

**Jesus' Arrest****Matthew 26:36—57****(Mark 14:32—53; Luke 22:39—51)**

At the Passover meal Jesus again tells the Disciples that He is going to die and that He will need to leave them for a while but He also encourages them with the promise of another Comforter that will be given and with the promise of them ruling in the Kingdom. Even though Jesus has told them a number of times that He was to die it seems they remained in a state of denial not really understanding what would shortly take place. Within hours, Jesus would be standing before the religious leaders of Israel being tried as a blasphemer.

**Gethsemane** (verses 36—46; Mark 14:32—42; Luke 22:38—46)

Gethsemane is a garden at the foot of the Mount of Olives just to the east of Jerusalem. The word Gethsemane means oil press and seems to be a picture of what Jesus was about to endure. Jesus knew His time was very short and desired to be in communion with the Father just before He would be faced with His biggest tribulation since His temptation at the beginning of His public ministry. In His humanity He desired the support of His Disciples and told them to wait while He went a stone's throw away telling them to be in prayer so they would not fall into temptation. It's interesting to note that this great time of distress Jesus was experiencing was not recorded in John because that book depicts Him as Deity.

Matthew 26:38 says Jesus' soul was exceedingly sorrowful to the point of death. Luke 22:44 says that He was in agony, sweating as if bleeding profusely. Many say he was under such agony that there was blood in his sweat but the text could also be saying that he was sweating in the manner of heavy bleeding. Either interpretation indicates great mental and emotional duress.

Jesus knew exactly what was to befall Him having studied Scripture and communed closely with the Father. Imagine reading about a torturous death then realizing the person you were reading about is you. Jesus had read and studied passages such as Isaiah 53:2—12; 50:5—9; 52:13—14; Psalm 22; 69:16—21 and knew he was the victim being talked about.

According to Matthew and Mark Jesus prayed three times asking the Father to remove this cup from Him. The cup Jesus was referring to was the torment that was just ahead of Him (Matthew 20:22—23; Mark 10:39). Drinking of the same cup is a sharing. In the case of communion a sharing of the cup is a sharing together in remembrance of Jesus' death for our sins. When the Disciples shared of the cup during the last Passover meal they were symbolically agreeing with the teachings and mission of Jesus Christ. When Jesus asked the Father to remove the cup from Him, His flesh was asking for a loophole. If there were any other way to get through this then He would not need to endure the torment of the cross. However, Jesus never thought of going against the will of the Father. I believe it was hard for the Father to see His Son suffering as He did for our sake and if there was another way the Father would have revealed it to His Son. The only possible way for us to be redeemed was through the sacrificial death of Jesus Christ and the only way for the Second Person of the Trinity to shed blood was for Him to become human. This was all planned out before the creation of the world and was soon to be accomplished.

It was now early morning and the Disciples had been awake almost all night. It's understandable that they were very tired and each time Jesus slipped away to pray the Disciples fell asleep. They probably would have reacted differently if they realized Jesus would be taken from them in short order. After waking them up the third time Jesus announces to them that it was time for the Son of Man to be betrayed into the hand of sinners.

**The betrayal** (verses 47—56; Mark 14:43—52; Luke 22:47—53; John 1—12)

Judas leads the unruly group representing the religious leaders of Israel to the place Jesus often met with His Disciples. According to John they were carrying lanterns, torches and weapons. It was Judas' plan to point out Jesus to the leaders of Israel away from the crowds so they could arrest Him without the common people being aware of what they were doing for the people thought of Jesus as a man sent from God (Matthew 21:46).

As the mob approaches Jesus He asks them whom they seek. They answer they were looking for Jesus the Nazarene. Jesus answers them, "I am." Most translations say "I am He" but the Greek manuscripts do not include the pronoun He. This is because Jesus was making reference to a preincarnate manifestation at the burning bush when He introduced Himself to Moses as the "I am." When He spoke these words the mob, including Judas, was pushed back and fell to the ground.

They got up and Judas went over to kiss Jesus to direct the mob to the One they were to arrest. As they were taking Jesus into custody, Peter drew his sword to push back against the mob and ended up cutting off the ear of the High Priest's slave, Malchus. Jesus told Peter to put his sword away because it was necessary that Jesus completed His mission of being the sacrificial Lamb. Jesus then touched Malchus' ear and healed it.

These two incidents should clearly remind them that Jesus came in the power of God. He claimed to be the Son of God and proved it time and time again throughout His earthly ministry. Matthew tells us that Jesus could have called down more than 12 legions of angels but allowed these evil ones to carry out God's plan of salvation for mankind (Acts 2:23). A legion can be anywhere from approximately 4—6,000 soldiers meaning Jesus would have been able to call down over 50,000 angels. The powers of darkness also have many warriors. Remember the man who was indwelt by a legion of demons (Mark 5)? It would have been quite the display to have the angels fighting with Satan's cohorts but that would have changed the plan for Jesus to die for the sins of the world. This same type of spiritual battle was in process during Jesus' temptation in the wilderness.

These religious leaders were completely blind to what was righteous and holy as proven by their rejection of the Second Person of the Trinity. They wanted nothing to do with God because their hearts were evil. Luke 22:53 attributes their actions to the power of darkness. As Jesus contended with forces of evil we also are struggling with forces of darkness and wickedness in our daily walk (Ephesians 6:12). It is a battle that cannot be won in our own strength but in the strength of the Lord (verse 10). We have been given the protection needed to live a life conformed to His will.

## **Faith**

I believe there is a common misconception that faith is about being confident that an outcome will come to pass. If you waver in thinking something will happen then it will not take place. This is often seen in the area of healing. How many times have we heard that a person needs to have unwavering faith in the fact of their healing or they will not be healed? Those who do not experience healing are accused of lacking faith. We also see godly men of faith defined by how they handle martyrdom. The braver they handle faith the more faith we say they have.

If this standard of faith is applied to Jesus He would be shown to have a great lack of faith. As he neared the cross, Jesus' soul became exceedingly sorrowful to the point of death (Matthew 26:38). He experienced a great heaviness of spirit (Mark 14:33) and pleaded with the Father for Him to not have to go through what was looming (Mark 14:35). His agony was so great that Luke 22:44 says He was sweating as if bleeding profusely. Where was Jesus' faith?

Fortunately, faith is not defined by what someone does but by whom they trust. Those who have a great faith are steadfast in their complete trust in God. Jesus is our perfect example. Every second of His life was spent in total trust in the Father. There was not even the barest hint of Him even thinking about not following the will of the Father. In His humanity, Jesus desired to avoid the torture, humiliation and bearing the sins of the world but through it all He remained committed to following the will of the Father. His faith was not based on his outward reaction but upon whom He placed His life and gave His total allegiance. Our faith also needs to be focused on the person instead of the works.

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