

First Passage: Jesus Arrested (vv. 47–56)

v. 47a “A large crowd,” “great multitude,” or “band of men” = *spira* = “a military cohort or group of men with a common interest, numbering between 300 and 600 trained Roman soldiers.”

Matthew says that the band of 300–600 Roman soldiers was accompanied by Jewish officers. The Greek word for these officers is *huperetas*, which referred to “police officers” who worked on the temple grounds.

v. 47b “swords and clubs” and “lances, torches, and weapons” (John 18:3) = *hoplos* = “the full weaponry of a Roman soldier.” Paul describes this in Ephesians 6:13–17.

“Lanterns” and “torches” = *lampas* and *phanos* = “bright, shining lights” and “long-burning oil lamps.”

v. 53 Considering the physical strength of a single angel.

(1) Legion” = a military term that was taken from the Roman army; it’s a group of at least 6,000 Roman soldiers, possibly higher. Legion = “at least 6,000 of something.”

(2) “Twelve legions of angels” amounts to 6,000 x 12 = at least 72,000 angels!

(3) Their combined strength? Isaiah 37:36 records that a single angel obliterated 185,000 men in one night. The combined strength of just one legion of angels = *one billion, one hundred and ten million men*. That’s one legion. But with twelve legions, Jesus had available the strength to annihilate at least *13 billion, 320 million men*.

Application aspect for this first passage

As you face challenges in your life, . . . always keep in mind that Jesus has the power to fix any problems you’ll ever come across.

The next time you’re tempted to “reach for the sword,” and strike an opponent, take a few minutes to pray, reminding yourself that Jesus can handle your problem without your intervention. Ask the Lord what He want you to do before you do anything!

Q. 1. How do you think Jesus felt seeing Judas and an armed mob approaching Him?
 frightened, surprised, prepared, angry, betrayed, confused

Q. 2. Why did the disciples desert Jesus and flee?
 They panicked, Their leader appeared defeated, They feared for their lives,
 Jesus wasn’t the kind of Messiah they thought he was,
 They didn’t know how to accept Jesus’ acceptance of his arrest, other: _____

Q. 3. If you were one of the disciples there, how would **you** have reacted?
 frightened, surprised, prepared, angry, betrayed, confused

Q. 4. What do you suppose was the hardest thing for Jesus about this arrest?
 being betrayed by a friend, being deserted by all his disciples,
 knowing what was going to happen next, knowing he called have called on
multitudes of powerful angels to rescue him, other: _____

Second Passage: Before the Sanhedrin (vv. 57–68)

v. 57 “arrested,” “laid hold on” = *kratos* = “to seize, to take hold of, to firmly grip, to apprehend.” In effect, Matthew uses the Greek *kratos* to indicate that the 300 to 600 Roman soldiers and all the temple police “made a forceful arrest” of Jesus.

Also in this first verse is the verb “took.” Matthew uses the term “took him away” or “led him away” when he uses the Greek word *apago*. It connotes this imagery: “A shepherd who ties a rope around the neck of his sheep, pulling it behind him, to lead it down the path to where it needs to go.”

v. 67 Then the religious scribes and elders did the unthinkable to Jesus.

The first verb is “spit.” Imagine how Jesus must have felt that night when he was literally “spit on” by temple guards and police.

Please notice that it wasn’t just a few who spit in Jesus’ face that night. The Bible says, “...*they* spit in his face.” The word “they” refers to all the scribes and elders assembled there. One scholar noted that it could have been more than a hundred men in this assembly.

The religious leaders didn’t stop there. After they all spit on Him, Matthew tells us that they “struck Him with their fists.” The Greek word he uses is *kolaphidzo*, which means “to violently beat.” It refers to “the grueling and barbaric practice of beating a slave.”

Application aspect for this portion of the second passage

As you think of how people have wronged you, consider whether it should affect your desire to *love* them.

v. 68 The religious scribes and elders were sadistic when they all spit in His face, then struck Him violently. Verse 68 tells us that there was an additional round of face slapping by some of the religious leaders. Matthew uses the Greek *paio* for “slapped.” A *paio* is interpreted as “a strike on the face that stings.”

. . . This charades effort was anything but a game. It involved violence as the men took turns slapping the face of a blindfolded Jesus as they asked Him to guess who had given Him the last slap.

Application aspect for this portion of the second passage

Jesus is the perfect example of how we’re to behave in all situations. Although He was reviled and cursed, humiliated and beaten, He never fought back, never retaliated, never got into “a war of words.”

And that’s something to think about.