

Luke 23:28

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

But Jesus turning unto them said, Daughters of Jerusalem, weep not for me, but weep for yourselves, and for your children.

Analysis

But Jesus turning unto them said, Daughters of Jerusalem, weep not for me, but weep for yourselves, and for your children. Amid His own agony, Jesus demonstrated compassion for those mourning Him. The address "Daughters of Jerusalem" (thygateres Ierousalēm, θυγατέρες Ἱερουσαλήμ) was a tender, affectionate term designating the women as covenant people of the holy city. Yet Jesus redirected their tears from present suffering to future catastrophe.

The command "weep not for me" (mē klaiete ep' eme, μὴ κλαίετε ἐπ' ἐμέ) uses klaiō (κλαίω), meaning to wail or lament loudly, not mere quiet tears. Jesus' substitutionary death, though agonizing, would accomplish eternal redemption—not ultimately a tragedy but triumph. The redirection "but weep for yourselves, and for your children" (plēn eph' heautas klaiete kai epi ta tekna hymōn, πλὴν ἐφ' ἑαυτὰς κλαίετε καὶ ἐπὶ τὰ τέκνα ὑμῶν) prophetically warns of Jerusalem's destruction in AD 70.

This statement reveals Christ's prophetic knowledge and pastoral heart. Even while suffering innocently, He warned of judgment coming upon the guilty city that rejected its Messiah. The inclusion of "your children" indicates the multi-generational consequences of rejecting God's salvation. Jesus' words fulfilled His earlier lament: "O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, thou that killest the prophets... how often would I have gathered thy children together... and ye would not! Behold, your house is left unto you desolate" (Matthew 23:37-38).

Historical Context

Professional mourners commonly followed condemned criminals to execution, but Luke suggests these were genuine sympathizers. In AD 70, Roman legions under Titus besieged Jerusalem for five months. Josephus records over one million Jews died, many by starvation, crucifixion, and massacre. The temple was destroyed, fulfilling Jesus' prophecy that "there shall not be left one stone upon another" (Luke 21:6).

Women and children suffered especially during the siege. Josephus describes mothers eating their own children during the famine (Jewish War 6.3.4), echoing the covenant curses of Deuteronomy 28:53-57. The catastrophe was so severe that Jesus declared, "Except those days should be shortened, there should no flesh be saved" (Matthew 24:22). This historical reality gives profound weight to Jesus' warning—their tears for His crucifixion were misplaced; they should weep for the judgment awaiting those who rejected Him.

Related Passages

Romans 10:9 — Confession and belief for salvation

Ephesians 2:8 — Salvation by grace through faith

Study Questions

1. How does Jesus' concern for others while suffering His own agony challenge our self-focus during personal trials?
2. What does this passage teach about the multi-generational consequences of rejecting Christ and His gospel?
3. How should the historical fulfillment of Jesus' prophecy about Jerusalem strengthen our confidence in His other prophetic warnings about judgment?

Interlinear Text

στραφεῖς δὲ πρὸς αὐτὰς ὁ Ἰησοῦς εἶπεν Θυγατέρες
turning **But** **unto** **them** ^{G3588} **Jesus** **said** **Daughters**
G4762 G1161 G4314 G846 G2424 G2036 G2364

Ἰερουσαλήμ μὴ κλαίετε ἐπὶ ἐμέ· πλὴν ἐπὶ ἑαυτὰς
of Jerusalem **not** **weep** **for** **me** **but** **for** **yourselves**
G2419 G3361 G2799 G1909 G1691 G4133 G1909 G1438

κλαίετε καὶ ἐπὶ τὰ τέκνα ὑμῶν
weep **and** **for** ^{G3588} **children** **your**
G2799 G2532 G1909 G5043 G5216

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