Grace to You :: *Unleashing God's Truth, One Verse at a Time*

Jesus Betrayed and Arrested
Scripture: John 18:1-11
Code: 1570

INTRODUCTION

The eighteenth chapter of the Gospel of John is one of the really thrilling chapters of the Bible because it is an historical narrative that reveals in depth the excellencies of Jesus Christ in a way that few others, if any, do. It is rich, powerful, and insightful. Beginning with chapter 18 are the final events of the life of Jesus Christ. This is the climax. What has been doctrinal in chapters 13 to 17, is historic in chapters 18 to 21. We are about to enter into the historic narrative of the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. This is the climax of His life.

A. The Purpose of Christ's Birth

Jesus Christ was born to die. It greatly concerns me that the "Jesus movements" of today are based on human principles and not on divine principles. Many of these movements say that Jesus was a wonderful person who, through one or another series of circumstances, got Himself crucified. This is the idea that the movie Jesus Christ Superstar and the book The Passover Plot advocate. This is the kind of thing constantly parroted by critics and liberals alike. But the Word of God clearly tells us that Jesus Christ was never trapped, tricked, or surprised -- He was never a victim. He went to the cross of His own design and His own will because He was born for that express purpose.

In John 12:27 Jesus says, "Now is My soul troubled; and what shall I say? Father, save Me from this hour. But for this cause came I unto this hour." Then in verses 32-33 He says, "And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto Me. This He said, signifying what death He should die." Jesus Christ came into the world to die. That was the purpose for which He was born.

B. The Peak of Christ's Life

As we begin John 18, we come to the climax -- the ascent to the cross. If you are a Christian, this is your moment. For every Old Testament and New Testament saint, the cross is the pinnacle -- the peak of history. Every redeemed man looks to this peak for his salvation.C. The Presentation of Christ's Majesty

In the life of any man, there could be no more debasing, shaming situation than to be arrested as a common criminal, to be betrayed by a friend, to be marched off, to be beaten, and then to be

crucified. But we know that even though this is the account of the betrayal and the arrest of Jesus, John will give conclusive evidence that Jesus is God because this is his purpose. And guess what we discover as we begin to study the eighteenth chapter? What should be shame, what should be a pathetic, degrading, humiliating, brutal kind of narrative turns out to be an unequaled presentation of the majesty of Jesus Christ. It is one of the most magnificent passages in the Bible. It is possible to read it through in its narrative sense and miss the point that John is trying to make in these few powerful verses.

There are four preeminent features in John 18:1-11 that show us the supremacy of Christ. What could be a humiliating thing, as He is arrested as a common criminal, turns out to be glory. The four features that I want you to see are: His Supreme Courage, His Supreme Power, His Supreme Love, and His Supreme Obedience. The wretchedness, injustice, and hellishness of Satan's plot to kill Jesus begins to unfold in chapter 18. But instead of Christ being degraded as the devil intended, we will see Him exalted to the highest heavens. We will see His unbounded magnificence burst open in a series of tremendous truths concerning His incomparable person. First, let's look at...

I. HIS SUPREME COURAGE (vv. 1-5)

His courage is seen in His determination to go to the cross. It is a very courageous thing when a man is willing to die for a cause -- to be martyred for a truth that will not be rejected by people. That is noble. But to purpose in His mind to go to a cross knowing it means that all His purity and sinlessness will be violated, that He will bear the sin of every man who ever lived, and that He will be abandoned by the God with whom He has been face to face throughout all eternity, that kind of courage is infinite and supreme beyond anything a mere human being could accomplish. As Jesus sets His face to go to the cross, He is undaunted, and without hesitation He moves directly in that direction. He is not trapped, He is not tricked, and He is not surprised; He purposes to do this because He has to die for those who will receive and believe Him. So we see infinite courage -- not a cowering Christ, not a hiding Christ, not a running Christ, but One who sets Himself to die.

A. The Custom of Christ (vv. 1-2)

1. Following His Pattern (v. 1)

"When Jesus had spoken these words [John 13-17], He went forth [leaving the upper room and the city of Jerusalem] with His disciples over the brook, Kidron, where was a garden, into which He entered, and His disciples."

