

John 18:7

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Then asked he them again, Whom seek ye? And they said, Jesus of Nazareth.

Analysis

Jesus's repeated question "**Whom seek ye?**" (τίνα ζητεῖτε/tina zēteite) demonstrates His sovereign control even in arrest. The soldiers had already fallen back at His "I am" declaration (v.6), yet their response remains unchanged: "**Jesus of Nazareth.**" This repetition reveals the hardness of unbelief—even supernatural manifestation of deity doesn't penetrate hearts darkened by sin and religious hatred.

The Greek verb ζητέω (zēteō, "seek") ironically echoes throughout John's Gospel as people "seek" Jesus—some for bread (6:26), some to kill Him (7:1), some in genuine faith (1:38). Here the seeking is hostile, yet Jesus remains in complete command of the encounter. He asks the question not for information but to establish their intent and protect His disciples (v.8).

This second questioning underscores that Jesus goes to the cross voluntarily, not as victim but as sovereign Lord. He could have escaped, called legions of angels (Matthew 26:53), or struck them all dead with a word. Instead, He methodically arranges their confession of seeking Him, demonstrates His power, and then surrenders Himself—the Good Shepherd laying down His life for the sheep (John 10:11, 17-18).

Historical Context

The arresting party consisted of a Roman cohort (σπεῖρα/speira, potentially 600 soldiers) along with Jewish temple police, an unusual collaboration between Roman military and Jewish religious authorities. This massive force came armed with weapons and torches to arrest one unarmed rabbi—revealing their fear despite superior numbers. In Roman legal procedure, the accused's confession was crucial for prosecution. Jesus's clear self-identification as "Jesus of Nazareth" provided the legal testimony they needed, though His divine "I AM" declaration in verse 6 testified to far more than His earthly origin.

Related Passages

Revelation 20:12 — Judgment according to deeds

Matthew 25:31 — Final judgment

Study Questions

1. How does Jesus's sovereign control during His arrest challenge our view of suffering and persecution?
2. What does the soldiers' unchanged response despite supernatural power reveal about the nature of unbelief?
3. How does Jesus's voluntary surrender fulfill His teaching about the Good Shepherd in John 10?

Interlinear Text

πάλιν	οὖν	αὐτούς	ἐπηρώτησεν	Τίνα	ζητεῖτε	οἱ	δὲ
again	Then	them	asked he	Whom	seek ye	G3588	And
G3825	G3767	G846	G1905	G5101	G2212		G1161
εἶπον,	Ἰησοῦν	τὸν	Ναζωραῖον				
they said	Jesus	G3588	of Nazareth				
G2036	G2424		G3480				

Additional Cross-References

John 18:4 (References Jesus): Jesus therefore, knowing all things that should come upon him, went forth, and said unto them, Whom seek ye?

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