

Acts 13:28

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And though they found no cause of death in him, yet desired they Pilate that he should be slain.

Analysis

And though they found no cause of death in him (αἰτίαν θανάτου, aitian thanatou)—Paul emphasizes the judicial innocence of Jesus. Despite rigorous examination by both Jewish and Roman authorities, no legitimate capital charge could be substantiated. This echoes Pilate's threefold declaration "I find no fault in him" (Luke 23:4, 14, 22) and fulfills Isaiah 53:9, "he had done no violence, neither was any deceit in his mouth."

Yet desired they Pilate that he should be slain (ἡτήσαντο Πιλᾶτον ἀναιρεθῆναι αὐτόν, ētēsanto Pilaton anairethēnai auton)—The verb ἡτήσαντο (ētēsanto, "demanded") implies persistent, forceful petition. Despite Jesus's legal innocence, the religious leaders manipulated political pressure to secure crucifixion. This reveals the depth of human depravity: they murdered the sinless Son of God while releasing Barabbas, a murderer. Peter makes the same charge in Acts 3:13-15, highlighting the paradox of rejecting the Holy and Just One.

Historical Context

This occurred during Paul's sermon in the synagogue at Pisidian Antioch (c. AD 47-48), his first recorded sermon in Acts. He's recounting salvation history to a Jewish audience, demonstrating how Israel's leaders fulfilled prophecy through their rejection of Jesus. The legal innocence of Jesus was crucial apologetically—the crucifixion wasn't execution for crimes but the predetermined plan of God (Acts 2:23).

Related Passages

1 Corinthians 13:4 — Characteristics of love

1 John 4:8 — God is love

Study Questions

1. How does Jesus's judicial innocence intensify both the guilt of his murderers and the wonder of his substitutionary atonement for guilty sinners?
2. What does the religious establishment's rejection of an innocent man reveal about humanity's moral capacity apart from God's grace?

Interlinear Text

καὶ μηδεμίαν αἰτίαν θανάτου εύρόντες
And no cause of death though they found
G2532 G3367 G156 G2288 G2147

ἡτήσαντο Πιλᾶτον ἀναιρεθῆναι αὐτόν
in him yet desired they Pilate should be slain that he
G154 G4091 G337 G846

Additional Cross-References

John 19:4 (Parallel theme): Pilate therefore went forth again, and saith unto them, Behold, I bring him forth to you, that ye may know that I find no fault in him.