

Matthew 5:22

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

But I say unto you, That whosoever is angry with his brother without a cause shall be in danger of the judgment: and whosoever shall say to his brother, Raca, shall be in danger of the council: but whosoever shall say, Thou fool, shall be in danger of hell fire.

Analysis

Jesus equates anger with murder in principle. The Greek 'raca' means 'empty-headed' or 'worthless'—a contemptuous insult. Calling someone 'fool' (moros) questions their moral character, not just intelligence. Such contempt makes one liable to hell fire (Gehenna), showing God's serious view of interpersonal sin.

Historical Context

Gehenna referenced the Valley of Hinnom outside Jerusalem, used as a garbage dump with continual burning. It became a vivid image for eternal judgment. The progression from 'judgment' to 'council' to 'hell fire' emphasizes escalating seriousness.

Related Passages

John 3:16 — God's love and salvation

Ephesians 2:8 — Salvation by grace through faith

1 Corinthians 13:4 — Characteristics of love

1 John 4:8 — God is love

Study Questions

1. How do you speak about people you disagree with or dislike—with contempt or compassion?
2. Why does Jesus consider verbal contempt and character assassination as seriously as physical murder?

Interlinear Text

ἐγὼ	δ'	λέγω	ὕμῖν	ὅτι	πᾶς	ὁ	ὀργιζόμενος	τῷ
I	But	say	unto you	That	whosoever	G3588	is angry	G3588
G1473	G1161	G3004	G5213	G3754	G3956		G3710	
ἀδελφῷ	αὐτοῦ		εἰκῇ	ἔνοχος	ἔσται	τῇ	κρίσει·	
brother	G846		without a cause	in danger	shall be	G3588	of the judgment	
G80			G1500	G1777	G2071		G2920	
ὃς	δ'	ἂν	εἴπῃ	τῷ	ἀδελφῷ	αὐτοῦ	Ῥακά	ἔνοχος
whosoever	But	G302	shall say	G3588	brother	G846	Raca	in danger
G3739	G1161		G2036		G80		G4469	G1777
ἔσται	τῷ	συνεδρίῳ·	ὃς	δ'	ἂν	εἴπῃ	Μωρέ	
shall be	G3588	of the council	whosoever	But	G302	shall say	Thou fool	
G2071		G4892	G3739	G1161		G2036	G3474	
ἔνοχος	ἔσται	εἰς	τὴν	γέενναν	τοῦ	πυρός·		
in danger	shall be	of	G3588	hell	G3588	fire		
G1777	G2071	G1519		G1067		G4442		

Additional Cross-References

1 John 2:9 (Parallel theme): He that saith he is in the light, and hateth his brother, is in darkness even until now.

James 3:6 (Parallel theme): And the tongue is a fire, a world of iniquity: so is the tongue among our members, that it defileth the whole body, and setteth on fire the course of nature; and it is set on fire of hell.

Matthew 10:28 (Parallel theme): And fear not them which kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul: but rather fear him which is able to destroy both soul and body in hell.

Titus 3:2 (Parallel theme): To speak evil of no man, to be no brawlers, but gentle, shewing all meekness unto all men.

Matthew 18:35 (Parallel theme): So likewise shall my heavenly Father do also unto you, if ye from your hearts forgive not every one his brother their trespasses.

Romans 12:10 (Parallel theme): Be kindly affectioned one to another with brotherly love; in honour preferring one another;

1 Peter 3:9 (Parallel theme): Not rendering evil for evil, or railing for railing: but contrariwise blessing; knowing that ye are thereunto called, that ye should inherit a blessing.

Psalms 109:3 (Parallel theme): They compassed me about also with words of hatred; and fought against me without a cause.

Matthew 18:21 (Parallel theme): Then came Peter to him, and said, Lord, how oft shall my brother sin against me, and I forgive him? till seven times?

1 Peter 2:23 (Judgment): Who, when he was reviled, reviled not again; when he suffered, he threatened not; but committed himself to him that judgeth righteously: