

Judas's Betrayal

Scripture: Mark 14:43–52

Code: 41-76

I want you to open the Word of God to the gospel of Mark...the gospel of Mark and chapter 14. With some apology to our guests, we are near the end of this great gospel and so much has gone on in the past that you have missed, but it is all available, these days, isn't it. GTY.org, you can download our whole study of Mark along with everything else.

But as we come to chapter 14 of Mark, we find ourselves in verse 43...verse 43. Let me read verses 43 through 52.

"Immediately while He was still speaking, Judas, one of the Twelve, came up accompanied by a crowd with swords and clubs who were from the chief priests and the scribes and the elders. Now he who was betraying Him had given them a sign, or a signal saying, 'Whomever I kiss, He is the one. Seize Him and lead Him away under guard.' After coming, Judas immediately went to Him saying, 'Rabbi,' and kissed Him. They laid hands on Him and seized Him. But one of those who stood by drew his sword and struck the slave of the High Priest and cut off his ear. And Jesus said to them, 'Have you come out with swords and clubs to arrest Me as you would against a robber? Every day I was with you in the temple teaching and you did not seize Me. But this taken place to fulfill the Scripture.' And they all left Him and fled. A young man was following Him, wearing nothing but a linen sheet over his naked body. And they seized him. But he pulled free of the linen sheet and escaped naked."

When I was a student in seminary, I was to write my dissertation before I could graduate. There were many subjects that I might have chosen to write a dissertation on, but my graduate dissertation was titled, "A Character Study of Judas Iscariot," because even as a young man, in my early twenties, he was among the most fascinating people on the pages of Scripture, an incomprehensible unbeliever. How could someone spend three years, 24 hours a day, seven days a week in the presence of Jesus Christ and do what he did? How can anyone be that evil? That wicked? That self-serving? That callous? That hopeless?

I wrote the dissertation. The committee accepted the dissertation and I graduated and many decades have past and I still can't quite comprehend Judas. But let's back up a little bit. The Jewish ruling council, the Supreme Court of Israel was called the Sanhedrin. That simply means the gathering together. It was a collection of religious leaders. Some among the sect of the Sadducees who were religious liberals, most among the sect of the Pharisees who were religious conservatives and among the Pharisees a group of scribes who were the law experts. They were all religious leaders. After all, Israel viewed itself as a theocratic Kingdom, God was King, and religious leaders therefore served God by disseminating His will and His Word into the life of the people. They didn't necessarily agree on everything, they...they had strong agreement about how they interpreted the Scripture. As I said, the Sadducees were liberals and didn't believe in the resurrection, and didn't believe in an afterlife and didn't believe in angels. And the Pharisees believed in all of that. And there were even divisions among them. They didn't agree on everything. In fact, rarely did they agree on everything,

but this time they agreed. They agreed right down to a man with perhaps just one or two exceptions...like Joseph of Arimathea. But they were unanimous that they wanted Jesus dead...they wanted Him dead.

They hated Him. They were jealous of His power, for who of them could raise the dead? Give sight to the blind? Hearing to the deaf? A voice to the mute? Who could make people walk? Heal them of all diseases? Deliver them from demons? Who could create food? Control storms? Obviously they were jealous of His power. They were also jealous of His popularity for His power had garnered Him popularity, the likes of which no person ever walking on this planet had received because none had ever done what He did. They were jealous of the accolades He received from the crowd. They hated His message. Theirs was a message of earn your salvation by works, and His was a message of repent for your sin and receive your salvation as a gift of grace, and they hated that because they were proud and self-righteous. They wanted to earn their way in.

