

Jesus taken, bound and led away. John 18. 1-13. Carmarthen Conference. 6 March 2010.

This afternoon, I wish to consider *three* things which *men* did to the Lord Jesus in the garden of Gethsemane; namely that, according to John 18 verses 12-13, they **took** Him, they **bound** Him and they **led** Him.

First, **they took Him**. The Jews had sought to 'take Him' for some time. John uses that exact expression 'take Him' twice in chapter 7 and once at the end of chapter 11.

In John 7, verses 30-32, we read, 'Therefore *they sought to take Him*; but no man laid hands on Him, because His hour had not yet come'. Then that, 'The Pharisees heard the crowd murmuring, "When the Christ comes, will He do more miraculous signs than these which this man has done?", and the Pharisees and the chief priests *sent officers* (the temple guard) *to take Him*'. They '*sought*' and they '*sent*'. But the officers failed to 'take Him' – failed to arrest Him. Indeed, in one sense, *He arrested them* – by His words. For on the great day of the Feast of Tabernacles, as these men jostled and elbowed their way through the crowd, Jesus stood and cried, 'If any man thirst, let him come to me and drink'; so reads verse 37. The temple guard stood riveted to the spot. Later they returned – empty-handed – soon to find themselves on the carpet – called to account – 'Why', the Jewish leaders wanted to know, 'have you not brought Him?' ... to which, according to verse 46, the officers could only respond, '*Never man spoke like this man!*' It is hardly surprising therefore that the chief priests and Pharisees had *now* requested and obtained a detachment of Roman soldiers (in all likelihood, auxiliaries) – the word John uses, translated 'band', suggesting a 'maniple' of 200 men – together with their commander (or tribune) – to accompany their own officers.¹ I suspect that – in spite of his intense personal dislike for them – Pilate agreed to their application for troops because of the volatile nature of Jewish pilgrims – particularly those from Galilee – at their annual festivals.² From the Governor's standpoint, it was best not to take any risks.

More recently than chapter 7, having then *sought* in vain and *sent* in vain, they had *schemed* to take Him. According to the end of chapter 11, following the raising of Lazarus, the supreme Jewish council had exercised their authority to throw their net wide. We read that 'both the chief priests and the Pharisees had given a commandment, that, if any man knew where He (the Lord Jesus) was, that man should inform them, that *they might take Him*'.³

Yet they had *sought*, *sent* and *schemed* to take Him to no avail. But now, due in part to the betrayal by Judas Iscariot, they 'took Him'.

I say 'in part' because John makes it clear that they could *not* have taken Him – then or ever – unless He had first chosen to submit Himself to them.⁴

When they had sought to take Him and kill Him at *the beginning* of chapter 7, He had withdrawn to Galilee. Verse 1 simply says, 'He would not (He did not wish to) walk in Judea, because the Jews sought to kill Him'. When the Jews sought to do the same at *the end* of chapter 11, He had withdrawn to the town of Ephraim, in the mountainous region north east of Jerusalem. 'Jesus no longer walked openly among the Jews', John says.⁵

The apostle also reports in chapter 12 how, while in Jerusalem during Passion Week itself, 'When He had finished speaking, Jesus left and hid Himself from them (the Jews)', so reads verse 36. And even now, when, with understandable trepidation, they had ventured into the garden and our Lord had stood forward to confront them, they had fallen to the ground awed, helpless and powerless before Him. No – they certainly couldn't have 'taken' Him unless He permitted them to.⁶

Indeed, I note that John used twice before the expression he now uses – '*went out*' – when describing how the Lord Jesus had evaded His foes on previous occasions. In chapter 8, He had said, 'Your father Abraham rejoiced to see my day', and in response to their challenge, 'You are not yet fifty years old, and have you seen Abraham?', had declared, 'before Abraham was, I am'. This to them – correctly – was an unmistakeable and transparent claim to deity – to be none other than the God of Israel Himself – the 'I am' who revealed Himself to Moses in Exodus 3.⁷ Small wonder they not only *took* umbrage, but '*took up* stones to cast at Him'. 'But', John reports, 'Jesus hid Himself and *went out* of the temple, going through the midst of them, and so passed by'.⁸

I said that John used *twice* before the expression '*went out*' when describing how the Lord Jesus had evaded His foes. The second occasion was in chapter 10, where, as they sought again to seize – to arrest – Him, 'He escaped (*went out*, literally) out of their hand. (Note that double 'out' in verse 39) And He went away again', the apostle adds, 'beyond the Jordan to the place where John was baptizing at first'.⁹

I am reminded of an incident in the life of David, when, in 1 Samuel 23, he learned that he would have been betrayed by the men of Keilah. Briefly, David and his 600 men¹⁰ had intervened to deliver the inhabitants of Keilah from the marauding Philistines who were robbing their threshing-floors. 'So David saved the inhabitants of Keilah', the text says. Ah but ... as a result, David's whereabouts became known to King Saul, who for some time had been far more concerned with killing David than with killing Philistines. And who, as if to prove just that, 'called all the people together to war' – *not* against the Philistines – but 'to go down to Keilah, to besiege David and his men'.

