

John 6:28

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Then said they unto him, What shall we do, that we might work the works of God?

Analysis

'Then said they unto him, What shall we do, that we might work the works of God?' The crowd's question reveals works-based thinking. They want a list of actions to perform. 'Works of God' (plural) implies multiple requirements. This reflects religious mentality that seeks salvation through achievement. Jesus' answer (verse 29) will redirect from works to work, from doing to believing.

Historical Context

First-century Judaism emphasized obedience to Torah commandments as the path to righteousness. The question assumes God requires specific performances. Jesus transforms the discussion from multiple works to single work, from human effort to divine gift received by faith.

Related Passages

Revelation 20:12 — Judgment according to deeds

Romans 2:1 — Judging others

Study Questions

1. Why do people naturally think of salvation in terms of works to perform?

2. How does Jesus' answer (verse 29) transform the discussion from works to faith?

Interlinear Text

εἶπον	οὖν	πρὸς	αὐτόν	Τί	ποιοῦμεν	ἵνα	ἐργαζώμεθα
said they	Then	unto	him	What	shall we do	that	we might work
G2036	G3767	G4314	G846	G5101	G4160	G2443	G2038
τὰ	ἔργα	τοῦ	θεοῦ				
G3588	the works	G3588	of God				
	G2041		G2316				

Additional Cross-References

Deuteronomy 5:27 (References God): Go thou near, and hear all that the LORD our God shall say: and speak thou unto us all that the LORD our God shall speak unto thee; and we will hear it, and do it.

Acts 9:6 (Parallel theme): And he trembling and astonished said, Lord, what wilt thou have me to do? And the Lord said unto him, Arise, and go into the city, and it shall be told thee what thou must do.

Acts 16:30 (Parallel theme): And brought them out, and said, Sirs, what must I do to be saved?

Matthew 19:16 (Parallel theme): And, behold, one came and said unto him, Good Master, what good thing shall I do, that I may have eternal life?

Luke 10:25 (Parallel theme): And, behold, a certain lawyer stood up, and tempted him, saying, Master, what shall I do to inherit eternal life?