

Mark 13:15

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And let him that is on the housetop not go down into the house, neither enter therein, to take any thing out of his house:

Analysis

Let him that is on the housetop not go down into the house, neither enter therein, to take any thing out of his house—ancient Near Eastern houses had flat roofs accessed by exterior stairs, used for work, socializing, sleeping. When danger appeared, occupants shouldn't descend interior stairs to retrieve possessions. The urgency demands immediate flight. The Greek *mē katabatō* (μὴ καταβάτω, 'let him not go down') is emphatic prohibition.

This illustrates radical prioritization: life over possessions, obedience over comfort, eternal over temporal. It echoes Lot fleeing Sodom—'escape for thy life; look not behind thee' (Genesis 19:17). His wife looked back, became salt (Genesis 19:26). Jesus warned, 'Remember Lot's wife' (Luke 17:32). Material attachment imperils spiritual safety. The physical command (flee Jerusalem's destruction) carries spiritual application: when God commands action, don't delay for worldly concerns. Priorities determine survival—temporal possessions or eternal safety.

Historical Context

AD 66-70 Jewish revolt escalated into Roman siege. Josephus describes horrific conditions—starvation, factional violence, crucifixions, cannibalism. Those who delayed escape perished. Eusebius recorded Jerusalem Christians fled to Pella, heeding Jesus' warning. They survived. Those who stayed—hoping to defend temple, retrieve possessions, maintain livelihoods—died or were enslaved. History

fulfilled Jesus' words literally: immediate obedience saved; delay destroyed. Spiritually applicable: when God warns of danger (sin's consequences, cultural compromise, false teaching), immediate action required. Lot's wife illustrates delay's danger—she obeyed physically (left Sodom) but not spiritually (looked back longingly), resulting in judgment. Christians must flee worldliness, error, compromise without backward glances.

Related Passages

Ephesians 2:8 — Salvation by grace through faith

Romans 10:9 — Confession and belief for salvation

Study Questions

1. What does the command to flee without retrieving possessions teach about material attachment's spiritual danger?
2. How does 'Remember Lot's wife' (Luke 17:32) connect to this command—what's the danger of looking back?
3. What spiritual 'flight' might God command today—from what sins, errors, or compromises—requiring immediate obedience without looking back?

Interlinear Text

ο	δὲ	ἐπὶ	τοῦ	δώματος	μὴ	καταβάτω	εἰς	τὴν
G3588	And	that is on	G3588	the housetop	not	go down	into	G3588
G1161		G1909		G1430	G3361	G2597	G1519	

οἰκίας	μηδὲ	εἰσελθέτω	ἀραί	τι	ἐκ	τῆς
house	neither	enter	therein to take	any thing	out of	G3588
G3614	G3366	G1525	G142	G5100	G1537	

οἰκίας αὐτοῦ

house	G846
G3614	

Additional Cross-References

Hebrews 11:7 (Parallel theme): By faith Noah, being warned of God of things not seen as yet, moved with fear, prepared an ark to the saving of his house; by the which he condemned the world, and became heir of the righteousness which is by faith.

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