

Mark 15:16

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And the soldiers led him away into the hall, called Praetorium; and they call together the whole band.

Analysis

And the soldiers led him away into the hall, called Praetorium (Οἱ δὲ στρατιῶται ἀπήγαγον αὐτὸν ἔσω τῆς αὐλῆς, ὅ ἐστιν πραιτώριον, Hoi de stratiōtai apēgagon auton esō tēs aulēs, ho estin praitōrion)—The verb ἀπάγω (apagō) means to lead away, often of prisoners to execution. The στρατιῶται (stratiōtai, soldiers) were Roman legionaries. The πραιτώριον (praitōrion), from Latin praetorium, was the governor's official residence/headquarters, either Herod's Palace (upper city) or Fortress Antonia (by the Temple).

And they call together the whole band (καὶ συγκαλοῦσιν ὅλην τὴν σπεῖραν, kai synkalousin holēn tēn speiran)—A σπεῖρα (speira), from Latin cohors (cohort), numbered 200-600 soldiers. Mark emphasizes ὅλην (holēn, 'whole')—the entire garrison assembled to mock Jesus. What follows (vv. 17-20) is calculated humiliation. The King of kings, having endured Jewish mockery (14:65), now faces Gentile contempt. Isaiah 50:6 foretold: '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.'

Historical Context

Roman cohorts stationed in Judea were auxiliaries (non-citizen troops) rather than legions, often recruited from Syria or Samaria—non-Jews who held Jewish messianic claims in contempt. The gathering of the 'whole band' suggests official sanction for what follows—not merely individual cruelty but institutional mockery.

The praetorium's location is disputed: Herod's Palace (traditional site) in the upper city, or Fortress Antonia adjacent to the Temple. Archaeological evidence supports both locations for different periods.

Related Passages

John 3:16 — God's love and salvation

Ephesians 2:8 — Salvation by grace through faith

Study Questions

1. Why does Mark emphasize that the 'whole band' assembled to mock Jesus?
2. How does the soldiers' mockery of Jesus as king fulfill Isaiah's prophecies of the suffering servant?
3. What does the progression from Jewish religious mockery to Roman military mockery reveal about Jesus's universal rejection?

Interlinear Text

Oi	δὲ	στρατιῶται	ἀπήγαγον	αὐτὸν	ἔσω	τῆς	αὐλῆς	ο
G3588	And	the soldiers	away	him	into	G3588	the hall	G3739
G1161		G4757	G520	G846	G2080		G833	

ἐστιν	πραιτώριον	καὶ	συγκαλοῦσιν	ὅλην	τὴν	σπεῖραν
G2076	Praetorium	and	they call together	the whole	G3588	band
	G4232		G4779	G3650		G4686

Additional Cross-References

John 19:9 (Parallel theme): And went again into the judgment hall, and saith unto Jesus, Whence art thou? But Jesus gave him no answer.

Matthew 26:3 (Parallel theme): Then assembled together the chief priests, and the scribes, and the elders of the people, unto the palace of the high priest, who was called Caiaphas,

John 18:28 (Parallel theme): Then led they Jesus from Caiaphas unto the hall of judgment: and it was early; and they themselves went not into the judgment hall, lest they should be defiled; but that they might eat the passover.

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