

Luke 21:13

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And it shall turn to you for a testimony.

Analysis

And it shall turn to you for a testimony. Jesus reframes persecution positively: *apobēsetai* *hymin eis martyrion* (ἀποβήσεται ὑμῖν εἰς μαρτύριον, 'it will turn out for you as a testimony'). The verb *apobainō* (ἀποβαίνω) means 'result in,' 'lead to,' 'turn out.' What appears negative—arrest, trial, imprisonment—God transforms into *martyrion* (μαρτύριον, 'testimony/witness'). The word *martyrion* shares its root with 'martyr,' reflecting how Christian witness often led to death.

This principle pervades Acts and church history: **persecution advances the gospel.** Paul's imprisonments spread the message (Philippians 1:12-14). Stephen's martyrdom scattered believers who evangelized (Acts 8:1-4). Tertullian wrote, 'The blood of martyrs is the seed of the church.' Persecution intended to silence believers instead amplifies their testimony. Courts become pulpits; trials become evangelistic opportunities; suffering validates message authenticity. God sovereignly uses evil intentions for redemptive purposes (Genesis 50:20).

Historical Context

Acts demonstrates this principle repeatedly. Peter and John's arrest led to gospel proclamation before the Sanhedrin (Acts 4:8-12). Persecution scattered believers who 'went everywhere preaching the word' (Acts 8:4). Paul's trials before Felix, Festus, and Agrippa became opportunities to present Christ (Acts 24-26). His Roman imprisonment facilitated gospel spread through the Praetorian Guard and Caesar's household (Philippians 1:13, 4:22). Early Christian apologists like Justin Martyr and Polycarp used trials to testify publicly. Modern persecution similarly

backfires—Chinese Christianity exploded under Communist persecution; underground churches thrive where above-ground churches are banned. Opposition intended to destroy faith instead proves its authenticity and spreads its message.

Related Passages

1 John 4:8 — God is love

John 15:13 — Greatest form of love

Study Questions

1. How does God transform persecution intended to silence believers into opportunities for gospel testimony?
2. What examples from Christian history demonstrate that 'the blood of martyrs is the seed of the church'?
3. How should this promise change believers' attitudes toward suffering and persecution for Christ's name?

Interlinear Text

ἀποβήσεται δὲ ὑμῖν εἰς μαρτύριον
it shall turn And to you for a testimony
G576 G1161 G5213 G1519 G3142

Additional Cross-References

Philippians 1:12 (Parallel theme): But I would ye should understand, brethren, that the things which happened unto me have fallen out rather unto the furtherance of the gospel;

Philippians 1:28 (Parallel theme): And in nothing terrified by your adversaries: which is to them an evident token of perdition, but to you of salvation, and that of God.

2 Thessalonians 1:5 (Parallel theme): Which is a manifest token of the righteous judgment of God, that ye may be counted worthy of the kingdom of God, for which ye also suffer:

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