

Hebrews 10:33

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Partly, whilst ye were made a gazingstock both by reproaches and afflictions; and partly, whilst ye became companions of them that were so used.

Analysis

Partly, whilst ye were made a gazingstock both by reproaches and afflictions; and partly, whilst ye became companions of them that were so used. This verse elaborates on the persecution mentioned in verse 32. "Ye were made a gazingstock" (*theatrizomenoi*, θεατριζόμενοι) means publicly exhibited, made a spectacle. The word derives from "theater"—they were put on public display for mockery and shame. This wasn't private persecution but public humiliation designed to break will and intimidate others.

"Both by reproaches and afflictions" (*te oneidismois te thlipsesin*, τε ὄνειδισμοῖς τε θλίψεσιν) describes verbal and physical abuse. *Oneidismois* means insults, reproaches, verbal abuse—public mockery, slander, cursing. *Thlipsesin* means pressures, tribulations, afflictions—likely including economic hardship, social exclusion, and possibly physical violence. They suffered comprehensively—reputation destroyed, body afflicted, livelihood threatened.

"Ye became companions of them that were so used" (*koinōnoi tōn houtōs anastrophomenōn genēthentes*, κοινωνοὶ τῶν οὗτως ἀναστρεφομένων γενηθέντες) shows they didn't merely endure personal suffering but identified with fellow sufferers. *Koinōnoi* means partners, sharers, participants. They deliberately associated with persecuted Christians, sharing their stigma and suffering. This demonstrated genuine love and courage—refusing to distance themselves from suffering brothers and sisters even when it meant incurring additional persecution.

Historical Context

Public shaming was a common persecution tactic in the ancient world. Early Christians were mocked in marketplaces, theaters, and public squares. Roman satirists ridiculed Christian beliefs; Jewish opponents blasphemed Christ in synagogues; mobs jeered at Christians during arrests and trials. This public humiliation aimed to break Christian resolve and deter potential converts by associating Christianity with shame and low social status.

The choice to identify with persecuted Christians was costly. Visiting Christians in prison, providing food and money, or publicly associating with them often resulted in being arrested or persecuted oneself. Yet the early church consistently demonstrated this costly love, visiting imprisoned believers, supporting widows and orphans of martyrs, and refusing to deny fellowship with suffering brothers and sisters. This love amazed pagan observers and validated Christian claims about divine love transforming hearts.

Related Passages

Ephesians 2:8 — Salvation by grace through faith

Romans 10:9 — Confession and belief for salvation

Study Questions

1. How does your willingness to publicly identify with Christ and His people demonstrate the genuineness of your faith?
2. In what ways might Christians today distance themselves from suffering or stigmatized fellow believers?
3. What would it cost you to openly identify with persecuted Christians or to stand with believers who face social ridicule for faithfulness?

Interlinear Text

τοῦτο μὲν ὄνειδισμοῖς τε καὶ θλίψεσιν
Partly G3303 by reproaches both and afflictions
G5124 G3680 G5037 G2532 G2347

θεατριζόμενοι τοῦτο δὲ κοινωνοὶ τῶν οὕτως
whilst ye were made a gazingstock Partly and companions G3588 so
G2301 G5124 G1161 G2844 G3779

ἀναστρεφομένων γενηθέντες
of them that were whilst ye became
G390 G1096

Additional Cross-References

1 Corinthians 4:9 (Creation): For I think that God hath set forth us the apostles last, as it were appointed to death: for we are made a spectacle unto the world, and to angels, and to men.

1 Thessalonians 2:14 (Parallel theme): For ye, brethren, became followers of the churches of God which in Judaea are in Christ Jesus: for ye also have suffered like things of your own countrymen, even as they have of the Jews:

Philippians 4:14 (Parallel theme): Notwithstanding ye have well done, that ye did communicate with my affliction.

Philippians 1:7 (Parallel theme): Even as it is meet for me to think this of you all, because I have you in my heart; inasmuch as both in my bonds, and in the defence and confirmation of the gospel, ye all are partakers of my grace.

Isaiah 51:7 (Parallel theme): Hearken unto me, ye that know righteousness, the people in whose heart is my law; fear ye not the reproach of men, neither be ye afraid of their revilings.

Psalms 74:22 (Parallel theme): Arise, O God, plead thine own cause: remember how the foolish man reproacheth thee daily.

