

Matthew 27:36

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And sitting down they watched him there;

Analysis

Sitting down they watched him there (καθήμενοι ἐτήρουν, kathēmenoi etēroun) —the guard detail ensures the condemned dies and no one attempts rescue. Etēroun means to watch carefully, to keep under surveillance. Pilate assigned guards because of potential unrest during Passover.

The irony: guards watch the God-man die to prevent interference, yet their watching fulfills divine purpose. Heaven watches too—angels restrained, the Father's face hidden (v. 46), all creation waiting for the moment when **it is finished** (John 19:30).

Historical Context

Crucifixion deaths could take days. Guards prevented premature removal, rescue attempts, or wild animals from disturbing the body. Their presence also deterred sympathizers from cutting down the victim prematurely to end suffering.

Related Passages

Psalm 19:1 — Heavens declare God's glory

Genesis 1:1 — Creation of heavens and earth

Study Questions

1. What is the significance of human guards watching Jesus when no earthly power could have stopped his mission?
2. How does the soldiers' passive watching contrast with the cosmic significance of what was happening?

Interlinear Text

καὶ καθήμενοι ἔτηρουν αὐτὸν ἐκεῖ

And sitting down they watched him there

G2532

G2521

G5083

G846

G1563

Additional Cross-References

Matthew 27:54 (Parallel theme): Now when the centurion, and they that were with him, watching Jesus, saw the earthquake, and those things that were done, they feared greatly, saying, Truly this was the Son of God.

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