

Presumption, Prophecy, and Power

Description

Mark 15:21-26

Was Simon of Cyrene Jewish, African, a Greek, or some combination of all three? We cannot be sure. Did he carry Christ's entire cross, as tradition holds; or just the crossbeam (Latin, *patibulum*) as was a common Roman practice; or merely an upright torture stake (Greek, *stauron*) as Mark records? It's difficult to say.

Mark's Jewish readers, however, would have recognized many signs pointing to Christ's rightful claims: wine mixed with myrrh (recommended for dying prisoners in Proverbs 31, and linked to Christ's birth and burial in Matthew 2 and John 19); the casting of lots for an innocent man's clothing (as described in Psalm 22); and the "King of the Jews" title conceived by religious and political leaders as grounds for Christ's crucifixion.

Amidst uncertainty, this is much is certain: Christ was brutally executed by secular and religious authorities because He is the King of the Jews. However, He died because He is the Messiah, the King of Kings.

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Date Created

2023/03/28