

Luke 23:21

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

But they cried, saying, Crucify him, crucify him.

Analysis

The crowd's demand: 'But they cried, saying, Crucify him, crucify him.' The verb 'cried' (ἐπεφώνουν, epephōnoun) indicates loud, repeated shouting. Their demand is emphatic through repetition: 'Crucify him, crucify him' (Σταύρου σταύρου αὐτόν, Staurou staurou auton). Crucifixion was Rome's most shameful, agonizing execution—reserved for slaves and worst criminals. That crowds demand this for Jesus, who taught and healed them, demonstrates humanity's depth of depravity. Days earlier, many of these same people cried 'Hosanna' (19:38); now they scream 'Crucify.' Their fickleness exposes the human heart's instability. More tragically, they demand death for the very One who could give them life. Sinful humanity instinctively rejects its only Savior.

Historical Context

The cry 'Crucify him' was likely orchestrated by religious leaders who manipulated the crowd (Matthew 27:20, Mark 15:11). Mob mentality took over—reason fled, violence dominated. Pilate tried repeatedly to release Jesus, finding no fault (23:4, 14, 22), but political expediency overcame justice. The crowd's preference for Barabbas (a murderer, v. 18-19) over Jesus (the sinless Son of God) symbolizes humanity's natural preference for rebellion over righteousness. This scene proves total depravity—humans, left to themselves, reject God and choose sin. It also demonstrates God's sovereignty—the crowds fulfilled prophecy and accomplished God's redemptive plan (Acts 2:23, 4:27-28) even while acting wickedly.

Related Passages

1 Corinthians 13:4 — Characteristics of love

1 John 4:8 — God is love

Study Questions

1. What does the crowd's shift from 'Hosanna' to 'Crucify' reveal about human nature and fickleness?
2. How does their choice of Barabbas over Jesus symbolize humanity's natural preference for sin over righteousness?
3. How can human wickedness and divine sovereignty coexist in the crucifixion?

Interlinear Text

οἱ	δὲ	ἐπεφώνουν	λέγοντες	σταύρωσον	σταύρωσον
G3588	But	they cried	saying	Crucify	Crucify
	G1161	G2019	G3004	G4717	G4717

αὐτόν

him
G846