They hated Him so much because He was encroaching in to their space. He was taking over their position and their popularity. And then, this week, their hatred of Him was amped up when on Monday He arrived, came into the city and there were hundreds of thousands of people hailing Him as the Messiah. That frightened them even more, made them more hostile toward Him. Then He came back on Tuesday, went right to the temple where the leaders of the Sanhedrin essentially ran temple operations, selling animals and exchanging money and it was nothing but the Israeli mafia, a den of robbers, Jesus said. And He went in and threw them out. One man by himself with hundreds of thousands of people massed around that massive courtyard, he went in, threw over the money changers, threw the buyers and sellers of animals and emptied the place of the bizarres of Annas, the former High Priest who ran that. Came back on Wednesday to the debris lying around, commandeered the entire place and for one solid day that place echoed with the truth coming out of His lips. Those three days had sealed His fate for certain if there was any question at all about whether they wanted Him dead. He had a problem, however. Chapter 14 says, "They were afraid of the people."

How are you going to arrest this man? How are you going to pull off this execution with kind of popularity? So in chapter 14 verses 1 and 2, they think, "Well, you know, maybe we better not do this during the festival." They can barely hold their hatred in another day, let alone another week or two. They know that it might be a bad thing to try to do this in public. They know there will be some repercussions with the people and a riot could start. That's not good. The Romans don't like that. And maybe they couldn't even handle the people.

So they have a problem. They need to capture and arrest Jesus, shut Him down and kill Him but they need someone to point Him out in the darkness of the night when the crowds have all dispersed. But who? They can't and offer themselves to one of His Twelve Apostles. As far as they know, they're all loyal and that will blow their plan. They have to wait till someone shows up.

Who would that be? Who would do that? Everybody who followed Him was enamored with Him. Who would be a betrayer of Jesus? The people were on the side of Jesus when He cleaned out the corruption in the temple because they were all the victims of it. They were paying ten times what you should pay for an animal to sacrifice. They were getting gouged on the coin exchange. Who was going to do this?

Amazingly, someone showed up. Chapter 14 verse 10, "Judas Iscariot who is one of the Twelve

went off to the Chief Priests in order to betray Him to them." He initiated it. Amazing. People didn't come to him and talk him into it, he initiated it. And they were glad when they heard this, verse 11. Yeah, where else were they going to find someone to do this? They promised to give him money and he said, another of the four gospels records and it's in Matthew, Mark, Luke and John, all these events. One of the other gospels says that he negotiated for 30 pieces of silver. They were willing to give him 30 pieces of silver which, by the way, was the price of a slave. So he was willing to sell Jesus for the price of a slave, which is exactly the amount the Old Testament says that He would be sold for. Unwittingly they fulfilled a prophecy that proves the validity, accuracy of the Old Testament.

And so, he began to seek how to betray Him at an opportune time. He's got to find a time away from the crowds at night in the dark. Well you know what we've covered in Mark 14. It's Thursday now. And they go together to an upper room where they have the final Passover, the final legitimate, official, Jewish Passover. And then our Lord institutes the Lord's Table, or the Communion service, the Lord's Supper with them there.

In the middle of that evening, that Thursday night which goes essentially from sundown all the way to midnight. It's a long prolonged time in which our Lord does extensive teaching, recorded in John 13 to 16, and lots of things are happening. But one thing that happens is the issue comes up of the betrayal. The issue comes up that somebody is going to betray Him. Verse 18 of chapter 14, "They were reclining at the table and eating and Jesus said, 'Truly I say to you, one of you will betray Me. One of you who is eating with Me.'" They were just absolutely shocked.

Judas was such an adept hypocrite, such a skilled hypocrite that they had no idea it was Him. In fact, it says they began to be grieved and to say to Him, one by one, all of them, "Surely not I?" They no more thought it was Judas then they thought it was themselves. That's how skilled he was as a hypocrite. Jesus said, "It's one of the Twelve. One of you who is dipping bread in the bowl with Me. It's one of you. For the Son of Man is to go just as it is written of Him. But woe to that man by whom the Son of Man is betrayed. It would have been good for that man if he had never been born." Better never born, than forever in hell.

