

Matthew 27:6

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And the chief priests took the silver pieces, and said, It is not lawful for to put them into the treasury, because it is the price of blood.

Analysis

It is not lawful for us to put them into the treasury, because it is the price of blood—The supreme irony: the chief priests who orchestrated an illegal trial and murder now display scrupulous concern for ritual purity. The Greek *korbanas* (κορβανᾶς, "temple treasury") could not receive *timē haimatos* (τιμὴ αἵματος, "blood money") according to Deuteronomy 23:18, which forbids bringing "the price of a dog" into God's house.

They strained at gnats while swallowing camels (Matthew 23:24). Their casuistry is breathtaking: blood money cannot defile the treasury, but the innocent blood they just shed doesn't defile their hands. This verse exposes how religious externalism becomes a shield for moral atrocity—they kept the letter of ceremonial law while murdering the Lord of glory. The thirty pieces Judas returned became evidence against them, money too unholy even for priests who trafficked in judicial murder.

Historical Context

The temple treasury (κορβανᾶς) received tithes, offerings, and vows for sacred use. Deuteronomy 23:18 forbade money from prostitution or "shameful gain" entering it. The priests' logic: since Judas' betrayal led to bloodshed, the silver was now ceremonially defiled—while ignoring their own guilt in that same bloodshed.

This scene occurred during Passover preparation (27:62), when ritual purity was paramount.

Related Passages

Psalms 19:1 — Heavens declare God's glory

Genesis 1:1 — Creation of heavens and earth

Study Questions

1. What modern forms of religious scrupulosity might mask deeper moral compromise in your own life?
2. How does this scene fulfill Zechariah 11:12-13, where the shepherd is valued at thirty pieces of silver cast into the potter's house in the temple?

Interlinear Text

οἱ	δὲ	ἀρχιερεῖς	λαβόντες	τὰ	ἀργύρια	εἶπον,	Οὐκ
G3588	And	the chief priests	took	G3588	the silver pieces	and said	not
	G1161	G749	G2983		G694	G2036	G3756
ἔξεστιν	βαλεῖν	αὐτὰ	εἰς	τὸν	κορβανᾶν	ἐπεὶ	τιμὴ
It is	for to put	them	into	G3588	the treasury	because	the price
G1832	G906	G846	G1519		G2878	G1893	G5092
αἱμάτων	ἐστιν						
of blood	it is						
G129	G2076						

Additional Cross-References

Deuteronomy 23:18 (Parallel theme): Thou shalt not bring the hire of a whore, or the price of a dog, into the house of the LORD thy God for any vow: for even both these are abomination unto the LORD thy God.