In situations when David didn't know what he should do, his automatic reaction was, 'Bring the ephod!' And this was no exception. 'Let me find out what God says'. David wanted the answers to two straightforward questions. First, 'Will Saul come down, as your servant has heard?', and, second, when the Lord said, 'he will come down', 'Will the men of Keilah deliver up me and my men into the hand of Saul?' God's answer to this, David's second question, must have wounded David deeply. 'The Lord said, "They will deliver you up"'. We are hardly surprised to read the sequel ... 'then David and his men ... arose and *departed out* of Keilah' – where the Greek Old Testament uses the same word ('went out' – 'David and his men ... arose and went out') as does John in verse 4 ('Jesus ... knowing all things coming on Him *went out* and said to them, "Whom seek ye?") That is, here in John 18, although the Lord Jesus knew that Judas was poised to deliver Him into the hands of His foes – much as the men of Keilah had been poised to betray David into Saul's – He didn't 'go out' to flee as David – He – the Son of David – 'went out' to meet them!¹¹

But, if – in chapters 8 and 10 – John had twice used the expression 'went out' when describing how the Lord Jesus evaded His foes, here, in chapter 18, John again tells us twice that Jesus 'went out' – first, in verse 1, that 'Jesus *went out* with His disciples over the brook Kidron', and now, in verse 4, that He '*went out* and said to them, "Whom seek ye?"' That is, He now 'went out' – *not* to escape out of their hands – but to meet them and to submit Himself to them.

For all was now changed. 'Jesus', we read at the beginning of chapter 13, 'knowing that *His hour was come* that He should depart (should cross the frontier) from this world to the Father, having loved His own which were in the world, He loved them unto the end'. 'Father', He prayed at the beginning of chapter 17, '*the hour is come*'. That is, He knew the big '**when**'.

We have been aware since the end of chapter 6 that He 'knew from the beginning who ... should betray him'.¹² That is, He also knew the big '**who**'.

But our passage makes it clear that Jesus knew, not only **when** and **who**, but **what** – for, according to verse 4, 'knowing all things coming on Him, He went out'. Oh, yes, *He knew* all – knew all the cross would mean for Him – all it would cost Him to drink the cup which, according to verse 11, His Father gave Him.

But there were things which those who came to take Him *didn't know*. They didn't know, for instance, who it was they had come to take. Yes, of course they knew it was 'Jesus of Nazareth', but they did not know who He really was – for, as He once told Peter, that knowledge came only by revelation from the Father.¹³ As John tells us in his first chapter, 'He (the Lord Jesus, the world's Creator) was in the world ... and the world knew Him not'.¹⁴

Nor did they know just *how different things could easily have proved for them* that night when they presumed to reach out their hands to take Him.¹⁵

According to Matthew 26, when rebuking Peter's violent response to the actions of these men, the Lord Jesus had calmly insisted that, *had* He wished to escape from their clutches, He would have asked, not *him* (Peter) to unsheathe and let fly with his rather pathetic short sword – being little more than a dagger – but asked *His Father* to despatch to Him in excess of 12 legions of angels. 'Put your sword into its place (its proper home)', He said, 'for all who take the sword will perish by the sword'. Look around you, Peter – you are surrounded by some 200 men – each of whom carries a sword far bigger than yours! 'Do you think that I cannot now pray to my Father, and He will provide me with more than 12 legions of angels?'¹⁶ Yes, Peter, a legion for each of us – and more to spare.

