

Mark 15:16-20 Our King Was Mocked Falls Ch. PM 9/29/2024

As a brief review – from chapter 14:43 to chapter 15:15, we have studied the events of the suffering of Jesus. His betrayal and arrest, followed by His nighttime religious trial, His first beating, followed by His denial by Peter, His being handed over to Pilate, followed by His government trial, and His formal sentencing of death by the Roman governor, and His being handed over to be crucified.

The situation as we find it in our passage now is that the King of the Jews had been rejected by Judas, the temple guards, the Sanhedrin, the High Priest, the Jerusalem crowd, the governor Pilate, who each had their own part in the rejection of Jesus. As a result, Jesus is now firmly in the hands of the Roman guards, and Jesus showed now intention of resisting their actions. They had already scourged Him with whips, and they were now under orders to crucify Him. One thing was clear – unless God the Father intervened, Jesus was going to die.

And the process of Jesus dying had already begun with the gruesome beating from verse 15, and was now gaining momentum.

Before we continue, we ask ourselves what we are meant to gain from studying this? Why is this in the Bible? How does it advance our spiritual walk with God to read and consider these next sad events? The answer is that **We see what others miss – that for our sakes, our King voluntarily endured the most disgraceful humiliation and rejection.**

Jesus was abandoned by the highest court of the Jewish religion in their capital city. Jesus was given a miscarriage of justice by the justice system of The Roman Empire. The thing that we already know is what makes this study manageable for us. The purposes of God must have been torturous for scores of angels to watch, who were on orders being held back from intervening, much as they were willing and able to intervene and put an end to their King's disgrace at the hands of this puny Roman battalion. This whole battalion was no match for one of God's angels. And there were thousands and thousands of invisible angels watching with horror, the most important event to ever happen on this globe.

Even the very mockery of Jesus that we are about to study points us who know how the story will end, to truths that were hidden from the mockers, both the Roman mockers and the Jewish mockers. What they have proclaimed in jest is actually true. They were in the presence of the King of the Jews, who was also the King of Kings, and Lord over all empires and kingdoms of the earth. This is truly the Messiah, the anointed King of Israel, and this is not how His story will end.

1. While rejecting Him, they added to His shame by calling together the whole battalion of soldiers to join in the perverse pleasure of fake adoration. (v.16)

Similar to how the religious verdict against Jesus had led to mocking, so now the government verdict against Jesus led to mocking.

This was a mockery that included both brutality and sarcasm.

Verse 16, “*And the soldiers led [Jesus] away inside the palace (that is, the governor’s headquarters), [the praetorium], and they called together the whole battalion.*”

Remember that the previous verse told us that Jesus had been flogged. He must have been a sad and bloody sight to see already, probably barely able to walk or even to stand up. Since this prisoner was on His way to execution, there was nothing to curb the enjoyment of the battalion of this opportunity to humiliate their subject nation Israel in the capital city of that nation (Jerusalem), and the man now turned in by the Jews as the King of the Jews. For the soldiers, any humiliation of Jesus was a humiliation of the Jewish nation, and signaled the superiority of the Romans. The Roman Empire was rife with contempt for the Jews already, and now this ludicrous case of one Jewish man who dared to challenge the imperial power of mighty Rome. It was not a scene of warmth, respect, love, and beauty. It was a dark scene of brute force being celebrated.

Remember that these are no longer the soldiers of the temple guard who had arrested Jesus the previous night. No. These were members of the Roman governor Pilate’s army of occupation. For these soldiers, probably it was a welcome diversion from the increased tension in Jerusalem during the festival of The Passover. In Judea at that time the Roman prefect had at his disposal not Roman legionary troops from closer to Rome, but rather more local auxiliary troops drawn from non-Jewish inhabitants of the neighboring areas. These would be troops from Caesarea and Samaria. The likelihood of anti-Jewish prejudice among such forces would be even greater than it would have been if the troops were drawn in from the city of Rome. They were only too glad to accept the order to gather with the entire battalion to participate in this mockery.

