

Luke 21:14

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Settle it therefore in your hearts, not to meditate before what ye shall answer:

Analysis

Settle it therefore in your hearts, not to meditate before what ye shall answer: Jesus gives practical instruction: *thete oun en tais kardiais hymōn mē promeletān apologēthēnai* (θέτε οὖν ἐν ταῖς καρδίαις ὑμῶν μὴ προμελετᾶν ἀπολογηθῆναι, 'settle therefore in your hearts not to prepare beforehand to make a defense'). The verb *thete* (θέτε, 'settle/determine/resolve') indicates deliberate decision. The phrase *en tais kardiais* (ἐν ταῖς καρδίαις, 'in your hearts') locates this resolution in the inner person—a heart commitment, not mere intellectual agreement.

The command *mē promeletān* (μὴ προμελετᾶν, 'not to practice beforehand/rehearse in advance') prohibits pre-planned speeches. The verb *apologeomai* (ἀπολογέομαι, 'make a defense') means to present a legal defense. Jesus instructs disciples not to prepare elaborate arguments for anticipated trials. This isn't anti-intellectualism—Paul engaged in sophisticated apologetics. Rather, it's **trust in divine enablement during crisis**. In persecution's heat, human preparation proves inadequate; supernatural aid suffices. This command tests faith: will believers trust God's promise or rely on human cleverness?

Historical Context

This instruction addresses natural anxiety about persecution. Who wouldn't worry about defending themselves before hostile authorities? Standing before the Sanhedrin, Roman governors, or emperors would terrify anyone. Natural response

is to rehearse speeches, prepare arguments, strategize responses. Jesus prohibits this not because preparation is wrong but because in persecution situations, **God provides supernatural assistance** (v. 15). Early Christians experienced this. Peter, uneducated and previously cowardly (denying Christ), spoke boldly before authorities (Acts 4:8-13), astonishing leaders with his courage. Stephen gave a powerful defense (Acts 7). Paul spoke fearlessly before governors and kings. Church history records martyrs whose testimony under torture amazed persecutors. Modern believers facing interrogation likewise report divine aid—words they didn't prepare, courage they didn't possess naturally.

Related Passages

1 Corinthians 13:4 — Characteristics of love

John 15:13 — Greatest form of love

Study Questions

1. Why does Jesus command believers not to prepare their defense in advance, and how does this test faith?
2. What is the difference between legitimate theological preparation and the anxious rehearsal Jesus prohibits here?
3. How should this command shape believers' approach to potential persecution or hostile confrontation?

Interlinear Text

θέσθε	οὖν	εἰς	τὰς	καρδίας	ὑμῶν	μὴ	προμελετᾶν
Settle	it therefore	in	G3588	hearts	your	not	to meditate before
G5087	G3767	G1519		G2588	G5216	G3361	G4304

ἀπολογηθῆναι·

what ye shall answer

G626

Additional Cross-References

Mark 13:11 (Parallel theme): But when they shall lead you, and deliver you up, take no thought beforehand what ye shall speak, neither do ye premeditate: but whatsoever shall be given you in that hour, that speak ye: for it is not ye that speak, but the Holy Ghost.

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