

Matthew 27:53

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And came out of the graves after his resurrection, and went into the holy city, and appeared unto many.

Analysis

And came out of the graves after his resurrection, and went into the holy city, and appeared unto many. The raised saints emerged 'after his resurrection' (μετὰ τὴν ἔγερσιν αὐτοῦ/meta tēn egersin autou), establishing Christ's priority as 'firstfruits from the dead' (1 Corinthians 15:20, Colossians 1:18). Though their tombs opened at His death, they appeared after He rose, maintaining His unique status as the first to conquer death permanently.

'Went into the holy city' (εἰσῆλθον εἰς τὴν ἁγίαν πόλιν/eisēlthon eis tēn hagian polin)—Jerusalem. 'Appeared unto many' (ἐνεφανίσθησαν πολλοῖς/enephanisthēsan pollois)—numerous witnesses saw them, providing testimony to resurrection's reality. This was no hallucination or legend but a witnessed event with multiple credible observers.

Historical Context

This event is unique to Matthew's Gospel, perhaps because Matthew wrote primarily to Jewish audiences who would be most impacted by OT saints appearing in Jerusalem. The appearance to 'many' ensured widespread testimony, yet it didn't convert unbelievers en masse—a reminder that even spectacular miracles don't compel faith apart from God's grace.

Related Passages

Matthew 25:31 — Final judgment

Revelation 20:12 — Judgment according to deeds

Study Questions

1. Why is it significant that these saints appeared 'after his resurrection' rather than immediately—what does this teach about Christ's unique role as firstfruits?
2. What does the fact that they 'appeared unto many' teach us about God providing sufficient evidence for faith while not forcing belief?
3. How does this preview of the final resurrection encourage believers facing death or mourning believing loved ones?

Interlinear Text

καὶ ἐξελθόντες ἐκ τῶν μνημείων μετὰ τὴν ἔγερσιν
And **came** **out of** G3588 **the graves** **after** G3588 **resurrection**
G2532 G1831 G1537 G3419 G3326 G1454

αὐτοῦ εἰσῆλθον εἰς τὴν ἁγίαν πόλιν καὶ ἐνεφανίσθησαν
his **and went** **into** G3588 **the holy** **city** **And** **appeared**
G846 G1525 G1519 G40 G4172 G2532 G1718

πολλοῖς
unto many
G4183