

Mark 13:12

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Now the brother shall betray the brother to death, and the father the son; and children shall rise up against their parents, and shall cause them to be put to death.

Analysis

Now the brother shall betray the brother to death, and the father the son—the Greek *paradōsei* (παράδωσει, 'shall betray/deliver up') is the same verb used of Judas betraying Jesus (14:10). Family betrayal represents ultimate relational breakdown. **Children shall rise up against their parents, and shall cause them to be put to death**—reverses natural family loyalty. The Greek *thanatōsousin* (θανατώσουσιν, 'shall put to death') means judicial execution, not merely hostility.

Jesus predicted faith would divide families (Matthew 10:34-36, quoting Micah 7:6). Gospel allegiance supersedes blood ties (Luke 14:26). This fulfilled literally: Christians faced denunciation by family members to authorities. Roman law required informing on treasonous relatives; emperor worship refusal constituted treason. Christian children faced parental rejection; Christian parents watched children apostatize or betray them. This continues today—converts from Islam, Hinduism face family ostracism, violence, death. Loyalty to Christ costs everything, including family.

Historical Context

Early church witnessed family persecution. Roman historian Tacitus noted Nero's persecution (AD 64) involved informants, likely including family betrayals. Pliny's letter to Trajan (ca. AD 112) describes anonymous denunciations of Christians,

probably including family members. Medieval Inquisition encouraged reporting heretical relatives. Reformation saw families divided—Protestant/Catholic conflicts split households. Modern totalitarian regimes (Nazi Germany, Soviet Union, China) incentivized children reporting parents. Today, converts from other religions often face family betrayal, honor killings. The gospel's divisive nature (Matthew 10:34) means choosing Christ above family, facing potential betrayal. This tests whether disciples love Jesus more than father/mother (Matthew 10:37).

Related Passages

Genesis 1:1 — Creation of heavens and earth

Colossians 1:16 — All things created through Christ

Study Questions

1. How does family betrayal for Christ's sake test whether disciples truly love Jesus 'more than father or mother' (Matthew 10:37)?
2. What does the possibility of children betraying parents to death reveal about gospel's radical call to prioritize Christ above all human relationships?
3. How should Christians in comfortable contexts prepare spiritually for potential family division or persecution if cultural tides shift?

Interlinear Text

παραδώσει	δὲ	ἀδελφὸν	ἀδελφὸν	εἰς	θάνατον	καὶ
shall betray	Now	the brother	the brother	to	death	and
G3860	G1161	G80	G80	G1519	G2288	G2532
πατὴρ	τέκνα	καὶ	ἐπαναστήσονται	τέκνα	ἐπὶ	γονεῖς
the father	children	and	shall rise up	children	against	their parents
G3962	G5043	G2532	G1881	G5043	G1909	G1118
καὶ	θανατώσουσιν	αὐτούς·				
and	shall cause	them				
G2532	G2289	G846				

Additional Cross-References

Matthew 10:21 (Resurrection): And the brother shall deliver up the brother to death, and the father the child: and the children shall rise up against their parents, and cause them to be put to death.

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