So Jesus unmasks Judas. The rest didn't get it, and Satan entered into Judas, Scripture says. And Jesus sent him out and said, "Go and do what you do quickly." So that Thursday night, Jesus is left with the eleven. Judas who has been looking for an opportune time now knows Jesus knows, leaves, goes to find the Sanhedrin members late Thursday night and set up the rendezvous. He knows where to find Jesus because he knows where Jesus and the disciples typically go at night, they go to the place where Jesus had just been, the Garden of Gethsemane. From verses 32 to 42, he had been there praying. That's where they would go.

Now remember, there's twelve Apostles and Jesus. They were all pilgrims in Jerusalem. The place was, you know, basically drowning in population that came for the Passover. There weren't a lot of places to stay. Probably the house of Mary and Martha and Lazarus couldn't accommodate them all, so there was a rich person in the city who had a garden on the Mount of Olives, who provided the garden for them and they went there at night. It was a place that the Bible says they resorted to, John 18, Luke 22:39 and it says that Judas knew it well. He knew that's where they'd be. This is a perfect setup for him. It's out of the city, it's on the Mount of Olives and when the sun goes down in the ancient world, it's really dark. And so he sets it up to take the leaders of Israel and their entourage to find Jesus in the darkness of the Garden of Gethsemane.

Our Lord is already there by the time we come into this passage in verse 43, because He came there in verse 32. Verse 32 tells us that He came to Gethsemane, He was there for a few hours praying. You remember His prayer, "Let this cup pass from Me," three times, "nevertheless not My will, but Yours be done," and He obeys the Father. I'll go to the cross if that's what You ask Me to do, as horrific as it is to be alienated from You and be a sin bearer. He's willing to do it. While He's praying, the disciples are sleeping. He warns them that it's dangerous to sleep when you should be praying cause temptation is coming. The prayer meeting is ended when you come down to verse 41, the middle of the verse, "The hour has come, behold, the Son of Man is being betrayed into the hands of sinners. Get up, let's be going. Behold the one who betrays Me is near."

They're up there. Here comes this entourage. And there are as many as a thousand of them in the crowd that's coming. They can see the torches. They can hear the crowd moving. Our Lord sees it, says prayer time is over. Let's go. And He doesn't go the other way, He walks right into the crowd. That's where we pick up the story in verse 43.

And here, early in the darkness of Friday morning, everything begins to get into motion for the execution of Jesus. He will be dead by about three o'clock in the afternoon. That's how fast this happens. A betrayal, an arrest, two trials, one before Jews and one before Gentiles, each with three parts...a crucifixion and death, all by three o'clock. So He will be Friday in the grave, Saturday in the grave, and Sunday a portion of that day in the grave, rising later on Sunday morning so that He fulfills the prophecy of crucified and buried for three days. God is in control of all these details, these mindless unbelievers who hate Jesus are step-by-step fulfilling the plan of God and no less culpable for doing it, cause they did it out of the hatred of their own hearts.

All right, let's step into the scene. First is the confronting crowd, "Immediately while He was still speaking, still talking to His disciples saying, 'Let's get up, let's get going, Judas is here, they're here,' Judas, one of the Twelve," and it seems that that little descriptive of him which we just read in another portion of this chapter, is the way Mark speaks the unbelieving idea that this man rejected Christ. He just can't get over it...one of the Twelve, one of the Twelve, one of the Twelve. How can that be?

Judas, one of the Twelve, the ultimate tragedy, the man with the greatest opportunity and privilege that could ever happen to any person, to be with Christ, the Son of God, that man, one of the Twelve. Busy night for him. The Lord sent him out. Judas was filled with Satan. You know what a demon-possessed person is like in the text of Scripture, we have descriptions of them, well he's possessed by Satan himself. There's a sense in which the devil has taken over control of him. It's a frantic night then for the devil-possessed Judas. He has to go find the Sanhedrin in the darkness of night. Sometime probably before midnight, before the Passover and Lord's Table meal was over, he has to get permission from them to get together their resources because he thinks he knows where Jesus is going to be because this is where they go, to the Mount of Olives, and he's familiar with it. And then he has to get permission from the Roman authorities to give soldiers to go along with the Jews, because the Jews are afraid that even with their temple police, they couldn't handle something if it began to happen, some kind of crowd revolt, if the word got out.

