

Matthew 28:11

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Now when they were going, behold, some of the watch came into the city, and shewed unto the chief priests all the things that were done.

Analysis

Now when they were going, behold, some of the watch came into the city, and shewed unto the chief priests all the things that were done. This verse begins the narrative of the authorities' response to the resurrection. While the women joyfully proclaimed Christ's victory, 'some of the watch' (τινὲς τῆς κουστωδίας/*tines tēs koustōdias*)—Roman soldiers or temple guards who had witnessed the earthquake, angel, and empty tomb—reported to 'the chief priests' rather than their military commander.

This detail suggests these were temple guards under Jewish authority rather than Roman soldiers. Their report to the chief priests (who had requested the guard in the first place, Matthew 27:62-66) shows institutional knowledge of what transpired. The Jewish leadership could not claim ignorance; they received firsthand testimony from their own security forces about supernatural events at the tomb.

'Shewed unto the chief priests all the things that were done' (ἀπήγγειλαν τοῖς ἀρχιερεῦσιν ἅπαντα τὰ γενόμενα/*apēngeilan tois archiereusin hapanta ta genomena*)—they reported everything: the earthquake, the angelic appearance, the opened tomb, their own terror. This was credible testimony from trained, sober-minded guards who had nothing to gain by fabricating such an account.

The chief priests thus faced a crisis: undeniable evidence of something

supernatural occurring at Jesus's tomb, precisely as He had predicted. They could respond with faith (acknowledging Jesus's messianic claims) or with suppression (attempting to maintain power and doctrine despite contrary evidence). Tragically, they chose the latter, demonstrating that unbelief can resist even overwhelming evidence when pride, position, and preconceptions are at stake.

Historical Context

The chief priests were Sadducees, a Jewish sect that denied resurrection, angels, and spirits (Acts 23:8). The guards' report of angelic appearance and empty tomb directly contradicted Sadducean theology. Yet rather than reconsidering their doctrines in light of evidence, they doubled down on unbelief—a pattern seen throughout redemptive history when religious authorities resist God's work (Acts 4:1-3, 5:17-18).

These same chief priests had demanded Pilate secure the tomb (Matthew 27:62-64) precisely because they feared the disciples might steal the body and claim resurrection. Now, ironically, when genuine resurrection occurred, they had to fabricate the very theft story they had tried to prevent.

The guards' report came 'when they [the women] were going'—parallel timing emphasizes the contrast. While faithful women proclaimed resurrection truth, institutional religion suppressed it. This dynamic continues throughout church history: grassroots, Spirit-empowered proclamation versus institutional resistance to truth that threatens established power.

Related Passages

Revelation 20:12 — Judgment according to deeds

Romans 2:1 — Judging others

Study Questions

1. What does the guards' testimony to hostile authorities teach us about the strength of resurrection evidence—even enemies acknowledged something unprecedented occurred?
2. How does the chief priests' suppression of truth despite evidence illustrate the spiritual blindness that comes from loving one's position, reputation, and power more than truth?
3. In what ways might we, like the chief priests, resist clear evidence of God's work because it threatens our theological systems, traditions, or comfort?

Interlinear Text

Πορευομένων	δὲ	αὐτῶν	ἰδοῦ,	τινες	τῆς	κουστωδίας
when they were going	Now	G846	behold	some	G3588	of the watch
G4198	G1161		G2400	G5100		G2892
ἐλθόντες	εἰς	τὴν	πόλιν	ἀπήγγειλαν	τοῖς	ἀρχιερεῦσιν
came	into	G3588	the city	and shewed	G3588	unto the chief priests
G2064	G1519		G4172	G518		G749
ἅπαντα	τὰ	γεγόμενα				
all the things	G3588	that were done				
G537		G1096				

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