

THE BETRAYAL OF THE LORD

INTRODUCTION: One of the interesting and absolutely unique things about Jesus is that when Jesus became a man he retained his divine attributes. He didn't leave them behind in heaven. He didn't relinquish them to the Father. He kept them. He was absolute God before he became a man. And, he was absolute God after he became a man. He was never less than God, even during his humanity. Theologians say that Jesus was theanthropic in his nature. This is a combination of the greek words Theos = God. Anthropos = man. He is the only one in all of history who was both God and man.

One of the attributes which Jesus retained was the attribute of prescience. That is, Jesus could see things before they occurred. There are several examples of this in the Scriptures. I've picked out three examples, all of which involve a tree.

After Jesus found Phillip, Phillip went and found Nathanael and Nathanael came to see Jesus for himself. When Jesus saw Nathanael coming, he said, "Behold, an Israelite indeed, in whom is no guile." Nathanael said unto him, "Whence knowest thou me?" And Jesus said unto him,

Before that Phillip called thee, when thou wast under the fig tree, I saw thee.

John 1:48

There is another example of Jesus omniscience involving a tree. Zaccheus knew Jesus was coming to town, but he was short of stature and couldn't see over the crowd. So, Zaccheus climbed a tree hoping to catch a glimpse of Jesus.

And when Jesus came to the place, he looked up, and saw him, and said unto him, Zaccheus, make hast, and come down; for to day I must abide at thy house.

Luke 19:5

So, Jesus saw Nathanael under the tree. He saw Zaccheus in the tree. And,

on the eve of his crucifixion, while he was in the garden, he saw himself nailed on the tree. This idea is clearly expressed in John 18:4.

Jesus therefore, knowing all things that should come upon him, went forth, and said unto them, Whom seek ye?

John 18:4

And so, when we last saw the Lord he was in the Garden, that is, the Garden of Gethsemane -- that Garden whose name means an olive press, a place where olives are crushed and sweet olive oil harvested. He was face down in the dirt.

And he went a little farther and he fell on his face, and prayed . . .

Mt. 26:39

Though this Garden was a lovely place and a private place where Jesus often came:

to be alone with his disciples

to pray and to rest from the hard work of the day

to be comforted

On this night Jesus came to suffer.

And so, this place Gethsemane will forever be known as a place of torment and suffering for our Lord.

Not only was Jesus prostrate on the ground, *face down*, says our text, but the account in Luke says:

And being in an agony he prayed more earnestly: and his sweat was as it were great drops of blood falling down to the ground.

Luke 22:44

Now unbelievers have long thought that this account of the suffering of Jesus was just another fairy tale of the Bible -- just another incredulous story that could not be true. But as the Scriptures say,

Yea, let God be true, but every man a liar.

Romans 3:4

Just as the Scriptures matter-of-factly mentioned that the world was round, long before Columbus figured it out, so the Scriptures say about Jesus that his sweat was as it were great drops of blood. This condition is now known as hematidrosis.

The Dictionary of Hematology defines it as “a condition where a person sweats blood. It is very rare and only experienced when a person is suffering extreme levels of stress, for example, facing their own death.”

The Stedman’s Medical Dictionary defines it this way: “Excretion of blood or blood pigment in the sweat; an extremely rare disorder.”

Basically what happens in these rare cases, is that tiny capillaries in the sweat glands rupture under intense mental pressure and the blood mixes with the sweat and comes through the pores of the skin.

So, the blood of Jesus flowed even in the Garden.

Now the Luke passage says, *And, being in an agony he prayed more earnestly.*

Now Jesus taught us to pray always. And so he did.

In comfortable times he prayed.

In times of joy he prayed.

In quiet times he prayed.

At regular times he prayed. And so should we.

But Jesus also prayed in uncomfortable times.

He prayed in times of temptation.

He prayed in times of sorrow as when his friend Lazarus died.

But this passage says, *And being in an agony, he prayed **more earnestly**.*

I find it interesting that even with Jesus, there were times when his prayers were more usual, more routine, more of a daily nature. But on this occasion he prayed **more earnestly**.

Have there been times in your life where you have prayed **more** earnestly? Probably so. Now, many of our prayers are more routine.

When we offer prayers of thanksgiving at the dinner table

When we offer prayers asking God to provide for our needs

But, when disaster falls suddenly on us and our strength fails us and we have nowhere else to turn, and our heart is breaking, and we feel like we can't go on for the sorrow, then we pray **more earnestly**.

And so with Jesus, *being in agony, he prayed more earnestly.*

Now Jesus checked on the disciples three times and he found them asleep. This shows that though this Garden was, **that** night, a place of great suffering for Jesus, yet, it was still a place of comfort for them.

