

Luke 3:14

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And the soldiers likewise demanded of him, saying, And what shall we do? And he said unto them, Do violence to no man, neither accuse any falsely; and be content with your wages.

Analysis

That 'soldiers likewise demanded of him, saying, And what shall we do?' shows repentance's universality—even military men recognized their need. The word 'likewise' indicates they joined publicans and common people in seeking guidance. Roman or Herodian soldiers had unique temptations to violence, extortion, and false accusation. John's answer addresses their specific ethical challenges, showing that repentance requires profession-specific application. That soldiers sought baptism demonstrates the Spirit's convicting work transcends social class and occupation. Their question models humility—powerful men seeking moral guidance from a wilderness preacher shows the Holy Spirit's work overcoming human pride.

Historical Context

Soldiers in first-century Judea had opportunities for extortion (demanding money under threat of violence), false accusation (for bribes), and discontent with pay. John's addressing their specific temptations shows his wisdom in applying universal truth to particular circumstances.

Related Passages

John 3:16 — God's love and salvation

Study Questions

1. How does repentance require addressing profession-specific temptations and sins?
2. What does the soldiers' question teach about humility and recognition of need?
3. How can those in positions of power genuinely submit to moral accountability?

Interlinear Text

ἐπηρώτων δὲ αὐτούς καὶ στρατευόμενοι λέγοντες καὶ
demanded And of him And the soldiers saying And
G1905 G1161 G846 G2532 G4754 G3004 G2532
ἡμεῖς Τί ποιήσομεν καὶ εἶπεν πρὸς αὐτούς Μηδένα
shall we what do And he said unto of him to no man
G2249 G5101 G4160 G2532 G2036 G4314 G846 G3367
διασείσητε μηδὲ συκοφαντήσητε καὶ ἀρκεῖσθε τοῖς
Do violence neither accuse any falsely And be content G3588
G1286 G3366 G4811 G2532 G714
όψωνίοις ὑμῶν
wages with your
G3800 G5216

Additional Cross-References

Exodus 20:16 (Parallel theme): Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbour.

Philippians 4:11 (Parallel theme): Not that I speak in respect of want: for I have learned, in whatsoever state I am, therewith to be content.

Exodus 23:1 (Parallel theme): Thou shalt not raise a false report: put not thine hand with the wicked to be an unrighteous witness.

Leviticus 19:11 (Parallel theme): Ye shall not steal, neither deal falsely, neither lie one to another.

Luke 19:8 (Parallel theme): And Zacchaeus stood, and said unto the Lord; Behold, Lord, the half of my goods I give to the poor; and if I have taken any thing from any man by false accusation, I restore him fourfold.

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