My wife Linda and I are currently reading through the Second Book of Kings. On Monday evening we read of that occasion when 'the Lord sent an angel'¹⁷ who 'smote 185,000 in the camp of the Assyrians' – following the siege mounted by Sennacherib the King of Assyria and his loudmouthed Rabshakeh. It had indeed been true, as the Rabshakeh had claimed, that 'the *gods* of Hamath, Arpad, Sepharvaim, Hena and Ivvah'¹⁸ had utterly failed to deliver *their* peoples out of the hand of the king of Assyria. But then *these* so-called 'gods' were just dead idols – the products of men's minds and hands. The Lord, the God of Israel, who Hezekiah addressed at the time as having 'made heaven and earth' had but to 'send an angel' – just one! Exit Sennacherib's army – and exit Sennacherib, who, the passage says, 'departed and went and returned'¹⁹ to Nineveh – where some time after he was murdered by two of his own offspring. Just one angel. Small wonder that David once wrote – Psalm 103 verse 20 – 'Bless the Lord, you His angels, who excel in strength'.

But if 'just one angel' could despatch 185,000 Assyrian troops in one night, it isn't difficult to calculate that 12 legions of angels – that is, 72,000 angels – could take care of well over 13 *billion*. And there *weren't* 13 billion Roman soldiers or Jewish guards in Gethsemane! Nor did our Lord speak of only '12 legions of angels' – but of '*more than 12 legions of angels*'.

But, leaving aside the possibility of large-scale angelic intervention, we have only to think of what happened to the first two companies of 50 which Ahaziah (the king of Israel who managed to fall through the lattice-work shutter of a window in the upper room of his palace, and who had commissioned his servants to obtain a prognosis from Ba'al-

zebug, a Philistine god²⁰) ... we have only to think of what happened to those first two companies of 50 which Ahaziah sent to 'take' – to capture – the prophet Elijah in 2 Kings 1. Both companies were led by captains who strutted up the hill on which Elijah dwelt to deliver the apostate king's demand, 'Man of God, *come down*' – the second adding (insolently – not to say foolishly), 'come down *quickly*'. 'If I am a man of God', Elijah responded in both cases, 'let fire *come down* out of heaven and consume you and your fifty'. And down the fire came – as surely as it had previously on an altar on Mount Carmel.²¹

Again, consider what happened when the king of Syria, probably Benhadad II, sent his 'great army' to Dothan in 2 Kings 6, to 'take' the prophet Elisha, surrounding the city with horses and chariots.²² The reason for this was that, on several occasions, Elisha had alerted the King of Israel to Syrian troop movements – 'not once or twice', the Bible says – enabling the king of Israel to avoid defeat.²³ At a council of war, Benhadad learned from one of his own officials that it was not a mole, a traitor, but Elisha who was supplying key military intelligence to the king of Israel – indeed that the prophet was relaying to his king, not only what Benhadad said in his war-chamber but, as the official put it, in his bedchamber!²⁴

Discovering that Elisha was then at Dothan, the king of Syria 'sent ... a great host' to take and 'fetch' him.²⁵ I should have thought that, given his recent experiences of Elisha's prophetic gift, Benhadad would have realised that God's prophet would have known in advance that his troops were being deployed against Dothan! Once the city had been besieged, according to 2 Kings 6 verses 15 to 18, Elisha had occasion to pray twice. First, for his terror-struck servant, 'Lord, open his eyes' – that he might 'see' the angelic forces ranged in Elisha's defence – that 'the mountain was full of horses and chariots of fire round about Elisha'.²⁶ And, second, for the Syrian army, 'Smite this people with blindness'²⁷ – both of which prayers the Lord immediately answered ... and Elisha, his servant and Dothan were delivered.

What do I learn from these stories of Elijah and Elisha? This, that clearly it didn't pay to mess with one of God's prophets! But *this* was *not* one of God's prophets in Gethsemane – this was God's one and only Son! And yet – most wonderfully – the men who came to take *Him* were *neither* barbecued nor blinded.

In summary ... No, He didn't call for 12 legions of angels to smite His foes... No, He didn't call for fire from heaven to consume them ... No, He didn't even inflict them with blindness. And so they '**took Him**'.

And then **they bound Him**.

Here I must take you back over two hundred years – from the days of Elijah and Elisha to the days of the Judges and to the days of Samson in particular, who was, the scriptures tell us, *twice 'bound'* with new ropes.

