

Luke 23:11

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And Herod with his men of war set him at nought, and mocked him, and arrayed him in a gorgeous robe, and sent him again to Pilate.

Analysis

Herod with his men of war set him at nought (ἐξουθενήσας, *exouthenēsas*)—'treated him with contempt,' 'despised him utterly.' The same verb appears in Psalm 22:6 (LXX): 'I am a worm, and no man; a reproach of men, and despised of the people.' Herod **mocked him** (ἐμπαίζας, *empaizas*), the prophesied mocking of the Suffering Servant (Isaiah 50:6, Psalm 22:7). The **gorgeous robe** (ἐσθῆτα λαμπράν, *esthēta lampran*)—'bright,' 'radiant,' perhaps white or purple—constituted mock-royal vestment, treating Jesus's kingship as farce.

Yet every mockery fulfills prophecy. They dress the King of Glory in royal robes as jest; God will clothe him in genuine glory at the resurrection. They 'set him at nought'—the very word Peter later uses in Acts 4:11 quoting Psalm 118:22: 'the stone which was set at nought of you builders.' Herod's contemptuous dismissal, sending Jesus back to Pilate, becomes another link in the chain of sovereign purpose—concentrating guilt upon both Jewish and Gentile authorities while moving inexorably toward Golgotha.

Historical Context

Roman soldiers and Herodian troops often used mock investiture to humiliate political prisoners claiming kingship. The 'gorgeous robe' may have been a white or purple garment from Herod's wardrobe, sarcastically acknowledging Jesus's claims while ridiculing them. Herod's sending Jesus back to Pilate both deferred

responsibility and subtly acknowledged Roman supreme authority—the tetrarch had no interest in executing someone he deemed a harmless fool.

Related Passages

Romans 10:9 — Confession and belief for salvation

Ephesians 2:8 — Salvation by grace through faith

James 2:17 — Faith and works

Romans 1:17 — The righteous shall live by faith

Study Questions

1. How does Herod's mockery paradoxically testify to truths about Jesus that Herod himself rejected?
2. In what ways do we 'set Christ at nought' through casual dismissal of his claims or reduction of Christianity to mere religion?

Interlinear Text

ἐξουθενήσας	δὲ	αὐτὸν	ὁ	Ἡρώδης	σὺν	τοῖς
set him at nought	And	him	G3588	Herod	with	G3588
G1848	G1161	G846		G2264	G4862	
στρατεύμασιν	αὐτὸν	καὶ	ἐμπαίξας	περιβαλὼν	αὐτὸν	
men of war	him	and	mocked	him and arrayed	him	
G4753	G846	G2532	G1702	G4016	G846	
ἐσθῆτα	λαμπρὰν	ἀνέπεμψεν	αὐτὸν	τῷ	Πιλάτῳ	
robe	in a gorgeous	again	him	G3588	to Pilate	
G2066	G2986	G375	G846		G4091	
