

Luke 17:18

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

There are not found that returned to give glory to God, save this stranger.

Analysis

There are not found that returned to give glory to God, save this stranger.

Jesus' assessment is both observation and indictment. **There are not found** (οὐχ εὐρέθησαν, ouch heurethēsan) indicates a search that came up empty—Jesus looked for worshipers but found only one. The phrase **to give glory to God** (δοῦναι δόξαν τῷ θεῷ, dounai doxan tō theō) describes the purpose of return: not merely to thank Jesus personally but to glorify God for the miracle. The Samaritan recognized the theological dimension—healing came from God through Jesus.

The word **stranger** (ἀλλογενής, allogenēs—literally "of another race/nation") emphasizes ethnic otherness. In Jewish parlance, Samaritans were mongrel half-breeds, theologically corrupt, ritually defiling. Yet this allogenēs demonstrated covenant faithfulness (returning to praise God) that the nine Jews lacked. The irony is crushing: the ethnic and religious outsider understood worship while God's covenant people pursued blessings without thanksgiving.

This prefigures the gospel's trajectory: Israel's Messiah came to His own, and His own received Him not (John 1:11), but Gentiles would stream into the kingdom (Luke 13:29, Acts 10-11, Romans 11:11-24). The Samaritan's faith-filled gratitude contrasts with Jewish presumption. Jesus highlights this repeatedly: a Roman centurion's faith exceeds Israel's (Luke 7:9), Ninevites and the Queen of Sheba will condemn Jesus' generation (Luke 11:31-32), and now a Samaritan leper exemplifies responsive faith. The lesson: proximity to religious truth doesn't guarantee grateful hearts or saving faith.

Historical Context

Samaritans descended from Israelites who intermarried with Assyrian colonists after the Northern Kingdom's fall (722 BC, 2 Kings 17:24-41). They worshiped Yahweh but only accepted the Pentateuch, rejecting Jerusalem temple worship in favor of Mount Gerizim (John 4:20). Jews considered them heretics and half-breeds, avoiding contact when possible. That Jesus highlighted a Samaritan's superior faith would have scandalized His Jewish audience—especially the Pharisees who prided themselves on covenant membership.

The Samaritan's action—falling on his face at Jesus' feet (v. 16)—was worship posture reserved for God alone. Combined with giving God glory, this suggests the Samaritan recognized Jesus' divine authority. His worship was both theologically informed (glory to God) and christologically significant (prostration before Jesus). The nine received healing and likely completed their priestly certification, enjoying restored community life—but they missed the greater treasure of knowing the Healer personally. Their ingratitude cost them the relationship for which they were created. Physical healing without spiritual transformation is incomplete salvation—the Samaritan alone received both.

Related Passages

Genesis 1:1 — Creation of heavens and earth

Colossians 1:16 — All things created through Christ

Study Questions

1. How does Jesus' emphasis on the stranger's faithfulness challenge religious privilege and ethnic pride?
2. What does it mean to 'give glory to God' in response to His blessings, versus merely enjoying the benefits?
3. In what ways might you resemble the nine who received blessings but failed to return to worship the Giver?

Interlinear Text

οὐχ	εὐρέθησαν	ὑποστρέψαντες	δοῦναι	δόξαν	τῷ	θεῷ
not	There are	that returned	to give	glory	G3588	to God
G3756	G2147	G5290	G1325	G1391		G2316
εἰ	μὴ	ὁ	ἀλλογενὴς	οὗτος		
G1487	G3361	G3588	stranger	this		
		G241		G3778		

Additional Cross-References

Psalms 50:23 (Salvation): Whoso offereth praise glorifieth me: and to him that ordereth his conversation aright will I shew the salvation of God.

Psalms 106:13 (Parallel theme): They soon forgot his works; they waited not for his counsel:

Revelation 14:7 (Glory): Saying with a loud voice, Fear God, and give glory to him; for the hour of his judgment is come: and worship him that made heaven, and earth, and the sea, and the fountains of waters.

Isaiah 42:12 (Glory): Let them give glory unto the LORD, and declare his praise in the islands.