

## Connecting Minds

"These are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing you may have life in His name" (John 20:31)

### The Gospel of John

Chapter 19:1-4

**"So then Pilate took Jesus and scourged Him. And the soldiers twisted a crown of thorns and put it on His head, and they put on Him a purple robe. Then they said, 'Hail, King of the Jews!' And they struck Him with their hands. Pilate then went out again, and said to them, 'Behold, I am bringing Him out to you, that you may know that I find no fault in Him.'"**

Charles Haddon Spurgeon preached on this passage 4 times and wrote "I am certain that I should fail if I were to attempt to preach a sermon that should be worthy of such a text as this."<sup>1</sup> In these verses we witness the beating and the mocking of our blessed Lord by the Roman soldiers.

Bruce Milne noted that "The Romans had three levels of flogging: the fustigatio, a lighter beating for lesser offenses; the flogellatio, a brutal flogging for more serious crimes; and the verberatio, the most terrible of all, which was administered as part of the preliminary to crucifixion."<sup>2</sup> The striking thing to remember in all this is Jesus has been declared an innocent man. Therefore, at this point of the account the form of scourging would probably have been the lesser one - either the fustigatio or the flogellatio.

The soldiers take over. They mock the King of kings. Psalm 132:18 reads "His enemies I will clothe with shame, but upon Himself His crown shall flourish..." Yet they twist a crown of thorns for Him. In Matthew 28:19 Jesus says "All authority has been given to Me..." yet these soldiers adorn Jesus with a mock robe of authority. Psalm 2:10-12 says "Now therefore be wise O kings... Kiss the Son, lest He be angry..." These unwise soldiers jokingly hail Him as king of a defeated people.

But oh, if only it were these Romans soldiers alone who bear guilt in this. Are we guiltless in this? We come and say "Jesus, You have all authority, You have

<sup>1</sup> Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit, vol.55, Charles Haddon Spurgeon, p.203

<sup>2</sup> BST: The Message of John, Bruce Milne, pg. 270

the crown, You have the kingdom" but in our actions we deny these words. When we say "no Lord" we are saying no to One who has all authority. When we love our sin more than His kingdom we are denying the beauty of that kingdom to be all desirable.

If you feel God speaking to you about something and you say 'no' or 'not right now' or 'maybe when I feel like it', then you are pulling the crown of authority from off Christ and replacing it with a crown of thorns. You are denying Him the Lordship over your life that you claim He has. And so we dress Christ up as king but refuse to allow Him to direct our steps. Are we part of that crowd of soldiers who "bowed the knee before Him and mocked Him?" (Matthew 27:29).

"And they struck Him with their hands..." Jesus endures such ridicule and insult to His person. With one gesture of His divine omnipotent hand He could have forever struck these soldiers with a fate far worse than a bruise, yet He withheld that power through His obedience to God for the purpose of His glory. In mercy that we cannot even fathom Jesus bore the punishment and insult of these soldiers in order to save His people.

John Calvin says it: "Our foul condition is such as God might abominate, and all the angels spit upon, but Christ, to make us stand in the sight of the Father pure and unstained, was willing to be spat upon Himself and befouled with all insult... By this proof Christ witnessed to His amazing love for us, in refusing no insult at all for our salvation."<sup>3</sup>

## TableTalk

Read 1 Corinthians 11:28,29. It seems appropriate to think upon how we may prepare ourselves for communion. May we each prepare our hearts for participating in our Lord's Supper. Would we who have mocked our Lord be worthy to share in His last supper? Can we come to the table of the Lord when we have mocked Him? Let us be humbled, thankful and praise our God that Christ came to seek sinners, such as us.

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<sup>3</sup>Calvin's New Testament Commentaries, Matthew, Mark and Luke, vol.3, John Calvin, p.189