

Luke 10:25

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And, behold, a certain lawyer stood up, and tempted him, saying, Master, what shall I do to inherit eternal life?

Analysis

The lawyer's question 'Master, what shall I do to inherit eternal life?' (*διδάσκαλε, τί ποιήσας ζωὴν αἰώνιον κληρονομήσω;*) reveals a works-based understanding of salvation. The participle 'poiēsas' (ποιήσας, having done) assumes earning eternal life through performance. Jesus redirects him to Scripture (v.26), then tells the Good Samaritan parable to expose self-righteousness and demonstrate that no one perfectly fulfills the law's demands. The question 'who is my neighbor?' (v.29) attempts to limit obligation and justify selective love, but Jesus' answer universalizes neighbor-love, making salvation by law-keeping impossible and pointing toward grace.

Historical Context

Lawyers (*νομικοί, nomikoi*) were experts in Mosaic law and oral tradition, part of the scribal class. They interpreted Torah and taught in synagogues. This lawyer 'stood up to test' (*ἐκπειράζων, trying to trap*) Jesus, seeking to discredit Him publicly. His question about eternal life reflects first-century Jewish debate over salvation requirements—Pharisees emphasized law observance, while Jesus taught grace through faith. The parable's setting on the Jericho road (a notoriously dangerous 17-mile descent from Jerusalem) would resonate with hearers familiar with banditry in that region.

Related Passages

John 15:13 — Greatest form of love

1 John 4:8 — God is love

Revelation 20:12 — Judgment according to deeds

Matthew 25:31 — Final judgment

Study Questions

1. How does the lawyer's works-based question reveal the human tendency to seek salvation through performance?
2. What does Jesus' response teach about the law's purpose in exposing sin rather than providing salvation?

Interlinear Text

Καὶ ἰδού, νομικός τις ἀνέστη ἐκπειράζων αὐτὸν Καὶ
And behold lawyer a certain stood up tempted him And
G2532 G2400 G3544 G5100 G450 G1598 G846 G2532

λέγων, Διδάσκαλε τί ποιήσας ζωὴν αἰώνιον
saying Master what shall I do life eternal
G3004 G1320 G5101 G4160 G2222 G166

κληρονομήσω
to inherit
G2816

Additional Cross-References

Luke 18:18 (Eternal Life): And a certain ruler asked him, saying, Good Master, what shall I do to inherit eternal life?

