

Matthew 27:12

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And when he was accused of the chief priests and elders, he answered nothing.

Analysis

And when he was accused of the chief priests and elders, he answered nothing (κατηγορεῖτο... οὐδὲν ἀπεκρίνατο)—Jesus's silence fulfilled Isaiah 53:7: 'as a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so he openeth not his mouth.' The Greek kategoreo (to accuse) is legal terminology; Christ faced formal prosecution.

This was not passive weakness but sovereign self-control. Jesus had defended Himself before the Sanhedrin (Matthew 26:64); His silence before Pilate demonstrated He went to the cross willingly, not as a victim but as the appointed sacrifice who 'gave himself' (Galatians 1:4).

Historical Context

Roman legal procedure allowed the accused to defend themselves (defensio). Silence was unusual and typically interpreted as guilt, yet Pilate found no fault. The chief priests needed Roman execution since they lacked authority under occupation.

Related Passages

1 John 4:8 — God is love

1 Corinthians 13:4 — Characteristics of love

Romans 2:1 — Judging others

Revelation 20:12 — Judgment according to deeds

Study Questions

1. When have you felt called to remain silent in the face of false accusations, trusting God's vindication?
2. How does Jesus's voluntary silence contrast with our tendency to self-justify and defend our reputation?

Interlinear Text

καὶ ἐν τῷ κατηγορεῖσθαι αὐτὸν ὑπὸ τῶν ἀρχιερέων
And **when** G2532 G1722 G3588 **he was accused** G2723 G846 **of** G3588 G5259 **the chief priests** G749

καὶ τῶν πρεσβυτέρων οὐδὲν ἀπεκρίνατο
And G2532 G3588 **elders** G4245 **nothing** G3762 **he answered** G611

Additional Cross-References

Matthew 26:63 (Parallel theme): But Jesus held his peace. And the high priest answered and said unto him, I adjure thee by the living God, that thou tell us whether thou be the Christ, the Son of God.

Isaiah 53:7 (Parallel theme): He was oppressed, and he was afflicted, yet he opened not his mouth: he is brought as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so he openeth not his mouth.