

Betrayed by a Kiss

[Mark 14:43-52](#)



We are examining the events of the last day of Jesus earthly life. In the morning He had withdrawn from the people of Jerusalem and sent his disciples to prepare the Passover in the Upper Room. He had met with His Apostles and other disciples later that afternoon, washed their feet and ate with them. He had initiated the Lord's Supper, preached to them, prayed for them, sang with them. He had then left the Upper Room and climbed the [Mount of Olives](#) to the [Garden of Gethsemane](#). He leaves eight of the Apostles at the entrance and takes His inner circle, Peter, James and John into the Garden of Gethsemane where He collapses on the ground in terror as He agonizes in prayer over the cup He is about to drink.



And He came the third time, and said to them, "Are you still sleeping and taking your rest? It is enough; the hour has come; behold, the Son of Man is being betrayed into the hands of sinners. ⁴² "Arise, let us be going; behold, the one who betrays Me is at hand!" (Mark 14:41-42 NASB)

The agonizing battle of Gethsemane was over. Jesus, who has spent hours in prayer, has just been speaking to his disciples about preparing for the hour of temptation:

"Keep watching and praying, that you may not come into temptation; the spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak." (Mark 14:38 NASB)

But now the hour of his crisis, and theirs, has arrived.

And immediately while He was still speaking, Judas, one of the twelve, came up, accompanied by a multitude with swords and clubs, from the chief priests and the scribes and the elders. (Mark 14:43 NASB)

The crowd of men who'd come out from Jerusalem to arrest Jesus must have initially met the eight disciples at or near the entrance to the Garden, realized that Jesus wasn't among them and then followed Judas as he made his way deeper into the heart of the olive grove.

"Judas, one of the twelve"—the appellation is emphasized to bring out the horror of the idea. Those twelve privileged men, who had spent so much time with Jesus, who had preached and healed and cast out spirits in His name, whom He had loved and to whom He had revealed so much. And the betrayer was one of them.

Lazarus tells us how Judas knew where to find Jesus:

When Jesus had spoken these words, He went forth with His disciples over the ravine of the Kidron, where there was a garden, into which He Himself entered, and His disciples. ² Now Judas also, who was betraying Him, knew the place; for Jesus had often met there with His

disciples. (John 18:1-2 NASB)

Jesus followed His custom; He acted according to a very predictable pattern. Judas would know exactly where to lead the arresting officers.

And immediately while He was still speaking, Judas, one of the twelve, came up, accompanied by a multitude with swords and clubs, from the chief priests and the scribes and the elders.
(Mark 14:43 NASB)

Of whom does the multitude consist? Mark indicates that it includes "***chief priests, the scribes and the elders.***" The term "elders" which is the Greek *presbuteros* refers to members of a group in the Sanhedrin, the ruling council of Jerusalem. Luke adds "***officers of the temple guard***" which means "*the commander responsible for the temple in Jerusalem.*" He is not a Roman officer, because the Romans are not under the chief priest's authority. The Fourth Gospel includes:

Judas then, having received the Roman cohort, and officers from the chief priests and the Pharisees, came there with lanterns and torches and weapons. (John 18:3 NASB)

Notice that "Roman" is in italics which means it is not in the text but is added by the translators. **Cohort** is the Greek noun *speira*, [spar-rah] a military technical term that refers to the tenth part of a legion which would be 600 men. Here was a mini-army, armed with swords and clubs, intent on carrying out the will of the religious superiors. Many translate this as a "Roman cohort" but the presence of such Roman soldiers is open to debate. The word "cohort" may have been loosely used among Temple soldiery of themselves and their leader. I believe that this "cohort" was made up of Levites, they were temple troops.

Day and night the temple was guarded by Levites to prevent, so far as possible, the unclean from entering. They also acted as the temple police. At night guards were placed in 24 stations about the gates and courts, each guard consisting of 10 men. In all, 240 Levite guards were on duty every night, relieved each morning. The officers of the temple guard were in charge of these troops. It is ironic that the soldiers who took Jesus into custody were normally charged with protecting the Holy Place from uncleanness.

