

# Matthew 27:24

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

When Pilate saw that he could prevail nothing, but that rather a tumult was made, he took water, and washed his hands before the multitude, saying, I am innocent of the blood of this just person: see ye to it.

## Analysis

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**When Pilate saw that he could prevail nothing, but that rather a tumult was made, he took water, and washed his hands before the multitude, saying, I am innocent of the blood of this just person** (ἀθῷός εἰμι ἀπὸ τοῦ αἵματος τούτου)—Pilate's handwashing invoked Jewish ritual (Deuteronomy 21:6-7), a symbolic declaration of non-culpability. Yet the act condemned him—he proclaimed Christ's justice (dikaios) while condemning Him to death.

You cannot wash away responsibility for moral choices. Pilate knew Christ was innocent (v. 18, 19, 23), yet chose political survival over justice. His words 'see ye to it' (ὑμεῖς ὄψεσθε) attempted to transfer guilt, but God holds all accountable—both Jewish leaders and Roman authority crucified Christ.

## Historical Context

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As prefect, Pilate alone held ius gladii (right of the sword). No handwashing could transfer his legal authority or moral responsibility. Fear of riot and Caesar's displeasure drove his decision. Governors who lost control faced recall and disgrace.

## Related Passages

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**Psalm 19:1** — Heavens declare God's glory

**Genesis 1:1** — Creation of heavens and earth

## Study Questions

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1. In what ways do you try to 'wash your hands' of moral responsibility for decisions you know are wrong?
2. How does Pilate's claiming innocence while condemning Christ illustrate the self-deception of knowing truth but choosing expediency?

## Interlinear Text

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ἰδὼν δὲ ὁ Πιλᾶτος ὅτι οὐδὲν ὥφελεῖ ἀλλὰ

saw When G3588 Pilate that nothing he could prevail but

G1492 G1161 G4091 G3754 G3762 G5623 G235

μᾶλλον θόρυβος γίνεται λαβὼν ὕδωρ ἀπενίψατο τὰς

that rather a tumult was made he took water and washed G3588

G3123 G2351 G1096 G2983 G5204 G633 G3588

χεῖρας ἀπέναντι τοῦ ὄχλου λέγων, Ἀθῷός εἰμι ἀπὸ

his hands before the multitude saying innocent I am of

G5495 G561 G3588 G3793 G3004 G121 G1510 G575

τοῦ αἵματος τοῦ δικαίου τούτου· ὑμεῖς ὄψεσθε

G3588 the blood G3588 just person of this ye see

G129 G1342 G5127 G5210 G3700

## Additional Cross-References

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**Matthew 27:4** (Blood): Saying, I have sinned in that I have betrayed the innocent blood. And they said, What is that to us? see thou to that.

**Psalms 26:6** (Parallel theme): I will wash mine hands in innocency: so will I compass thine altar, O LORD:

**Matthew 26:5** (Parallel theme): But they said, Not on the feast day, lest there be an uproar among the people.

**2 Corinthians 5:21** (Righteousness): For he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him.

**1 Peter 3:18** (Righteousness): For Christ also hath once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh, but quickened by the Spirit:

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