

Review

When we last left off in the gospel of Matthew, we saw the beginning of the Passion, Jesus' suffering in the garden of Gethsemane. Jesus was distressed and troubled that night. He was grieved and in agony over what He was about to suffer. He had asked the disciples to sit, watch, and pray, but they had instead fallen asleep. Even after waking them up twice, He was let down yet again when they fell asleep a third time.

Matt. 26:45-46 Then He *came to the disciples and *said to them, "Are you still sleeping and resting? Behold, the hour is at hand and the Son of Man is being betrayed into the hands of sinners. Get up, let us be going; behold, the one who betrays Me is at hand!"

And now we pick up Matthew's narrative in verse 47...

26:47 Judas' Betrayal

Judas the betrayer. He had been one of the twelve disciples hand-selected by Jesus. For the last three and a half years, he'd spent almost every minute with Jesus. He heard almost every sermon, and witnessed almost every miracle. But in spite of it all, he had still chosen to betray Jesus.

The chief priests had been plotting together on how they might seize Jesus by stealth and kill Him (Matt. 26:4). They didn't want His influence affecting the people during the Passover, but there were too many people around. They thought if they grabbed Him during the festival, the crowds would riot (Matt. 26:5).

But when Judas snapped over a lost opportunity to fill the disciples' money box from which he used to pilfer (John 12:6), he went to the chief priests and asked, "How much will you pay me to betray Him to you?" (Matt. 26:15). They paid him thirty pieces of silver.

Knowing that Jesus would take the disciples to the Garden of Gethsemane after dinner, Judas informed the chief priests. They supplied a large crowd of men with swords and clubs, who advanced on the garden.

26:48 Whomever I Kiss

Two thousand years of paintings, stained glass portraits, and movies have programmed us to immediately identify Jesus. He is taller and better looking than anyone else in the crowd. He radiates love, and quite often appears to have a golden neon pie plate suspended behind His head! How could anyone ever fail to identify this Man in a crowd? But Isaiah had prophesied of Him,

Is. 53:2 ...He has no stately form or majesty that we should look upon Him, nor appearance that we should be attracted to Him.

In the garden that night, there were twelve average Jewish men: Jesus and eleven of His disciples. And the only way to tell Jesus apart from the rest of them would be Judas' identification of Him.

26:49-50a Rabbi And Friend

Notice what each man calls the other. Judas called Jesus, "Rabbi," and Jesus called Judas, "friend."

"Rabbi" is a word which means, "my master" or "my teacher." "Friend" is the Greek word "**het-AH-ee-ros**," and it comes from a word that means "my cousin, my family member." Jesus is calling Judas, "My comrade, My companion."

Judas had learned nothing from Him, and he certainly wasn't sincere when He called Jesus, "Master." On the other hand, Jesus was sincere when He called Judas, "my companion."

Judas had the same opportunity to believe as the others did. He'd been befriended by Jesus. He'd been given the same love. And that's why Jesus said,

Mark 14:21 "...woe to that man by whom the Son of Man is betrayed! It would have been good for that man if he had not been born."

The Kiss

When I read of Judas' betrayal with a kiss, I often think of the sincerity with which people kissed or didn't kiss Him. There was the sinful

woman who had been forgiven of her sins that kissed Jesus' feet as she cried (Luke 7:38). There was Simon the Pharisee who refused to kiss Jesus as He entered his house (Luke 7:45). But Judas' kiss was pure evil. King Solomon had written about a thousand years before,

Prov. 27:6 Faithful are the wounds of a friend, but deceitful are the kisses of an enemy.

And Jesus pointed that out to Judas, asking,

Luke 22:48 ...“Judas, are you betraying the Son of Man with a kiss?”

26:50b Seizing Jesus

Matthew gives us the short version of what happened after the kiss, but John tells us about Jesus' interaction with the crowd before the rest of the events unfolded.

John 18:4-7 So Jesus, knowing all the things that were coming upon Him, went forth and *said to them, “Whom do you seek?” They answered Him, “Jesus the Nazarene.” He *said to them, “I am He.” And Judas also, who was betraying Him, was standing with them. So when He said to them, “I am He,” they drew back and fell to the ground. Therefore He again asked them, “Whom do you seek?” And they said, “Jesus the Nazarene.”

When Jesus said, "I am," (not, "I am He"), the entire crowd drew back and fell to the ground! Literally, "they went away to the rear and fell on the earth"! One Man against so many, and yet they fall all over themselves retreating from Him! This always reminds me that Jesus was not captured against His will, but that He in effect turned Himself in. He willingly submitted to what was going to take place that night.

26:51-54 Protecting Peter

Matthew, Mark, and Luke are gracious enough to hide the identity of the disciple who cut off this man's ear. But we know from the Apostle John's account, written after Simon Peter had been killed, that this was in fact Peter.

Jesus also did his part to protect Peter. Not by omitting his name in writing, but by tampering with the evidence! You see, after Peter had cut of the man's ear, Jesus...

Luke 22:51 ...touched his ear and healed him.

If Jesus had not intervened, Peter would have been put to death for this attack. You see, the man he attacked was **MAL-khos**, the servant of the high priest (John 18:10).

Not only did Jesus remove the evidence of Peter's attack, but He also immediately put a stop to it. He again reminded everyone that He was doing this of His own free will. At any moment, He could have summoned tens of thousands of angels to wipe the ground with His enemies.

26:55-56 This Has Taken Place To Fulfill The Scriptures

The Scriptures would be fulfilled. Everything that God had foretold through the prophets about the suffering of the Messiah was about to take place. Jesus was in control, but to the disciples, this whole situation seemed completely out of control. Every one of them ran away.