

Luke 22:25

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And he said unto them, The kings of the Gentiles exercise lordship over them; and they that exercise authority upon them are called benefactors.

Analysis

The kings of the Gentiles exercise lordship over them (κυριεύουσιν, kyrieuousin—to have dominion, rule as master). Jesus contrasts pagan power structures with kingdom values. **Benefactors** (εὐεργέται, euergetai) was an official title Hellenistic rulers adopted, claiming to serve the people while actually exploiting them for glory. Roman emperors and Eastern kings took this title to justify autocratic rule as paternalistic care.

Jesus exposes the fundamental corruption of worldly leadership: it seeks to be served rather than to serve. The Greek construction emphasizes oppressive domination (κατεξουσιάζω, katexousiazo—to exercise authority over, lord it over), where supposed "benefactors" actually enslaved populations while demanding praise. This is Satan's kingdom paradigm—power used for self-glorification.

Historical Context

Hellenistic monarchs and Roman emperors commonly took titles like Soter (Savior) and Euergetes (Benefactor) while maintaining totalitarian control. The Ptolemies of Egypt and Seleucids of Syria used this propaganda extensively. Jesus's disciples, living under Roman occupation, knew firsthand the reality behind such hollow titles—taxation, military force, and execution for dissent.

Related Passages

James 2:17 — Faith and works

Hebrews 11:1 — Definition of faith

Genesis 1:1 — Creation of heavens and earth

Colossians 1:16 — All things created through Christ

Study Questions

1. How do Christian leaders sometimes adopt worldly models of hierarchical power while using spiritual language to justify them?
2. In what ways can serving others become another form of self-promotion rather than genuine humility?
3. What current cultural or political leadership models contradict Jesus's teaching here?

Interlinear Text

ο δὲ εἶπεν αὐτῶν Οἱ βασιλεῖς τῶν ἐθνῶν
G3588 **And** he said them G3588 **The kings** G3588 **of the Gentiles**
G1161 G2036 G846 G935 G1484

κυριεύουσιν αὐτῶν καὶ οἱ ἔξουσιάζοντες
exercise lordship over them and G3588 **they that exercise authority upon**
G2961 G846 G2532 G1850

αὐτῶν εὑργέται καλοῦνται
them **benefactors** are called
G846 G2110 G2564