

Matthew 27:49

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

The rest said, Let be, let us see whether Elias will come to save him.

Analysis

Let be, let us see whether Elias will come to save him—the Greek ἄφετε (let alone) shows the crowd treated Jesus' dying moments as entertainment, a test of prophetic claims. Their mocking 'wait and see' attitude echoes the taunt in verse 42: 'let him save himself.' They demanded miraculous rescue while missing that Christ's refusal to save himself was salvation.

The irony is profound: they waited for Elijah to descend from heaven, while the Greater-than-Elijah was ascending to heaven through death. Christ came 'not to be served but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom' (Matthew 20:28)—salvation required he not come down from the cross, that he not save himself.

Historical Context

This verse highlights Matthew's theme of misunderstood messiahship. The crowds expected political deliverance and supernatural spectacle. Jesus' contemporaries couldn't fathom a suffering Messiah—despite Isaiah 53—because rabbinic tradition emphasized the conquering King. Peter himself had rebuked Jesus for predicting his death (Matthew 16:22-23).

Related Passages

James 2:17 — Faith and works

Study Questions

1. How do we demand Jesus 'prove himself' on our terms rather than submitting to God's redemptive plan?
2. Why was it necessary for Christ to refuse miraculous rescue in order to accomplish salvation?

Interlinear Text

οἱ	δὲ	λοιποὶ	ἔλεγον	Ἄφες	ἴδωμεν	εἰ	ἔρχεται
G3588	The	rest	said	Let be	let us see	whether	will come
G1161		G3062	G3004	G863	G1492	G1487	G2064
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Ἐλίας	σώσων	αὐτόν					
Elias	to save	him					
G2243		G4982					

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