

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	G3588	the midst	they asked	
G2532	G2476	G846	G1722		G3319	G4441	
ἐν	ποιῶ	δυνάμει	ἢ	ἐν	ποιῶ	ὀνόματι	ἐποιήσατε
By	what	power	or	By	what	name	done
G1722	G4169	G1411	G2228	G1722	G4169	G3686	G4160
τοῦτο	ὕμεῖς						
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?

