

John 18:12

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Then the band and the captain and officers of the Jews took Jesus, and bound him,

Analysis

The arrest proceeds with overwhelming force: "**Then the band and the captain and officers of the Jews took Jesus, and bound him**" (Ἡ οὖν σπεῖρα καὶ ὁ χιλίαρχος καὶ οἱ ὑπηρέται τῶν Ἰουδαίων συνέλαβον τὸν Ἰησοῦν καὶ ἔδησαν αὐτόν/ Hē oun speira kai ho chiliarchos kai hoi hypēretai tōn Ioudaiōn synelabon ton Iēsoun kai edēsan auton). The **σπεῖρα** (speira, "band") refers to a Roman cohort—potentially 600 soldiers. The **χιλίαρχος** (chiliarchos, "captain") was a military tribune, a high-ranking officer commanding a cohort.

The **ὑπηρέται** (hypēretai, "officers") were Jewish temple police, subordinate to the Sanhedrin. This collaboration between Roman military and Jewish religious authorities was unusual but reflected the high-stakes threat Jesus represented to both powers. The verb **συλλαμβάνω** (syllambanō, "took, seized, arrested") means to capture or apprehend—they treated Jesus as a dangerous criminal.

"And bound him" (ἔδησαν αὐτόν/edēsan auton)—the binding with ropes or chains fulfilled Isaiah 53:7, "as a sheep before her shearers is silent." Jesus, who had just demonstrated power to cast hundreds to the ground (v.6), now submits to binding without resistance. The One who claimed "all authority in heaven and earth" (Matthew 28:18) allows Himself to be treated as a powerless prisoner. This voluntary restraint demonstrates that the cross was not forced upon Christ—He actively laid down His life (John 10:18).

Historical Context

Roman and Jewish authorities rarely cooperated so closely, as occupation created natural tension. However, both saw Jesus as a mutual threat—to Roman order (potential insurrectionist king) and Jewish religious power (blasphemer claiming deity). Pilate later acknowledged he found no fault in Jesus (18:38), suggesting Roman involvement was a concession to Jewish pressure. Binding prisoners was standard procedure for transport, preventing escape and demonstrating the prisoner's subjugation. For Jesus's followers, seeing their Master bound while He had just displayed supernatural power must have been cognitively dissonant—until they later understood He went willingly to the cross as the sin-bearing Lamb of God.

Related Passages

Colossians 1:16 — All things created through Christ

Genesis 1:1 — Creation of heavens and earth

Study Questions

1. What does the massive arresting force reveal about human fear of Christ and His message?
2. How does Jesus's voluntary submission to binding demonstrate the nature of His sacrifice?
3. What theological significance do you see in the collaboration between Roman and Jewish authorities to arrest Jesus?

Interlinear Text

Ἐ οὖν σπεῖρα καὶ ὁ χιλίαρχος καὶ οἱ ὑπηρέται
G3588 Then the band and G3588 the captain and G3588 officers
G3767 G4686 G2532 G5506 G2532 G5257

τῶν Ἰουδαίων συνέλαβον τὸν Ἰησοῦν καὶ ἤδησαν αὐτὸν
G3588 of the Jews took G3588 Jesus and G2532 bound him
G2453 G4815 G2424 G2532 G1210 G846

Additional Cross-References

Matthew 26:57 (References Jesus): And they that had laid hold on Jesus led him away to Caiaphas the high priest, where the scribes and the elders were assembled.

John 18:3 (Parallel theme): Judas then, having received a band of men and officers from the chief priests and Pharisees, cometh thither with lanterns and torches and weapons.

Acts 21:37 (Parallel theme): And as Paul was to be led into the castle, he said unto the chief captain, May I speak unto thee? Who said, Canst thou speak Greek?

Acts 21:31 (Parallel theme): And as they went about to kill him, tidings came unto the chief captain of the band, that all Jerusalem was in an uproar.

Mark 14:53 (References Jesus): And they led Jesus away to the high priest: and with him were assembled all the chief priests and the elders and the scribes.

Mark 15:1 (References Jesus): And straightway in the morning the chief priests held a consultation with the elders and scribes and the whole council, and bound Jesus, and carried him away, and delivered him to Pilate.

Matthew 27:2 (Parallel theme): And when they had bound him, they led him away, and delivered him to Pontius Pilate the governor.

Genesis 22:9 (Parallel theme): And they came to the place which God had told him of; and Abraham built an altar there, and laid the wood in order, and bound Isaac his son, and laid him on the altar upon the wood.

Luke 22:54 (Parallel theme): Then took they him, and led him, and brought him into the high priest's house. And Peter followed afar off.

Judges 16:21 (Parallel theme): But the Philistines took him, and put out his eyes, and brought him down to Gaza, and bound him with fetters of brass; and he did grind in the prison house.

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