

John 8:59

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Then took they up stones to cast at him: but Jesus hid himself, and went out of the temple, going through the midst of them, and so passed by.

Analysis

Then took they up stones to cast at him (ἥραν οὖν λίθους ἵνα βάλωσιν ἐπ' αὐτόν, eran oun lithous hina balosin ep' auton)—The crowd's violent response to Jesus's claim '**Before Abraham was, I am**' (8:58) proves they understood His deity claim. Stoning was prescribed for blasphemy (Leviticus 24:16), and they recognized Jesus's ἐγώ εἰμι (ego eimi, 'I AM') as invoking God's covenant name from Exodus 3:14. **But Jesus hid himself, and went out of the temple, going through the midst of them, and so passed by** (Ιησοῦς δὲ ἐκρύβη καὶ ἐξῆλθεν ἐκ τοῦ ἱεροῦ, Iesous de ekrybe kai exelthen ek tou hierou)—His escape demonstrates supernatural power; no mob can kill God's Son before His appointed hour (John 7:30; 8:20).

This verse reveals the fundamental division: some recognize Jesus as Yahweh incarnate and worship; others recognize the claim and seek to kill Him for 'blasphemy.' There is no middle ground when confronting Christ's deity. His ability to pass through the hostile crowd prefigures His resurrection power—death cannot hold Him when He chooses otherwise.

Historical Context

This incident occurred during the Feast of Tabernacles (John 7:2), when Jerusalem swelled with pilgrims. Temple precincts had stones readily available for construction or repair. The attempt to stone Jesus in the temple itself shows how

His claims provoked religious authorities beyond mere theological disagreement into murderous rage.

Related Passages

1 John 4:8 — God is love

1 Corinthians 13:4 — Characteristics of love

Study Questions

1. How does Jesus's claim 'Before Abraham was, I AM' force a decision—either worship Him as God or reject Him as blasphemer?
2. What does Jesus's supernatural escape teach about God's sovereignty over the timing of His own sacrifice?
3. How should Christians respond when confessing Christ's deity provokes hostile reactions—with fear or confidence in His protecting power?

Interlinear Text

ἥραν	οὖν	λίθους	τίνα	βάλωσιν	ἐπ'	αὐτῶν·	Ἰησοῦς
took they up	Then	stones	to	cast	at	him	Jesus
G142	G3767	G3037	G2443	G906	G1909	G846	G2424
δὲ	ἐκρύβη	καὶ	ἐξῆλθεν	ἐκ	τοῦ	ἱεροῦ	διελθὼν
but	hid himself	and	went	out of	G3588	the temple	going
G1161	G2928	G2532	G1831	G1537	G2411	G1330	
διὰ	μέσου	αὐτῶν·	καὶ	παρῆγεν	οὕτως		
through	the midst	him	and	passed by	so		
G1223	G3319	G846	G2532	G3855	G3779		

Additional Cross-References

John 11:8 (Parallel theme): His disciples say unto him, Master, the Jews of late sought to stone thee; and goest thou thither again?

Leviticus 24:16 (Parallel theme): And he that blasphemeth the name of the LORD, he shall surely be put to death, and all the congregation shall certainly stone him: as well the stranger, as he that is born in the land, when he blasphemeth the name of the LORD, shall be put to death.

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