

Matthew 27:37

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And set up over his head his accusation written, THIS IS JESUS THE KING OF THE JEWS.

Analysis

Set up over his head his accusation written, THIS IS JESUS THE KING OF THE JEWS (ἡ αἰτία αὐτοῦ γεγραμμένη, hē aitia autou gegrammenē)—the titulus or placard stating the crime. Pilate's inscription, written in Hebrew, Greek, and Latin (John 19:19-20), proclaims ironic truth: Jesus IS King.

The chief priests protested (John 19:21): **Write not, The King of the Jews; but that he said, I am King of the Jews.** Pilate refused. His contemptuous dismissal of Jewish sensibilities became prophecy: Jesus is King of the Jews, King of Kings, and Lord of Lords. The accusation is coronation.

Historical Context

The titulus served as public warning—crucifixion was primarily deterrent, meant to terrorize populations into submission. That Pilate wrote 'King of the Jews' rather than 'claimed to be king' was unusual, perhaps his final insult to the Jewish leaders who forced his hand.

Related Passages

Matthew 25:31 — Final judgment

Romans 2:1 — Judging others

Study Questions

1. How does Pilate's unwitting proclamation of Jesus's kingship demonstrate God's sovereignty over human pride?
2. What does the trilingual inscription (Hebrew, Greek, Latin) symbolize about the universal scope of Christ's reign?

Interlinear Text

καὶ ἐπέθηκαν ἐπάνω τῆς κεφαλῆς αὐτοῦ τὴν αἰτίαν
And set up over G3588 head his G3588 accusation
G2532 G2007 G1883 G2776 G846 G156

αὐτοῦ γεγραμμένην· Οὗτός ἐστιν Ἰησοῦς ὁ βασιλεὺς
his written THIS IS JESUS G3588 THE KING
G846 G1125 G3778 G2076 G2424 G935

τῶν Ἰουδαίων
G3588 OF THE JEWS
G2453

Additional Cross-References

Mark 15:26 (Kingdom): And the superscription of his accusation was written over, THE KING OF THE JEWS.

Luke 23:38 (Kingdom): And a superscription also was written over him in letters of Greek, and Latin, and Hebrew, THIS IS THE KING OF THE JEWS.