

Luke 17:22

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And he said unto the disciples, The days will come, when ye shall desire to see one of the days of the Son of man, and ye shall not see it.

Analysis

And he said unto the disciples, The days will come, when ye shall desire to see one of the days of the Son of man, and ye shall not see it. Jesus shifts from addressing Pharisees (vv. 20-21) to privately instructing disciples about eschatological realities. The phrase **The days will come** (ἐλεύσονται ἡμέραι, eleusontai hēmerai) predicts a future season of longing. **When ye shall desire to see one of the days of the Son of man** (ὅτε ἐπιθυμήσετε μίαν τῶν ἡμερῶν τοῦ υἱοῦ τοῦ ἀνθρώπου ἰδεῖν, hote epithymēsete mian tōn hēmerōn tou huiou tou anthrōpou idein) describes intense yearning to experience even one day of the Son of Man's presence or kingdom manifestation.

The title **Son of man** (ὁ υἱὸς τοῦ ἀνθρώπου, ho huios tou anthrōpou) is Jesus' self-designation, evoking Daniel 7:13-14's messianic figure who receives eternal dominion. The phrase **and ye shall not see it** (καὶ οὐκ ὄψεσθε, kai ouk opsesthe) promises a period of absence—between His ascension and second coming, disciples would long for His visible presence. This addresses post-resurrection church experience: believers would endure persecution, suffering, and delay, crying 'How long, O Lord?' (Revelation 6:10) while awaiting Christ's return.

The warning prepares disciples for the 'already/not yet' tension of kingdom life. The kingdom has come in Jesus (Luke 17:21) yet awaits consummation at His return (Luke 21:27). Believers live between advents, longing for the day when faith becomes sight (2 Corinthians 5:7), groaning while we await redemption (Romans

8:23). This prevents both false expectations (immediate earthly triumph) and despair (Christ has abandoned us)—the delay is real but temporary.

Historical Context

Jesus spoke these words during His final journey to Jerusalem, shortly before His crucifixion. The disciples still expected immediate political messianic kingdom (Luke 19:11, Acts 1:6)—they couldn't yet imagine the agony of Jesus' absence. After Pentecost, the early church lived this reality: persecution intensified (Acts 8:1, 12:1-5), apostles were martyred, and Christ's return delayed beyond the first generation's lifetime. They longed for 'one of the days of the Son of man'—relief from suffering through Christ's visible return.

This longing characterizes authentic Christianity throughout church history. Second-century martyrs in Roman arenas, Reformation believers burned at stakes, modern persecuted churches—all cry 'Come, Lord Jesus' (Revelation 22:20). The delay tests faith: will we endure patiently or lose hope? Jesus' prediction validates this experience while warning against false messiahs and premature expectations (vv. 23-24). The disciples would indeed long for Christ's return, and that longing remains unfulfilled 2,000 years later—yet the promise stands: He will return.

Related Passages

Hebrews 11:1 — Definition of faith

Romans 1:17 — The righteous shall live by faith

Study Questions

1. How does knowing that longing for Christ's return is normal Christian experience help you endure present suffering?
2. What spiritual dangers arise when believers either obsess over Christ's return or completely ignore eschatological hope?
3. How should the tension between Christ's presence (through the Spirit) and absence (physically) shape daily Christian living?

Interlinear Text

Εἶπεν	δὲ	πρὸς	τοὺς	μαθητάς	ἔλεύσονται	ἡμερῶν	ὅτε
he said	And	unto	G3588	the disciples	will come	The days	when
G2036	G1161	G4314		G3101	G2064	G2250	G3753
ἐπιθυμήσετε	μίαν	τῶν	ἡμερῶν	τοῦ	υἱοῦ	τοῦ	
ye shall desire	G1520	G3588	The days	G3588	of the Son	G3588	
G1937			G2250		G5207		
ἀνθρώπου	ἰδεῖν	καὶ	οὐκ	ὄψεσθε			
of man	to see	and	not	see			
G444	G1492	G2532	G3756	G3700			

Additional Cross-References

Matthew 9:15 (Parallel theme): And Jesus said unto them, Can the children of the bridechamber mourn, as long as the bridegroom is with them? but the days will come, when the bridegroom shall be taken from them, and then shall they fast.

Luke 5:35 (Parallel theme): But the days will come, when the bridegroom shall be taken away from them, and then shall they fast in those days.

Mark 2:20 (Parallel theme): But the days will come, when the bridegroom shall be taken away from them, and then shall they fast in those days.

John 13:33 (Parallel theme): Little children, yet a little while I am with you. Ye shall seek me: and as I said unto the Jews, Whither I go, ye cannot come; so now I say to you.