

Mark 15:26

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And the superscription of his accusation was written over,
THE KING OF THE JEWS.

Analysis

The superscription of his accusation was written over, THE KING OF THE JEWS—The Greek epigraphē tēs aitias (ἐπιγραφὴ τῆς αἰτίας, inscription of the charge) refers to the titulus, the placard stating the crime. Roman law required crucifixion victims to display their offense publicly. Pilate's inscription, written in Hebrew, Latin, and Greek (John 19:20), proclaimed HO BASILEUS TŌN IOUDAIŌN (Ὁ ΒΑΣΙΛΕΥΣ ΤΩΝ ΙΟΥΔΑΙΩΝ).

Pilate meant it as mockery of Jewish messianic hopes, but wrote theological truth: Jesus IS the King of the Jews—and of all nations. The chief priests protested (John 19:21), wanting 'He said he was King,' but Pilate refused alteration: 'What I have written I have written.' God sovereignly overruled Pilate's hand to proclaim Christ's kingship in the three universal languages of that era. This 'accusation' was actually coronation: the cross became His throne, the title His glory.

Historical Context

The titulus was typically carried before the condemned during the procession, then affixed above the cross. It served both as legal documentation and public deterrent, warning others against similar crimes. Pilate's trilingual inscription ensured maximum readership among Jerusalem's diverse Passover crowd—Palestinian Jews (Hebrew/Aramaic), Romans (Latin), and Greek-speaking Gentiles from across the Empire. The location 'over' the cross placed it at eye level for passersby on the road outside Jerusalem's walls.

Related Passages

1 John 4:8 — God is love

John 15:13 — Greatest form of love

Study Questions

1. How does God's sovereignty over Pilate's inscription encourage you when human authorities oppose gospel truth?
2. What does Jesus' enthronement on a cross (rather than a palace) reveal about the nature of His kingdom?
3. In what ways do you need to recognize and submit to Jesus' kingship over the specific areas of your life you've withheld?

Interlinear Text

καὶ	ἦν	ἡ	ἐπιγραφὴ	τῆς	αἰτίας	αὐτοῦ
And	was	G3588	the superscription	G3588	accusation	of his
G2532	G2258		G1923		G156	G846
ἐπιγεγραμμένη	Ὁ	βασιλεὺς	τῶν	Ἰουδαίων		
written over	G3588	THE KING	G3588	OF THE JEWS		
G1924		G935		G2453		

Additional Cross-References

Matthew 27:37 (Kingdom): And set up over his head his accusation written, THIS IS JESUS THE KING OF THE JEWS.

Zechariah 9:9 (Kingdom): Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion; shout, O daughter of Jerusalem: behold, thy King cometh unto thee: he is just, and having salvation; lowly, and riding upon an ass, and upon a colt the foal of an ass.

Matthew 2:2 (Kingdom): Saying, Where is he that is born King of the Jews? for we have seen his star in the east, and are come to worship him.

