

Mark 14:21

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

The Son of man indeed goeth, as it is written of him: but woe to that man by whom the Son of man is betrayed! good were it for that man if he had never been born.

Analysis

The Son of man indeed goeth, as it is written of him (ὁ μὲν υἱὸς τοῦ ἀνθρώπου ὑπάγει καθὼς γέγραπται περὶ αὐτοῦ, *ho men huios tou anthrōpou hypagei kathōs gegraptai peri autou*)—Jesus affirms His death fulfills Scripture (Isaiah 53, Psalm 22, etc.). "Son of man" (υἱὸς τοῦ ἀνθρώπου) from Daniel 7:13-14 identifies Jesus as the messianic figure receiving eternal dominion. **But woe to that man by whom the Son of man is betrayed** (οὐαὶ δὲ τῷ ἀνθρώπῳ ἐκείνῳ, *ouai de tō anthrōpō ekeinō*)—"woe" pronounces divine judgment.

Good were it for that man if he had never been born (καλὸν αὐτῷ εἰ οὐκ ἐγεννήθη ὁ ἄνθρωπος ἐκεῖνος, *kalon autō ei ouk egennēthē ho anthrōpos ekeinos*)—this severe statement affirms eternal judgment worse than non-existence. Jesus holds together divine sovereignty ("as it is written") and human responsibility ("woe to that man"). Judas wasn't a puppet—he freely chose betrayal and bears full guilt. Yet his evil served God's redemptive purpose. Reformed theology sees here the mystery of providence: God ordains ends and means without violating human agency or excusing sin. Judas's judgment warns that intimate religious proximity without genuine faith leads to damnation.

Historical Context

Jesus's prediction that He "goeth" uses the prophetic present—His death was certain, fulfilling Old Testament prophecy. Isaiah 53 (suffering servant), Psalm 22

(crucifixion details), Zechariah 11:12-13 (thirty pieces of silver), and other texts foretold Messiah's suffering. Yet prophecy didn't excuse Judas—he acted from greed and free will. Early church fathers debated whether Judas could have repented; Matthew 27:3-5 records his remorse but not repentance unto salvation. Jesus's statement "better if he had not been born" affirms hell's reality and eternal judgment's severity—doctrines often denied in modern theology but clearly taught by Christ Himself.

Related Passages

1 Corinthians 13:4 — Characteristics of love

John 15:13 — Greatest form of love

Study Questions

1. How does Jesus's statement that Scripture must be fulfilled coexist with Judas bearing full moral responsibility for betrayal?
2. What does Jesus's pronouncement that non-existence would be better than Judas's fate teach about hell's reality and severity?
3. How should the warning about Judas's judgment motivate examining whether our faith is genuine or merely external religious participation?

Interlinear Text

ὁ	μὲν	υἱὸς	τοῦ	ἄνθρωπος	ὑπάγει	καθὼς	γέγραπται		
G3588	indeed	The Son	G3588	man	goeth	as	it is written		
	G3303	G5207		G444	G5217	G2531	G1125		
περὶ	αὐτῷ	οὐαὶ	δὲ	τῷ	ἄνθρωπος	ἐκεῖνος	δι'	οὗ	ὁ
of	he	woe	but	G3588	man	for that	by	whom	G3588
G4012	G846	G3759	G1161		G444	G1565	G1223	G3739	
υἱὸς	τοῦ	ἄνθρωπος	παραδίδοται·	καλὸν	ἦν	αὐτῷ	εἰ		
The Son	G3588	man	is betrayed	! good	were it	he	if		
G5207		G444	G3860	G2570	G2258	G846	G1487		
οὐκ	ἐγεννήθη	ὁ	ἄνθρωπος	ἐκεῖνος					
never	been born	G3588	man	for that					
G3756	G1080		G444	G1565					

Additional Cross-References

John 19:28 (Parallel theme): After this, Jesus knowing that all things were now accomplished, that the scripture might be fulfilled, saith, I thirst.

Genesis 3:15 (Parallel theme): And I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel.

Daniel 9:24 (Parallel theme): Seventy weeks are determined upon thy people and upon thy holy city, to finish the transgression, and to make an end of sins, and to make reconciliation for iniquity, and to bring in everlasting righteousness, and to seal up the vision and prophecy, and to anoint the most Holy.