What a sight this must have been. It was something like a torchlight parade, streaming out of Jerusalem toward the Mount of Olives and into the Garden of Gethsemane. There were the chief priests and Pharisees, accompanied by the temple police, a sizeable crowd of Jews. They were armed with torches, swords, and even clubs.

Now he who was betraying Him had given them a signal, saying, "Whomever I shall kiss, He is the one; seize Him, and lead Him away under guard." ⁴⁵ And after coming, he immediately went to Him, saying, "Rabbi!" and kissed Him. (Mark 14:44-45 NASB)

Long before the night took place, Jesus knew that Judas would betray Him. He had earlier told the disciples:

Jesus answered them, "Did I Myself not choose you, the twelve, and yet one of you is a devil?"
(John 6:70 NASB)

Lazarus further explained that Jesus meant Judas Iscariot, giving the impression that Jesus knew all along about Judas.

And after coming, he immediately went to Him, saying, "Rabbi!" and kissed Him. (Mark 14:45 NASB)

Judas addressed him as “Rabbi” an act of homage and respect, and then he kissed him. Mark uses an emphasized form of that word, a word that means a prolonged kiss, a lover's kiss. “**Kissed**” is the same word used of the father of the prodigal son kissing him when he comes home, or the Ephesian elders kissing good-bye to the apostle Paul. Such a kiss should have indicated loyalty, affection, friendship, and trust, but Judas turned all of those characteristics upside down.

Do you know the pain of rejection from someone close to you? The greatest pain and injury comes not from our enemies but from those closest to us. Psalm 55 foretells the suffering of rejection which God's anointed King and Messiah would endure for our sake:

For it is not an enemy who reproaches me, Then I could bear it; Nor is it one who hates me who has exalted himself against me, Then I could hide myself from him. ¹³ But it is you, a man my equal, My companion and my familiar friend. ¹⁴ We who had sweet fellowship together, Walked in the house of God in the throng. (Psalms 55:12-14 NASB)

Christ knew this psalm; in fact he had inspired its writing. This is his own spirit saying these things. In other words, there was no surprise or accident about the betrayal.

Jesus is no helpless victim here? The Forth Gospel tells us that:

Jesus therefore, knowing all the things that were coming upon Him, went forth, and said to them, "Whom do you seek?" (John 18:4 NASB)

Jesus knows exactly what is going on and He asks this arresting multitude, “Who’s name is on the arrest warrant? Who is it that you are after?”

They answered Him, "Jesus the Nazarene." He said to them, "I am He." And Judas also who was betraying Him, was standing with them. ⁶ When therefore He said to them, "I am He," they drew back, and fell to the ground. (John 18:5-6 NASB)

When Jesus identified Himself there was a spontaneous and seemingly involuntary reaction on the part of those standing in front of Him— they fell to the ground. If you look at the New American Standard Bible, you will see that in both verse 5 and verse 6 the statement, “**I am He**” has the *He* italicized. This is the translators’ way of indicating that this word is not actually found in the Greek manuscripts. It is a word the translators have supplied for clarity. Literally, then, Jesus responded, “**I Am.**” What did these Jews understand Jesus to be saying? By saying that He was the “I AM”, Jesus was asserting equality with God, himself, who was revealed as the “I Am That I Am”—the self-existent, eternal God:

And God said to Moses, "I AM WHO I AM"; and He said, "Thus you shall say to the sons of Israel, 'I AM has sent me to you.'" (Exodus 3:14 NASB)

“I AM” is a transliteration of the personal name of God in Hebrew. It is sometimes called the “[Tetragrammaton](#)” (Greek, meaning: “four letters”); these are the four consonants (**YHWH**), which make up the divine name found more than 6,000 times in the Law and the Prophets. The written Hebrew

language did not include vowels, only the consonants were used; thus readers supplied the vowels as they read (this is true even today in Hebrew newspapers). Reverence for the divine name led to the practice of avoiding its use. In time, it was thought that the divine name was too holy to pronounce at all. Thus the practice arose of using the word *Adonai*: "Lord." Many translations of the Bible followed this practice. In most English translations, YHWH is recognizable where the word LORD appears in all caps.

