

Luke 23:24

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And Pilate gave sentence that it should be as they required.

Analysis

Pilate's decision: 'And Pilate gave sentence that it should be as they required.' Despite finding Jesus innocent (vv. 4, 14, 22), 'Pilate gave sentence' (Πιλάτος ἐπέκρινεν, Pilatos epekrinen, Pilate decided/pronounced judgment) 'that it should be as they required' (γενέσθαι τὸ αἴτημα αὐτῶν, genesthai to aitēma autōn, that their demand be granted). Pilate had authority to release Jesus but lacked courage. Political pressure overcame justice. This represents the ultimate failure of human government—an innocent man condemned to please a mob. Pilate tried washing his hands of responsibility (Matthew 27:24), but history remembers him as the one who crucified Christ. His attempt at neutrality only ensured guilt. There is no neutrality regarding Jesus—rejection is as decisive as acceptance.

Historical Context

Pilate epitomizes political expediency over principle. He knew Jesus was innocent but feared losing control of the crowd and jeopardizing his political position. Roman governors ruled at Caesar's pleasure—if Jerusalem erupted in riot, Pilate could be removed. This calculation led him to crucify an innocent man rather than risk his career. The irony is profound: Pilate thought he was avoiding trouble, but his decision made him infamous for all time. The Apostles' Creed includes 'suffered under Pontius Pilate'—his name is eternally linked to this injustice. This warns all in positions of authority: compromise with evil to preserve power or position brings eternal disgrace. Better to lose everything than betray justice and truth.

Related Passages

James 2:17 — Faith and works

Romans 1:17 — The righteous shall live by faith

Genesis 1:1 — Creation of heavens and earth

Colossians 1:16 — All things created through Christ

Study Questions

1. How does Pilate's decision demonstrate the danger of political expediency over principle?
2. What does his attempt at neutrality ('washing hands') teach about the impossibility of remaining neutral regarding Jesus?
3. How should this warn those in authority about the eternal consequences of unjust decisions?

Interlinear Text

ὁ	δὲ	Πιλάτος	ἐπέκρινεν	γενέσθαι	τὸ	αἴτημα
G3588	And	Pilate	gave sentence	that it should be as	G3588	required
	G1161	G4091	G1948	G1096		G155

αὐτῶν·

they
G846

Additional Cross-References

Exodus 23:2 (Parallel theme): Thou shalt not follow a multitude to do evil; neither shalt thou speak in a cause to decline after many to wrest judgment:

Proverbs 17:15 (Parallel theme): He that justifieth the wicked, and he that condemneth the just, even they both are abomination to the LORD.

Matthew 27:26 (Parallel theme): Then released he Barabbas unto them: and when he had scourged Jesus, he delivered him to be crucified.

Mark 15:15 (Parallel theme): And so Pilate, willing to content the people, released Barabbas unto them, and delivered Jesus, when he had scourged him, to be crucified.

John 19:1 (Parallel theme): Then Pilate therefore took Jesus, and scourged him.

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