First, you will remember that, when Samson's Philistine wife was given to one of his former companions by her father in Judges 15, Samson was far from amused, and, with the help of 300 foxes, burned the Philistine's all-important crops – starting with their standing corn. They (the Philistines) responded violently, fighting 'fire with fire' – quite literally – burning both Samson's wife and her father to death. In response, Samson avenged himself in the famous 'hip and thigh' slaughter – which expression probably means that he smote them 'very severely', although I suppose it is just possible that he did leave their corpses a tangle of legs and thighs.²⁸

In retaliation, the Philistines came out in force against the men of Judah, 'three thousand' of whom approached Samson to say, 'Don't you know that the Philistines rule over us? What is this you have done to us?'²⁹ Personally, I find it sad to hear the men of Judah, of all people, speak thus. It is hard to believe that, according to the opening chapter of Judges, this was the Israelite tribe which had distinguished itself formerly by wading into battle after battle against the Canaanites.³⁰ In response to Samson's condition, 'Swear to me that you will not kill me yourselves', the delegation solemnly promised, 'We will bind you securely and deliver you into the hand of the Philistines; but we will surely not kill you'. Now, wasn't that nice of them! 'We won't kill you; we'll only bind you and hand you over to the Philistines so that *they* can kill you'. 'And they *bound him with two new ropes* and brought him up from the rock'.

But we read that, when the Philistines *came against him* shouting their war-cries, 'the Spirit of the Lord *came on him* mightily, and the ropes on his arms became like flax which had been burnt with fire'.³¹ At which point, things weren't looking too good for the Philistines! Exit 1,000 Philistines, slaughtered by Samson with 'a new jawbone of an ass' for his only weapon – the word 'new' (or 'fresh') indicating that the jawbone still had its teeth intact – and in Samson's hand these donkey-dentures made a very nasty and lethal weapon! In commemoration of his God-given victory there, Samson named the scene of the battle fittingly as 'Jawbone Hill' (Ramath-Lehi).

The second occasion that Samson was bound was when, in the following chapter, '*Delilah took new ropes and bound him with them*, and said to him, "The Philistines are upon you, Samson!" And he broke them off his arms', it says, this time, 'like thread'.³²

The word 'bound' used in the Greek Old Testament on both occasions is the same as that used by John in our reading – the 'officers of the Jews took Jesus, and *bound* Him'.

But *this* was no super-strong, Philistine-battering Israelite hero from the days of the Judges. This was the Lord Himself ... the One who, in the language of Job 38 verse 31, 'binds the cluster of Pleiades' – a star cluster comprising hundreds of stars in the constellation of Taurus the Bull.³³ And yet *He* permitted them to bind Him – and, what is more, unlike Samson, He left their ropes intact.

And then, we read, **they led Him**. The Gospels lay great emphasis on the fact that, in the period immediately prior to His death, the Lord Jesus was repeatedly 'led'. Indeed, between the moment He was arrested here in the garden of Gethsemane and the time He was crucified, they record no less than *seven* stages.

First, as we read, (i) He was **led** to Annas, for a preliminary examination.³⁴ Although it had in fact been some 15 years since Annas had actually held the office of High Priest,³⁵ he was still known – and described in the New Testament – as 'high priest',³⁶ and remained the dominant and ruling spirit of the Jewish council.

Then, (ii) 'they ... **led** him away to Caiaphas the high priest, where the scribes and the elders were assembled', for a full, albeit unofficial, investigation held by the council *at night*.³⁷

Then, (iii), 'As soon as it was *day*, the elders of the people and the chief priests and the scribes came together, and **led** him into their council', for the formal session of the council, convened to confirm the death sentence passed on Jesus during the night.³⁸

Then, (iv) 'they **led** Jesus ... to the hall of judgement',³⁹ and (v) '**led** him to Pilate' personally,⁴⁰ for His civil trial before the Roman governor.

Then, (vi) 'The soldiers **led** him into the hall, called Praetorium',⁴¹ the courtyard where His supposed kingly claims were ridiculed and derided both by Pilate's own soldiers and by others of the garrison stationed in Jerusalem.

And finally, (vii), 'After that they had mocked him, they ... **led** him away to crucify him'.⁴²

Over 700 years before, the prophet Isaiah had spoken of the Messiah, the Servant of the Lord, as 'oppressed and afflicted, yet', Isaiah added, 'He opened not His mouth. He was led as a lamb to the slaughter'.⁴³ The word translated 'slaughter' in the Greek Old Testament there being closely akin to that translated 'slain' in Revelation 5 – where the four living creatures and the 24 elders declare, 'You are worthy ... because you were slain and, by your blood, have purchased to God those out of every tribe and tongue and people and nation' – and where the innumerable company of angels proclaim, 'Worthy is the Lamb that was slain'.

Over the centuries, many, many lambs had been 'led' away (innocent and unsuspecting) to be slaughtered. Now the Lamb of God is led away to be slain – to be slaughtered – but, unlike those lambs, as John noted, knowing all that which would come upon Him!