The Jews in this arresting multitude rightly understood Jesus' claim and they all fall to the ground. I'm sure that they jumped to their feet and recovered as quickly as possible, but the damage was already done. The authorities were rattled.

If one of the charges against Jesus was that He was a revolutionary, then His disciples would have been, in present day terms, terrorists. Do you think that under normal circumstances the authorities would have intended to let Jesus' disciples just walk away? I don't think so. But Jesus had them so rattled they didn't attempt to arrest anyone else. Jesus had twice asked them who they were seeking, and twice they answered, "*Jesus the Nazarene.*" Then Jesus said, "*Let these go their way.*"

Lazarus points out that in securing the release of His disciples, Jesus was once again fulfilling the prophecy He Himself had spoken earlier:

Again therefore He asked them, "Whom do you seek?" And they said, "Jesus the Nazarene."⁸ Jesus answered, "I told you that I am He; if therefore you seek Me, let these go their way,"⁹ that the word might be fulfilled which He spoke, "Of those whom Thou hast given Me I lost not one." (John 18:7-9 NASB)

This is a completely different picture of Jesus than we saw in our last study. Last week we saw Jesus' humanity, we saw Him terrorized, sweating profusely and falling to the ground in agonizing prayer. Today in our text we see Him boldly standing up to the multitude and we see them on the ground. Jesus is in complete control.

And they laid hands on Him, and seized Him. (Mark 14:46 NASB)

The term "seized" is the Greek verb *krateo*, which means: "*take into custody, seize, grasp, apprehend, to arrest someone.*" Listen to what the Forth Gospel says:

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. 2 He was in the beginning with God. 3 All things came into being by Him, and apart from Him nothing came into being that has come into being. (John 1:1-3 NASB)

Without Jesus Christ was not anything made that was made, yet sinful men put handcuffs on him and took him away.

These religious leaders and their cohorts had long planned to get rid of Jesus Christ. But up to this point they couldn't pull it off. When Jesus read the scroll of Isaiah in His hometown of [Nazareth](#) and declared that the words of the text were fulfilled that day in their presence, the townspeople marveled that such wondrous words could fall from His lips. Then our Lord began to press them at the point of their spiritual hypocrisy. Their attitudes changed, and they determined that He must die!

And all in the synagogue were filled with rage as they heard these things;²⁹ and they rose up

and cast Him out of the city, and led Him to the brow of the hill on which their city had been built, in order to throw Him down the cliff. ³⁰ But passing through their midst, He went His way. (Luke 4:28-30 NASB)

Another occasion, when Jesus was at the [Feast of Dedication](#) in Jerusalem, He had declared His equality with God, "*I and the Father are one.*" The Jews picked up stones to kill Him.

Therefore they were seeking again to seize Him, and He eluded their grasp. (John 10:39 NASB)

Stopping Jesus appeared to be the full-time occupation of the religious leaders! They looked for the chance to catch Jesus in some wrong statement so that they could accuse Him and remove Him. Every time they tried, they failed. For three years, Jesus walked away from numerous attempts to kill Him or to have Him arrested. But now all of that changed. The time had come for the Son of God to lay down His life in the sin-atonement, God-satisfying death at the cross.

When Peter saw the soldiers falling back from Christ like corn blown by the wind— this galvanized Peter to act. The former fisherman was carrying a sword and he drew it, running up to the soldiers slashing away at them, and a poor slave named Malchus became his victim, avoiding having his head split open but having his ear cut off.

And they laid hands on Him, and seized Him. ⁴⁷ But a certain one of those who stood by drew his sword, and struck the slave of the high priest, and cut off his ear. (Mark 14:46-47 NASB)

You've got to hand it to Peter: he was initially ready to take on several hundred armed men with his one sword! Always impulsive, ready to speak or act without clearly sizing up the situation or understanding the divine purpose, Peter looks like a lot of modern Christians.

All four evangelists, Matthew, Mark, Luke and Lazarus, record this incident, and every one of them makes a distinctive contribution to our knowledge of what happened.

Mark does not give us a great deal of information regarding this incident. Remember that Mark is writing at the direction of Peter and we will see that it was Peter who pulled the sword.