So permission has to be gained for the Roman soldiers, and not a small group but a *speiron* is the Greek word used, a cohort, a full cohort would be six hundred Roman soldiers. And the Romans would have extra soldiers at Passover because of the massive influx of people, they would have them there for security.

And by the way, there had recently been a Jewish insurrection against the Romans. And they put that insurrection down and that's referred to in Mark 15:7 and one of the principles in that insurrection was a man named Barabbas...Barabbas. So the Romans didn't like insurrections, the Romans would have accommodated Judas. So it's a busy night for this devil-possessed man, as he puts together the pieces of this little puzzle, probably had to gain permission from Pilate, himself, the governor.

But those places are so close by. Fort Antonia where the Romans were and where Pilate was, is less than a minute walk across from the wall, the northeastern side of the temple, the northern wall of the temple. It's all very close and he was scrambling to get it all done. He had betrayed the location and therefore the Son of God for 30 pieces of silver.

So the crowd shows up. It says in verse 43, "They were with swords and clubs." The swords would have belonged to the Romans, *machaira* is the word. They carried a small little dagger, a very lethal, sharp on two sides, two-edged dagger that they were very skilled at handling, for slitting throats, and putting that dagger in the appropriate places to bring about a quick end to life. They were skilled with that. Clubs? They would have belonged to the temple police. The temple police didn't use deadly weapons. They controlled crowds with billy-clubs. So here comes the temple police who were normally the ones who took care of the temple security, along with the Romans with their swords. And we learn a little more about this. Also we learn from John 18:3, John gives us further details, that they came with torches and lanterns. The only way you could light the night. It was critical that they be able to see where they were going, and locate the Lord at the appropriate moment. So out of the blackness, out of the middle of that night comes this huge crowd, hundreds and hundreds of them together, mindlessly, cowardly, unjustly and profanely coming for the purpose of killing the Son of God.

The traitor then identifies the Lord. He tells them how he's going to do it. So you go from the confronting crowd, to the betraying disciple, verse 44, "He who was betraying Him had given them a signal, or a sign, saying, 'Whomever I kiss, He is the one.'" And then amazingly Judas gives them the order, "Seize Him and lead Him away under guard." He also hated Jesus.

But if Satan was speaking through Peter when Peter said, "No, Lord, You're not going to die," Satan was certainly speaking through Judas when Judas said, "Seize Him and lead Him away under guard."

By the way, this is a good indication that Jesus didn't wear a halo or Judas would have said, "It's the guy with the halo," or "It's the guy with the supernatural glow on His face." There was nothing external that could identify Jesus as divine. But there were obvious needs to be able to identify Him in the crowd, and to make sure that somebody else didn't step up and say, "I'm Jesus," and then Jesus slide away and escape. The assumption was He would try to escape. That's another reason for the force, that He would try to escape, that He wasn't going to let this happen. They didn't want somebody else to pretend to be Jesus while He got away. So Judas says, "I'm going to mark Him out, I'm going to mark Him out. "Whomever I kiss, He's the one, seize Him."

A kiss, strong embrace, an ancient sign that that could be delivered in a number of ways. Slaves kissed feet. Inferiors kissed hands. And equals kissed cheeks. This is an equal. This is an act of affection, honor, love, respect. That makes it all the more ugly, doesn't it? I mean, we've all been

betrayed. We all know that. But with a kiss, this is hypocrisy at its blackest. The man of sorrows had many sorrows and He can add this to the list. Verse 45 says, "Judas was unhesitating. After coming, Judas immediately went to Him saying, 'Rabbi, teacher,' and kissed Him."

By the way, the Greek verb *kataphileo* here means to kiss fervently...to kiss fervently. It's got a preposition added at the front which intensifies the verb. This was an ongoing affection, expression of an affection. This is reminiscent of the prodigal son coming home and the father, remember, in Luke 15, receiving the prodigal and kissing him all over the head. Boy, Judas really put on a dramatic show of false affection, designed to make it unmistakable exactly who was the one, so the soldiers would know.