Some estimate that it could be as many as 600 soldiers, but it could simply mean only the soldiers who were on duty that day, so the number could be less. Verse 16 says, “the whole battalion” so it seems likely that it was all 600 of them who gathered. It would not take that many to restrain Jesus, but this gathering was not for the purpose of restraining Jesus. It was for the purpose of mocking Jesus. For that purpose, “...*they called together the whole battalion.*”

2. While rejecting Him, they faked adoring Him with royal purple and a crown, but made of thorns. (v.17)

Verse 17, “*and they clothed [Jesus] in a purple cloak, and twisting together a crown of thorns, they put it on [Jesus].*”

The purple color of the cloak was a royal color. It was probably a faded military garment that used to be bright red, to serve their purpose. Remember, that Jesus was bleeding profusely from the flogging, so they would likely not place a truly royal garment on Him for this purpose. Fake purple was fitting for fake

homage. Their intention was to pretend an acknowledgment of His kingship in order to tease Him about being so weak.

The crown of thorns was to symbolize a royal crown, and again, this was in order to tease Him about being so weak. Thorns are spikes, and so the crown was intended to cause pain as well as mockery.

Remember what God said to Adam in Genesis 3:17-18, Because "...*you have eaten of the tree of which I commanded you, 'You shall not eat of it,' cursed is the ground because of you; in pain you shall eat of it all the days of your life; thorns and thistles it shall bring forth for you...*" Thorns came about in connection with Adam's fall. And now the Second Adam wore a crown of thorns reminding us that Jesus was bearing the curse that Adam brought, to deliver us from it.

The mixture of mockery with cruelty in dressing Jesus up was noticeable.

The soldiers displayed one of the most frightening of human traits. Discipline of an unusual degree in one area, while simultaneously being undisciplined in another area. There is something grotesque about their little game. They were disciplined soldiers. But they lost all self-control in these actions. They saw a defenseless man already on his way to die, and they kicked the man while he was down.

Pilate knew that Jesus was innocent, and Pilate could have and should have prevented this mockery. But Pilate was interested in pleasing the crowd, was probably equally interested in pleasing his soldiers.

The soldiers formally showed Jesus what they really thought of His claim to be a King. The soldiers did not have the eyes to see what we see. That Jesus truly is the King. That even in the hour of His deepest humiliation, Jesus was still reigning as our King.

3. While rejecting Him, they struck Him, spit on Him, faked salutes and honor, and led Him out to crucify Him. (v.18-20)

Verse 18, "*And they began to salute [Jesus], 'Hail, King of the Jews!'"*

Verse 19, "*And they were striking [Jesus'] head with a reed and spitting on Him and kneeling down in homage to [Jesus]."*

Both the mockery and the cruelty were continued as the soldiers added salutes and statements of respect for Him as King, which were gutted of their genuineness. In addition, they struck Jesus on the head with a reed, which was a mock scepter for Him as a joke of a king. Rather than the King's scepter being a fearful object for the soldiers, they used his own reed or scepter to hit Jesus in the head. If that were not enough, verse 19 tells us that the brutal soldiers spat on Him as only soldiers know how to do. Not yet finished, they also knelt down in homage to Jesus as a supposed king, without the required respect involved. The soldiers obviously had adopted Pilate's view, that this Jesus posed no real threat to Rome, and no real threat to any of these soldiers. Ha, the man could barely stand up. They

kneeled before Him in a formal way, the word that we often translate as worship. It was a common action performed to a social superior, much like a salute. They were saying ‘your majesty,’ while they knelt, and then stood and spat on Him. They found their own behavior hilarious.

They took turns hitting Jesus with a hard cane from a plant stem, perhaps like a broom handle. What do you supposed happened to each of the thorns in his crown when they hit Jesus in the head? They were filled with violence and contempt, and they were taking turns expressing it. Every insult that they could think up, they were adding, with fiendish delight. Isaiah 50:6-7, “*I gave my back to those who strike, and my cheeks to those who pull out the beard; I hid not my face from disgrace and spitting. But the Lord God helps me; therefore I have not been disgraced; therefore I have set my face like a flint, and I know that I shall not but put to shame. He who vindicates me is near.*”

Do you remember the prediction of Jesus? Mark 10:34, “*...they will mock Him and spit on Him, and flog him and kill Him. And after three days he will rise.*”

Now listen to our final verse in our study, Mark 15:20, “*And when [the soldiers] had mocked Him, they stripped Him of the purple cloak and put His own clothes on Him. And they led Him away to crucify Him.*”

All that Jesus predicted has now been reflected in what has happened or what is about to happen in the hands of these Roman soldiers.

