

Mark 15:18

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And began to salute him, Hail, King of the Jews!

Analysis

Hail, King of the Jews! (Χαῖρε, ὁ βασιλεὺς τῶν Ἰουδαίων)—The greeting *chaire* (χαῖρε, 'hail' or 'rejoice') was the standard Roman imperial salutation, identical to Ave Caesar. Mark's terse narrative captures the soldiers' savage parody: they mimicked the formal court protocol for greeting Roman emperors, transforming worship into weaponized ridicule.

Theological irony saturates this verse. The soldiers' mockery inadvertently proclaimed the exact truth: Jesus IS the King of the Jews—and infinitely more, the King of Kings. Their theatrical 'worship' foreshadows Philippians 2:10-11, where genuine knee-bending confession will be universal. Satan's kingdom mocked Christ; God's kingdom will vindicate Him.

Historical Context

Roman emperors received elaborate ritualized greetings involving genuflection, acclamation, and titles like Imperator and Dominus et Deus. The soldiers' performance satirized both Jewish messianic hopes and Jesus' Sanhedrin trial claims. To Roman soldiers, Jewish messianic movements represented provincial rebellion deserving contempt—dozens of 'messiahs' had been crucified in living memory.

Related Passages

Matthew 25:31 — Final judgment

Romans 2:1 — Judging others

Psalms 19:1 — Heavens declare God's glory

Genesis 1:1 — Creation of heavens and earth

Study Questions

1. How do modern culture's attempts to mock Christianity often accidentally proclaim gospel truth?
2. What does the gap between the soldiers' intent and the actual reality reveal about God's sovereignty over evil?
3. When have you treated Jesus with mere lip service rather than genuine heart allegiance?

Interlinear Text

καὶ	ἤρξαντο	ἀσπάζεσθαι	αὐτόν	Χαῖρε	βασιλεῦ	τῶν
And	began	to salute	him	Hail	King	G3588
G2532	G756	G782	G846	G5463	G935	

Ἰουδαίων·

of the Jews
G2453

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