

SCRIPTURE LESSON TEXT

JOHN 18:1 When Jesus had spoken these words, he went forth with his disciples over the brook Cedron, where was a garden, into the which he entered, and his disciples.

2 And Judas also, which betrayed him, knew the place: for Jesus oftentimes resorted thither with his disciples.

3 Judas then, having received a band of *men* and officers from the chief priests and Pharisees, cometh thither with lanterns and torches and weapons.

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

5 They answered him, Jesus of Nazareth. Jesus saith unto them, I am *he*. And Judas also, which betrayed him, stood with them.

6 As soon then as he had said unto them, I am *he*, they went backward, and fell to the ground.

7 Then asked he them again, Whom seek ye? And they said, Jesus of Nazareth.

8 Jesus answered, I have told you that I am *he*: if therefore ye seek me, let these go their way:

9 That the saying might be fulfilled, which he spake, Of them which thou gavest me have I lost none.

10 Then Simon Peter having a sword drew it, and smote the high priest's servant, and cut off his right ear. The servant's name was Malchus.

11 Then said Jesus unto Peter, Put up thy sword into the sheath: the cup which my Father hath given me, shall I not drink it?

12 Then the band and the captain and officers of the Jews took Jesus, and bound him,

13 And led him away to Annas first; for he was father in law to Caiaphas, which was the high priest that same year.

NOTES

Jesus' Arrest

Lesson Text: John 18:1-13

Related Scriptures: John 11:45-53; Matthew 26:36-57;
Mark 14:26-50; Luke 22:39-53

TIME: A.D. 30

PLACE: Jerusalem

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GOLDEN TEXT—"That the saying might be fulfilled, which he spake, Of them which thou gavest me have I lost none" (John 18:9).

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Lesson Exposition

TREACHERY IN THE GARDEN— John 18:1-3

A familiar hangout (John 18:1-2). Jesus and His apostles left the place where they had celebrated the Passover and made their way to a familiar spot. This was the Garden of Gethsemane.

Since this was a place frequented by Jesus and His disciples, Judas knew it was where Christ would be after the Passover meal.

A hostile intrusion (John 18:3). Concerning Judas's motivation for betraying Christ, there are numerous theories. At the very least, greed was involved (cf. 12:4-6). While thirty pieces of silver may seem a paltry sum for betraying an innocent person, thieves like Judas do not think this way. Beyond the money, he seems to have been disappointed that Jesus had no plans to overthrow Rome. His false, worldly expectations for the Messiah certainly played a part in his actions.

Legal systems invariably make a distinction between unplanned homicides and those that are premeditated. Judas voluntarily went to the Jewish religious leaders early in that week and

contracted to betray Christ to them for money (cf. Matt. 26:14-16).

John 18:3 says a "band" of men arrived to arrest Jesus. Taken at face value, this means that a large contingent of soldiers was involved in Christ's arrest. Since it was Passover, more troops were stationed in Jerusalem, since uprisings were more likely to occur because of the influx of foreigners on the occasion.

The "officers" would have been under the supervision of the chief priests. Since the priesthood was largely associated with the Sadducees, mention of the Pharisees indicates a collaborative effort between these otherwise adversarial factions of the Jewish Sanhedrin. They set aside their animosity for the mutual goal of ridding themselves of Jesus.

Since it was night, the torches and lanterns were needed by the soldiers. But they had no need to carry weapons, since the Saviour would offer no resistance to their intentions.

DEMONSTRATION OF POWER— John 18:4-9

A staggering answer (John 18:4-6). Being the eternal Son of God, nothing that was about to occur came as a

surprise to Jesus. Undaunted by this hostile rabble, He stepped forward and asked, "Whom seek ye?"

Regarding Jesus's reply to the arresting force, note that in both verses 5 and 6, the King James Version has the word "he" in italics. This means that the word is not found in the original Greek text. Jesus' actual answer was "I am." As mentioned previously, this phrase is often used throughout John's Gospel to introduce key statements about Christ's identity and mission. Jesus used this phrase to identify Himself as Yahweh (cf. John 8:58), the one true God who appeared to Moses at the burning bush (cf. Ex. 3:14).

In an amazing demonstration of the power of that divine name, the text tells us that when Jesus answered them with the declaration "I am," the arresting rabble staggered backward and fell to the ground, literally knocked off its feet. And this was just a small intimation of His divine identity.