Luke adds this, Luke 22:48, "Jesus said, 'Judas, are you betraying the Son of Man with a kiss? Are you betraying the Son of Man with a kiss?'" Jesus could have destroyed him on the spot. He could have incinerated him on the spot. But He didn't. He submits to the betrayal in order that Scripture would be fulfilled. You remember, the psalmist said, didn't he?, that His own familiar friend would lift up his heel against Him and He would be betrayed in the house of His friends." Mark says no more about Judas. He kisses Him and he disappears off the pages of Mark's history.

So what happened to Judas? Matthew tells us. Matthew chapter 27 tells us what happened. "Judas who had betrayed Him," verse 3, "saw that He had been condemned." What does that mean? Judas hung around after he betrayed Him that night. He hung around for the trial that morning. The trial went on in the early hours of the morning. And at the end of the trial, Jesus was condemned to death and Judas is still hanging on the fringes watching this happen. And when he saw that He had been condemned, he felt remorse and returned the 30 pieces of silver to the Chief Priest and the elders. He went back to wherever the Sanhedrin was located and he gave them back the money. And he said, verse 4, "I have sinned by betraying innocent blood." And they said, "What is that to us? See to it yourself." What do we care? And he threw the pieces of silver into the temple sanctuary and departed and went out and hanged himself. Hanged himself? That's remorse. That's repentance not unto salvation. He went out and hanged himself. He didn't do that very well cause Acts 1 says that ultimately his body fell, smashed on the rocks and his intestines came out. The rope broke, or the branch broke as he suspended himself over the edge and he died a horrific, tragic death. And people don't name their sons Judas, they don't even name their dogs Judas. The greatest illustration of wasted opportunity, squandered privilege ever...ever, ever, ever.

So they arrest Jesus. Verse 46, "They laid hands on Him and seized Him." John 18:12 says, "The Roman cohort and the commander and the officers of the Jews, the temple police, arrested Jesus and tied Him up."

That takes us to verse 47. We have seen the confronting crowd. We've seen the ugly, tragic betrayer, Judas. Now we are introduced to another person in the drama, we'll call him the impulsive disciple...the impulsive disciple. Verse 47, "One of those who stood by drew his sword and struck the slave of the High Priest and cut off his ear." This is strange. Startling incident. Fortunately we know who this is. If we weren't told, we'd know any way. We could guess that it would be Peter, couldn't we? We could guess that it would be Peter, impulsive, impetuous Peter. And we are right. According to John 18:10 it was Peter. And according to John 18:10 the guy's name was Malchus and he was a servant of Caiaphas the High Priest. He wasn't even a police officer, nor was he a soldier.

What is Peter doing? He seems so often out of touch with the plan, doesn't he? Why is he doing

this?

I'll tell you why he's doing this. He's got something to prove. Back in verse 29 of chapter 14, Peter said to Jesus, "Even though all may fall away, yet I will not." Peter was a confident guy. Wow, he believed in himself. You know, he'd fit in to the modern world. If you believe in yourself, you can do anything. That was Peter, he believed in himself. He wouldn't fail, he wouldn't fall.

You say, "Well there's some boldness there, some courage there." Sure, there is some boldness and some courage, but something had just happened that led Peter to be that courageous, and I'll tell you what it was. John 18...John 18 gives the same account, same incident. But I want you to know what happened there. They all arrive, the entourage. Jesus walks up to the Roman cohort, the officers, the Chief Priests, the Pharisees, the massive crowd with their torches and weapons and lanterns, and Jesus says, "Whom do you seek?" Who you looking for? And they said, "Jesus the Nazarene." And He said to them, "*Ego Eime, I am.*" And he said the tetragrammaton, the name of God, the *I am*, and that's all He had to do was say I am. Judas was standing with him and when He said, "I am," they all collapsed to the ground. The whole crowd went down flat. They couldn't...they couldn't touch His power if He didn't give them permission. That's why He said, "No man takes My life from Me, I lay it down Myself."

