

Luke 23:6

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

When Pilate heard of Galilee, he asked whether the man were a Galilaean.

Analysis

He asked whether the man were a Galilaean—Pilate seizes upon the mention of Galilee as a potential escape from this politically dangerous case. The Greek construction (εἰ ὁ ἄνθρωπος Γαλιλαῖός ἐστιν, *ei ho anthrōpos Galilaios estin*) frames this as a formal inquiry into jurisdiction. Galilee fell under Herod Antipas's authority, offering Pilate a convenient way to shift responsibility while maintaining diplomatic protocol.

This question reveals Pilate's political calculation rather than pursuit of justice. His eagerness to defer judgment exposes the cowardice that will ultimately lead him to condemn an innocent man he knows is guiltless. The irony is profound: Jesus, though born in Bethlehem of Judea (fulfilling Micah 5:2), grew up in Nazareth of Galilee, leading to the frequent designation 'Jesus of Nazareth.' Pilate's jurisdictional maneuvering becomes another thread in God's sovereign purpose—bringing both Roman and Jewish authorities under condemnation.

Historical Context

Roman provincial administration divided authority geographically. Pontius Pilate governed Judea, Samaria, and Idumea as prefect (later procurator), while Herod Antipas ruled Galilee and Perea as tetrarch under Roman oversight. Jurisdictional questions were common in borderline cases, and deferring to local rulers maintained political relationships essential to Roman control.

Related Passages

Genesis 1:1 — Creation of heavens and earth

Colossians 1:16 — All things created through Christ

Study Questions

1. How does Pilate's attempt to pass responsibility to Herod mirror our own tendency to avoid difficult moral decisions?
2. What does this jurisdictional shuffle reveal about the futility of evading God's truth through political or religious technicalities?

Interlinear Text

Πιλάτος	δὲ	ἀκούσας	Γαλιλαίαν	ἐπηρώτησεν	εἰ	ὁ
Pilate	When	heard	of Galilee	he asked	whether	G3588
G4091	G1161	G191	G1056	G1905	G1487	
ἄνθρωπος	Γαλιλαῖός	ἐστίν·				
the man	a Galilaean	were				
G444	G1057	G2076				

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