

John 12:33

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

This he said, signifying what death he should die.

Analysis

John provides editorial explanation: Jesus spoke of the manner of His death—crucifixion, lifted up on the cross. The verb 'signifying' indicates symbolic teaching requiring interpretation. 'What death he should die' specifically points to Roman crucifixion, the only form of capital punishment involving being 'lifted up.' This fulfills Jesus' earlier prediction (3:14) comparing His lifting to the bronze serpent. John's clarification aids readers, demonstrating the Gospel's catechetical purpose. The lifting encompasses both crucifixion and exaltation—degradation becomes glorification.

Historical Context

Crucifixion was Roman execution method; Jewish capital punishment was stoning. Jesus' prediction that He'd be 'lifted up' specifically foretold Roman execution, requiring religious leaders to involve Pilate (18:31).

Related Passages

Romans 2:1 — Judging others

Matthew 25:31 — Final judgment

Study Questions

1. How does the double meaning of 'lifted up' (crucified and exalted) demonstrate God's redemptive irony?
2. What does the specific manner of death teach about prophecy's precision?
3. In what ways does your degradation become God's platform for glorification?

Interlinear Text

τοῦτο δὲ ἔλεγεν σημαίνων ποίω θανάτῳ ἥμελλεν

This G1161 he said G3004 signifying G4591 what G4169 death G2288 he should G3195

ἀποθνήσκειν

die

G599

Additional Cross-References

John 18:32 (Parallel theme): That the saying of Jesus might be fulfilled, which he spake, signifying what death he should die.

John 21:19 (Parallel theme): This spake he, signifying by what death he should glorify God. And when he had spoken this, he saith unto him, Follow me.