

John 18:31

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Then said Pilate unto them, Take ye him, and judge him according to your law. The Jews therefore said unto him, It is not lawful for us to put any man to death:

Analysis

Then said Pilate unto them, Take ye him, and judge him according to your law—Pilate attempts to deflect this political trap by returning jurisdiction to Jewish courts. **The Jews therefore said unto him, It is not lawful for us to put any man to death** (Οὐκ ἔξεστιν ἡμῖν ἀποκτεῖναι οὐδένα, ouk exestin hēmin apokteinai oudena)—Rome had revoked capital punishment authority from provincial courts (likely around AD 6-7).

This forced collaboration reveals God's sovereignty: Jewish execution was stoning (Acts 7:58); Roman crucifixion. Only Roman involvement could produce crucifixion—the death Jesus repeatedly predicted (3:14, 8:28, 12:32-33). The Jews' loss of capital jurisdiction wasn't historical accident but divine orchestration ensuring Jesus would be 'lifted up' on a cross, not stoned.

Historical Context

The Sanhedrin could execute for temple violations (hence their later stoning of Stephen), but formal Roman ratification was normally required. Their admission 'it is not lawful' reveals they sought Rome's official sanction for their religious vendetta, implicating both Jew and Gentile in Christ's death—showing universal guilt requiring universal atonement.

Related Passages

Romans 10:9 — Confession and belief for salvation

John 3:16 — God's love and salvation

Study Questions

1. How does God's sovereignty work through even unjust legal restrictions to accomplish His redemptive purposes?
2. What does the collaboration between Jewish and Roman authorities teach about human guilt being universal, not ethnic?
3. How does the specific manner of Jesus's death (crucifixion vs. stoning) demonstrate the precision of prophetic fulfillment?

Interlinear Text

εἰπον εὖν αὐτῷ ὁ Πιλᾶτος Λάβετε αὐτῷ ὑμεῖς καὶ
said Then him G3588 Pilate Take him ye and
G2036 G3767 G846 G4091 G2983 G846 G5210 G2532

κατὰ τὸν νόμον ὑμῶν κρίνατε αὐτῷ εἰπον οὖν αὐτῷ
according G3588 law to your judge him said Then him
G2596 G3551 G5216 G2919 G846 G2036 G3767 G846

οἱ Ἰουδαῖοι Ἡμῖν οὐκ ἔξεστιν ἀποκτεῖναι οὐδένα·
G3588 The Jews for us not It is to death any man
G2453 G2254 G3756 G1832 G615 G3762

Additional Cross-References

John 19:15 (Parallel theme): But they cried out, Away with him, away with him, crucify him. Pilate saith unto them, Shall I crucify your King? The chief priests answered, We have no king but Caesar.

