

Luke 22:49

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

When they which were about him saw what would follow, they said unto him, Lord, shall we smite with the sword?

Analysis

When they which were about him saw what would follow, they said unto him, Lord, shall we smite with the sword? The disciples' response to imminent danger reveals misunderstanding of Jesus' kingdom. The question *ei pataxomen en machaira* (εἰ πατάξομεν ἐν μακαίρᾳ, 'shall we strike with sword?') expects a negative answer grammatically, yet betrays their continued expectation of military messianism. Despite Jesus' explicit teaching that 'all they that take the sword shall perish with the sword' (Matthew 26:52), they instinctively resort to violence. John 18:10 identifies Peter as the one who later strikes.

This moment crystallizes the tension between Christ's spiritual kingdom and human political expectations. The disciples had two swords (v. 38), which Jesus called 'enough'—not for battle but to fulfill Scripture (Isaiah 53:12, 'numbered with transgressors'). Their readiness to fight contrasts with Jesus' readiness to suffer. The phrase *to mellō* (τὸ μέλλω, 'what would follow') indicates they perceived the danger but not its divine purpose.

Historical Context

Roman law forbade Jews from carrying weapons without permission, making the disciples' possession of swords significant. The Garden of Gethsemane was a private property where Jesus often retreated (John 18:2), but this night it became an ambush site. The arrest party included Temple guards (Luke 22:52) and possibly Roman soldiers (John 18:3 mentions a 'band'). First-century Jewish

messianic expectations centered on military liberation from Rome, explaining the disciples' violent instinct. They expected the Messiah to overthrow oppressors, not submit to them.

Related Passages

1 Corinthians 13:4 — Characteristics of love

John 15:13 — Greatest form of love

Psalms 19:1 — Heavens declare God's glory

Colossians 1:16 — All things created through Christ

Study Questions

1. How do the disciples' swords reveal the gap between their understanding and Jesus' mission?
2. When do Christians today confuse political/military power with the advancement of God's kingdom?
3. What does Jesus' rebuke of violence teach about the nature of spiritual warfare?

Interlinear Text

ιδόντες	δὲ	οἱ	περὶ	αὐτῷ,	τὸ	ἐσόμενον
saw	When	G3588	they which were about	him	G3588	what would follow
G1492	G1161		G4012	G846		G2071
εἶπον	αὐτῷ,	Κύριε	εἰ	πατάξομεν	ἐν	μαχαίρᾳ
they said	him	Lord	G1487	shall we smite	with	the sword
G2036	G846	G2962		G3960	G1722	G3162

Additional Cross-References

Luke 22:38 (Word): And they said, Lord, behold, here are two swords. And he said unto them, It is enough.

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