

Matthew 26:54

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

But how then shall the scriptures be fulfilled, that thus it must be?

Analysis

But how then shall the scriptures be fulfilled, that thus it must be? (πῶς οὖν πληρωθῶσιν αἱ γραφαὶ ὅτι οὕτως δεῖ γενέσθαι;)—The conjunction οὖν (therefore, then) draws conclusion: resisting arrest would prevent Scripture's fulfillment. The verb πληρώω (plēroō, 'to fulfill, to complete') indicates divine plan revealed in αἱ γραφαί (the Scriptures). The impersonal δεῖ ('it is necessary, it must be') conveys divine necessity, not mere fate. The adverb οὕτως ('thus, in this way') shows the manner of fulfillment—arrest, trial, crucifixion, resurrection—was prophetically specified.

Jesus subordinated self-preservation to scriptural fulfillment. He valued God's Word's accuracy above His own comfort. References include Isaiah 53 (suffering servant), Psalm 22 (crucifixion details), Zechariah 13:7 (striking the shepherd), and numerous passion predictions. The rhetorical question assumes Peter should know Scripture requires Messiah's suffering. Jesus's passion demonstrates that providence and prophecy, divine sovereignty and human freedom, converge at the cross—wicked hands fulfilling God's predetermined plan (Acts 2:23).

Historical Context

First-century Jews knew their Scriptures but misinterpreted messianic prophecies, emphasizing conquering king (Psalm 2; Isaiah 9:6-7) while ignoring suffering servant (Isaiah 52:13-53:12). Jesus consistently taught both (Luke 24:25-27, 44-46), showing one Messiah in two comings. His submission to arrest

demonstrates that biblical authority governed His choices—He lived (and died) sola scriptura. Early Christians defended the gospel by showing Jesus fulfilled prophecy, arguing His death wasn't defeat but divine plan (Acts 2:22-36; 8:32-35; 1 Corinthians 15:3-4).

Related Passages

Revelation 20:12 — Judgment according to deeds

Romans 2:1 — Judging others

Genesis 1:1 — Creation of heavens and earth

Psalm 19:1 — Heavens declare God's glory

Study Questions

1. How does Jesus's subordination of self-preservation to scriptural fulfillment challenge your submission to biblical authority?
2. What comfort does the fulfillment of Scripture at Christ's arrest provide when your own suffering seems chaotic and purposeless?

Interlinear Text

πῶς οὖν πληρωθῶσιν αἱ γραφαὶ ὅτι οὕτως

But how **then** **be fulfilled** **shall the scriptures** **that** **thus**

G4459

G3767

G4137

G3588

G1124

G3754

G3779

δεῖ γενέσθαι

it must **be**

G1163

G1096

Additional Cross-References

Zechariah 13:7 (Word): Awake, O sword, against my shepherd, and against the man that is my fellow, saith the LORD of hosts: smite the shepherd, and the sheep shall be scattered: and I will turn mine hand upon the little ones.

Matthew 26:24 (Parallel theme): The Son of man goeth as it is written of him: but woe unto that man by whom the Son of man is betrayed! it had been good for that man if he had not been born.

Acts 1:16 (Word): Men and brethren, this scripture must needs have been fulfilled, which the Holy Ghost by the mouth of David spake before concerning Judas, which was guide to them that took Jesus.

John 10:35 (Word): If he called them gods, unto whom the word of God came, and the scripture cannot be broken;

From KJV Study • kjvstudy.org