

Mark 10:37

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

They said unto him, Grant unto us that we may sit, one on thy right hand, and the other on thy left hand, in thy glory.

Analysis

Grant unto us that we may sit, one on thy right hand, and the other on thy left hand, in thy glory (δὸς ἡμῖν ἵνα...καθίσωμεν, dos hēmin hina...kathisōmen). The verb δὸς (dos) is an imperative—"Grant!"—revealing presumptuous boldness. They demand rather than humbly request, assuming entitlement to positions of honor.

The phrase "thy right hand and thy left" (ἐκ δεξιῶν σου καὶ εἰς ἐξ εὐωνύμων σου, ek dexiōn sou kai heis ex euōnymōn sou) refers to the places of highest honor beside a king's throne—positions of chief authority and prestige. Matthew's parallel account (20:20-21) notes their mother Salome made the request, suggesting family coordination for dynastic positioning.

The phrase "in thy glory" (ἐν τῇ δόξῃ σου, en tē doxē sou) reveals they envision Jesus' kingdom in earthly, political terms—a visible throne with positions of power. They completely misunderstand that Jesus' glory comes through crucifixion (John 12:23-24) and that kingdom greatness means servant leadership (Mark 10:43-44). Ironically, at Jesus' crucifixion, two others will occupy positions at His right and left—two thieves on crosses (Mark 15:27).

Historical Context

Ancient Near Eastern courts featured hierarchical seating arrangements reflecting status and authority—those closest to the king held greatest power. In Persian,

Greek, and Roman imperial courts, positions at the ruler's right and left signified chief ministers or advisors. The disciples' request reflects their assumption that Jesus would establish an earthly messianic kingdom with governmental structure similar to surrounding nations. This expectation persisted even after resurrection (Acts 1:6). James and John were part of Jesus' inner circle (along with Peter) who witnessed the Transfiguration (9:2) and would witness Gethsemane (14:33)—their privileged access perhaps fueled their sense of entitlement.

Related Passages

Revelation 20:12 — Judgment according to deeds

Matthew 25:31 — Final judgment

Genesis 1:1 — Creation of heavens and earth

Colossians 1:16 — All things created through Christ

Study Questions

1. How does the disciples' request for positions 'in thy glory' expose the human tendency to desire kingdom benefits without kingdom suffering?
2. What does the ironic fulfillment—two thieves flanking Jesus on the cross—teach about the path to true glory in God's kingdom?
3. When do you seek positions, recognition, or influence in ministry for self-advancement rather than service?

Interlinear Text

οἱ	δὲ	εἶπον	αὐτῷ	Δὸς	ἡμῖν	ἵνα	εἷς	ἐξ	δεξιῶν
G3588	G1161	They said	unto him	Grant	unto us	that	one	on	right hand
		G2036	G846	G1325	G2254	G2443	G1520	G1537	G1188
σου	καὶ	εἷς	ἐξ	ἐνωνύμων	σου	καθίσωμεν	ἐν	τῇ	
thy	and	one	on	left hand	thy	we may sit	in		G3588
G4675	G2532	G1520	G1537	G2176	G4675	G2523	G1722		
δόξῃ	σου								
glory	thy								
G1391	G4675								

Additional Cross-References

Matthew 19:28 (Glory): And Jesus said unto them, Verily I say unto you, That ye which have followed me, in the regeneration when the Son of man shall sit in the throne of his glory, ye also shall sit upon twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel.

Psalms 110:1 (Parallel theme): The LORD said unto my Lord, Sit thou at my right hand, until I make thine enemies thy footstool.

Mark 16:19 (Parallel theme): So then after the Lord had spoken unto them, he was received up into heaven, and sat on the right hand of God.

Luke 24:26 (Glory): Ought not Christ to have suffered these things, and to enter into his glory?