

John 18:28

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Then led they Jesus from Caiaphas unto the hall of judgment: and it was early; and they themselves went not into the judgment hall, lest they should be defiled; but that they might eat the passover.

Analysis

Then led they Jesus from Caiaphas unto the hall of judgment (εἰς τὸ πραιτώριον, eis to praitōrion, 'the praetorium')—Pilate's official residence, likely Herod's palace on Jerusalem's western hill. **And it was early** (πρωῒ, prōi, 'early morning')—after a sleepless night of mock trials.

They themselves went not into the judgment hall, lest they should be defiled (ἴνα μὴ μιανθῶσιν, hina mē mianthōsin)—Entering a Gentile residence would cause ceremonial uncleanness, preventing Passover participation. John's irony is devastating: they strain at ritual purity while engineering history's greatest injustice. **But that they might eat the passover**—they plot to kill the Passover Lamb while obsessing over ceremonial qualification to eat the shadow.

Historical Context

Jewish tradition taught that Gentile homes were unclean due to potential presence of dead bodies or idolatry. This required Pilate to conduct proceedings outdoors, creating the public spectacle John describes. The chronological note confirms Jesus died as Passover lambs were slaughtered (19:14), fulfilling 1 Corinthians 5:7 —'Christ our passover is sacrificed for us.'

Related Passages

Matthew 25:31 — Final judgment

Romans 2:1 — Judging others

Study Questions

1. How does the religious leaders' concern for ceremonial purity while murdering the Son of God expose the danger of externalized religion?
2. What modern equivalents exist to straining gnats while swallowing camels (Matthew 23:24)—maintaining religious appearance while violating God's heart?
3. How does their desire to 'eat the passover' while killing the true Passover Lamb illustrate humanity's capacity for self-deception?

Interlinear Text

Ἄγουσιν οὖν τὸν Ἰησοῦν ἀπὸ τοῦ Καϊάφα εἰς τὸ¹
led they Then G3588 Jesus from G3588 Caiaphas into G3588
G71 G3767 G2424 G575 G2533 G1519

πραιτώριον ἦν δὲ πρωίᾳ καὶ αὐτοὶ οὐκ
the hall of judgment it was and early and they themselves not
G4232 G2258 G1161 G4405 G2532 G846 G3756

εἰσῆλθον εἰς τὸ πραιτώριον ἵνα μὴ μιανθῶσιν
went into G3588 the hall of judgment that G3361 they should be defiled
G1525 G1519 G4232 G2443 G3392

ἀλλ' ἵνα φάγωσιν τὸ πάσχα
but that they might eat G3588 the passover
G235 G2443 G5315 G3957

Additional Cross-References

John 18:33 (Judgment): Then Pilate entered into the judgment hall again, and called Jesus, and said unto him, Art thou the King of the Jews?

John 19:9 (Judgment): And went again into the judgment hall, and saith unto Jesus, Whence art thou? But Jesus gave him no answer.

John 19:14 (Parallel theme): And it was the preparation of the passover, and about the sixth hour: and he saith unto the Jews, Behold your King!

Matthew 27:27 (References Jesus): Then the soldiers of the governor took Jesus into the common hall, and gathered unto him the whole band of soldiers.

Acts 11:3 (Parallel theme): Saying, Thou wentest in to men uncircumcised, and didst eat with them.

Acts 3:13 (References Jesus): The God of Abraham, and of Isaac, and of Jacob, the God of our fathers, hath glorified his Son Jesus; whom ye delivered up, and denied him in the presence of Pilate, when he was determined to let him go.

Acts 10:28 (Parallel theme): And he said unto them, Ye know how that it is an unlawful thing for a man that is a Jew to keep company, or come unto one of another nation; but God hath shewed me that I should not call any man common or unclean.

John 11:55 (Parallel theme): And the Jews' passover was nigh at hand: and many went out of the country up to Jerusalem before the passover, to purify themselves.

Deuteronomy 16:2 (Parallel theme): Thou shalt therefore sacrifice the passover unto the LORD thy God, of the flock and the herd, in the place which the LORD shall choose to place his name there.

Micah 2:1 (Parallel theme): Woe to them that devise iniquity, and work evil upon their beds! when the morning is light, they practise it, because it is in the power of their hand.