

Matthew 27:23

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And the governor said, Why, what evil hath he done? But they cried out the more, saying, Let him be crucified.

Analysis

Why, what evil hath he done? But they cried out the more, saying, Let him be crucified (περισσῶς ἔκραζον)—Pilate's third declaration of innocence (see Luke 23:22, John 19:4, 6) met with intensified mob frenzy. The Greek *perissōs ekrazōn* (cried out exceedingly) shows escalating irrationality—they couldn't name a crime, yet demanded execution.

This is injustice personified: the Just One condemned, the guilty freed. 'What evil hath he done?' receives no answer because there was none. 'He had done no violence, neither was any deceit in his mouth' (Isaiah 53:9). The only 'crime' was being the Holy One in a sinful world.

Historical Context

Roman law required specific charges (crimen) for conviction. Pilate's repeated question 'What evil?' shows he found no legal basis for execution. Yet political pressure overcame justice—governors served at Caesar's pleasure and couldn't risk reports of mismanagement.

Related Passages

1 Corinthians 13:4 — Characteristics of love

1 John 4:8 — God is love

Study Questions

1. How does the baseless condemnation of Jesus expose the injustice of your own sin being imputed to Him?
2. When have you witnessed or participated in mob mentality that abandoned reason and justice?

Interlinear Text

ό	δὲ	ἡγεμὼν	ἔφη	Τί	γὰρ	κακὸν	ἐποίησεν	οἱ	δὲ
G3588	And	the governor	said	what	Why	evil	hath he done	G3588	And
G1161		G2232	G5346	G5101	G1063	G2556	G4160		G1161

περισσῶς ἔκραζον λέγοντες Σταυρωθήτω
the more they cried out saying Let him be crucified
G4057 G2896 G3004 G4717

Additional Cross-References

Acts 7:57 (Parallel theme): Then they cried out with a loud voice, and stopped their ears, and ran upon him with one accord,

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