

Acts 26:15

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And I said, Who art thou, Lord? And he said, I am Jesus whom thou persecutest.

Analysis

Who art thou, Lord? (Τίς εἶ, κύριε;)—Saul's question reveals profound theological tension: he addressed Jesus as 'Lord' (κύριε, kurie) even before recognizing his identity, acknowledging divine authority in the heavenly voice. **I am Jesus whom thou persecutest** (Ἐγώ εἰμι Ἰησοῦς ὃν σὺ διώκεις)—Christ's response uses the divine 'I AM' (Ἐγώ εἰμι, ego eimi), echoing Exodus 3:14's revelation to Moses.

Jesus identifies himself with his persecuted church: 'whom thou persecutest'—to touch believers is to touch Christ himself (Matthew 25:40). This mystical union between Christ and his body demolishes Saul's theological framework: the crucified Nazarene was indeed the risen Lord, and persecuting Christians meant fighting God. The risen Jesus was not a theological abstraction but the living, glorified Messiah who directly confronted his chief enemy.

Historical Context

This occurred on the Damascus Road around AD 34-35 when Saul (later Paul) traveled with letters authorizing him to arrest Christians. Paul recounts this third time in Acts (also 9:5, 22:8), here before King Agrippa II, emphasizing Jesus' self-identification. This conversion transformed Christianity's greatest persecutor into its foremost apostle.

Related Passages

John 15:13 — Greatest form of love

1 John 4:8 — God is love

Study Questions

1. How does Jesus' identification with persecuted believers challenge your view of how Christ relates to his church today?
2. What theological convictions might God need to overturn in your life, as he did with Saul's misguided zeal?

Interlinear Text

Ἐγώ	δὲ	εἶπεν	Τίς	εἶ	κύριε	ὁ	δὲ	εἶπεν	Ἐγώ
I	And	he said	Who	art thou	Lord	G3588	And	he said	I
G1473	G1161	G2036	G5101	G1488	G2962		G1161	G2036	G1473

εἰμι	Ἰησοῦς	ὃν	σὺ	διώκεις
am	Jesus	whom	thou	persecutest
G1510	G2424	G3739	G4771	G1377

Additional Cross-References

Matthew 25:45 (Parallel theme): Then shall he answer them, saying, Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye did it not to one of the least of these, ye did it not to me.