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The Mocking of the Righteous in Wisdom and in Matthew

Wisdom of Solomon (also called Wisdom) is a deuterocanonical book written in Greek by a Hellenistic Jew in the latter part of the first century BCE. The author of Matthew's Gospel probably knew this book and may have considered it to be part of Scripture since it was included in the Septuagint or Greek translation of the Hebrew Bible in use at the time. Today Wisdom constitutes part of what Protestant Christians call the Apocrypha.

One passage in Wisdom presents the mocking of a righteous man by the ungodly in terms that parallel the mocking of Jesus on the cross by evil religious leaders in the Gospel of Matthew.

Note first, the thought of the ungodly regarding the righteous man:

Let us lie in wait for the righteous man,
because he is inconvenient to us and opposes our actions;
he reproaches us for sins against the law,
and accuses us of sins against our training.
He professes to have knowledge of God
and calls himself a child of the Lord.
He became to us a reproof of our thoughts;
the very sight of him is a burden to us,
because his manner of life is unlike that of others,
and his ways are strange.

We are considered by him as something base,
and he avoids our ways as unclean.

Wisdom 2:12–16a

The Gospel of Matthew presents the religious leaders of Israel as harboring similar thoughts and attitudes toward Jesus. They want to trap him (Matt. 12:14; 22:15) because he challenges them (Matt. 12:9–13; 15:7–9), denounces them publicly (Matt. 23:2–7, 13–36) and claims to have a unique relationship with God (Matt. 9:2–3; 12:6, 8, 41–42). Further, his lifestyle is strange and offensive to them (Matt. 9:11; 11:19) and yet he considers them to be the ones who are debased (Matt. 15:14).

Then, Wisdom of Solomon continues with these words:

[He] boasts that God is his father.
Let us see if his words are true,
and let us test what will happen at the end of his life;
for if the righteous man is God's child, he will help him,
and will deliver him from the hand of his adversaries.
Let us test him with insult and torture,
so that we may find out how gentle he is,
and make trial of his forbearance.
Let us condemn him to a shameful death,
for, according to what he says, he will be protected.

Wisdom 2:16b–20

The account of Jesus's crucifixion in the Gospel of Matthew says,

Those who passed by derided him, shaking their heads and saying, “You who would destroy the temple and build it in three days, save yourself! If you are the Son of God, come down from the cross.” In the same way, the chief priests also, along with the scribes and elders, were mocking him, saying, ‘He saved others; he cannot save himself. He is the King of Israel; let him come down from the cross now, and we will believe in him. He trusts in God; let God deliver him now, if he wants to; for he said, ‘I am God’s Son.’” (Matt. 27:39–43)