He asked them again, once they scrambled back up, "Who do you seek?" And they said, "Jesus the Nazarene." "He said, I told you, I am."

Now if you had just seen Jesus say, *Ego Eime*, in Greek, different in Aramaic, but if you had...let's take two words, one word in Aramaic, if you had just seen Jesus say one word and a thousand people collapsed to the ground, you'd feel okay, right? You'd feel like you could pull out your little knife and start through the crowd because at any moment all Jesus would have to do is say another word and they'd all go down again. It was amazing, miraculous, triumphant, glorious powerful act of Jesus that infused Peter with strength. He needed to prove his loyalty again.

You say, "Where did he get a sword? What's he doing with a sword?" Well, Luke tells us that Jesus said in Luke 22:36 to 38, you know, "I sent you out, you didn't take a belt, you didn't take a bag, you didn't take extra shoes, you went out and you preached the gospel and you were cared for and your needs were met, but in the future when I send you out, you better take a belt and you better take a bag, cause there's going to be persecution out there. And by the way, you better take a sword." He actually said to them, "If you don't have a sword, you better get one, not to kill people, Christianity doesn't advance like Islam, it doesn't advance by killing people. And any supposed Christian effort to advance by killing anybody is false Christianity. But He said, "You're going to need a sword because you're going to be confronted, you're going to be persecuted, you're going to need to be able to defend yourself." In which the Lord advocates self-defense.

So Peter said at the end of that little conversation in Luke 22, some of the disciples responded, "We have two swords, we found two in the group." Well you can be sure Peter had one of them. Or for all we know, he's two-sword Peter. He may have gotten both of them. But he pulls one out and he whacks off the ear of Malchus.

Now look, he didn't have any surgical training and I promise you, he was better at throwing nets than he was at slitting throats because he missed the throat and hit the ear. He was not trying to cut off

somebody's ear. He was trying to slit the throat, because that's what you did with that. The guy ducked. And the Lord says, according to Luke 22, "Stop, no more of this, no more of this." This is wrong headed, impulsive, and dangerous because in Matthew 26 He says to Peter, "Peter, put your sword away for whoever lives by the sword, dies by the sword." And our Lord with that advocates capital punishment, in capital crime. That's a reiteration of Genesis 9. "Who sheds man's blood, by man shall his blood be shed." Peter, they'll have a right to kill you if you kill somebody. That's our Lord advocating capital punishment. Put your sword in the sheath. John 18:11, he says, "Put your sword in the sheath, the cup which the Father has given Me, shall I not drink it?" And later Jesus says, "My Kingdom is not of this world, otherwise My servants would fight. The Kingdom does not advance by force, it advances one person at a time by faith in Christ." Christianity makes no advance by the sword, none whatsoever.

Well people say, "Well Christians are fighting in northern Ireland, and Christians are fighting in Bosnia and Croatia, and Christians...what about the Christian crusades? None of that is Christian. It may have the word, it's not Christian. The Kingdom advances one soul at a time by faith in Christ."

Well we learn from the New Testament record that the Lord reached over and gave him a new ear. The only healing in the New Testament of a fresh wound. "Peter, that's not how we do this."

So you see the crowd, the betrayer, and you see the impulsive disciple. And then in the next little scene, you see the glorious Christ, the triumphant Christ. "And Jesus said to them, 'Have you come out with swords and clubs to arrest Me, as you would against a robber? Every day I was with you in the temple teaching, you didn't seize Me. But...as if to say here and now...to fulfill the Scripture."

