

Luke 10:17

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And the seventy returned again with joy, saying, Lord, even the devils are subject unto us through thy name.

Analysis

And the seventy returned again with joy, saying, Lord, even the devils are subject unto us through thy name. The disciples return with chara (χαρᾶς, joy) —not mere happiness but deep spiritual delight at witnessing God's power. Their exclamation focuses on demon subjection: the Greek hypotassetai (ὑποτάσσεται) is present passive, indicating ongoing subordination. Demons don't merely flee—they are subjected, placed under authority.

The phrase **through thy name** (en tō onomati sou, ἐν τῷ ὀνόματί σου) is theologically critical. The disciples wield no personal power; authority comes entirely through Jesus' name. In Hebrew thought, a name represents the full person, character, and authority. Invoking Jesus' name means operating under His delegated power, not magical incantation. This anticipates Acts where the apostles perform signs "in the name of Jesus Christ" (Acts 3:6, 4:10, 16:18).

Yet Jesus immediately redirects their focus (v. 20) from spectacular ministry success to the greater joy of salvation—names written in heaven. Ministry power can become a snare if it eclipses personal relationship with God. The seventy learned what all ministers must: the greatest miracle is not power over demons but reconciliation with the Father through the Son.

Historical Context

This mission of the seventy (or seventy-two in some manuscripts) occurred during Jesus' final journey to Jerusalem. Unlike the Twelve's mission restricted to Israel (Matthew 10:5-6), this broader sending likely included Samaritan and Gentile regions, prefiguring the church's universal mission. First-century exorcism was common among Jewish and pagan practitioners, but Jesus' disciples demonstrated unique authority that amazed even themselves—demons obeyed immediately without elaborate rituals or formulas.

Related Passages

Ephesians 2:8 — Salvation by grace through faith

Romans 10:9 — Confession and belief for salvation

Study Questions

1. How does the disciples' amazement at demonic subjection reveal what they didn't yet fully understand about Jesus' identity and authority?
2. Why does Jesus redirect their joy from ministry success to salvation, and how does this guard against spiritual pride?
3. What does invoking Jesus' name truly mean, and how does this differ from treating His name as a magical formula?

Interlinear Text

Ὑπέστρεψαν δὲ οἱ ἑβδομήκοντα μετὰ χαρᾶς λέγοντες
returned again And G3588 the seventy with joy saying
G5290 G1161 G1440 G3326 G5479 G3004

Κύριε καὶ τὰ δαιμόνια ὑποτάσσεται ἡμῖν ἐν τῷ
Lord even G3588 the devils are subject unto us through G3588
G2962 G2532 G1140 G5293 G2254 G1722

ὄνοματί σου

name thy
G3686 G4675

Additional Cross-References

Romans 16:20 (References Lord): And the God of peace shall bruise Satan under your feet shortly. The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you. Amen.

Mark 16:17 (Evil): And these signs shall follow them that believe; In my name shall they cast out devils; they shall speak with new tongues;

Luke 9:1 (Evil): Then he called his twelve disciples together, and gave them power and authority over all devils, and to cure diseases.

Luke 10:1 (References Lord): After these things the Lord appointed other seventy also, and sent them two and two before his face into every city and place, whither he himself would come.

Luke 10:9 (Parallel theme): And heal the sick that are therein, and say unto them, The kingdom of God is come nigh unto you.