

Luke 13:3

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

I tell you, Nay: but, except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish.

Analysis

Jesus issues a stark warning: 'Nay, I tell you: but, except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish' (οὐχί, λέγω ὑμῖν, ἀλλ' ἐὰν μὴ μετανοῆτε, πάντες ὄμοίως ἀπολεῖσθε). The emphatic 'Nay' (οὐχί, ouchi) rejects their thinking. 'Except ye repent' (ἐὰν μὴ μετανοῆτε, ean mē metanoēte) uses the aorist subjunctive, indicating a decisive act of repentance, not gradual moral improvement. 'Metanoeō' (μετανοέω) means to change one's mind fundamentally, turn from sin to God. 'Ye shall all likewise perish' (πάντες ὄμοίως ἀπολεῖσθε, pantes homoiōs apoleisthe) warns that without repentance, all face the same destruction—not necessarily violent death but eternal judgment. The word 'perish' (ἀπολεῖσθε, apoleisthe, future middle of apollymi) indicates utter destruction, ruin, loss. Jesus pivots from tragedy to gospel urgency—repent or face judgment.

Historical Context

This teaching occurred during Jesus' journey to Jerusalem (Luke 9:51-19:27), likely in the final year of His ministry. The urgency of His call to repentance intensified as crucifixion approached. Within one generation, Jesus' warning would find literal fulfillment when Rome destroyed Jerusalem (AD 70), killing thousands and ending the temple system. Yet the primary reference is to eternal judgment—physical death is temporary, but spiritual death is eternal separation from God. Jesus consistently taught that judgment awaits those who reject Him (Luke 13:28, Matthew 25:46).

Related Passages

Revelation 20:12 — Judgment according to deeds

Matthew 25:31 — Final judgment

Study Questions

1. How does Jesus' warning challenge modern tendencies to downplay God's judgment and the urgency of repentance?
2. What does 'perish' mean in this context—physical death, spiritual death, or both?
3. How should the certainty of judgment apart from repentance shape Christian preaching and personal witness?

Interlinear Text

οὐχί λέγω ὑμῖν ἀλλ' ἐὰν μὴ μετανοῆτε πάντες

Nay	I tell	you	but	G1437	G3361	ye repent	all
G3780	G3004	G5213	G235			G3340	G3956

ἀσαύτως ἀπολεῖσθε

likewise	perish
G5615	G622

Additional Cross-References

Acts 3:19 (Repentance): Repent ye therefore, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, when the times of refreshing shall come from the presence of the Lord;

Matthew 3:2 (Repentance): And saying, Repent ye: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.

Luke 13:5 (Repentance): I tell you, Nay: but, except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish.

Matthew 12:45 (Parallel theme): Then goeth he, and taketh with himself seven other spirits more wicked than himself, and they enter in and dwell there: and the last state of that man is worse than the first. Even so shall it be also unto this wicked generation.

Luke 24:47 (Repentance): And that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem.

Matthew 22:7 (Parallel theme): But when the king heard thereof, he was wroth: and he sent forth his armies, and destroyed those murderers, and burned up their city.

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