You know, He is surrounded by this...this crowd of really tragic figures, corrupt apostate religious leaders, mindless, blind, ignorant, pagan, idol-worshiping Roman soldiers, killers by trade, weak, cowardly, wrong-headed followers and a wretched, evil betrayer. He's standing before the forces of hell and the forces of man. And he's just in charge. He says, "Why now? You think you're going to get resistance? Why the soldiers? Why all the police? Why all the clubs? And where were you on Monday when I was at the temple? And where were you on Tuesday when I was there, and why didn't you arrest Me on Wednesday?" And what He is doing is unmasking the hypocrisy of this clandestined operation in which they're taking Him at night cause it was a violation of all their laws. His glorious majesty is displayed by the crumbling of the crowd when He says, "I am." Displayed by the amazing calm, tranquility as He asks reasonable questions. Am I some robber, some highwayman, some plunderer that you need all these soldiers, and all these police? Have I ever tried to run from you? Wasn't I there every day this week? Where were you? But the reason you're here right now in the middle of the night on a Friday is because today is the day Scripture is to be fulfilled. And in your witless hostile anger, you are fulfilling the plan of God on schedule...that's why you're here. Scripture will be fulfilled. He will die at three o'clock in the afternoon, same time the Passover Lambs are being killed because He is the true Passover Lamb.

Now a footnote that I mentioned last week, just briefly. Why would Satan try to keep Jesus from the cross, which he did earlier. Peter said, "No, Lord, You're not going to die, You're not going to die, You're not going to die," and Jesus said, "Get behind Me, Satan." It was Satan trying to keep Him from the cross. It was Satan who tempted Him and said, "I'll give You the kingdoms of the world. You can take popularity. You can take Your satisfaction. You don't need the cross at His temptation." If Satan wants to keep Him from the cross, then why does Satan enter Judas and have Judas go to the people who want to arrest Him so that they can kill Him? Why does Satan prompt Judas to go to the

Sanhedrin to have Jesus arrested and executed? I don't know how Satan's mind functions, but it's pretty simply reasonable to me that the one thing the leaders of Israel didn't want to do was arrest Jesus during the Passover. They said that, they didn't want to arrest Him, 14:2, we don't want to arrest Him during this festival, this Passover. Satan's thought may well have been, if I can get this arrest going during the Passover, even if they get Him in the middle of the night, this is going to show up in the daytime and the people will rise up and stop this crucifixion. And if the people don't stop it, Satan's thought must have been, "I'm going to make it so unbearable for Jesus with the spitting and the mockery and the crowning and the punches in the face and the beatings and the scourging and the whole thing, I'm going to make it so bad for Him that He's going to finally say, 'Stop, that's enough, I'm not going to die.'"

Do you remember in chapter 26, verses 51 to 54, He said to Peter when Peter pulled out the sword, He said, "Look, Peter, if I wanted, I could call twelve legions of angels right now." You know how many that is? Seventy-two thousand. Can you imagine what kind of defense seventy-two thousand angels would be when in the Old Testament one angel killed 185 thousand Assyrians? Seventy-two thousand angels could do some serious damage. "Put your sword away."

I think Satan must have thought if the crowd doesn't stop it, Jesus will say, "I've had enough...I've had enough." You all saw the Passion of the Christ, you saw what He endured. At some point He's going to say, "That's it, I'm done, I'm not going any further. I don't deserve this and call the angels."

No, Satan didn't want to get Him to the cross, he wanted to make it so bad that Jesus Himself would stop it. But He never did because He was obedient to the Father for your sake, my sake. There He stands in such majesty. This is to fulfill Scripture.

So you see the crowd, it's an ugly crowd. The betrayer even uglier. The impulsive Peter disappointing, weak, cowardly in the end because verse 50 says, and here we come to the final point, the cowardly Apostles, "They all left Him and fled." All of them, including Peter. They all left. That's what He said they would do back in verse 27, He told them, "You will all fall away...You will all fall away." And instead of praying against that temptation, they went to sleep during prayer meeting. They were ill-equipped, weak, afraid, unfaithful, they fled. Zechariah 13:7 said that would happen, "Strike the Shepherd, the sheep will be scattered." And that prophecy was fulfilled. Unprepared, impatient, carnal, inconsistent, weak, they flee for their lives.

