

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

εἶπον	οὖν	αὐτῷ	ὁ	Πιλάτος	λάβετε	αὐτῷ	ὁμεῖς	καὶ
said	Then	him	G3588	Pilate	Take	him	ye	and
G2036	G3767	G846		G4091	G2983	G846	G5210	G2532
κατὰ	τὸν	νόμον	ὑμῶν	κρίνατε	αὐτῷ	εἶπον	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.

