

Mark 15:11

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

But the chief priests moved the people, that he should rather release Barabbas unto them.

Analysis

But the chief priests moved the people (οἱ δὲ ἀρχιερεῖς ἀνέσεισαν τὸν ὄχλον, hoi de archiereis aneseisan ton ochlon)—The verb ἀνασείω (anaseiō) means to shake up, stir up, incite. It suggests agitation, deliberate manipulation. The ὄχλος (ochlos, crowd) becomes a weapon in the chief priests' hands. **That he should rather release Barabbas unto them** (ἵνα μᾶλλον τὸν Βαραββᾶν ἀπολύσῃ αὐτοῖς, hina mallon ton Barabban apolysē autois)—The conjunction *ἵνα* (hina) indicates purpose; *μᾶλλον* (mallon, 'rather, instead') shows substitution.

The chief priests—who should shepherd God's people toward righteousness—instead manipulate them toward murdering the Righteous One. They preferred a murderer to the Messiah, violence to peace, insurrection to the Kingdom of God. This reveals the complete moral inversion of corrupt leadership. Barabbas becomes history's most dramatic recipient of substitutionary grace—the guilty released because the innocent takes his place (Isaiah 53:5-6).

Historical Context

The chief priests wielded enormous social capital—they controlled Temple employment, certified ritual purity, and managed the economic ecosystem around pilgrimage and sacrifice. Thousands depended on their favor. They could mobilize clients, servants, and associates quickly. The crowd's transformation from neutral (v. 8) to demanding Jesus's death (v. 13-14) in minutes testifies to organized

manipulation. This mirrors modern propaganda techniques—controlling narrative, appealing to nationalist sentiments, and demonizing opponents.

Related Passages

Psalm 19:1 — Heavens declare God's glory

Genesis 1:1 — Creation of heavens and earth

Study Questions

1. What tactics did the chief priests likely use to 'move the people' so quickly toward demanding Jesus's death?
2. How does the crowd's choice of Barabbas over Jesus reveal the fallenness of human moral judgment?
3. What responsibility do religious leaders bear when they manipulate people toward evil ends?

Interlinear Text

οἱ	δὲ	ἀρχιερεῖς	ἀνέσεισαν	τὸν	ὄχλον	ἵνα
G3588	But	the chief priests			the people	that
G1161		G749			G3793	G2443

μᾶλλον	τὸν	Βαραββᾶν	ἀπολύσῃ	αὐτοῖς
he should rather	G3588	Barabbas	release	unto them
G3123		G912	G630	G846

Additional Cross-References

Acts 3:14 (Parallel theme): But ye denied the Holy One and the Just, and desired a murderer to be granted unto you;