment from heaven (Genesis 19). Yet Jesus declares rejecting His messengers brings greater condemnation than Sodom's sexual immorality and violent sin.

The phrase **more tolerable in that day** (*anektoteron estai en tē hēmera ekeinē, ἀνεκτότερον ἔσται ἐν τῇ ἡμέρᾳ ἐκείνῃ*) refers to the day of judgment—the final reckoning when Christ returns. The comparative adjective *anektoteron* (ἀνεκτότερον, "more tolerable") indicates degrees of punishment. This contradicts universalist theology claiming all judgment is identical or that all eventually saved.

The principle is clear: **greater revelation brings greater responsibility.** Sodom never heard the gospel or witnessed Christ's power. Cities that reject Jesus after seeing miracles and hearing the kingdom proclaimed face severer judgment. This echoes Hebrews 10:29: those who spurn the Son of God and treat covenant blood as common deserve worse punishment than Law-breakers. Knowledge increases accountability (Luke 12:47-48; James 3:1).

Historical Context

Sodom's destruction was proverbial in Jewish thought, representing ultimate divine judgment. Genesis 19 records God raining fire and brimstone on Sodom and Gomorrah for their wickedness. Ezekiel 16:49-50 details Sodom's sins: pride, excess, indifference to the poor, and abominations. Yet Jesus declares that Galilean cities like Chorazin, Bethsaida, and Capernaum—which witnessed His teaching and miracles but refused to repent—face worse judgment. This reveals how seriously God regards rejection of the gospel and despising of grace.

Related Passages

1 John 4:8 — God is love

1 Corinthians 13:4 — Characteristics of love

Psalm 19:1 — Heavens declare God's glory

Colossians 1:16 — All things created through Christ

Study Questions

1. What does the comparison to Sodom teach about degrees of punishment in final judgment?
2. How does greater revelation of gospel truth increase accountability and potential condemnation?
3. Why is rejecting Jesus' messengers worse than Sodom's gross immorality, and what does this reveal about the seriousness of unbelief?

Interlinear Text

λέγω δὲ ὑμῖν ὅτι Σοδόμοις ἐν τῇ ἡμέρᾳ ἐκείνῃ

I say But unto you that for Sodom in G3588 day for that

G3004

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G3754

G4670

G1722

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G2250

G1565

ἀνεκτότερον ἔσται ἢ τῇ πόλει ἐκείνῃ

more tolerable it shall be than city for that

G414

G2071

G2228

G3588

G4172

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Additional Cross-References

Matthew 10:15 (Parallel theme): Verily I say unto you, It shall be more tolerable for the land of Sodom and Gomorrha in the day of judgment, than for that city.

Matthew 11:24 (Parallel theme): But I say unto you, That it shall be more tolerable for the land of Sodom in the day of judgment, than for thee.

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