

Acts 4:7

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And when they had set them in the midst, they asked, By what power, or by what name, have ye done this?

Analysis

The council's question - 'By what power, or by what name, have ye done this?' - acknowledges the miracle while seeking to discredit its source. The Greek distinguishes 'power' (dynamis, inherent ability) and 'name' (onoma, authority). This inquiry mirrors Satan's strategy: admit the supernatural while attributing it to wrong source. Their question betrays fear - if Jesus' name heals, their crucifixion judgment was wrong.

Historical Context

Ancient understanding viewed names as embodying personal power and authority. Invoking a name called upon that person's power. The council sought to trap apostles: claiming divine authority would be blasphemy, claiming human power would be impossible given the evidence. Peter's answer transcends their trap.

Related Passages

John 3:16 — God's love and salvation

Romans 10:9 — Confession and belief for salvation

Romans 1:17 — The righteous shall live by faith

James 2:17 — Faith and works

Study Questions

1. How do opponents of the gospel acknowledge its power while denying its source?
2. What does the question about 'name' reveal about authority's nature in spiritual warfare?

Interlinear Text

καὶ στήσαντες αὐτοὺς ἐν τῷ μέσῳ ἐπυνθάνοντο
And when they had set them By the midst they asked
G2532 G2476 G846 G1722 G3588 G3319 G4441

ἐν ποίω δυνάμει ἢ ἐν ποίω ὄνόματι ἐποιήσατε
By what power or By what name done
G1722 G4169 G1411 G2228 G1722 G4169 G3686 G4160

τοῦτο ὑμεῖς
this ye
G5124 G5210

Additional Cross-References

Matthew 21:23 (Parallel theme): And when he was come into the temple, the chief priests and the elders of the people came unto him as he was teaching, and said, By what authority doest thou these things? and who gave thee this authority?

Mark 11:28 (Parallel theme): And say unto him, By what authority doest thou these things? and who gave thee this authority to do these things?

Acts 5:40 (Parallel theme): And to him they agreed: and when they had called the apostles, and beaten them, they commanded that they should not speak in the name of Jesus, and let them go.

John 2:18 (Parallel theme): Then answered the Jews and said unto him, What sign shewest thou unto us, seeing that thou doest these things?

