

Isaiah 50:6

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

I gave my back to the smiters, and my cheeks to them that plucked off the hair: I hid not my face from shame and spitting.

Analysis

This verse from the third Servant Song (50:4-9) prophetically describes the physical abuse Christ would endure. 'I gave my back to the smiters' depicts voluntary submission to scourging—the Servant doesn't resist or retaliate but willingly accepts beating. Roman scourging was brutally efficient: leather whips embedded with bone or metal shredded flesh from victims' backs. Jesus endured this before crucifixion (Matthew 27:26). 'My cheeks to them that plucked off the hair' describes the humiliating practice of beard-pulling, especially degrading in ancient Near Eastern culture where beards symbolized dignity and manhood. Forcibly plucking a man's beard was severe insult and mockery. 'I hid not my face from shame and spitting' reveals the Servant's acceptance of ultimate degradation. Spitting on someone expressed contempt and rejection. During Jesus's trial, soldiers and council members spit on Him and struck Him (Matthew 26:67, Mark 14:65). The Servant's dignity amid such abuse fulfills this prophecy and demonstrates the depth of His voluntary suffering for our redemption.

Historical Context

Written 700 years before Christ's crucifixion, Isaiah provides specific details that would be fulfilled literally. Jewish law prohibited beard-pulling as assault (reflecting its degrading nature). Roman soldiers, ignorant of Isaiah's prophecy, unwittingly fulfilled it when mocking Jesus. Early Christians facing persecution found courage in this text—Christ the King endured worse abuse, yet remained

faithful. Church fathers like Athanasius and Chrysostom preached on this verse, emphasizing Christ's voluntary suffering. The Servant doesn't merely permit abuse; He actively gives Himself to it ('I gave'), demonstrating that the cross was not tragedy but planned redemption.

Related Passages

Romans 10:9 — Confession and belief for salvation

Ephesians 2:8 — Salvation by grace through faith

James 2:17 — Faith and works

Hebrews 11:1 — Definition of faith

Study Questions

1. How does Jesus's willing submission to abuse and mockery challenge your response to mistreatment or criticism?
2. What does the Servant's refusal to hide His face from shame teach about embracing God's will even when it involves suffering?

Interlinear Text

לִמְרַט יְמִינֵי	וּלְפִנֵּי	לִמְכִימָה	נִתְתַּפֵּי	לִמְרַט יְמִינֵי
my back	I gave	to the smiters	and my cheeks	to them that plucked off
H1460	H5414	H5221	H3895	H4803

לֹא פָנֵי	מִכְלָמָה וְתִרְקָה	הַסְתֵּרְתִּי	אַתָּה מִלְמַדְתִּי
not my face	the hair I hid	from shame	and spitting

H6440	H3808	H5641	H3639	H7536
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Additional Cross-References

Matthew 26:67 (Parallel theme): Then did they spit in his face, and buffeted him; and others smote him with the palms of their hands,

Mark 14:65 (Parallel theme): And some began to spit on him, and to cover his face, and to buffet him, and to say unto him, Prophesy: and the servants did strike him with the palms of their hands.

Mark 15:19 (Parallel theme): And they smote him on the head with a reed, and did spit upon him, and bowing their knees worshipped him.

Matthew 27:30 (Parallel theme): And they spit upon him, and took the reed, and smote him on the head.

Isaiah 53:5 (Parallel theme): But he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed.

John 18:22 (Parallel theme): And when he had thus spoken, one of the officers which stood by struck Jesus with the palm of his hand, saying, Answerest thou the high priest so?

Lamentations 3:30 (Parallel theme): He giveth his cheek to him that smiteth him: he is filled full with reproach.

Hebrews 12:2 (Parallel theme): Looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith; who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God.

Nehemiah 13:25 (Parallel theme): And I contended with them, and cursed them, and smote certain of them, and plucked off their hair, and made them swear by God, saying, Ye shall not give your daughters unto their sons, nor take their daughters unto your sons, or for yourselves.

Matthew 5:39 (Parallel theme): But I say unto you, That ye resist not evil: but whosoever shall smite thee on thy right cheek, turn to him the other also.