Concluding His prayer and a time of fellowship and instruction with His disciples, Jesus moves immediately to the Garden of Gethsemane.

a. His Retirement

It had been Jesus' custom throughout the years of His ministry to spend His evenings on the Mount of Olives in this Garden. The gardens on the Mount of Olives belonged to the rich people of the city because the dwellings in the city were situated very close together -- there wasn't any room for gardens. Evidently, Jesus had known an individual who perhaps had given Him the key to the gate of this Garden. So, He retired frequently at the Garden of Gethsemane on the Mount of Olives. John 7:53-8:1 says, "And every man went unto his own house. Jesus went unto the Mount of Olives." This was home to Jesus -- where He could be alone with the Father and rest from the trials and the conflicts of the people. And on this occasion He again went to the Mount of Olives and gathered His disciples and took them with Him.

The Picture of Christ's Sacrifice

As Jesus was leaving Jerusalem on this night, it was Passover season. And at the Passover season, thousands of pilgrims would move into the city from all over the land. So Jerusalem was bulging with people. And they were all there to offer sacrifices in the Temple. Lambs were being slain incessantly during those days. In fact, thirty years after Christ, historians tell us that there were 256 thousand lambs slain at the Passover in Jerusalem. You can imagine the mess that slaughtering that many lambs on one altar in the Temple would create -- blood running everywhere.

Well, the Jews had provided for this problem. They had built a channel which ran from the Temple ground, which sat immediately above the valley of Kidron, down into the brook Kidron. All of the blood would run down this channel into the brook. Undoubtedly, as Jesus was leaving the city of Jerusalem on that last night, He stepped across the brook and saw that brook red with the blood of all the lambs that were being slain for the sins of the people. His own coming sacrifice must have become very vivid in His mind.

So, Jesus continued up the other side of the valley and came to the little Garden called Gethsemane (meaning "oil press"). Since it was the Mount of Olives, one would expect to find an olive press there, and there was -- a wooden olive press. The olives were crushed and the oil would flow into the middle of the press. Then they would gather the oil and use it for cooking and other purposes. Jesus and His disciples gathered to this place where they had been many times before, Judas also knew where they were gathered. But Jesus knew that Judas knew this, and Jesus knew that Judas knew He would go there because He had gone there every night for the last few nights. It was His place of prayer and retirement. So, as Jesus entered the Garden with His disciples, Judas has already betrayed Him and is gathering the force to confront Him.

Words and Types

There are two kinds of prophecy in the Old Testament: Verbal predictive prophecy and typical prophecy. An example of verbal predictive prophecy is Isaiah 9:6: "For unto us a Child is born, unto us a Son is given...." This verse gives a detailed verbal prophecy of Christ's coming. Typical predictive prophecy is a prophecy in types. In other words, every Old Testament sacrifice was a picture of Jesus Christ -- a prophecy that a final sacrifice would come. That is typical prophecy.

There are some men in the Old Testament who are types of Christ (i.e., by their very life they typified Christ). One such man was David. In 2 Samuel 15:12-14, David was betrayed by his own friend Ahithophel, and David had to escape. When David escaped, he went out of the gate in Jerusalem, down the slope, across the Kidron, and up to the Mount of Olives with his faithful followers (vv. 23, 30). Ahithophel and David in this incident become a perfect picture in the Old Testament of what was to come when the true Christ -- the real King, David's greater Son -- arrived. So, Jesus Christ fulfills the typical Old Testament prophecy seen in the incident involving David and Ahithophel. And Judas becomes one even more treacherous than Ahithophel.

b. His Reasons

Now you ask the question: "Why did He go there? If He knew He was going to get into this mess, why did He go?" He went there because it was...

1) The Place of Prayer

He wanted to talk to the Father, and He did. John doesn't tell us about His agonizing in prayer as the other writers do (Mt. 26:36-46; Mk. 14:32-42; Lk. 22:39-46).

2) The Place of Rest

It was the place where He could go to get away from the all of the conflict.

3) The Place of Sweet Fellowship with His Disciples

Here they could be alone together. But all of these reasons were secondary.

4) The Place of His Arrest

The main reason Jesus went there was to make it easy for Judas and the soldiers to arrest Him. You say, "You mean this wasn't a surprise?" He mapped out this scene before the world began. The Old Testament details what Judas was going to do not only in the typical prophecy of Ahithophel's situation, but in very accurate verbal prophecy (e.g., Ps. 41:9; 55:12-14). Zechariah 11:13 even prophesies the fact that the chief priests would use the thirty pieces of silver to buy the potter's field. Jesus went to that Garden because He was forcing the confrontation that would result in His death.

