

Luke 21:16

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And ye shall be betrayed both by parents, and brethren, and kinsfolks, and friends; and some of you shall they cause to be put to death.

Analysis

And ye shall be betrayed both by parents, and brethren, and kinsfolks, and friends; and some of you shall they cause to be put to death. Jesus reveals persecution's most painful dimension: *paradothēsethe de kai hypo goneōn kai adelphōn kai syngenōn kai philōn* (παραδοθήσεσθε δὲ καὶ ὑπὸ γονέων καὶ ἀδελφῶν καὶ συγγενῶν καὶ φίλων, 'you will be betrayed even by parents and brothers and relatives and friends'). The verb *paradidōmi* (παραδίδωμι, 'betray/hand over/deliver up') is the same word used for Judas betraying Jesus—intimate treachery. Persecution comes not from strangers but from *goneōn* (γονέων, 'parents'), *adelphōn* (ἀδελφῶν, 'siblings'), *syngenōn* (συγγενῶν, 'relatives'), and *philōn* (φίλων, 'friends').

The consequence: *kai thanatōsousin ex hymōn* (καὶ θανατώσουσιν ἐξ ὑμῶν, 'and they will put to death some of you'). Family members will facilitate believers' executions. This fulfills Jesus' earlier prophecy that He came to bring division, setting family members against each other (Luke 12:51-53). **Allegiance to Christ supersedes blood relationships**; when families oppose faith, believers must choose Christ over kinship. This is Christianity's costliest demand—losing not just possessions or freedom but family love and loyalty.

Historical Context

This prophecy has been horrifically fulfilled throughout church history. Early Christians faced family betrayal when parents reported converted children to authorities, or children reported believing parents. Roman law prioritized family and state loyalty; Christianity's exclusive claims threatened both. Jewish families sat shiva (mourned as dead) children who converted to Christianity. During various persecutions—Diocletian, Reformation conflicts, Communist regimes—family members betrayed believers. In modern Islamic, Hindu, or Buddhist contexts, conversion often means family rejection, persecution, or honor killing. Chinese house church members face betrayal by relatives. This prophecy remains painfully relevant wherever following Christ conflicts with family or cultural loyalty.

Related Passages

John 15:13 — Greatest form of love

1 John 4:8 — God is love

Revelation 20:12 — Judgment according to deeds

Matthew 25:31 — Final judgment

Study Questions

1. Why does Jesus warn specifically about betrayal by family members and friends, and why is this persecution's most painful form?
2. How should believers prepare spiritually for potential family rejection or persecution because of faith in Christ?
3. What does this passage teach about the priority of allegiance to Christ over natural family relationships when they conflict?

Interlinear Text

παραδοθήσεσθε δὲ καὶ ὑπὸ γονέων καὶ ἀδελφῶν καὶ
ye shall be betrayed And and by parents and brethren and
G3860 G1161 G2532 G5259 G1118 G2532 G80 G2532

συγγενῶν καὶ φίλων καὶ θανατώσουσιν ἐξ
kinsfolks and friends and shall they cause to be put to death some of
G4773 G2532 G5384 G2532 G2289 G1537

ὑμῶν
you
G5216

Additional Cross-References

Luke 12:53 (Parallel theme): The father shall be divided against the son, and the son against the father; the mother against the daughter, and the daughter against the mother; the mother in law against her daughter in law, and the daughter in law against her mother in law.

Revelation 6:9 (Parallel theme): And when he had opened the fifth seal, I saw under the altar the souls of them that were slain for the word of God, and for the testimony which they held:

Jeremiah 9:4 (Parallel theme): Take ye heed every one of his neighbour, and trust ye not in any brother: for every brother will utterly supplant, and every neighbour will walk with slanders.