And then there's a closing picture of one person's cowardice. Listen to this. "A young man was following Him wearing nothing but a linen sheet over his naked body." He would have had his undergarments on, which they always wore, but nothing other than a sheep wrapped around that. They seized him. "He pulled free of the linen sheet and escaped naked." This is the only place that appears. It doesn't appear in Matthew, Luke or John. People say to me, "Who is that young man?" I have absolutely no idea who that young man is, how would I know? I'm looking at the same Bible you're looking at. I don't see a name. And what is the linen sheet? I have no idea, but I do know that when people went to sleep at night, they put a linen sheet on. And he wrapped himself in a linen sheet and they tried to seize him and he pulled free from the linen sheet and ran away. I love that about the Bible, it just says it because it happened. If a committee wanted to organize this, they would say, "Take that thing out because it doesn't add anything to the story. What's the point? Who's the guy and why did he do it and what's the sheet and...?"

I'll tell you what happened. I mean, this we know, somebody in the middle of the night heard a

commotion, some guy, and thought, "What is going on?" And jumped out of his bed and just wrapped himself with a sheet and said, "I'm going to go out there and find out what's going on." And as he was poking around on the Mount of Olives, maybe he worked there, you know, up on the...maybe he was in a vineyard up there. And he's poking around out there and all of a sudden somebody thinks he's a threat that belongs to the crowd that goes around with Jesus, and they grab him and he just runs. And the guy's left, holding the sheet. And that, my dear friends, is a true interpretation of this passage. Anything more than that is pure speculation. Some people say, "No, no, that's Mark...that's Mark." It is? "Yeah, because it's a first-person account, who would know that but the guy who was doing it? Who would know that? Maybe it's Mark. Maybe he just doesn't want to call himself that because he's embarrassed that he was running around without his clothes on in the middle of the night." I don't know, maybe it was Mark. Maybe the reason it's here is because it was Mark and maybe somebody even suggested that before Judas went to the Garden, he checked Mark's house because Mark's mother was one of the early believers and maybe checked to see if Jesus went there instead of to the Mount of Olives, and when Mark found out they were looking for Jesus, he threw his sheet on and jumped out the window cause he was very young, his mother wouldn't let him go out in the middle of the night, and followed along...and well....

Well now we're creating some fiction here instead of what it says.

What's the point? The point is, Jesus is alone. Everybody's gone. The Apostles are gone and even a sort of, I don't know, a normal follower of Jesus, just a guy who saw what was going on and the more he saw, the more he knew and he was a follower. He was following Him. Get closer and closer and closer and he's gone too. It's just to show that there's no one left...no one left.

And so alone, verse 53 says, they led Him away in the darkness of night to a Kangaroo Court to put Him through two trials with three parts each, six separate tribunals. Trumped up charges, bribed witnesses, corrupt judges, proverbial kangaroo court, get Him on the cross in the morning, He's dead in the afternoon.

In the end, nothing is to be said except that Jesus triumphantly knowingly goes to the cross, fulfilling prophecy. There were prophecies about Judas, the betrayer, there were prophecies about the scattering of the disciples. There were prophecies about Him as the Passover Lamb that had to be fulfilled on Friday. There were prophecies about the cross, that He would be lifted up. There were prophecies about Him being pierced by the nails and the sword. It is all what Scripture says. Isaiah 53, "He is led as a sheep to slaughter." But He goes willingly. He does it out of love for His Father and love for you because it's your sins that He carried there.

Father, what an experience for us to be there on the Mount of Olives that day through the eyes of Mark and the other writers of the gospel account, and to experience the betrayal and arrest of Jesus, at least in a small way. Just adding to the gratitude for which we have for His willingness to give His life who was perfectly holy, sinless and bearing this kind of scorn when He had only been worshiped forever by angels and adored and honored, to be kissed by a betrayer, to be arrested by sinners and to be judged, as it were, by You on the cross, to be punished for our sins. The horrors of this are beyond comprehension and yet His majesty and magnificence shines through. O what a Savior is ours. And we praise You, O God, for giving Him to us and giving us to Him. In His great name we pray. Amen.

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