And so the Scriptures teach that Jesus suffered, that we might be comforted.

Surely he has borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows: yet we did esteem him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted. But he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we were healed.

And so, though Jesus suffered in the Garden, the disciples slept in peace.

Did you know that you rest in peace only at the foot of the cross? There is no rest for your soul anywhere else.

You can try to find rest in the pleasures of the world, and you will only find trouble and torment and your soul will not be comforted.

You can try to find rest for your troubled soul by much working and accumulation of wealth, but you will only find trouble and torment and your soul will not be comforted.

You can try to find rest for your soul in doing good deeds in this world, but even your good deeds are filthy rags and you will not be comforted.

You may even try to find comfort for your soul in much religious activity, but that alone will not satisfy your soul and in the end you will not be comforted.

But there is comfort for your soul at the cross of Christ. The place of his wounding is the place of your healing.

The place where his body was broken is the place where yours is made whole.

The hill where his soul was abandoned, is where yours is gathered up into the family of God.

Charles Spurgeon, the great Baptist preacher, whose sermons I love to read, was want to quote from the old hymn, Rock of Ages,

“Nothing in my hand I bring, simply to the cross I cling.”

And so, we find that the very place where the bloody sweat drops fell to the ground, is the place where the disciples slept in comfort.

And while he yet spake, lo, Judas, one of the twelve, came, and with him a great multitude with swords and staves, from the chief priests and elders of the people. (v.47)

While the eleven true friends of Jesus slept, the one devil among them was about his evil business. It seems like those doing Satan’s bidding never rest. If there is sinning to be done, there is no time for sleep. Or maybe they sleep in the daytime for they just love the darkness. Jesus and his disciples worked during the day, but Judas did his work by night.

And this is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil.

John 3:19

The persons involved in the apprehension of Jesus

I. Judas

One of the twelve.

The keeper of the bag.

A friend of Jesus (or so it seemed).

A thief. (John 12:3-6)

II. A great multitude.

a. Partly Roman guards (Gentiles)

b. Partly Servants of the High Priest (Jews)

c. All sinners (v.45)

The authority by which they came to apprehend Jesus

I. They came by the authority of the chief priests and the elders. The Jews.

II. They did not come by the authority of Pontius Pilate. Pilate found no fault in him. Pilate would rather have nothing to do with him. Even Pilate told Jesus, *Even thine own nation and the chief priests delivered thee to me.* (John 18:35)

And so, this multitude was sent from the Jewish authorities, with assistance from the Roman Guard.

The arms by which they came

I. They were armed with swords. These were no doubt borne by the Roman soldiers.

II. They were armed with staves (clubs). These were no doubt carried by the Jews who were sent by the chief priests.

III. They were armed with numbers. (a multitude)

IV. They were armed with rage.

The Jews were enraged with jealousy and religious fervor against this Jesus who claimed to be their Messiah and who claimed to be God himself.

The Romans were enraged with political furor, nervous about the civil unrest and whether this man Jesus was in fact to be the King of the Jews.

Others were enraged just to see someone die, just to see blood spilt, thus fulfilling the Scriptures,

Their feet are swift to shed blood. (Romans 3:15)

Why do the heathen rage against the Lord's Anointed? (Psalm 2:1)

They rage because they are sinners. And this is what Jesus called them in verse 45.

The Son of Man is betrayed into the hands of sinners.

Their feet are swift to shed blood. Destruction and misery are in their ways. And the way of peace they have not known. There is no fear of God before their eyes.

Romans 3:15-18.

And so Jesus says the Son of Man is betrayed into the hands of sinners. (v.45)

Dare I go on and describe sinners further? Paul goes on.

Being filled with all unrighteousness, fornication, wickedness, covetousness, maliciousness, full of envy, murder, debate, deceit, malignity, whisperers, backbiters, haters of God, despiteful, proud, boasters, inventors of evil things, disobedient to parents, without understanding, covenant-breakers, without natural affection, implacable, unmerciful . . .

Romans 1:29-31

And so, Jesus was betrayed into the hands of sinners such as these.

But, the Bible also says in Proverbs:

The fool rageth and is confident. (Proverbs 14:16)

I would suggest that this was a very foolish band of sinners who gathered together to take Jesus into custody.

Note: This was a conglomerate of an army – a mixture of Roman guards and Jewish rabble. It was more in the nature of an angry mob, but given some authority by the presence of the Roman Guard.

But, notice all the ado to take one man, defended by eleven sleepy disciples? It appears that the disciples had two swords among them. So, why is an army of armed men necessary? All of this force brought to bear to take a willing lamb to the slaughter?