“The slave of the High Priest”—was probably a high official acting on behalf of his master. The definite article which is used in all four Gospels to denote the slave seems to indicate that this slave was head above all his others. This slave, therefore, should be seen as being the one who'd been entrusted with responsibility and position over much of the high priest's estate including those other slaves who were in his possession.

Can you imagine what the normal reaction would have been, once Peter had his sword out and was lopping off the ear of the man nearest to him? This was like striking a match in a room filled with gasoline fumes. How quickly and easily Jewish arms could have been employed, so that the situation would have gotten completely out of control.

You see the scene, Peter at one side, holding a bloody sword in his hand, rebuked and chastened by Christ yet again. The soldiers are still getting up and fearful of this one whose words have sent them crashing to

the ground, and there is Malchus groaning in severe pain, blood running down his neck and over his shoulder from where his ear had been. Then Jesus acts; he has spoken to his apostles and told them to sheath their swords.

Then Jesus said to him, "Put your sword back into its place; for all those who take up the sword shall perish by the sword." ⁵³ "Or do you think that I cannot appeal to My Father, and He will at once put at My disposal more than twelve legions of angels?" (Matthew 26:52-53 NASB)

Peter's drawing of his sword was the most volatile thing he could have done, which, apart from our Lord's intervention, would have been devastating to the cause of our Lord. Apart from the quick action of our Lord, I believe that a blood bath would have occurred. Jesus first took charge of the situation.

Jesus says, ***"All those who take up the sword shall perish by the sword."*** Those who take the sword in their own strength will perish by the sword. A stroke of the sword, which is independent of justice, will wound and destroy whoever wields it. It creates resentment and retaliation. There is a place for the sword. The powers that be in the government can use an army and its weapons and fight a just war. The police and courts and prisons are designed to punish criminals. That is their place; keep it there. The sword and instruments of man's power are not to be used for the defense of the gospel or the spread of the kingdom.

Jesus is saying, we must not fight the kingdom's battles our way. World hunger, racism, abortion, freedom to evangelize openly and a variety of other matters are literally life-and-death issues, but the very urgency of these issues sometimes tempts us to fight the battle with human strength and worldly weapons. Jesus clearly established the fact that the Christian faith is never to be propagated by the sword. We do not force people into conformity to Christ by brute strength.

"Or do you think that I cannot appeal to My Father, and He will at once put at My disposal more than twelve legions of angels?" (Matthew 26:53 NASB)

Jesus is conscious that God was in control and taking care of him at that moment—far better than we ever could with our swords. Let's take Jesus literally for a moment. A Roman legion had about 6,000 men in it. So if an angelic legion had that number of angels Christ was saying that God could send 72,000 angels at the nod of the head of the Ancient of Days to protect him if necessary. In other words, there would have been about 6,000 angels for each of the eleven disciples and Jesus to protect them. This is certainly over kill all Jesus would have needed is one angel:

Then it happened that night that the angel of the LORD went out, and struck 185,000 in the camp of the Assyrians; and when men rose early in the morning, behold, all of them were dead. (2 Kings 19:35 NASB)

What's Jesus' point in saying this? To stress that it's not because God lacks the power to stop it that he is going to be crucified. And it's not because Jesus lacks the authority to ask God to spare him that he is going to the cross. He is going to Golgotha because he has chosen to go there. He is not a passive victim. He is the prime actor, and he has chosen to go to Calvary.

If you don't understand that, you don't understand the cross. The cross is not a tragedy; it is not the triumph of evil over good; it is not some sort of "Plan B" idea that God came up with. You know there is an old teaching on the fringes of evangelicalism to the effect that Jesus really came to offer the kingdom to

the Jews. However, they rejected it, and, OOPS, God had to come up with another plan.

Only Luke tells us that Jesus healed this mans ear:

But Jesus answered and said, "Stop! No more of this." And He touched his ear and healed him. (Luke 22:51 NASB)

The word "touched" is Greek *hapto*, "to make close contact," often indicating to touch with the hand to offer a blessing or to heal. You can't miss the contrast here. Peter strikes the servant with a sword to injure him, but Jesus touches with his hand to heal. Jesus is acting out his own teaching,

"But I say to you who hear, love your enemies, do good to those who hate you, (Luke 6:27 NASB)

Malchus is the servant of Jesus' arch enemy, the chief priest, acting on behalf of his master. But I wonder if Malchus is ever able to forget the sensation of Jesus' hand on the side of his bloody face. One minute he feels excruciating pain, the next, peace and wholeness. This emissary of the high priest must do his duty and take his healer into custody, but how can he ever be the same?

