

Matthew 27:58

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

He went to Pilate, and begged the body of Jesus. Then Pilate commanded the body to be delivered.

Analysis

He went to Pilate, and begged the body of Jesus (ἡτήσατο τὸ σῶμα)—the Greek *aitesato* means earnestly requested, even demanded as a favor. Roman law allowed family or advocates to claim executed bodies. Joseph's boldness contrasts with the disciples' fear and hiding. **Then Pilate commanded the body to be delivered**—only after confirming death with the centurion (Mark 15:44-45).

This detail confirms Jesus truly died—not swooned or fainted. Pilate's surprise at the rapid death (typically crucifixion took days) prompted verification. The centurion's testimony closed all doubt. Joseph's request transformed Jesus from executed criminal to honored deceased, preparing for royal burial that befitted the King of Kings.

Historical Context

Roman governors could grant bodies to relatives or advocates as political favor. Pilate had already declared Jesus innocent three times, so granting the body involved no legal risk. The speed of Jesus' death (six hours) was unusual—likely due to prior scourging, the crown of thorns, and carrying the cross. His voluntary surrender of life (John 10:18) fulfilled Scripture.

Related Passages

James 2:17 — Faith and works

Hebrews 11:1 — Definition of faith

Revelation 20:12 — Judgment according to deeds

Matthew 25:31 — Final judgment

Study Questions

1. How does the verification of Jesus' death refute theories that he merely revived from unconsciousness?
2. What gave Joseph courage to ask Pilate when all the apostles were in hiding?

Interlinear Text

οὗτος προσελθὼν τῷ Πιλάτῳ ἠτήσατο τὸ σῶμα τοῦ
He **went** G3588 **Pilate** **and begged** G3588 **the body** G3588
G3778 G4334 G4091 G154 G4983

Ἰησοῦ τότε ὁ Πιλάτος ἐκέλευσεν ἀποδοθῆναι τὸ
of Jesus **Then** G3588 **Pilate** **commanded** **to be delivered** G3588
G2424 G5119 G4091 G2753 G591

σῶμα
the body
G4983