Note: When they went into their fields to find a lamb to take to the temple for sacrifice they took no such army. One man could easily take the lamb, because the lamb

goes blindly where he is led. “Come here little lamb, we are taking you to have your throat slit and to pour your blood out on the altar.” And the little lamb comes willingly. And so, the Lamb of God would **willingly** come. One guard could take him in. One unarmed guard could take him in.

And so, all this force was completely unnecessary.

I would suggest that they were not especially afraid of the army of eleven disciples surrounding Jesus, but they were quite nervous about this man Jesus. He had slipped through their hands on other occasions and they sought now to surround him with overwhelming force. And these fools were confident that they could take Jesus with this overwhelming force of men.

And so the Bible says, *The fool rageth and is confident.*

I want to tell you that not only is unwarranted confidence a characteristic of fools, but ignorance makes them even more bold. And how ignorant was this army that came out to take Jesus.

Had Jesus not freely yielded himself up, an army of ten thousand could not have taken him. He was after all, the Lord of all. Jesus told Peter that if he had wanted, he could have asked the Father and the Father would have given him twelve legions of angels. (See v. 53)

How many angels is twelve legions of angels? In the Roman army, the troops were divided into legions. There were 28 legions in the entire army and each legion was composed of up to 8,000 men. So, twelve legions would be as many as 96,000 individuals. Had Jesus so desired, he could have called 96,000 angels to protect him against this multitude of rabble rousers in the Garden of Gethsemane. Now, assuming that angels have considerably more power than men, I doubt this would have been a fair fight. I suspect that one angel could overpower a legion of men. But Jesus could have called 96,000 angels to his rescue.

Do you remember the Roman guards who guarded the tomb of Jesus. And when the angels simply appeared they fell to the ground as though dead. And Jesus could have called 96,000 angels.

The Bible rightly says, *“The fool rages and is confident.”*

But Jesus could have defended himself merely with the breath from his mouth. In the John account, (John 18:4-6) Jesus asked them, *Who seek ye? And they answered him, Jesus of Nazareth. And he said, I am he.* Now if you look at the John account, that word he is italicized So, Jesus simply said, *I am*. And the army against him went backward and fell to the ground. At first they were standing upright looking at Jesus, the Bright

Morning Star, and when Jesus said, “I am,” they found themselves on their backs looking at the stars in the heavens.

These were fools that came out to take Jesus. They had no chance except that Jesus was willing to go with them. They could have sent one or two to bid Jesus to come and He would have come willingly because this was his hour when he should lay his life down for his people.

The manner of the betrayal (v.48)

I. He gave instructions to the soldiers.

- a. He gave them a sign. *Whosoever I shall kiss, that is he.*

The Jews may have known Jesus from his teaching in the temple. But the Roman guards may not have known Jesus. For Jesus went first to the Jews and did not share himself so much with the Gentiles.

Jesus came unto his own and his own received Him not.

And so, Judas gave the Roman guards a sign. *Whosoever I shall kiss . . .*

- b. He gave them an order. *Hold him fast.*

That is, this guy Jesus is slippery. If you get your hands on him, don't let him go. Bind him and hold him tight, lest he get away and so pass by again.

And so, Judas said, *Whomsoever I shall kiss, that same is he. Hold him fast.*

II. He performed his evil deed.

- a. He came close to Jesus. So close that he could touch him. He was close enough to look in the face of Jesus and to look into his eyes. You would think if there was any spark of life in Judas that he would at the last instant change his mind. He stood face to face with Jesus. His heart must have been pounding at the moment that was before him. If ever there was a chance to repent and live this was it.

Judas had once heard Jesus say, *Come unto me all ye that labor and are heavy laden and I will give you rest.*

But Judas did not come to Jesus for rest. He came to Jesus for 30 pieces of silver. For Judas was a thief. And with his bag weighing heavy in his pocket, Judas came face to face with Jesus.

- b. He spoke to Jesus. He said, *Hail master.* (v.49)

Note how easy it is to give lip service to Jesus. He says, *Hail Master*, when the words were merely pretence. Confession with the mouth is absolutely useless without believing in the heart. That's why the Scriptures say:

*That if thou shalt confess with your mouth the Lord Jesus, **and** shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved.*

Romans 10:9

- c. He kissed Jesus. Again, this would normally be a confession of affection. Not a **verbal** confession, but an **act** of confession. See how much I love Jesus, I kiss him on the cheek. But there is no love in the heart of Judas, only greed and all the other evidences of sin.

The attention Jesus gave to Judas (v.50)

I. He called him friend.

- a. Jesus would have been justified to call him villain or traitor or a fool or a child of the devil. But, he called him friend.

There was no evil speaking in Jesus. No bitterness. No lashing back.

And Judas **was** an earthly friend of Jesus. He **had been** a friend. He had walked the hills with Jesus. He had laughed with him. Eaten with him. He had been one of the twelve.

