

Luke 18:19

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And Jesus said unto him, Why callest thou me good? none is good, save one, that is, God.

Analysis

And Jesus said unto him, Why callest thou me good? none is good, save one, that is, God—Jesus challenges the ruler's casual use of *agathos* (ἀγαθός), 'good.' *Ti me legeis agathon* (τί με λέγεις ἀγαθόν)—'why do you call me good?' *Oudeis agathos ei mē heis ho theos* (οὐδεὶς ἀγαθὸς εἰ μὴ εἷς ὁ θεός)—'no one is good except one, God.'

Jesus isn't denying His divinity but forcing the ruler to think: either

1. Jesus is merely human and therefore not truly good, or
2. Jesus is divine and therefore the ruler faces God Himself.

The ruler used 'good teacher' as flattery; Jesus transforms it into confrontation. Before discussing eternal life, the ruler must recognize who stands before him. Casual religious titles won't suffice when facing the Holy One whose goodness exposes all human unrighteousness.

Historical Context

Jewish monotheism insisted God alone possessed absolute goodness. Human righteousness was always relative and flawed (Isaiah 64:6). By claiming 'no one is good except God,' Jesus forces the ruler to examine both

1. his own goodness—is he truly righteous as he claims?
2. Jesus's identity—if Jesus is good, He must be divine.

This encounter reveals that questions about earning eternal life must begin with recognizing God's absolute holiness and human inability to meet that standard.

Related Passages

Revelation 20:12 — Judgment according to deeds

Matthew 25:31 — Final judgment

Study Questions

1. What two conclusions about Jesus's identity does His statement 'no one is good except God' force the ruler to consider?
2. How does recognizing God's absolute goodness expose the inadequacy of human attempts at righteousness?
3. Before discussing 'how to be saved,' why must you first confront 'who can save'?

Interlinear Text

εἶπεν	δὲ	αὐτῷ	ὁ	Ἰησοῦς	τί	με	λέγεις	ἀγαθός
said	And	unto him	G3588	Jesus	Why	me	callest thou	good
G2036	G1161	G846		G2424	G5101	G3165	G3004	G18
οὐδεὶς	ἀγαθός	εἰ	μὴ	εἷς	ὁ	θεός		
none	good	G1487	G3361	one	G3588	that is God		
G3762	G18			G1520		G2316		

Additional Cross-References

Hebrews 7:26 (Parallel theme): For such an high priest became us, who is holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners, and made higher than the heavens;

James 1:17 (Good): Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of lights, with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning.

