

Jesus, the Wanted Man

Scripture Reading — John 18:1-7

Jesus, knowing all that was going to happen to him, went out and asked them, “Who is it you want?” — John 18:4

They assumed that the man they were after was dangerous. They were told he was leading a rebellion, he was a threat to law and order, and he was a danger to the temple and to Jerusalem. They expected to encounter a hostile band of rebels and a leader who had “powers” from the devil.

The well-armed and trained security force that came to arrest Jesus may have included about 200 men. (The Greek word in our text for “detachment of soldiers”—*spiera*—was used in other contexts to describe groups ranging from 600 to 200 Roman soldiers.) These were the forces that guarded the Jerusalem temple. They advanced through the midnight darkness with torches and lanterns blazing. They also had the informer Judas with them to identify the rebel leader.

But Judas’s kiss turned out to be unnecessary. As the armed force approached the olive garden, the wanted man calmly came out to meet them—alone and unarmed. He identified himself as the one they were looking for, Jesus of Nazareth, and their reaction was quite surprising: “They drew back and fell to the ground.”

These unanticipated circumstances unnerved the armed detachment of soldiers into a strange silence. Jesus’ calm presence changed everything, for a moment.

Prayer

Lord Jesus, for that moment, the plot against you paused, stunned by the power of your calm, unthreatening meekness. Holy Spirit, bless your people today with that kind of power. Amen.

Devotion topics: [Bible](#), [Books of the Bible](#), [Gospel of John](#), [Life of Jesus](#), [God](#), [Jesus](#)

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