

Mark 13:18

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And pray ye that your flight be not in the winter.

Analysis

Pray ye that your flight be not in the winter—Palestinian winter (November–March) brings cold, rain, flooding wadis (dry riverbeds), swollen Jordan River, muddy roads. Travel becomes treacherous, especially fleeing through mountainous Judean wilderness. The Greek proseuchesthe (προσεύχεσθε, 'pray ye') commands intercession that flight occurs during favorable conditions.

This teaches:

1. Prayer affects circumstances—God sovereignly ordains ends and means; petitioning God for favorable timing aligns with His will.
2. Practical wisdom matters—faith doesn't mean ignoring physical realities; fleeing in winter adds suffering.
3. God cares about details—not just spiritual but physical circumstances concern Him.

This isn't fatalism ('whatever will be') but prayerful dependence ('Lord, grant mercy'). Christians pray for circumstances while trusting God's sovereignty—intercession honors both divine control and human responsibility.

Historical Context

Judean geography made winter flight difficult. Jerusalem sits 2,500 feet elevation; Pella (where Christians fled) lies in Transjordan, requiring crossing wilderness, descending to Jordan Valley, ascending eastern plateau. Winter rains flooded wadis, creating flash floods. Jordan River swelled, crossings dangerous. Roads

became muddy quagmires. Cold temperatures threatened exposure, especially for families with children (v. 17). Fleeing in dry season (April-October) meant passable roads, fordable streams, survivable temperatures. Eusebius records Christians fled before final siege (AD 70), suggesting favorable timing. Prayer and providential timing converged. Throughout church history, believers prayed for divine timing—escaping persecutions, missionary journeys, providential circumstances. God answers such prayers, demonstrating sovereignty over historical details.

Related Passages

James 2:17 — Faith and works

Hebrews 11:1 — Definition of faith

Study Questions

1. What does commanding prayer for favorable flight conditions teach about God's sovereignty and human responsibility?
2. How does this verse balance faith (trusting God) and wisdom (recognizing physical realities like winter's difficulty)?
3. What circumstances should Christians pray about today—how does God care about both spiritual and practical details of His people's lives?

Interlinear Text

προσεύχεσθε	δε	τινα	μη	γένηται	η	φυγη	υμῶν
pray ye	And	G2443	G3361	be	G3588	flight	your
G4336	G1161			G1096		G5437	G5216

χειμῶνος·

in the winter

G5494