

**Subject: *The Betrayal and Arrest of Christ***

**Scripture: *John 18:1-11***

We come now to the final chapters in John. This is the greatest story ever told. It is the Gospel of Jesus Christ (1 Cor. 15), how He died, was buried, and rose again to save sinners. These are some of the most important chapters in the whole Bible. The four Gospels devote about 20% of their material to the last few days of Christ's life on earth. In the Gospels we have a total of 13 chapters devoted to the last days of Christ's life on earth: his betrayal, arrest, trials, crucifixion, death, burial, and resurrection. Matthew, Mark, and Luke all devote the last three chapters of their gospels and John devotes the last four chapters of his gospel (18-21) to these events. We refer to this as the Passion of Christ. The word "passion" means the suffering He endured. So much material on one event—it's that important.

Chapter 18 describes the night when Jesus was betrayed by Judas and arrested by the religious leaders. Everything in Jesus' life and ministry had been moving toward this moment in time. This was "the hour" that Jesus referred to many times in John. It was the hour appointed by God the Father. It was the hour of spiritual darkness, and at that same time it was Jesus' finest hour, the hour in which He would accomplish our redemption and seal our eternal victory over sin. Every detail of the story is full of meaning and significance.

Jesus had just finished His prayer to the Father in which He prayed for Himself and His disciples. He also prayed for us and all believers down through the ages. He prayed for us to be sanctified, to be unified, and to be glorified. He passed over the Kidron valley and entered a garden we know as the Garden of Gethsemane. It was a place that Jesus and His disciples often went to get away for a quiet time. Judas knew the place because he had been there many times with Jesus and the other disciples. But now, Judas came as an enemy and as a betrayer. Just think of the times he had been there with Jesus for instruction and prayer and fellowship, but all of that meant nothing now. Judas should be a warning to us all. You can be in the best place in the best company, you can hear the best truth, and have the best opportunity to know God and be close to God, but that doesn't guarantee you will be saved and be in heaven with Christ.

But this text is not really about Judas. It is about Jesus. Even His betrayal and arrest, as shameful and demeaning as they were, take nothing from Him but they offer proof of His glory as the Son of God. Remember the purpose John had in writing this book: **John 20:30-31**<sup>30</sup> *And many other signs truly did Jesus in the presence of his disciples, which are not written in this book:*<sup>31</sup> *But these are written, that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing ye might have life through his name.* Everything in this gospel points to the glory of Christ one way or the other.

## **1. A DISPLAY OF CHRIST'S COURAGE**

The place was the Garden of Gethsemane (olive press), a fitting place where Jesus was pressed with the weight of bearing our sins and our guilt. All of human history revolves around two gardens (the Garden of Eden and the Garden of Gethsemane). The time was after His prayer in John 17 and His prayer in the garden. As mentioned before, Jesus and His disciples crossed the Kidron Valley. This was a place with a history of betrayal. It was first mentioned in the Bible as the place where David and his men passed as they fled out of Jerusalem from his son Absalom.

This was the meeting place of two groups that night. Jesus and His disciples were there and Judas and the mob (probably several hundred men) that came to arrest Jesus were there. Jesus knew what would happen, but He went anyway (vs. 4) and He even stepped out to ask the mob who they wanted. Most wanted men will run and hide from their pursuers, but Jesus didn't run or hide. The mob came looking for Him with lanterns, torches, and weapons, but they didn't need any of those things. He didn't hide and He didn't resist arrest. He had already predicted that He would lay down His life. ***John 10:11*** *I am the good shepherd: the good shepherd giveth his life for the sheep.* ***John 10:17-18***<sup>17</sup> *Therefore doth my Father love me, because I lay down my life, that I might take it again.*<sup>18</sup> *No man taketh it from me, but I lay it down of myself. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again. This commandment have I received of my Father.* The death sentence was given by the Jewish leaders about two months earlier. ***John 11:53*** *Then from that day forth they took counsel together for to put him to death.* Although John doesn't mention it, Judas betrayed Jesus with a kiss, a token of love and friendship. In that kiss we see the depths of human depravity and we see the tragedy of a man who actually kissed the door of heaven and yet went to hell.