2. Fulfilling His Plan (v. 2)

"And Judas also, who betrayed Him, knew the place; for Jesus often resorted there with His disciples."

a. Jesus: The Victor

Now why do you suppose it says that? Jesus went there because Judas knew where He would go. You say, "Why did Jesus want to make it easy for Judas?" By no means was it easy for Judas...forever it isn't easy for Judas. But Jesus wanted the arrest and the betrayal to occur in the manner that He designed.

1) The Plan of His Arrest

a) Avoiding Insurrection

If Jesus had allowed Himself to be arrested in the middle of Jerusalem, there would have been an insurrection and a revolution that would have torn apart the city and perhaps might have ended in the killing of the disciples, because Jesus was popular. Jesus wanted to make it easy.

b) Proving Victory

Jesus also wanted to prove to the disciples that He was not a victim. He could have gone by Himself to the Garden, had the disciples stay in Jerusalem, and by word of mouth they could have heard Jesus had been captured. But their faith would have gone down the drain and they would have seen Him as a victim. So Jesus says, "Come with Me. You are going to see how it really is." So He gathers them together and takes them with Him to the Garden of Gethsemane so that in the quiet and solitude of that place the arrest can occur without any disturbance and revolution. As a result, the disciples can stand there in that calmer atmosphere and watch what happens and see that Jesus is no victim, but a victor. In addition, they can also be protected by Jesus.

c) Eliminating Fear

The leaders of Israel had wanted to get Jesus many times, but they feared the people. Jesus, by going to the Garden, eliminated the problem of their fear and made it very easy to arrest Him. And He took His eleven along just so they would see that it was a voluntary surrender.

2) The Perspective of His Authority

John 10:17-18 says, "Therefore doth My Father love Me, because I lay down My life, that I might take it again. No man taketh it from Me, but I lay it down of Myself. I have power [authority] to lay it down, and I have power [authority] to take it again...." No one ever took Jesus' life from Him. He was never a victim. A coward would have gone anywhere but the Garden because that was the most obvious place where Judas would look for Him first.

Earlier that evening He had said to Judas, "Go do what you have to do. It is time" (Jn. 13:27). Judas thought he was so clever and so sneaky, yet he was doing Jesus' own bidding, setting up a confrontation designed and planned before the ages by God Himself. So Jesus is there because He knows the soldiers and Judas will come. He wants it to be as easy as possible, and He wants His disciples to see that He is not a victim but a victor.

b. Judas: The Victim

Judas has been sent out of the upper room because he didn't belong with the disciples. And the Bible tells us that when Judas left, Satan entered into him (Jn. 13:27). Now, it's one thing to be demon possessed, but quite another to be possessed by Satan himself. So Judas went to the chief priests and elders and contracted his betrayal for what amounted to about twenty dollars. Some bargain! He managed to get the chief priests and elders to commission the Temple police and a band (Gk. speira) of Roman soldiers to go with him and capture Jesus. While Jesus is up in the upper room celebrating the Lord's Supper, praying, teaching, loving, and commending the disciples to the Father, and walking with them to the Garden, Judas is pursuing Him under the shelter of the black of night. He comes to do the blackest work in the history of all the world's treachery.

The Romans and the Jewish Temple police had been gathered with the elders to be the diabolical force which went to the Garden. Matthew 26:47 says that they were "a great multitude with swords and clubs." They were ready for action. As best we can tell, the Temple police used the clubs and the soldiers of Rome used the swords.

B. The Cohort Of Judas (v. 3)

1. The Men (v. 3a)

"Judas then, having received a band of men and officers from the chief priests and Pharisees..."

Judas went to the chief priests and Pharisees, worked out his deal, and they in turn brought the police and the Romans into the picture. So here comes the mob -- Jewish leaders, Gentile soldiers, and Jewish Temple police. Now, you wonder how many there were altogether. It's hard to know exactly, but we do have an idea.

a. The Roman Cohort

The Greek word speira referred to a Roman cohort, which contained a minimum of six hundred men. There are some historians who feel that as many as twelve hundred could be in a cohort, yet a detachment from a cohort might have been as small as two hundred men. But let's assume that there were six hundred Roman soldiers. They all came from Fort Antonia, which was butted right up against the Temple ground. And they were professional soldiers -- like none other in the world.

b. The Temple Police

In addition to the Roman cohort, there was a large group of the Temple police, perhaps one or two hundred.

