

John 18:35

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Pilate answered, Am I a Jew? Thine own nation and the chief priests have delivered thee unto me: what hast thou done?

Analysis

Am I a Jew? (Μήτι ἐγὼ Ἰουδαῖός είμι;)—The Greek particle *mēti* expects a negative answer: "I'm not a Jew, am I?" Pilate's contempt drips from this rhetorical question. As a Roman, he considers Jewish Messianic disputes beneath his concern—until they threaten imperial order.

Thine own nation and the chief priests have delivered thee (τὸ ἔθνος τὸ σὸν... παρέδωκάν σε)—The verb *paradidōmi* (delivered, betrayed) appears throughout the passion narrative, the same word used for Judas's betrayal. Pilate deflects responsibility: "Your people brought you here." Yet **what hast thou done?** betrays Pilate's puzzlement—this prisoner bears no marks of revolutionary violence. The question haunts the narrative: Jesus has done everything (healing, teaching, loving), yet his "crime" is being who he is—the Truth incarnate, intolerable to both Jewish and Roman establishments.

Historical Context

Roman-Jewish tensions ran high in first-century Judea. Pilate had already antagonized Jews by bringing military standards with Caesar's image into Jerusalem and using Temple funds for an aqueduct. His dismissive question reflects Roman ethnic prejudice—viewing Jewish religious matters as superstitious irrelevance.

Related Passages

Hebrews 11:1 — Definition of faith

Romans 1:17 — The righteous shall live by faith

Study Questions

1. How do you distance yourself from Jesus when following him becomes politically or socially costly?
2. What does the collision between Jewish religious leaders and Roman authority reveal about worldly power structures opposing Christ?
3. How does Pilate's question "What hast thou done?" expose the world's incomprehension of grace?

Interlinear Text

ἀπεκρίθη ὁ Πιλᾶτος Μήτι ἐγὼ Ἰουδαῖός είμι τὸ¹
answered G3588 Pilate G3385 I a Jew Am G3588
G611 G4091 G1473 G2453 G1510

ἔθνος τὸ σὸν καὶ οἱ ἀρχιερεῖς παρέδωκάν σε
nation G3588 Thine own and G3588 the chief priests have delivered thee
G1484 G4674 G2532 G749 G3860 G4571

ἔμοι· τί ἐποίησας
unto me what hast thou done
G1698 G5101 G4160

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