

Matthew 26:4

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And consulted that they might take Jesus by subtilty, and kill him.

Analysis

Consulted that they might take Jesus by subtilty—The Greek *dolos* (δόλος) means 'deceit' or 'treachery.' The religious leaders plot to arrest Jesus secretly, contradicting legal procedures requiring public charges. Their scheming fulfills Psalm 2:2: 'The rulers take counsel together against the LORD, and against his anointed.'

And kill him—The stark brutality of *apokteino* (ἀποκτείνω) reveals premeditated murder. They've moved beyond theological disagreement to conspiracy to commit capital crime. These guardians of 'Thou shalt not kill' (Exodus 20:13) plot judicial murder of the sinless One.

Historical Context

Under Roman occupation, the Sanhedrin lacked authority to execute (John 18:31), requiring them to manipulate Pilate into ordering crucifixion. Their plan required secrecy because Jesus had popular support—the crowds had proclaimed Him during the Triumphal Entry just days before.

Related Passages

Ephesians 2:8 — Salvation by grace through faith

Romans 10:9 — Confession and belief for salvation

Study Questions

1. How does the religious leaders' use of deception contrast with Jesus's open teaching in the temple courts?
2. What does their conspiracy reveal about the human heart's capacity for self-justification when rejecting God's truth?

Interlinear Text

καὶ συνεβουλεύσαντο ὅνα τὸν Ἰησοῦν κρατήσωσιν

And consulted that G3588 Jesus they might take
G2532 G4823 G2443 G2424 G2902

δόλῳ καὶ ἀποκτείνωσιν.

by subtlety And kill
G1388 G2532 G615

Additional Cross-References

Matthew 12:14 (Parallel theme): Then the Pharisees went out, and held a council against him, how they might destroy him.

Acts 13:10 (Parallel theme): And said, O full of all subtlety and all mischief, thou child of the devil, thou enemy of all righteousness, wilt thou not cease to pervert the right ways of the Lord?

Psalms 2:2 (Parallel theme): The kings of the earth set themselves, and the rulers take counsel together, against the LORD, and against his anointed, saying,