In addition, there were the chief priests and the Pharisees. They all came after Christ with Judas out front. What a compliment that was to Jesus when they had to send that many to pick up one Galilean carpenter and His friends. Now, they were also aware of the popularity of Jesus, and I'm sure that the Jewish leaders wanted these forces to be sure that if they were attacked, they would be able to defend themselves.

2. Their Equipment (v. 3b)

"...cometh there with lanterns and torches and weapons."

Historians tell us that at that time of the month, there was a full moon. Jerusalem would have been brilliantly lit up by that full moon and they would have had no need for the torches and the lanterns to see their way up the Mount of Olives. Historians say that this indicates that they evidently felt they would have to search for Jesus who would be hiding somewhere in the nooks and crannies of the hillside. So, they came with torches to search for the Light of the world and with swords to fight the Prince of peace. What an insult! What a cruel misinterpretation of who He was! And Judas was leading the mob. What a vile, sick, tragic, sinful person he was!

The Kiss of the Traitor

When I was in seminary, I did my thesis on a character analysis of Judas Iscariot. In recent years, people have said, "Well, Judas was really a good guy. He just made a mistake in trying to force Christ into setting up the Kingdom. He was trying to do a good thing, but he was just misguided." My friends, the Bible says that Satan entered into him (Jn. 13:27). Jesus said, "...Good were it for that man if he had never been born" (Mk. 14:21b). He was vile, he was the lowest of the low, he was a hypocrite beyond the bounds of hypocrisy.

As Judas approaches Jesus leading this huge mob, he feels secure. After all, he didn't believe that Jesus was God. And when Judas arrives in the Garden, the Bible tells us in the other Gospels that Judas went up to Jesus and (according to the Greek construction) kissed Him repeatedly (Mt. 26:49; Mk. 14:45; Lk. 22:47-48).

Now, you can fathom a betrayer pointing out the victim, and you might be able to conceive that he might quickly give the victim a kiss and then take off, but to believe that he would linger and repeatedly kiss Jesus Christ and remain is absolutely inconceivable. There is no way that you could conceive of a man being that debased and unfeeling to do something like that...but he does. All he had to do was point to Jesus, but not Judas. The same spirit of mental confusion and sin and the same kind of possessive control by Satan that made him a traitor, also added to this devilish refinement of a kiss. And this is an unheard-of combination. In all of history you will never find a disciple's kiss coupled with a traitor's sign. It doesn't exist. This combination occurs to forever make Judas alone stand out as the black spot on humanity.

Judas's cunning mind degenerated into brutal stupidity. Inferiors kiss the foot or the hand. Servants, slaves, and suppliants asking for pardon kiss the foot and worshipers kiss the hem of a garment. But familiarity is revealed when someone kisses the face of another. It reveals the warmth of love and affection. So, Judas's evil is intensified by the kiss. His feigned innocence was a weak attempt to conceal the reality of what he was, and possibly to let Jesus think that he had just gone out of the upper room for a little while and now was back with them again. It is bad enough to betray a friend; it is even worse to sell Jesus Christ. But the most foolish thing in the world is to think you can kiss God in mockery and get away with it.

The saddest part of Jesus' betrayal is not that He endured only one Judas kiss, but He has endured a million since then. People who exalt Him to the skies won't live for Him. People who talk about all of His greatness never receive Him as their Savior. What is that but a Judas kiss -- polluting the Son of Man's face today as Judas did almost two thousand years ago.

C. The Confrontation By Christ (vv. 4-5)

1. The Physical Confrontation (v. 4a)

"Jesus, therefore, knowing all things that should come upon Him, went forth..."

John won't let an opportunity go by that shows us that Jesus is God. He is omniscient -- He knows everything. He knew exactly what was going to happen, and He didn't wait for His enemies to get Him. He wasn't hiding behind an olive tree; he went out the gate and met them when they were on their way in. Christ was so humble and so willing in His self-sacrifice. Jesus initiated the confrontation, not Judas. Judas didn't even have an opportunity to open his mouth.

2. The Verbal Confrontation (vv. 4b-5)

a. The Powerful Reception (v. 4b)

"...and said unto them, Whom seek ye?"