Concluding applications: One of the books called the Chronicles of Narnia, the book by the title *The voyage of the Dawn Treader*, begins with the 3 main characters Lucy, Edmund, and Eustace looking at the painting of a ship. The picture is so beautiful that they cannot help but stare at the beauty of the painting. Before they know it, the painting came to life, and they found themselves entering the story. That is what is supposed to happen to us as we study the ugly scene of Jesus being mocked. We enter the story. We ask ourselves whether we are seeing what the soldiers were missing. We have 3 takeaway lessons.

1. We accept Jesus. Jesus confronted Jews and Gentiles with His true identity as King. Only two responses were possible – accept Him or reject Him.

For those of us who accept Jesus and love Jesus, this study has been a painful study, because of the irony. Jesus IS ROYALTY! Jesus SHOULD BE dressed up in royal robes with a true crown and a proper scepter. All people should hail Him as king, and all people should bow before Him. Philippians 2:8-10, Jesus “*...humbled Himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross. Therefore God has highly exalted Him and bestowed on Him the name that is above every name, so that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.*” The soldiers will express it again, but this time, it will be because they know it to be true. The call to us is to accept Jesus now as our King by faith.

2. We accept Jesus' love for us. This sort of suffering would evoke our compassion if it were a person like ourselves. But when we reflect on the fact that this sufferer was the eternal Son of God, we are overcome with wonder and amazement. When we push ourselves to reflect that these sufferings were voluntarily endured in order to deliver us sinful people from hell, we are impressed with the love it showed for us.

Paul wrote in Ephesians 3:19 that Paul prayed for the believers “...to know the love of Christ that surpasses knowledge, and you may be filled with all the fullness of God.” Again in Romans 5:8, we read that “...God shows His love for us in that while we were still sinners Christ died for us.”

Think of our Savior Jesus, and what this scene of mockery shows us about His love for us. He was completely alone, humiliated, beaten nearly to death, and now endured more ridicule, shaming, and pain at the hands of brute hardened soldiers. Oh how the angels of heaven must have stared at this scene with disbelief. Do angels weep? Do angels get itching mad? Did the angels keep an eye on the Father, looking for one nod, one glance, and the angels would fly and put an end to this mockery? But the angels came to realize that it was God the Father who had sent His truly Royal Son in order to rescue and redeem a rebel race of people. The angels realized that this is what they did to Jesus, and the reason it was allowed was because of the love of God the Father for us, and the love of God the Son for us. The angels began to be in awe. Look at what they have done to our beloved Lord! That is exactly the lesson for us. Look at this scene of mockery, and never forget. But the point is not what they have done to our Lord, but rather the point is what our Lord has done for us.

Jesus suffered that injustice for us. Jesus suffered the insult we should have suffered. He experienced the shame and pain that we should have experienced. Jesus bore the guilt and curse that we should have carried. Our Shepherd was struck so that we His sheep might be saved. Our King was tortured and killed, so that we His people might live.

3. We accept our own suffering, since we follow a suffering Savior.

Since we are following Jesus, and this is how Jesus was treated, do we really expect to have an easy time as we journey through this world?

Sailing ships do poorly when the wind is directly behind them, pushing them sloppily on their way through the ocean. What is needed is a wind slightly opposed to the ship, for then the tension can be maintained. We are the ships who point ourselves toward Christ and toward any contrary winds. This will require vigilance, and suffering and sometimes even danger. But we will be sailing as ships were meant to sail – steady as she goes. And we will find that there is a wind in our sails – the wind of The Holy Spirit, sent by Christ our King.

1 Peter 4:12-14, *“Beloved, do not be surprised at the fiery trial when it comes upon you to test you, as though something strange were happening to you. But rejoice insofar as you share Christ’s sufferings, that you may also rejoice and be glad when His glory is revealed. If you are insulted for the name of Christ, you are blessed, because the Spirit of glory and of God rests upon you.”*