## **2. A DISPLAY OF CHRIST'S POWER**

When the mob (cohort, 600 men) said they were looking for Jesus, He said, "I am he" (vs. 5), and they went backward and fell to the ground. In the Bible believers fall *forward* and unbelievers fall *backward* whenever God reveals His glory. When Jesus identified Himself He actually said, "I am" and so identified Himself with the name of God (Yahweh, Jehovah). This was the name God revealed to Moses when he was going to lead Israel out of Egypt. The Bible speaks of the power of God's spoken word. God spoke and the heavens and earth were created. He upholds all things by the word of His power. He spoke and put a curse on man in the Garden of Eden. When Christ returns to this earth He will execute judgment on His enemies with the sharp sword that comes from His mouth (Rev. 19:21).

## **3. A DISPLAY OF CHRIST'S LOVE**

Jesus protected His disciples as He stated earlier. ***John 6:39*** *And this is the Father's will which hath sent me, that of all which he hath given me I should lose nothing, but should raise it up again at the last day.* ***John 17:12*** *While I was with them in the world, I kept them in thy name: those that thou gavest me I have kept, and none of them is lost, but the son of perdition; that the scripture might be fulfilled.* If Jesus had not interceded for them, they would have been arrested, they would have been discouraged, their faith would have failed, and they would have been lost, but that would not and could not happen. Does that mean that our faith can fail and we can be lost? If left up to us it could fail and we could be lost. But the Lord keeps us secure. Just like He said to Peter, "I have prayed for you that your faith will not fail." Even at the time when His own life was in jeopardy, Jesus was mainly concerned about His disciples.

Peter thought the best thing to do was pull out a sword and defend Jesus by force. Peter meant well, but he obviously didn't understand that Jesus had to suffer and die. He didn't understand that Jesus could have called for more than twelve legions of angels (72,000) to defend Him, and he didn't understand that all who take the sword will perish by the sword, as said Jesus in Matthew 26:52. Peter's impulsive act threatened to start something that could have wended up with the disciples either killed or arrested—the very thing that Jesus was trying to prevent. Only John tells us that it was Peter who took the sword and the man who lost his ear was Malchus, and Luke tells us that Jesus then touched his ear and healed him instantly. It was a remarkable proof of His divine power and at the same time a proof of His

love for Peter, a close disciple who still didn't understand God's plan, and His love for Malchus, a man who came to arrest and kill Him.

#### **4. A DISPLAY OF CHRIST'S OBEDIENCE**

Jesus was willing to drink the cup the Father had for Him to drink. In the Old Testament the cup represented the wrath of God against sin. Jesus was going to die for the purpose of satisfying God's wrath against our sin. **2 Corinthians 5:21** *For he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him.* Jesus' death was no accident. He was no victim. His death fulfilled the plan and purpose of God for Him to be the Lamb of God to take away the sins of the world. **Isaiah 53:6** *All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and the LORD hath laid on him the iniquity of us all.* **Isaiah 53:10** *Yet it pleased the LORD to bruise him; he hath put him to grief: when thou shalt make his soul an offering for sin, he shall see his seed, he shall prolong his days, and the pleasure of the LORD shall prosper in his hand.* When Peter preached on the Day of Pentecost, the birthday of the Church, he said, **Acts 2:23** *Him, being delivered by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God, ye have taken, and by wicked hands have crucified and slain.* The Jews had killed Him, but God planned it from the beginning.

Far from being an accident, Jesus' death was the main reason why He became a man in the first place. His death was the supreme accomplishment of all time. **John 12:27** *Now is my soul troubled; and what shall I say? Father, save me from this hour: but for this cause came I unto this hour.* In just a few hours Jesus would say, "It is finished."

Jesus obeyed God the Father to offer Himself as the perfect sacrifice for sin. His sacrifice will take away our sin only if we trust Him and obey Him as Savior and Lord.