He went out of the gate to meet them as they were coming to get Him. In His omniscience, He had seen Judas make his deal, He had seen them all leave Jerusalem, go down the hill, and then up the Mount of Olives. Then He walked right out and met them. This is the majestic courage of Jesus Christ. What magnificent boldness He displayed in going to the cross for us!

b. The Parroted Response (v. 5a)

"They answered Him, Jesus, of Nazareth...."

They are just simply parroting their orders. They have no recognition of Him as Christ, or Messiah, or God. They just give His name and where He's from in order to identify Him. They only know that they have been commissioned to get Jesus of Nazareth.

c. The Perfect Revelation (v. 5b)

"...Jesus saith unto them, I am He...."

The "He" isn't present in the Greek. So Jesus just says, "I am." Whose name is that? It is God's name.

d. The Pernicious Representative (v. 5c)

"...And Judas also, who betrayed Him, stood with them."

Why is Judas still there? He has his money, why doesn't he just go? I think he is still there for two reasons:

1) Revealing Satan's Rule

Judas remains in order to show what happens when Satan rules an individual. The activity of sin is senseless, incoherent, and stupid.

2) Revealing Judas's Reversal

Jesus wanted us to know that Judas was there because Judas was in on this arrest. Judas was also part of the plan, and he had no power over Jesus. There might be a tendency to think Judas was a big hero because he marched in with the army to capture Christ. But Jesus wants us all to know that Judas is just a part of the plan, standing there with the soldiers.

So we have seen the supreme courage of Christ. In a moment that Jesus could have been debased, He is revealed as having majestic courage. He is determined to go to the cross, so He goes right out and meets His foe. Now second, let's look at...

II. HIS SUPREME POWER (v. 6)

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

Jesus wanted us to know Judas was there to show that Judas had no power. All Jesus had to do was say His name and they all went down. The other Gospels dwell on Jesus' agony -- on His knees on the ground in anguish. But not in John's Gospel. Jesus is standing and the whole Roman army is on the ground.

A. The Action of His Power

The disciples saw that Jesus had power over them. He wanted them to know, He wanted us to know, He wanted Judas to know, the whole Roman army to know, and all the Jews to know that He was in control. He was laying His life down; nobody was taking it away from Him. He just said, "I am," and a thousand people went down.

Now, one commentator said, "Well, evidently someone fell in the front and everyone else lost their balance." That is a typical line of reasoning. Jesus said, "I am," and the entire group went down. Now, they were soldiers. They weren't stupid, standing one inch behind each other. They were in some kind of formation. They knew what they were doing. They fell down because of the power of His word.

All He had to do was say His name, the name of God, and they collapsed on the spot. There He was, a single, unarmed, lonely figure, and they were an army, equipped and manned for war, and He simply spoke His name and they collapsed. There flowed from Jesus such commanding power and authority that they could not even stand up in His presence. This was another sign recorded by John to show us that Jesus Christ was no victim; He was the majestic victor in control of everything. And I think He revealed His power most of all for the delight and faith of the disciples, who would see that He was not a victim.

B. The Authority of His Power

An interesting Bible study is the study of the concept of the word of His power. God created the world by His word, and He said, "Let there be light..." (Gen. 1:3a). And when Christ comes in judgment at the end of the age, the Bible says, "And out of His mouth goeth a sharp sword..." (Rev. 19:15a). It is the word of God that is powerful; it is the word of God that will judge and condemn men; and it is the word of God that is incisive. Jesus Christ is coming to judge (Mt. 13:37-43, 47-50; Ac. 10:42- 43; 17:30-31). So the Bible says He will judge by the word out of His mouth. And the mob tasted just a sample of His judgment power and they fell helpless at His feet.

John is showing us that Jesus was no victim. This was the majestic Son of God displaying power. So we have seen His supreme courage and His supreme power. Third, let's look at...

III. HIS SUPREME LOVE (vv. 7-11a)

As Jesus anticipated the cross, He was never concerned about Himself, but His disciples. They were constantly on His mind, revealing His selflessness and endless love. When most men whould be thinking about themselves, He is thinking about the disciples.

