

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 εἰμι;)—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	Πιλάτος	Μήτι	ἐγὼ	Ἰουδαῖός	εἰμι	τὸ
answered G611	G3588	Pilate G4091	G3385	I G1473	a Jew G2453	Am G1510	G3588
ἔθνος	τὸ	σὸν	καὶ	οἱ	ἀρχιερεῖς	παρέδωκάν	σε
nation G1484	G3588	Thine own G4674	and G2532	G3588	the chief priests G749	have delivered G3860	thee G4571
ἐμοί·	τί	ἐποίησας					
unto me G1698	what G5101	hast thou done G4160					

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