

Acts 4:21

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

So when they had further threatened them, they let them go, finding nothing how they might punish them, because of the people: for all men glorified God for that which was done.

Analysis

The council's impotence - 'when they had further threatened them, they let them go, finding nothing how they might punish them, because of the people' - reveals political rather than legal motivation. Repeated threats without action demonstrate weakness. The phrase 'because of the people' shows fear of popular revolt. 'All men glorified God for that which was done' indicates the miracle's apologetic power - undeniable evidence produced worship even from opposition.

Historical Context

The Sanhedrin's authority depended on popular support. Punishing miracle-workers who healed a 40-year cripple would spark revolt, potentially bringing Roman intervention. This political calculation mirrors Pilate's decision regarding Jesus (John 19:12) - expediency trumping justice.

Related Passages

Romans 1:17 — The righteous shall live by faith

Hebrews 11:1 — Definition of faith

1 John 4:8 — God is love

John 15:13 — Greatest form of love

Study Questions

1. How does God use political calculation and fear to protect His messengers and advance His gospel?
2. What does 'all men glorified God' teach about miracles' appropriate role in validating gospel truth?

Interlinear Text

οἱ	δὲ	προσάπειλησάμενοι		ἀπέλυσαν	αὐτούς	μηδὲν	
G3588	So	when they had further threatened		go	them	nothing	
	G1161	G4324		G630	G846	G3367	
εὐρίσκοντες	τὸ	πῶς	κολάσωνται	αὐτούς	διὰ	τὸν	
finding	G3588	how	they might punish	them	because	G3588	
G2147		G4459	G2849	G846	G1223		
λαόν	ὅτι	πάντες	ἐδόξαζον	τὸν	θεὸν	ἐπὶ	τῷ
of the people	for	all	men glorified	G3588	God	for	G3588
G2992	G3754	G3956	G1392		G2316	G1909	
γεγονότι·							
that which was done							
G1096							

Additional Cross-References

Acts 5:26 (Parallel theme): Then went the captain with the officers, and brought them without violence: for they feared the people, lest they should have been stoned.

Matthew 21:46 (Parallel theme): But when they sought to lay hands on him, they feared the multitude, because they took him for a prophet.

Matthew 9:8 (Glory): But when the multitudes saw it, they marvelled, and glorified God, which had given such power unto men.

Luke 20:6 (Parallel theme): But and if we say, Of men; all the people will stone us: for they be persuaded that John was a prophet.

Luke 20:19 (Parallel theme): And the chief priests and the scribes the same hour sought to lay hands on him; and they feared the people: for they perceived that he had spoken this parable against them.

Luke 22:2 (Parallel theme): And the chief priests and scribes sought how they might kill him; for they feared the people.

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