

Acts 21:32

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Who immediately took soldiers and centurions, and ran down unto them: and when they saw the chief captain and the soldiers, they left beating of Paul.

Analysis

Who immediately took soldiers and centurions—The Roman tribune (χιλίαρχος, chiliarchos, commander of 1,000) Claudius Lysias (23:26) responded swiftly to prevent insurrection. Taking multiple centurions indicates he mobilized significant force—at least 200 soldiers, as each centurion commanded 100 men. Roman military discipline meant instant response to civil unrest.

Ran down unto them—The Fortress Antonia connected to the temple courts by stairs, allowing rapid deployment. The verb katadramon emphasizes urgent descent. **They left beating of Paul** (ἐπαύσαντο τύπτοντες, epausanto tuptontes)—The mob ceased their assault only when confronted by Roman military power, not from mercy or reason. God's providence used pagan authority to preserve His apostle for further ministry and witness before Caesar (23:11).

Historical Context

The Fortress Antonia, built by Herod the Great, housed a cohort (600 soldiers) overlooking the temple. Romans maintained heightened alert during Jewish feasts when nationalist fervor peaked. Tribune Claudius Lysias commanded this garrison, responsible for maintaining order in volatile Jerusalem.

Related Passages

Genesis 1:1 — Creation of heavens and earth

Psalm 19:1 — Heavens declare God's glory

Study Questions

1. How has God used unexpected means—even secular authorities—to protect you or advance His purposes?
2. What does this passage teach about God's sovereignty over mob violence and political power?

Interlinear Text

ὅς ἐξαυτῆς παραλαβὼν στρατιώτας καὶ ἑκατοντάρχους,

Who immediately took soldiers and centurions

G3739 G1824 G3880 G4757 G2532 G1543

κατέδραμεν ἐπ' αὐτούς οἱ δὲ ιδόντες τὸν

and ran down unto them and when they saw the

G2701 G1909 G846 G3588 G1161 G1492 G3588

χιλίαρχον καὶ τοὺς στρατιώτας ἐπαύσαντο τύπτοντες

the chief captain and soldiers they left beating

G5506 G2532 G3588 G4757 G3973 G5180

τὸν Παῦλον

G3588 **of Paul**

G3972

Additional Cross-References

Acts 23:27 (Parallel theme): This man was taken of the Jews, and should have been killed of them: then came I with an army, and rescued him, having understood that he was a Roman.

Isaiah 3:15 (Parallel theme): What mean ye that ye beat my people to pieces, and grind the faces of the poor? saith the Lord GOD of hosts.

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