

Luke 10:15

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And thou, Capernaum, which art exalted to heaven, shalt be thrust down to hell.

Analysis

And thou, Capernaum, which art exalted to heaven, shalt be thrust down to hell. Jesus singles out Capernaum, His ministry headquarters (Matthew 4:13, 9:1). The phrase *kai sy, Kapharnaoum, mē heōs ouranou hypsōthēsē* (καὶ σύ, Καφαρναούμ, μὴ ἔως οὐρανοῦ ὑψωθήσῃ; "And you, Capernaum, will you be exalted to heaven?") uses a rhetorical question with the negative particle *mē* (μή) expecting the answer "No!" Some manuscripts read this as a statement rather than question: "which art exalted to heaven."

Either reading communicates Capernaum's privileged position—the city where Jesus lived, taught in the synagogue (Mark 1:21, John 6:59), healed the centurion's servant (Matthew 8:5-13), Peter's mother-in-law (Mark 1:29-31), the瘫痪者 lowered through the roof (Mark 2:1-12), and performed countless miracles. No city on earth enjoyed greater spiritual privilege. Yet this becomes the basis for severer judgment: **shalt be thrust down to hell** (*heōs hadou katabibasthēsē, ἔως ἄδου καταβιβασθήσῃ*).

The term *hadēs* (ἄδης) is the Greek equivalent of Hebrew Sheol—the realm of the dead, here clearly indicating the place of punishment. The verb *katabibasthēsē* (καταβιβασθήσῃ) means to be brought down forcibly, cast down. This echoes Isaiah 14:13-15's description of Babylon's (or Satan's) fall: "How art thou fallen from heaven... yet thou shalt be brought down to hell." Privilege rejected becomes the measure of judgment.

Historical Context

Capernaum was a thriving fishing village on the Sea of Galilee's northwest shore, a customs station and commercial hub. Jesus made it His base of operations during His Galilean ministry. The synagogue where Jesus taught has been excavated. Despite witnessing more miracles and hearing more teaching than any other city, Capernaum corporately rejected Jesus as Messiah. By the fourth century, the city was abandoned ruins—a literal fulfillment of being 'brought down.' Archaeologists have found the remains buried beneath later structures, testimony to judgment realized.

Related Passages

Matthew 25:31 — Final judgment

Romans 2:1 — Judging others

Study Questions

1. How does Capernaum's privileged position as Jesus' headquarters intensify the severity of their judgment for unbelief?
2. What does the prophetic description of being 'thrust down to hell' teach about the reality and justice of divine judgment?
3. How should those raised in Christian homes or gospel-preaching churches apply this warning about privilege increasing accountability?

Interlinear Text

καὶ σύ Καπερναούμ, τοῦ ἔως τοῦ οὐρανοῦ ὑψωθεῖσα,

And thou Capernaum which to which heaven art exalted

G2532 G4771

G2584

G3588

G2193

G3588

G3772

G5312

ἔως ἄδου καταβιβασθήσῃ

to hell shalt be thrust down

G2193

G86

G2601

Additional Cross-References

Matthew 4:13 (Parallel theme): And leaving Nazareth, he came and dwelt in Capernaum, which is upon the sea coast, in the borders of Zabulon and Nephthalim:

2 Peter 2:4 (Parallel theme): For if God spared not the angels that sinned, but cast them down to hell, and delivered them into chains of darkness, to be reserved unto judgment;

Matthew 11:23 (Parallel theme): And thou, Capernaum, which art exalted unto heaven, shalt be brought down to hell: for if the mighty works, which have been done in thee, had been done in Sodom, it would have remained until this day.

Luke 13:28 (Parallel theme): There shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth, when ye shall see Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, and all the prophets, in the kingdom of God, and you yourselves thrust out.

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