Luke 7:5

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

> For he loveth our nation, and he hath built us a synagogue.

Analysis

For he loveth our nation, and he hath built us a synagogue. The Greek agapa (ἀγαπᾷ, loves) is the verb form of agapē—selfless, sacrificial love. This Gentile Roman officer loved 'our nation' (the Jews), demonstrated through concrete action: autōs ōkodomēsen (αὐτὸς ᾠκοδόμησεν, he himself built). The reflexive pronoun emphasizes personal involvement and expense—he didn't merely fund but actively participated in building the synagōgēn (συναγωγήν).

Here is a Gentile God-fearer supporting Jewish worship of the true God, foreshadowing the Gentile inclusion in God's covenant. Yet the elders still miss the point—they cite his works while Jesus marvels at his faith. True religion combines both: faith expressing itself through love (Galatians 5:6), but salvation rests on faith alone.

Historical Context

Archaeological excavations at Capernaum uncovered a fourth-century limestone synagogue built atop earlier black basalt foundations dated to the first century—likely the very synagogue the centurion built. God-fearers were Gentiles who worshiped Israel's God without full conversion (circumcision).

Related Passages

1 John 4:8 — God is love

John 15:13 — Greatest form of love

Study Questions

1. How does genuine love for God's people manifest in tangible, costly acts of service and generosity?
2. What does the centurion's building of a synagogue teach about supporting the worship and mission of God's people?
3. How can you demonstrate love for God's church through concrete action rather than mere sentiment?

Interlinear Text

ἀγαπᾷ	γὰρ	τὸ	ἔθνος	ἡμῶν	καὶ	τὴν	συναγωγὴν	αὐτὸς
he loveth	For	G3588	nation	our	and	G3588	a synagogue	he
G25	G1063		G1484	G2257	G2532		G4864	G846

ᾠκοδόμησεν	ἡμῖν
hath built	us
G3618	G2254