

Luke 21:12

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

But before all these, they shall lay their hands on you, and persecute you, delivering you up to the synagogues, and into prisons, being brought before kings and rulers for my name's sake.

Analysis

But before all these, they shall lay their hands on you, and persecute you, delivering you up to the synagogues, and into prisons, being brought before kings and rulers for my name's sake. Jesus shifts focus from cosmic signs to personal persecution: *pro de toutōn pantōn epibalousin eph' hymas tas cheiras autōn kai diōxousin* (πρὸ δὲ τούτων πάντων ἐπιβαλοῦσιν ἐφ' ὑμᾶς τὰς χεῖρας αὐτῶν καὶ διώξουσιν, 'but before all these things they will lay hands on you and persecute'). The phrase *pro toutōn pantōn* (πρὸ τούτων πάντων, 'before all these') indicates persecution precedes cosmic signs—disciples will suffer before eschatological events unfold.

The persecution includes *paradidontes eis tas synagōgas kai phylakas* (παραδιδόντες εἰς τὰς συναγωγὰς καὶ φυλακάς, 'delivering into synagogues and prisons') and *being apagomenous epi basileis kai hēgemonas* (ἀπαγομένους ἐπὶ βασιλεῖς καὶ ἡγεμόνας, 'led away before kings and governors'). Synagogues represent Jewish persecution; prisons, kings, and governors represent Roman persecution. The cause: *heneken tou onomatos mou* (ἔνεκεν τοῦ ὀνόματός μου, 'for my name's sake'). **Disciples suffer not for crimes but for confessing Christ.** This suffering identifies believers with their persecuted Lord.

Historical Context

This prophecy was fulfilled immediately. Acts records synagogue persecution (Acts 4:1-22, 5:17-42, 6:8-8:3). Paul suffered beatings in synagogues (2 Corinthians 11:24-25). Stephen was stoned (Acts 7). James was executed (Acts 12:1-2). Peter and John were imprisoned multiple times. Paul stood before governors Felix and Festus, King Agrippa, and ultimately Caesar (Acts 23-26). Christian persecution intensified under Nero (AD 64), Domitian (AD 81-96), and later emperors. Early Christians faced martyrdom in arenas, crucifixion, burning, and other brutality. Church history confirms the pattern: believers suffer 'for His name's sake' in every generation. Modern Christians face persecution globally—imprisonment, execution, discrimination—fulfilling Jesus' prophecy continuously.

Related Passages

1 John 4:8 — God is love

John 15:13 — Greatest form of love

Study Questions

1. Why does Jesus warn that persecution will come 'before all these' cosmic signs, and what does this priority reveal?
2. What does it mean to suffer 'for my name's sake,' and how does this distinguish Christian persecution from ordinary suffering?
3. How should believers prepare spiritually for potential persecution, given Jesus' clear warning that it will come?

Interlinear Text

πρὸ δὲ τούτων ἄπαντων ἐπιβαλοῦσιν ἐπὶ ὑμᾶς τὰς
before But these all they shall lay before you G3588
G4253 G1161 G5130 G537 G1911 G1909 G5209

χεῖρας αὐτῶν καὶ διώξουσιν παραδιδόντες εἰς
hands and persecute you delivering you up
G5495 G2532 G1377 G3860 G1519

συναγωγὰς καὶ φυλακάς ἀγομένους ἐπὶ βασιλεῖς καὶ
to the synagogues and into prisons being brought before kings and
G4864 G2532 G5438 G71 G1909 G935 G2532

ἡγεμόνας ἔνεκεν τοῦ ὄνοματός μου·
rulers for name's my
G2232 G1752 G3588 G3686 G3450

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