

Colossians 2:15

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And having spoiled principalities and powers, he made a shew of them openly, triumphing over them in it.

Analysis

And having spoiled principalities and powers, he made a shew of them openly, triumphing over them in it. The cross accomplished cosmic victory. "Spoiled" (apekdysamenos, ἀπεκδυσάμενος) means stripped like removing armor from defeated enemy, the same verb from 2:11 for putting off sin's body. Christ disarmed spiritual powers, stripping their authority and weapons. "Made a shew of them openly" (edeigmatisen en parrēsia, ἐδειγμάτισεν ἐν παρρησίᾳ) means publicly exposed their defeat.

"Triumphing over them in it" (thriambeusas autous en autō, θριαμβεύσας αὐτοὺς ἐν αὐτῷ) uses imagery of Roman military triumph—victory parade where defeated enemies marched in chains behind conquering general. The cross, appearing as Christ's defeat, was actually His triumph, the place where He conquered Satan and spiritual forces. What looked like weakness was supreme power; apparent loss was decisive victory.

Historical Context

Roman triumphs celebrated military victories with grand processions: captive enemies, seized treasures, victorious troops marching through Rome while crowds cheered. Generals rode chariots; conquered kings walked in chains. Paul pictures Christ's cross as such triumph—He led defeated spiritual powers in victory procession, publicly demonstrating their subjugation. This reverses worldly perspective viewing crucifixion as shameful defeat.

Related Passages

Matthew 25:31 — Final judgment

Romans 2:1 — Judging others

Study Questions

1. How does recognizing the cross as Christ's triumph over spiritual powers affect your view of spiritual warfare?
2. Where do you still grant Satan and demons authority that Christ already stripped from them?
3. How should Christians live in light of Christ's complete victory—fearfully or confidently?

Interlinear Text

ἀπεκδυσάμενος	τὰς	ἀρχὰς	καὶ	τὰς	ἐξουσίας
And having spoiled G554	G3588	principalities G746	and G2532	G3588	powers G1849
ἐδειγμάτισεν	ἐν	παρρησίᾳ	θριαμβεύσας	αὐτῷ	ἐν
he made a shew of them G1165	in G1722	G3954	triumphing over G2358	it G846	in G1722
αὐτῷ					
it G846					

Additional Cross-References

Hebrews 2:14 (Parallel theme): Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself likewise took part of the same; that through death he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil;

Ephesians 4:8 (Parallel theme): Wherefore he saith, When he ascended up on high, he led captivity captive, and gave gifts unto men.

Matthew 12:29 (Parallel theme): Or else how can one enter into a strong man's house, and spoil his goods, except he first bind the strong man? and then he will spoil his house.

Isaiah 53:12 (Creation): Therefore will I divide him a portion with the great, and he shall divide the spoil with the strong; because he hath poured out his soul unto death: and he was numbered with the transgressors; and he bare the sin of many, and made intercession for the transgressors.

Ephesians 6:12 (Parallel theme): For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places.

Luke 10:18 (Parallel theme): And he said unto them, I beheld Satan as lightning fall from heaven.

John 16:11 (Parallel theme): Of judgment, because the prince of this world is judged.

Revelation 20:10 (Parallel theme): And the devil that deceived them was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone, where the beast and the false prophet are, and shall be tormented day and night for ever and ever.

Psalms 68:18 (Parallel theme): Thou hast ascended on high, thou hast led captivity captive: thou hast received gifts for men; yea, for the rebellious also, that the LORD God might dwell among them.

Genesis 3:15 (Parallel theme): And I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel.