

Luke 13:27

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

But he shall say, I tell you, I know you not whence ye are; depart from me, all ye workers of iniquity.

Analysis

Jesus responds to their claims: 'But he shall say, I tell you, I know you not whence ye are; depart from me, all ye workers of iniquity.' The repeated 'I know you not whence ye are' emphasizes that Jesus doesn't recognize them as His own. Despite their claims of association, He declares 'depart from me,' a judicial dismissal. The phrase 'workers of iniquity' indicates active pursuit of sin, not passive failure. The term 'workers' means laborers—these people worked at sin with the same energy others should work at righteousness. External religious profession combined with immoral living exposes false faith. This echoes Jesus' warning in the Sermon on the Mount (Matthew 7:21-23) that many who claim 'Lord, Lord' will be rejected.

Historical Context

This teaching directly challenges Jewish confidence in ethnic and religious privilege. Many assumed that being Abraham's descendants and members of the covenant community guaranteed salvation (Matthew 3:9, John 8:39-41). Jesus insists that genealogy and religious heritage save no one—only personal faith and repentance matter. The early church struggled with this truth, as Jewish Christians initially resisted Gentile inclusion and Gentile equality (Acts 10-11, 15, Galatians 2). Paul addresses this extensively in Romans 2-4, arguing that true children of Abraham are those who share his faith, not merely his DNA.

Related Passages

Revelation 20:12 — Judgment according to deeds

Matthew 25:31 — Final judgment

Study Questions

1. What does 'workers of iniquity' teach about the incompatibility of genuine Christianity with ongoing, unrepentant sin?
2. How does Jesus' rejection of those who claim association with Him challenge contemporary evangelism that emphasizes decisions without discipleship?
3. In what ways might people today assume salvation based on religious heritage, church attendance, or doctrinal knowledge without genuine heart transformation?

Interlinear Text

καὶ	έρει	λέγω	ὑμῖν	Οὐκ	οἶδα	ὑμᾶς	πόθεν	έστε·
But	he shall say	I tell	you	not	I know	you	whence	ye are
G2532	G2046	G3004	G5213	G3756	G1492	G5209	G4159	G2075

ἀπόστητε	ἀπ'	έμοῦ	πάντες	οἱ	έργάται	τῆς	ἀδικίας
depart	from	me	all	G3588	ye workers	G3588	of iniquity
G868	G575	G1700	G3956		G2040		G93

Additional Cross-References

Matthew 25:41 (Parallel theme): Then shall he say also unto them on the left hand, Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels:

Psalms 6:8 (Sin): Depart from me, all ye workers of iniquity; for the LORD hath heard the voice of my weeping.

Psalms 119:115 (Parallel theme): Depart from me, ye evildoers: for I will keep the commandments of my God.

Psalms 1:6 (Parallel theme): For the LORD knoweth the way of the righteous: but the way of the ungodly shall perish.

Luke 13:25 (Parallel theme): When once the master of the house is risen up, and hath shut to the door, and ye begin to stand without, and to knock at the door, saying, Lord, Lord, open unto us; and he shall answer and say unto you, I know you not whence ye are:

Psalms 28:3 (Sin): Draw me not away with the wicked, and with the workers of iniquity, which speak peace to their neighbours, but mischief is in their hearts.

Psalms 125:5 (Sin): As for such as turn aside unto their crooked ways, the LORD shall lead them forth with the workers of iniquity: but peace shall be upon Israel.

Psalms 5:6 (Sin): Thou shalt destroy them that speak leasing: the LORD will abhor the bloody and deceitful man.

Psalms 101:8 (Parallel theme): I will early destroy all the wicked of the land; that I may cut off all wicked doers from the city of the LORD.

Hosea 9:12 (Parallel theme): Though they bring up their children, yet will I bereave them, that there shall not be a man left: yea, woe also to them when I depart from them!