

Luke 23:4

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Then said Pilate to the chief priests and to the people, I find no fault in this man.

Analysis

I find no fault in this man (οὐδὲν εὐρίσκω αἴτιον, *ouden heuriskō aition*)—Pilate's first declaration of Jesus's innocence. The Greek *aition* means 'cause' or 'legal charge,' making this a formal acquittal: 'I find no basis for an accusation.' Luke records Pilate's innocence declaration three times (vv. 4, 14, 22), establishing Jesus's legal blamelessness before Roman law.

This verdict fulfills Isaiah 53:9 ('he had done no violence, neither was any deceit in his mouth') and demonstrates the injustice of what follows. Pilate's assertion contradicts the Sanhedrin's accusations of perverting the nation, forbidding tribute to Caesar, and claiming kingship (v. 2). The Roman prefect's public exoneration exposes the fabricated nature of the charges while ironically testifying to Christ's sinlessness—the very qualification necessary for him to be humanity's spotless sacrifice (Hebrews 4:15, 1 Peter 1:19).

Historical Context

Roman legal procedure (*cognitio extra ordinem*) required the governor to investigate charges personally. Pilate, governing Judea AD 26-36, was known for his contempt of Jewish sensibilities (Josephus, Philo) yet feared popular unrest that could threaten his position. His verdict here reflects standard Roman jurisprudence—without evidence of sedition or treason, he had no legal grounds for execution.

Related Passages

Revelation 20:12 — Judgment according to deeds

Matthew 25:31 — Final judgment

Study Questions

1. How does Pilate's triple declaration of innocence magnify the injustice of Jesus's crucifixion and our own guilt in requiring it?
2. What does it reveal about human nature that Pilate could recognize Jesus's innocence yet still condemn him to death?

Interlinear Text

ὁ G3588	δὲ G1161	Πιλᾶτος G4091	εἶπεν G2036	πρὸς G4314	τοὺς G3588	ἀρχιερεῖς G749	καὶ G2532	τοὺς G3588
Then		Pilate	said	to		the chief priests	and	
ὄχλους G3793	Οὐδὲν G3762	εὕρισκω G2147	αἴτιον G158	ἐν G1722	τῷ G3588	ἀνθρώπῳ G444	τούτῳ G5129	
to the people	no	I find	fault	in		man	this	

Additional Cross-References

John 18:38 (Parallel theme): Pilate saith unto him, What is truth? And when he had said this, he went out again unto the Jews, and saith unto them, I find in him no fault at all.

Mark 15:14 (Parallel theme): Then Pilate said unto them, Why, what evil hath he done? And they cried out the more exceedingly, Crucify him.

Luke 23:22 (Parallel theme): And he said unto them the third time, Why, what evil hath he done? I have found no cause of death in him: I will therefore chastise him, and let him go.

1 Peter 2:22 (Parallel theme): Who did no sin, neither was guile found in his mouth:

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