A. Christ's Protection (vv. 7-9)

1. The Demand for His Protection (v. 7)

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

What blocks, what stones, what worse than senseless things they were! They have just picked themselves up off the ground and they say, "Jesus, of Nazareth" again, like nothing ever happened. Unbelievable is the stupidity and the blindness of sin! The Bible doesn't even indicate that anything entered their minds about what Jesus had done. Perhaps they thought that someone fell in front. Even the Jews make no comment about the fact that He named the name of God when He said, "I am." The stupidity of sin is unbelievable!

Look at your life. How many times did Jesus knock you down and still you didn't believe? Now, as a Christian, how many times have you been belted to the ground because of sin, and picked yourself up and done the same thing again? Jesus uses these types of things to try and awaken a man's heart. Look at Pharaoh (Ex. 5-14). The Lord tried with him but his responses didn't make sense given the evidence that was displayed. The same thing goes on today. People come to church, hear the Word of God, walk out, and forget it. They might go through trauma, tragedy, and disasters in their lives, but when those are over, they still have the same unbelief they had before.

So, the cohort parrots their orders: "Jesus, of Nazareth." And Jesus wants them to state their orders emphatically. Why do you think He asked them twice?

2. The Display of His Protection (v. 8)

"Jesus answered, I have told you that I am He; if, therefore, ye seek Me, let these go their way"

The rulers would have loved to have gotten their hands on all of the disciples, so Jesus makes the cohort repeat their orders twice so that from their own mouths they state that they have no right to the disciples.

a. The Command of the King

Jesus is not a victim, He is a King commanding them. Two times He impressed their reply on their minds -- they had come to take Him, and Him alone. Jesus wanted to have the disciples there to see that He was no victim, but He had to have them released to carry on the message. This was His master plan. In order to make sure of the disciples' safety, He had them repeat their orders twice that they were after Him alone and had no business with the disciples. So Jesus protects His own.

b. The Commitment of the Shepherd

This is a powerful scene. The enemy is on one side, the disciples are on the other side, and Christ is in the middle. Jesus Christ isn't the kind of shepherd who rescues the lamb when it is half eaten by the wolf. He is the kind of shepherd who gets in front to meet the wolves before they attack the flock. In John 10:12, as He talked about the good shepherd, He talked about the fact that when the hireling sees the wolf coming, he runs away. The true shepherd meets the wolves.

Jesus is no victim, He is a victor -- a King giving commands. He displays His protective love for His own. In John 10:28-30 Jesus said, "And I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of My hand. My Father, who gave them to Me, is greater than all, and no man is able to pluck them out of My Father's hand. I and My Father are one." By that statement, Jesus secures His protection over His own sheep. The disciples had to remain. They had

to carry on the work. So Jesus stands in front and protects them.

3. The Design of His Protection (v. 9)

"That the saying might be fulfilled, which He spoke, Of them whom Thou gavest Me have I lost none."

This saying was spoken by Jesus in John 17:12, only in a spiritual context. In that verse He was saying, "I'm not going to lose any of them spiritually." But this verse is in a physical context -- He doesn't want the disciples captured. This is Jesus' supreme protective love. Jesus is saying to Himself, "These men will never make it. I have to keep them from capture." He commands the scene to make sure the disciples are safe from something they couldn't handle.

Jesus will never let you slip out of His grasp. That would be an admission on His own part that He can't keep you. No man is able to pluck you out of the Father's hand or Jesus' hand. Isn't that a secure thing to know? And the reaction of many Christians to this security is, "Now I can go do this. I can wing it. After all, I'm secure." The Lord builds protection, we have fellowship with believers, He says, "Stay apart from the world," and He gives us the Word, but some of us think we can make it on our own. And that was what Peter thought.

B. Peter's Problem (vv. 10-11a)

Peter decided to step out of the protective care of the Lord. Now remember, the Lord stood in the middle between the enemy and the disciple. That is where He is in relation to us and the world -- He is in the middle. But every once in a while, we run out of the shelter He builds and decide that we can do just fine on our own.

1. His Invincibility (v. 10)

"Then Simon Peter, having a sword [Gk. machaira = dagger], drew it, and smote the high priest's servant, and cut off his right ear. The servant's name was Malchus."