II. He asked him, *Wherefore art thou come?*

- a. If you come as an enemy, why the kiss?
- b. If you come as a friend, why the swords and staves?

Why are you come Judas?

- c. Have not I loved thee as a friend, Judas? And shown you great favor? Have not I put you in charge of the treasury? Have we not eaten around the same table only two hours ago? Have we not prayed in this same Garden together many times before? Have I not taught you the way of life?

Wherefore art thou come Judas?

The treatment the Guard gave to Jesus (v.50)

I. *They came.* That is, they came upon Jesus in a rush of rage.

This further demonstrates that they were fools of the highest order. For seconds earlier, Jesus said, *I am*, and pushed them backwards and knocked them down with his word. And yet, they come rushing in as though it had merely been a rush of wind that knocked them down.

II. *They laid hands on Jesus.*

These were evil hands that were laid on Jesus. They were the hands of sinners. Wicked hands working wickedness.

We can imagine that they laid hands on Jesus roughly. Their intent was to put him to death and they no doubt would have done so at this moment with their swords and staves. But God said, No, evil hands. I will determine the moment when my Son shall be put to death.

They had an evil design, but the Scriptures say they were born along by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God. (see v.56)

III. *They took him.*

They hauled him away down the road as a prisoner. From this point forward he would be treated as a criminal -- as though he were a murderer or a thief. Though he was faultless in all regards, he was punished for the crimes of others. He was our surety. He promised to pay the fine that we could not pay. And so Matthew says they *took him* under arrest and led him into the city.

Time prevents us from going much further in this passage this morning, but I would like to point out that in verse 56 Matthew tells us that the disciples forsook him and fled.

- This was perhaps an act of cowardice, they fled for their lives.
- This was an act which constituted a forsaking of Christ.
- This also was ordained of God, for it was necessary that Jesus should face the cross alone.
 - He should have no comfort in his distress.
 - He should have no sharing of his burden.

And so, the disciples fled and Jesus was left along in the hands of sinners.

There was one other person that was left alone this night and that was Judas. Judas was an important man to the multitude when he was needed to lead them to Jesus. But after the deed was done, Judas was needed no more. I suspect Judas stood there in the garden and watched as Jesus was buffeted and dragged down the road. And he saw the evil treatment of Jesus until the multitude rounded the curve and headed into the city. And Judas stood there alone. The disciples had fled away. The multitude had swarmed away with Jesus in tow. And the noise faded into the distance. And, perhaps Judas stood now alone in the garden.

Suddenly the great enormity of his sin became clear to him. The sweet taste of money in his pocket now became bitter in his stomach and he wanted to vomit it up like a bad meal. But he couldn't. And Judas was alone in his misery. And the Scriptures are true when it says, "tribulation and anguish upon every soul of man that doeth evil." And multiply the tribulation and anguish by 1000 in the case of Judas.

Jesus said of Judas, it would have been better for him if he had never been born.

But, there was hope yet for Judas. There he stood in the garden of Gethsemane. He could have followed the footsteps of Jesus yet. He could have fallen on his face in the dirt and prayed more earnestly. Dost thou see thy sin now Judas? Then you may come to Jesus yet, for he is a merciful Saviour. The blood of Jesus is being spilt at this very moment for sinners such as you, Judas. Stay in the garden a while, Judas, and find comfort for your soul. Find deep and lasting forgiveness in the blood of this man Jesus and then lie down and sleep in peace like the disciples.

But, poor Judas, poor wicked Judas. He preferred to go to the Jewish authorities with his repentance. So, he left the place of Jesus suffering, the place where he could have found comfort, and went to the temple to unload his guilt. He asked the Jews to take back their money and they would not. So, he threw down the silver on the floor. But he could not find comfort for his soul.

So, Judas went out and found a tree overhanging a cliff and he strung the rope and fixed a noose for his own neck and he stood on the edge of eternity. And still, Judas could have found redemption. Judas, take off the noose from around your own neck and run back to Gethsemane. Find the place where the sweat drops of blood fell to the ground for there your sins may be washed away.

In his deep despair Judas lunged over the edge and hung himself and so forever his soul will be in torment.

Take heed all of you who fear for your souls. Come visit Gethsemane and reflect on the sufferings of Jesus. Think on the sweat drops of blood that were the first drops of earnest money paid for you. Then take a walk down the road where Jesus was dragged into the city. Stop for a

moment and look behind the temple gates where Jesus was scourged and beaten all night long. Now walk on up the road to Calvary and take nothing in your hands. You have nothing to offer for your sins. So, go empty handed. When you get to the cross wrap your arms around it and never ever let go. For it is true that there and there alone you may find peace for your troubled soul.