

Matthew 27:21

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

The governor answered and said unto them, Whether of the twain will ye that I release unto you? They said, Barabbas.

Analysis

Whether of the twain will ye that I release unto you? They said, Barabbas (Τὸν Βαραββᾶν)—The stark, unelaborated response shows mob mentality's power. No deliberation, no debate—just the demand for the rebel. The Greek article ton (the) emphasizes decisiveness: THE Barabbas, not the Christ.

This choice epitomizes humanity's rebellion: choosing sin over salvation, death over life, the murderer over the Life-Giver (Acts 3:14-15). Every sinner who rejects Christ makes the same choice—preferring their own way over God's provision.

Historical Context

Roman crowd dynamics could quickly turn violent. Pilate faced potential riot (27:24) and couldn't risk Caesar hearing of disturbances during Passover. His prefecture was already troubled; Tiberius would not tolerate another incident.

Related Passages

John 3:16 — God's love and salvation

Ephesians 2:8 — Salvation by grace through faith

1 Corinthians 13:4 — Characteristics of love

John 15:13 — Greatest form of love

Study Questions

1. In what ways do you choose 'Barabbas' in daily decisions—preferring sin, rebellion, or self over Christ?
2. How does the crowd's choice reveal the depth of human depravity apart from God's grace?

Interlinear Text

ἀποκριθεὶς δὲ ὁ ἡγεμὼν εἰπον, αὐτοῖς Τίνα
answered and G3588 The governor They said unto them Whether
G611 G1161 G2232 G2036 G846 G5101

θέλετε ἀπὸ τῶν δύο ἀπολύσω ὑμῖν οἱ δὲ εἰπον,
will ye of G3588 the twain G1417 that I release G630 unto you G5213 and G1161 They said G2036

Βαραββᾶν

Barabbas

G912