Here is impetuous Peter. It is not enough that Christ has protected him; now Peter draws a knife and starts cutting into the crowd. You can imagine the Lord saying, "After all I have just gone through to get you off the hook, and now you are doing this!" The Bible says that Peter cut off his right ear, but you should know Peter well enough to know that he wasn't aiming for an ear. Nothing would have made him happier than to see the man's head rolling down the hill. So, Peter wanted to move into the army -- he felt invincible. After all, Christ was right beside him. He probably figured, "If I get into trouble, the Lord will just say, `I am.'" So he felt secure and invincible in the presence of Christ and drew the sword and whacked off an ear. Fortunately, Malchus had fairly good reactions. And then, in a beautiful demonstration of His protective love, Jesus recreated his ear -- gave him a new one (Lk.

22:51).

2. His Impotency (v. 11a)

"Then said Jesus unto Peter, Put up thy sword into the sheath..."

In other words, "Peter, put that thing away. Don't you realize what I'm trying to do?" Now, I admire Peter's courage, but I can't say much for anything else he does. He really thought he could handle it. The Lord had built protection for him apart from his enemies, but he ran right into the middle of them thinking he was invincible. Peter found out later that night that he wasn't as great as he thought. By the time the night was over, he was crying his heart out after having denied Jesus.

By this time, the crowd had seen two astounding miracles. They had not only fallen over together, but now they had seen Jesus give a man an ear. Under normal circumstances those miracles would be convincing, but not to this crowd. You would expect them to fall to His feet in worship, but sin blinded their minds. So Jesus not only provided a shelter of care for His beloved, but at the same time He performed two astounding miracles.

What principle can be drawn out of all this? Jesus is in the middle between the disciples and the trouble. He says, "Stay in the shelter, don't mix with the world, don't love the things of the world, and don't fool around in the world." But Peter does. What does Jesus do? He brings Peter back and fixes up the mess he created. There are the two great areas that reveal the protective love of Christ: He not only stands between us and danger, but when we willfully get into a problem, He rescues us. For example, there is the story of the man who left his ninety-nine sheep to look for the one that wandered away (Lk. 15:4). The principle of that story is obvious: It is the principle of the prodigal son (Lk. 15:11-32). Jesus will recover the one who keeps leaving the shelter. The joy, peace, and happiness in Christianity is found in the shelter that Christ has built for all Christians. Now, if you want to run out, Christ promises to get you, but you will get a spanking on the way back. "For whom the Lord loveth He chasteneth..." (Heb. 12:6a). The reason He spanks you is so you won't run into trouble again. The protective love of Jesus is seen in two ways: He secured the disciples' protection by making the cohort answer the same question twice, and then by performing a divine miracle to remove Peter from the problem.

Has God done some miracles in your life to remove you from some messes? He has in mine, and I thank Him for His protective care. What does this say to us? It says none of us will ever be lost. Jesus could have destroyed that entire group with a word, but He willingly went to the cross. He even fixed up Malchus to show that He went to the cross peacefully. He wasn't interested in injuring or fighting against these men. He was willingly going to die. Nobody took His life from Him. So, we have seen His supreme courage, His supreme power, and His supreme love -- a love that does not think of itself, but only of others. Now, last we see...

IV. HIS SUPREME OBEDIENCE (v. 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?"

Matthew includes this statement: "...for all they that take the sword shall perish with the sword" (Mt. 26:52b). In other words, "This is what God planned, Peter. Don't mess it up!" I wonder how many times the Lord has had to say to us in effect, "Why don't you get out of My way so I can do My work?" He says, "Peter, this is what we have been planning since the beginning of eternity. Now just stand aside for a minute and let it happen."

A. Drinking the Cup of God's Wrath

Notice the word "cup." The idea of cup in the Old Testament is associated with judgment (i.e., the cup of His wrath; Jer. 25:15). Revelation 14:10 mentions the cup of indignation. Jesus was saying that He was going to drink a cup full of wrath. When Jesus went to the cross, He drank a cup of wrath -- God's wrath against sin. Jesus says, "Shall I not drink God's cup of wrath, bearing the shame, agony, and sin? Shall I not die feeling the killing death of God's judgment on sinners? This is how it has been planned, Peter. Shall I not do it?" And I say what Peter didn't say: "Do it, Lord, because we need it done."

B. Dying in Obedience to God's Plan

Jesus willingly drank the cup. And He drank it to the bottom. He died our death. Jesus died even though God turned His back on Him, even though His disciples forsook Him, even though the Gentiles mocked and scourged Him, and even though the Jews cried, "Crucify Him!" He died in love for His own and in obedience to the Father's plan. That is supreme obedience.