An extension of protection (John 18:7-9). Jesus had flattened them with a single word! Since their sudden loss of verticality seemed to leave them speechless, Jesus again asked them, "Whom seek ye?"

In a further demonstration of His authority, Jesus commanded the throng to allow His disciples to go their way.

The reason Jesus commanded His persecutors to let His disciples go was to fulfill the prophecy He Himself had spoken about a year earlier in John 6:39: "Of all which he hath given me I should lose nothing."

ACCEPTANCE OF THE FATHER'S WILL—John 18:10-13

An impulsive blow (John 18:10). John alone informs us that it was Simon Peter who attacked the servant of the high priest with a sword.

The fact that Peter took the initiative

to defend Jesus without being told to do so is certainly in character with his impetuous nature.

Rebuke and recommitment (John 18:11). Obviously, Jesus did not need Peter or anyone else to defend Him. For Peter to do so under these circumstances was both futile and foolish. Jesus therefore rebuked Peter, telling him to put his sword away.

Arrest and removal (John 18:12-13). While Caiaphas was the currently ruling high priest, Jesus was taken first to Annas, father-in-law of Caiaphas. Although Annas was no longer the official high priest, he still wielded great authority in Jerusalem.

—John Alva Owston.

QUESTIONS

1. What was the name of the garden where Jesus and His disciples went?
2. What motivations may have lain behind Judas's betrayal?
3. How do we know that Judas's act was premeditated?
4. What was the size of the force involved in Jesus' arrest?
5. What two adversarial groups collaborated to rid themselves of Jesus?
6. What caused those sent to arrest Jesus to fall backward to the ground?
7. Why did Jesus command that His disciples be allowed to go free?
8. Who tried to defend Jesus with a sword?
9. Why did Christ rebuke this disciple's action?
10. Who was Jesus first taken to after His arrest? Why?

—John Alva Owston

PRACTICAL POINTS

1. When we follow Jesus, we can expect to face formidable opposition (John 18:1-3).
2. We can boldly meet adversity in the Lord's strength (vss. 4-5).
3. We should not be afraid to declare to others who we are—that we belong to Jesus (vss. 6-7).
4. We can take courage that Jesus has taken responsibility for our security in Him (vss. 8-9).
5. The Lord's interests are not served by rashness on our part (vss. 10-11).
6. Jesus is with us in our trials, although He stood alone in His (vss. 12-13).

—Charity G. Carter.

RESEARCH AND DISCUSSION

1. An estimated two to six hundred men and officers approached Jesus in the garden. Why were so many sent to arrest one man (John 18:3)?
2. Explain the irony of Jesus asking the men who they were looking for (vs. 4).
3. How did Jesus demonstrate love for His disciples on the night that He was betrayed (vs. 8)?
4. Jesus willingly went with the soldiers, but Peter violently cut off a servant's ear to defend Him (vss. 10-13). What do Jesus' and Peter's actions teach us about submission?

—Charity G. Carter.

Golden Text Illuminated

“That the saying might be fulfilled, which he spake, Of them which thou gavest me have I lost none” (John 18:9).

In reading this text, we might find it strange that just four verses earlier (vs. 5), John speaks of Judas betraying Him. Judas was one of the Twelve. Did Jesus lose him?

Judas's betrayal fulfilled Old Testament prophecy of the Messiah's betrayal by a friend (Ps. 41:9). Judas was always out for his own interests, and in the process, he fulfilled the Scripture.

Concerning Jesus' other disciples, He had said, “Of all which he [the Father] hath given me I should lose nothing” (John 6:39). That passage, together with 17:12, indicates that the golden text refers to Jesus keeping all who are His until His kingdom comes (cf. 17:11-15).

We must find the significance of this week's text in its own context.

Verse 4 tells us that Jesus already knew what was going to happen, and He was ready for it. He did not run or cower from the soldiers and thugs. When they said that they were looking for “Jesus of Nazareth,” He replied, “I am he” (vs. 5).

Everyone literally fell over backward at this. It was the words He used that knocked them flat.

Then, despite His obvious power, He offered to go with them if they would let His disciples go.

None of His disciples were arrested, killed, or “lost” that night. Jesus here keeps His faithful disciples to demonstrate His ability to preserve them into His heavenly kingdom.

—David Samuel Gifford.