

Mark 15:19

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And they smote him on the head with a reed, and did spit upon him, and bowing their knees worshipped him.

Analysis

They smote him on the head with a reed (ἐτύπτων αὐτοῦ τὴν κεφαλὴν καλάμῳ)—The imperfect tense of *typtō* (τύπτω, 'strike') indicates repeated, continuous beating. The *kalamos* (κάλαμος, reed-staff) they had mockingly placed in His hand as a royal scepter became an instrument of torture, driving the thorns deeper into His skull with each blow.

Did spit upon him, and bowing their knees worshipped him—The Greek *proskynēō* (προσκυνέω, worship) means to prostrate oneself, the highest form of reverence. This grotesque combination—spitting (*emptysantes*, ἔμπτύσαντες) while genuflecting—represents total mockery. Yet Isaiah 50:6 prophesied exactly this: 'I gave my back to the smiters...I hid not my face from shame and spitting.' Jesus endured ritual defilement (spitting rendered one ceremonially unclean) to purify us.

Historical Context

Spitting on someone was the ultimate act of contempt in both Roman and Jewish culture, representing total rejection and defilement. Roman soldiers' brutality toward condemned prisoners was legendary—they had unlimited authority to abuse them before execution. The specific combination of mock worship and physical abuse was designed to psychologically destroy the victim's dignity before crucifixion destroyed their body.

Related Passages

John 3:16 — God's love and salvation

Romans 10:9 — Confession and belief for salvation

Study Questions

1. How does Jesus' silent endurance of mockery challenge your response to personal humiliation?
2. What does Christ's willingness to be ceremonially defiled reveal about the costliness of your redemption?
3. In what subtle ways might you 'worship' Jesus outwardly while treating Him contemptuously in your heart?

Interlinear Text

καὶ ἔτυπτον αὐτῷ τὴν κεφαλὴν καλάμῳ καὶ ἐνέπτυον
And they smote him G3588 on the head with a reed G2563 And did spit
G2532 G5180 G846 G2776 G1716

αὐτῷ καὶ τιθέντες τὰ γόνατα προσεκύνουν αὐτῷ
him And bowing G3588 their knees G1119 worshipped G4352 him
G846 G2532 G5087 G6432 G846

Additional Cross-References

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.