Back in chapter 10, we have His own well-known words, 'I am the good shepherd ... the good shepherd lays down His life for the sheep'. And now the good *Shepherd* who, in verses 7-9 of our chapter, stepped between His sheep and the wolves to protect His sheep, allows Himself to be led as a *lamb* to the slaughter.

What grace ... and what tremendous self-restraint. To have all power; yet to be as having none.

He permits Himself to be **taken, bound and led away** ... in unswerving devotion to God and His will ... and in unflinching and boundless love for me. Yes, it was *for me* He was taken, bound and led away to die.

Some years ago, my wife Linda and I received a Christmas card from a Christian couple living about 12 miles away from us. This particular card moved me deeply – not because of anything Ed and Linda wrote on it, but because of the words which were printed inside ... 'His destiny was the cross; His purpose was to die; His reason was you!'

You are probably familiar with Paul's words in 1 Corinthians 8 verse 11; 'through thy knowledge shall the weak brother perish, for whom Christ died?' When Paul says of the weak brother that Christ died 'for' him, he uses one of four different Greek words which, in the New Testament, are translated 'for' in the context of the Lord's death – each with its own shade of meaning. One word signifies that the death of Jesus in some way concerned me; that is, it had something to do with me. Another word signifies that His death was in my interests; that is, that He died on my behalf. Yet another word signifies that He died instead of me; that is, that He died in my place. But the word Paul uses in 1 Corinthians 8 signifies that the Lord Jesus died 'because of' me; that I am the reason He died.

What a thought! That I am the reason the Son of God allowed Himself to be **taken, bound and led away**.

Footnotes

¹ John 18. 12. See D. A Carson, 'John', page 577. I understand that the governors of Judaea had only auxiliary troops at their disposal. These amounted to five infantry cohorts and one cavalry regiment scattered throughout the province. One infantry cohort - or just possibly two infantry cohorts - had their barracks in Jerusalem (at the old palace and at the fortress Antonia); one cohort guarded the Judaeian capital, Caesarea; and the remainder, together with the cavalry regiment, were on duty throughout the province. Agrippa I left a military establishment of one cavalry regiment and five cohorts at his death in 44 AD (Josephus, Ant, XIX, ix, 2; BJ, III, iv, 2), which he had probably received from the earlier Roman administration. At one time the cavalry regiment - The Ala I gemina Sebastenorum - was stationed at Caesarea (Josephus, Ant, XX, 122; BJ, II, xii, 5).

² See the article 'Pilate' in HDB. Also page 553 in I. Howard Marshall's commentary on 'The Gospel of Luke'.

³ John 11. 57.

⁴ Indeed, John draws our attention to the fact that 'Judas, who betrayed Him, also knew the place; for Jesus often met there with His disciples', v. 2 – that is, that Jesus was not trying to avoid arrest, but instead deliberately went to the place where He knew Judas would anticipate He would go.

⁵ John 11. 54.

⁶ I confess that, for my part, I see nothing miraculous to the fact that 'when He said to them, I am *He*, they drew back and fell to the ground'. I wouldn't question for one moment that there are occasions when the words 'I am' on our Lord's lips were certainly a claim to deity. But I know of no instance – in either Testament – where the mere declaration of the divine name caused any physical effects on men. I have to say that, to me, this savours rather more of magic than it does of divine power. And I note that John records the very same expression back in chapter 9 of the healed blind man; where we read that 'the neighbours and those who previously had seen that he was blind said, Is not this he who sat and begged? Some said, This is he. Others said, He is like him. He said, I am *he*', vv. 8-9 – clearly using the words with the sense 'It is I' – as they were used by the Lord Himself when walking on the sea in Matthew 14; 'Jesus spoke to them, saying, Be of good cheer! It is I (the same words); do not be afraid', Matt. 14. 27. I therefore take our Lord's response to mean simply, 'I am indeed Jesus of Nazareth - the One you are seeking'.

And, again, I note that there was no physical effect on our Lord's would-be captors when He repeated the very same words in verse 8; 'Jesus answered, "I have told you that I am *He*'.