Jesus was in charge here, so that when He said, "Stop! No more of this!" everyone stopped dead in their tracks. Jesus' power was so great that no one even thought about taking Peter into custody, even though he had just assaulted a man with a deadly weapon. It's really amazing when you think of it, isn't it?

Why wasn't Peter arrested for assault? Well, it surely would have proven somewhat embarrassing for this servant to attempt to prove to a judge that he was, indeed, assaulted by Peter? If his ear were perfectly restored, who would ever believe someone cut it off, and another put it back on him?

And Jesus answered and said to them, "Have you come out with swords and clubs to arrest Me, as against a robber?"⁴⁹ "Every day I was with you in the temple teaching, and you did not seize Me; but this has happened that the Scriptures might be fulfilled." (Mark 14:48-49 NASB)

Jesus clearly recognized members of the Temple police. So He charged those who were there to arrest Him with their hypocrisy. They were pretending to act justly but were quite aware that they were acting against the wishes of the people, otherwise why were they there in the darkness on Passover night rather than arresting Him in the temple?

"This has happened that the Scriptures might be fulfilled"–The Bible says that it must happen in this way, the Messiah is to be put to death. He must become the Lamb of God to take away the sin of the world. Matthew tells us that Jesus says to Peter, ***"Shall I not drink the cup that the Father has given me?"*** Jesus was determined to live by God's plan, and nobody, not Peter, not Judas, not the mob was going to keep that plan from being accomplished.

Jesus met his betrayal and arrest with serenity and with confident trust in his Father. How did the other apostles meet this trial? They were unprepared even though Jesus has warned them about his betrayal. And they had forgotten God for the moment. Their will was to resist force with force rather than peaceably submit to God's will.

And they all left Him and fled. (Mark 14:50 NASB)

Jesus saw the disciples taking off into the darkness, crashing through the olive trees like startled deer. All this was part of the suffering of Christ. Nothing in Gethsemane was trivial; nothing was incidental. Everything that happened fulfilled Scripture.

And Jesus said to them, "You will all fall away, because it is written, 'I WILL STRIKE DOWN THE SHEPHERD, AND THE SHEEP SHALL BE SCATTERED.' (Mark 14:27 NASB)

These eleven disciples had seen Christ raise the dead. They had been with him in the boat and seen him command the winds and waves to be silent. They had been the objects of his pastoral care, and learners under his powerful ministry. These disciples were the very men who now ran off and abandoned him.

They had *all* said they would never leave him:

But Peter kept saying insistently, "Even if I have to die with You, I will not deny You!" And they all were saying the same thing, too. (Mark 14:31 NASB)

But now they all forsake him and flee for their lives—Scripture is fulfilled.

Only in Mark do we find the following story:

And a certain young man was following Him, wearing nothing but a linen sheet over his naked body; and they seized him.⁵¹ But he left the linen sheet behind, and escaped naked. (Mark 14:51-52 NASB)

One commentator writes, *"All the scholars agree that this is Mark himself. This is Mark's way of saying, "I was there."* In order to make such a statement he would have to have read every scholar, which I doubt he did. Many do say this is Mark himself. In our first study of Mark I said this,

Many scholars have suggested that this was Mark, for he would have been a "young man" at that time. Perhaps, because of his fascination with Jesus, he had been hanging around hoping to learn more, had gotten into this trap unknowingly, and had to flee for his life leaving his garment behind. The fact that Mark is the only one who mentions this incident is highly suggestive that this, indeed, was Mark himself.

