

Mark 15:27

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And with him they crucify two thieves; the one on his right hand, and the other on his left.

Analysis

With him they crucify two thieves; the one on his right hand, and the other on his left—The Greek *lēstēs* (ληστής, 'robber/bandit,' plural *lēstas*) can denote violent brigands or insurrectionists. These weren't petty thieves but dangerous criminals. Mark's spatial precision—**on his right...on his left** (ἐκ δεξιῶν...ἐξ ἐναντίων)—echoes the disciples' request in Mark 10:37: 'Grant us to sit, one on Your right and one on Your left, in Your glory.'

Devastating irony: Jesus promised James and John they would share His cup and baptism (10:39), but the positions of honor flanking Him in His 'kingdom' went to crucified criminals. This fulfilled Isaiah 53:12: 'He was numbered with the transgressors.' Jesus died surrounded by sinners—the very people He came to save. The cross is His throne, criminals His courtiers. One thief would repent (Luke 23:40-43), demonstrating that proximity to Christ, even in execution, brings opportunity for salvation.

Historical Context

Roman practice sometimes crucified multiple victims simultaneously for efficiency and increased deterrent effect. Placing Jesus between two criminals may have been deliberate degradation—guilt by association with 'bandits' (possibly Barabbas's accomplices?). Crucifixion sites along major roads ensured maximum public visibility. Jewish authorities would have appreciated the symbolism:

execution among criminals reinforced their narrative that Jesus was a blasphemous pretender deserving this shameful death.

Related Passages

Psalms 19:1 — Heavens declare God's glory

Colossians 1:16 — All things created through Christ

Study Questions

1. How does Jesus' fulfillment of 'numbered with transgressors' reshape your understanding of His identification with sinners?
2. What does the positioning of criminals at Christ's right and left reveal about the path to true glory in God's kingdom?
3. How should the reality that one thief repented even while dying affect your evangelism and hope for 'hard cases'?

Interlinear Text

καὶ	σὺν	αὐτοῦ	σταυροῦσιν	δύο	ληστές	ἓνα	ἐξ
And	with	him	they crucify	two	thieves	the one	on
G2532	G4862	G846	G4717	G1417	G3027	G1520	G1537
δεξιῶν	καὶ	ἓνα	ἐξ	εὐωνύμων	αὐτοῦ		
his right hand	And	the one	on	left	him		
G1188	G2532	G1520	G1537	G2176	G846		

Additional Cross-References

Matthew 27:38 (Cross): Then were there two thieves crucified with him, one on the right hand, and another on the left.