

Matthew 27:11

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And Jesus stood before the governor: and the governor asked him, saying, Art thou the King of the Jews? And Jesus said unto him, Thou sayest.

Analysis

Art thou the King of the Jews? And Jesus said unto him, Thou sayest (Σὺ λέγεις)—Pilate's question addressed the political charge: sedition against Caesar. Jesus's enigmatic response (su legeis, 'you say') neither denies nor affirms in Pilate's terms, for Christ's kingdom is 'not of this world' (John 18:36).

This was Rome's cognitio procedure—a magistrate's investigation without jury. As praefectus (prefect), Pilate held ius gladii (right of the sword), absolute power over capital cases. Yet here stands the true King before an earthly governor, sovereign over His own trial.

Historical Context

Pontius Pilate governed Judea AD 26-36 under Syrian legate oversight. Roman prefects like Pilate held military and judicial authority, including capital punishment rights. The charge 'King of the Jews' threatened maiestas (treason against Rome), punishable by crucifixion.

Related Passages

John 15:13 — Greatest form of love

1 Corinthians 13:4 — Characteristics of love

Study Questions

1. How does Jesus's response to Pilate model how to answer hostile interrogation with truth while refusing false premises?
2. What does it mean that Jesus, the true King, voluntarily submitted to an unjust earthly authority to accomplish salvation?

Interlinear Text

Ο δὲ Ἰησοῦς ἔστη ἔμπροσθεν τοῦ ἡγεμῶν καὶ
G3588 And Jesus stood before the governor and
G1161 G2424 G2476 G1715 G3588 G2232 G2532

ἐπηρώτησεν αὐτῷ ὁ ἡγεμὼν λέγεις Σὺ εἰ ὁ
asked him G3588 the governor sayest Thou Art G3588
G1905 G846 G2232 G3004 G4771 G1488

βασιλεὺς τῶν Ἰουδαίων ὁ δὲ Ἰησοῦς ἔφη αὐτῷ Σὺ
the King G3588 of the Jews G3588 And Jesus said him Thou
G935 G2453 G1161 G2424 G5346 G846 G4771

λέγεις
sayest
G3004

Additional Cross-References

Matthew 26:25 (Parallel theme): Then Judas, which betrayed him, answered and said, Master, is it I? He said unto him, Thou hast said.

Mark 14:62 (References Jesus): And Jesus said, I am: and ye shall see the Son of man sitting on the right hand of power, and coming in the clouds of heaven.

Matthew 2:2 (Kingdom): Saying, Where is he that is born King of the Jews? for we have seen his star in the east, and are come to worship him.

Matthew 26:64 (References Jesus): Jesus saith unto him, Thou hast said: nevertheless I say unto you, Hereafter shall ye see the Son of man sitting on the right hand of power, and coming in the clouds of heaven.

Matthew 10:18 (Kingdom): And ye shall be brought before governors and kings for my sake, for a testimony against them and the Gentiles.

Matthew 10:25 (Parallel theme): It is enough for the disciple that he be as his master, and the servant as his lord. If they have called the master of the house Beelzebub, how much more shall they call them of his household?

1 Timothy 6:13 (References Jesus): I give thee charge in the sight of God, who quickeneth all things, and before Christ Jesus, who before Pontius Pilate witnessed a good confession;

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