

Matthew 20:24

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And when the ten heard it, they were moved with indignation against the two brethren.

Analysis

And when the ten heard it, they were moved with indignation (ἠγανάκτησαν)—The verb *ēganaktēsan* (were indignant) reveals intense displeasure, not righteous anger at James and John's presumption, but competitive jealousy. The ten were angry because they wanted the same privileged positions. **Against the two brethren** (περὶ τῶν δύο ἀδελφῶν)—The description *adelphōn* (brothers) underscores the tragedy: covenant siblings fighting over status.

Immediately after Jesus's third passion prediction and His teaching on suffering service, all twelve disciples—not just James and John—demonstrate complete failure to grasp His kingdom ethics. Their competitive spirit contradicts everything Jesus has taught about humility (Matthew 18:1-4), servanthood (Matthew 20:26-28), and the last being first (Matthew 19:30). The disciples' carnal ambition necessitates Jesus's definitive teaching on servant leadership in verses 25-28.

Historical Context

The disciples' political ambition reflected common first-century Jewish expectations. Messianic movements typically promised positions of power when the kingdom was established. The Zealot party sought to overthrow Rome militarily; the Essenes expected an apocalyptic victory; Pharisees anticipated national restoration. All twelve disciples, including Judas, expected Jesus to establish an earthly kingdom, making their indignation understandable though misguided.

Related Passages

Matthew 25:31 — Final judgment

Romans 2:1 — Judging others

Study Questions

1. Why were the ten disciples angry—because James and John were wrong to ask, or because they asked first?
2. How does competitive ambition within Christian community contradict the gospel of grace?
3. What does the disciples' collective failure immediately after Jesus's passion prediction reveal about the human capacity for self-deception?

Interlinear Text

Καὶ	ἀκούσαντες	οἱ	δέκα	ἠγανάκτησαν
And	heard	G3588	when the ten	it they were moved with indignation
G2532	G191		G1176	G23
περὶ	τῶν	δύο	ἀδελφῶν	
against	G3588	the two	brethren	
G4012		G1417	G80	

Additional Cross-References

1 Peter 5:5 (Parallel theme): Likewise, ye younger, submit yourselves unto the elder. Yea, all of you be subject one to another, and be clothed with humility: for God resisteth the proud, and giveth grace to the humble.