In this passage, you have seen the majesty of Jesus Christ in His courage, His power, His love, and His obedience. But the sad thing is this: just like the crowd that night, you may not really comprehend His majesty. Verse 12 adds this sad, tragic commentary: "Then the band and the captain and officers of the Jews took Jesus, and bound Him."

Focusing on the Facts

1. Why was Jesus Christ born? What is the climax of His life?

2. Explain why Jesus was not a victim.

3. What are the four preeminent features in John 18:1-11 that reveal the supremacy of Jesus Christ?

4. Why is Jesus Christ's willingness to die greater than any human martyr's willingness?

5. Why would Jesus spend His evenings on the Mount of Olives?

6. What was Judas doing as Jesus and the disciples moved to the Garden of Gethsemane? Why did Judas know where Jesus would be?

7. What are the two kinds of prophecy in the Old Testament? Explain how each functions. What Old Testament incident typifies the betrayal of Christ by Judas?

8. Why did Jesus go to the Mount of Olives, knowing that He would be betrayed there?

9. Why did Jesus want the betrayal and arrest to occur in the manner that He designed? What is significant about each reason?

10. Why was Jesus not a victim? What authority did He possess?

11. What happened to Judas as he left the upper room?

12. Describe the cohort that Judas brought with him in order to arrest Jesus. Why did they bring lanterns, torches, and weapons?

13. In what way did Judas kiss Jesus when he betrayed Him? Why is this significant?

14. What physical act of Christ in the Garden revealed His supreme courage?

15. Why did Judas remain in the Garden after having betrayed Jesus with the kiss?

16. How did Jesus reveal that He was in control of the entire situation?

17. How will Jesus Christ judge and condemn men? When will this occur?

18. What kinds of things does Jesus use in order to try to awaken a man's heart to spiritual truth?

19. Why did Jesus make the cohort state their orders twice?

20. How is Jesus' protection of the disciples like the protection of sheep by a shepherd?

21. What is the difference in context between the statements made in John 17:12 and John 18:9?

22. Why did Peter step out of the protective care of the Lord?

23. What two miracles performed by Christ had this cohort witnessed? How did they respond to them?

24. In what two ways is Jesus Christ's protective love made manifest in our lives? What is the principle that is revealed in this protection?

25. What does the word "cup" refer to in John 18:11? Why did Jesus need to drink this cup?

Pondering the Principles

1. Not only was Jesus' arrest and betrayal a part of God's plan, but so was Jesus' entire life and ministry. Look up the following prophecies and identify their fulfillment: Genesis 3:15; 26:4; Deuteronomy 18:18-19; Psalm 2:7; 8:2; 22:6; 41:9; 69:9; 72:10; Isaiah 9:1-2; 35:5-6; Jeremiah 31:15; Hosea 11:1; Zechariah 11:12-13; 13:7; Malachi 3:1.

2. Jesus has indeed been subject to many a Judas kiss since the very first one. As a Christian, although believing in Him in your heart, have you outwardly been responsible for your own Judas kiss in front of unbelievers? Why? What has prevented you from being a faithful witness of Jesus Christ? What are some of the lessons that you can learn from the supreme courage of Christ that you can apply in your own life? Take this moment to confess to God those times you did not stand up and be recognized as a believer. Thank Him for His forgiveness, and then begin to apply what you have learned.

3. As a Christian, how many times has God knocked you down because of sin, yet you have picked yourself up and committed the same sin? Give some examples. What finally made you stop committing the same sin? What sin are you presently having difficulty in dealing with? Based on your past experiences, how do you think God wants you to deal with your present situation? Read James 1:13-25. How does sin begin? What has God provided for us to deal with our sin? What do you need to do in order to stop being a forgetful hearer and become an effectual doer? Start today!

4. How often do you run out of the shelter that God has built for you? Give some examples. Why do you leave the shelter? How often have you experienced God's chastening as a result of leaving His protection? Read Hebrews 12:5-11. Why does the Lord chasten us? What is the result of the chastening? Why should you want to stay in Christ's protective care? In order to remember how

secure you are in Christ, memorize John 10:28-30: "And I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of My hand. My Father, who gave them to Me, is greater than all, and no man is able to pluck them out of My Father's hand. I and My Father are one."

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