You know what's coming next right? If your thinking that I'm going to present a different answer as to who this young man was you're right! We can only speculate regarding the identity of this otherwise unidentified "follower" of Jesus. So let's do that, let's speculate; our text says, ***"And a certain young man was following Him..."*** The word "following" is the Greek word *akoloutheo*, which means: *"to be in the same way with, i.e. to accompany (specifically as a disciple)."* I think that it's safe to assume that this man was a disciple of Jesus that is why he is there in the first place.

Notice what happens to this disciple, ***"they seized him."*** The word "seized" is the Greek word *krateo*, it is the same word used in verse 46 of what they did to Jesus. Why did they "seize" him when they had let the other disciples go free? Remember Jesus pressed them as to who they wanted to arrest and he told them to, ***"Let these go their way."*** So why would they seek to arrest this man? Maybe they knew him; maybe they

had also wanted to arrest him:

But the chief priests took counsel that they might put Lazarus to death also; (John 12:10 NASB)

Maybe, just maybe this man with the “linen sheet” was Lazarus—the beloved disciple. We can understand him following Jesus after they all had fled. He had risen from the dead and wasn’t afraid of any of the religious leaders. You might say, “But this “young man” then fled too.” So how was his behavior any different from the others who “forsook” Jesus in Mark 14:50? The difference I believe is in his motive for fleeing.

When the others ***“left him and fled”***, the clear implication is that they did so out of fear for their own safety. Yet it seems that this man fled not because of fear, but shame or embarrassment:

But he left the linen sheet behind, and escaped naked. (Mark 14:52 NASB)

What would you do if a crowd pulled your clothes off? I bet you would run! If this was Lazarus, then after quickly getting something else to wear he returned and followed Jesus into the court of the high priest.

And a certain young man was following Him, wearing nothing but a linen sheet over his naked body; and they seized him. ⁵¹ But he left the linen sheet behind, and escaped naked. (Mark 14:51-52 NASB)

The word translated as "linen sheet" appears only one other time in Mark's gospel:

And Joseph bought a linen cloth, took Him down, wrapped Him in the linen cloth, and laid Him in a tomb which had been hewn out in the rock; and he rolled a stone against the entrance of the tomb. (Mark 15:46 NASB)

Joseph of Arimathea buys a “linen cloth” to serve as a shroud for the body of Jesus, then wraps the body in it before laying it in a rock-hewn tomb. This Greek word [sindon](#), is only used 9 times in the New Testament it is only used of the “lined cloth” that Joseph used to wrap Jesus in and of this un-named man in Mark. This word “[sindon](#)” is always used for the cloth covering a corpse except for its use with the un-named man in Mark. Why would this un-named man in Mark be wearing a material that was used to cover a corpse? If this was Lazarus maybe he was wearing this material as a reminder to himself and others that he had been raised from the dead.

“In a letter that Clement wrote to Theodore, he stated that there was more testimony attached to Mark than was presently available. Within this original gospel was a discussion of the young man John Eleazar [Eleazar being the Hebrew of the Greek Lazarus], who after [Yahshua](#) raised him from the tomb, went to the Garden of Gethsemane clothed in a fine white linen garment over his naked body” (Willis Barnstone, [The Other Bible, The Secret Gospel of Mark](#), p.342). I know this is just history, I know that it is not inspired, but it is interesting. It means that others saw this un-named man in Mark as Lazarus.

The one person left in Gethsemane when everyone else had fled may have been Lazarus—the disciple whom Jesus loved. He loves his Lord and is seeking to stay with Him until he is attacked; they grab his linen garment and there’s a struggle. He twists and pulls away and all they have is the garment and he runs off naked into the darkness of the night—only to get some clothes and quickly return to the court of the

high priest. You have to admit it's possible!

In our text this morning we see Jesus totally unshaken, totally in control. It was the arresting officers who were shaken up. They actually drew back and tripped over themselves when Jesus identified Himself to them as "[I AM](#)."

This incident, which ended up being amazingly peaceful, was not expected to go down that way. The arresting party that came was a large one, a crowd, in fact. They were heavily armed, and they even had torches. But only Jesus was arrested:

"Every day I was with you in the temple teaching, and you did not seize Me; but this has happened that the Scriptures might be fulfilled." (Mark 14:49 NASB)

The Scriptures were being fulfilled, every detail, just as the Sovereign LORD had planned.

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