Nor do I find it at all strange that the men fell to the ground. Clearly the group who entered the Garden were extremely nervous and apprehensive – hence such a large number of Roman soldiers – the word 'band' suggesting up to 200 men – not to speak of the Temple police which accompanied them – armed, John noted, with 'weapons' – and all to arrest just one man. But this was hardly surprising. Our Lord's supernatural powers were well known to all – and not least to the man who led them into the moonlit Garden! It was, after all, less than a week since Judas had witnessed a fig tree wither at Jesus' mere word! I have no difficulty therefore in envisaging the men at the front rapidly drawing away back and stumbling over when they suddenly found themselves no more than three feet or so from 'Jesus of Nazareth'. But whether or not my view is correct, we do know that all fell to the ground helpless before Him and that they certainly couldn't have taken Him unless He permitted them to.

⁷ Verse 14.

⁸ John 8. 59.

⁹ John 10. 38-40.

¹⁰ 1 Sam. 23. 13.

¹¹ There are many fascinating parallels between the experience of David and the Lord Jesus. Both crossed the Kidron in rejection, having been betrayed by someone close to them – see John 13. 18 – with the betrayer in each case going out and hanging himself.

¹² John 6. 64.

¹³ Matt. 16. 17.

¹⁴ John 1. 10.

¹⁵ Mark's gospel : Lay hands on ...

Mark 5. 23 And besought him greatly, saying, My little daughter lieth at the point of death: I pray thee, come and **lay thy hands** on her, that she may be healed; and she shall live.

Mark 6. 5 And he could there do no mighty work, save that he **laid his hands** upon a few sick folk, and healed them.

Mark 8. 23 And he took the blind man by the hand, and led him out of the town; and when he had spit on his eyes, and **put his hands** upon him, he asked him if he saw ought.

Mark 8. 25 After that he **put his hands again upon** his eyes, and made him look up: and he was restored, and saw every man clearly.

Mark 10. 16 And he took them up in his arms, **put his hands** upon them, and blessed them.

Contrast - Mark 14. 46 And they **laid their hands** on him, and took him.

¹⁶ Matt. 26. 52-53.

¹⁷ 2 Chron. 32. 21.

¹⁸ 2 Kings 18. 34.

¹⁹ 2 Kings 19. 36.

²⁰ It is not really surprising that he send to a false god – the Philistine ‘Lord of flies’. Ahaziah was the son of Athaliah (the daughter of Jezebel), 2 Chron. 22. 2. ‘He also walked in the ways of the house of Ahab, for his mother advised him to do wickedly’, 2 Chron. 22. 3.

²¹ And both bands of 50 came, we are told, from Samaria (2 Kings 1. 2), which I suggest adds force to the reaction of the sons of Zebedee to the insult offered our Lord by a village of *the ‘Samaritans’* ...‘when His disciples James and John saw this, they said, "Lord, do you want us to command fire to come down from heaven and consume them, as Elijah did?"’ (Luke 9. 54.) No, He did not! Turning around to face them, He rebuked them, and then ‘went to another village’.

²² 2 Kings 6. 13-14.

²³ Elisha was the best military intelligence service you could wish for. As one of the king of Aram's advisors puts it, Elisha could hear what the king said even in his bedroom. Elisha used this prophetic gift to foil the Aramaean army's attempts to ambush the king of Israel and his troops. Every time the Aramaeans take up position Elijah tells the king of Israel where they are so that he can avoid them.

²⁴ 2 Kings 6. 12.

²⁵ 2 Kings 13a.

²⁶ 2 Kings 6. 17.

²⁷ The word ‘blindness’ is found only in Gen. 19. 11 and in 2 Kings 6. Almost certainly it denotes not actual loss of sight but some kind of visual confusion – hence Elisha being able to lead them to Samaria. Blindness is not the best translation; something like ‘confusion of sight’ would be better, because it is not that the Aramaean soldiers cannot now see anything, but that they misperceive. They recognize neither the city nor Elisha, and so when Elisha tells them they are in the wrong place and he will take them to the city where Elisha is, they believe him.

²⁸ Dale Ralph Davis, ‘Judges’, page 181, footnote 4.

²⁹ Judg. 15. 11.

³⁰ Judg. 1. 1-20.

³¹ Judg. 15. 11-14.

³² Judg. 16. 12.

³³ Not only the handful of hot blue stars visible to the naked eye.

³⁴ John 18. 12-13.

³⁵ Having been deposed by the Roman Governor Valerius Gratus – having been High Priest for 9 years.

³⁶ Acts 4. 6.

³⁷ Matt. 26. 57; cf. John 18. 24.

³⁸ Luke 22. 66

³⁹ John 18. 28.

⁴⁰ Luke 23. 1.

⁴¹ Mark 15. 16.

⁴² Matt. 27. 31.

⁴³ Isa. 53. 7 NKJV.