

JOHN CHAPTER EIGHTEEN

The Betrayal

John 18:1-11

Today we begin a new chapter in our study of John. Chapter seventeen concluded what is known as the **Upper Room Discourse**, which began in John 13 and ended with the powerful prayer in John 17 that Jesus addressed to the Father. As we come to John chapter 18, we come to the beginning of the end: the arrest, trial, crucifixion, and resurrection of Jesus the Christ.

This is a story, by the way, that was predicted by God and His prophets throughout the Old Testament; going as far back as Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden when God spoke these words to Satan, referring to his deception of Adam and Eve, in Genesis 3:14-15 (MSG):

¹⁴ *God told the serpent: "Because you've done this, you're cursed, cursed beyond all cattle and wild animals, Cursed to slink on your belly and eat dirt all your life.*

¹⁵ *I'm declaring war between you and the Woman, between your offspring and hers. He'll wound your head, you'll wound his heel."*

Here God made it clear to Satan that Satan's days were numbered and that one day a descendant of Adam and Eve would destroy him. This is a prediction of the coming of Jesus to destroy Satan's power in the world by conquering sin and death thousands of years before the event took place. We want you to understand this miracle of prophecy so that you can fully appreciate that God has had a plan for this world since before the beginning of time and that nothing happens in this world without God allowing it to happen.

Imagine if you would, that God sent another prophet to this world in the time in which we are living. Imagine also that the prophet began predicting events that would take place in the year 2713 and 3033, and 3256. Your first reaction might be: "No one can predict with any accuracy anything that will happen that far in the future." We're relatively certain that is how many people reacted to the prophets in the Old Testament. But guess what? Every single prediction made in the Old Testament about the first coming of Jesus came true, and there were over one hundred of them. Do you know the statistical probability for all of over one hundred predictions to come true by mere chance? It is a statistical impossibility, which means that the predictor did not do it by chance but knew exactly what would occur in the future. Let us show you just a few more predictions to give you

an appreciation for the wonder of it all:

Psalm 22:7 NAS-- written by David around one thousand years before Christ: *All who see me sneer at me; They separate with the lip, they wag the head.*”

Matthew 27:39 NAS—the fulfillment recorded by Matthew regarding Jesus’ crucifixion: *“And those passing by were hurling abuse at Him, wagging their heads.”*

Psalm 69:21 NAS-- also written about a thousand years before Christ: *“They also gave me gall for my food And for my thirst they gave me vinegar to drink.”*

John 19:29 NAS—the fulfillment recorded by the apostle John regarding Jesus’ death: *“A jar full of sour wine was standing there; so they put a sponge full of the sour wine upon a branch of hyssop and brought it up to His mouth.”*

Isaiah 53:12 NAS-- written some seven hundred years before Christ: *“Yet He Himself bore the sin of many, And interceded for the transgressors.”*

Luke 23:34 NAS—the fulfillment written by Luke after Jesus’ death. *“But Jesus was saying, “Father, forgive them; for they do not know what they are doing.” And they cast lots, dividing up His garments among themselves.”*

Isaiah 53:12 NAS:

“Therefore, I will allot Him a portion with the great, And He will divide the booty with the strong; Because He poured out Himself to death.”

Fulfilled in John 10:17-18 NAS:

“For this reason the Father loves Me, because I lay down My life so that I may take it again. No one has taken it away from Me, but I lay it down on My own initiative. I have authority to lay it down, and I have authority to take it up again. This commandment I received from My Father.”

The stage was set for Jesus to come from the very beginning and God has placed Jesus at the very core of the history of mankind. Everything revolves around Jesus. Unfortunately, most people do not realize it.

There is a famous painting of the crucifixion by the well-known artist, **Rembrandt van Rijn**. As you look at the painting, your attention is drawn first to the dying Savior. Then, as you notice the crowd gathered around that scene at Calvary, you are impressed by the various attitudes and actions of the people involved in putting the Son of God to death. Finally, your eyes drift to the edge of the picture and catch sight of a lone figure almost hidden in the shadows. He represents the artist himself, for Rembrandt realized that his sins had helped nail Jesus to the cross!¹

¹ Paul Lee Tan, “6218. Rembrandt Crucified Christ,” in *Encyclopedia of 15,000 Illustrations: Signs of the Times*,

We decided to use this illustration to open our message this morning as we begin to look at the events leading up to Jesus' arrest, trial, and crucifixion, because most people think of Judas as the one betraying Christ and thereby bringing about His death. However, although Judas led the officers of the chief priests and the Roman soldiers to where they could find Jesus, the cause of His death was the sin of every human being ever born including you and me. And there was nothing that anyone could do to prevent that death because it was part of the plan of God from before the world was formed. It was the only way that anyone could be saved from the penalty for sin; that penalty being eternity in Hell. So we want you to understand the price that Jesus was willing to pay so that we all could receive forgiveness, be given salvation, and eternity in Heaven with God and Christ. Let us not forget what He had to endure to pay the penalty that each of us deserves for our sin.

Then perhaps the next time we are tempted to do something we know is sin, we will think of what He was willing to do for us. Maybe that thought would keep us from willfully doing something that would in fact show our ridicule for His sacrifice. **If we willfully do what we know is sinful, that is exactly what we are doing to Jesus.**

In the Gospel of John, the emphasis is upon the deity of Christ. He is the God-man in this Gospel, and the emphasis here is upon His glory. In His arrest, His death, and His resurrection we will see **His glory**.²

John 18:1-11 NAS:

¹ *When Jesus had spoken these words, He went forth with His disciples over the ravine of the Kidron, where there was a garden, into which He entered with His disciples.*

² *Now **Judas** also, who was betraying Him, knew the place, for Jesus had often met there with His disciples.*

³ *Judas then, having received the Roman cohort and officers from the chief priests and the Pharisees, came there with lanterns and torches and weapons.*

⁴ *So Jesus, knowing all the things that were coming upon Him, went forth and said to them, "Whom do you seek?"*

⁵ *They answered Him, "Jesus the Nazarene." He said to them, "I am He." And Judas also, who was betraying Him, was standing with them.*

⁶ *So when He said to them, "I am He," they drew back and fell to the ground.*

⁷ *Therefore He again asked them, "Whom do you seek?" And they said,*

(Dallas, TX: Bible Communications, 1998), WORDsearch CROSS e-book, under: "6218. Rembrandt Crucified Christ."

² J. Vernon McGee, *Thru The Bible with J. Vernon McGee*, (Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson, 1983), WORDsearch CROSS e-book, under: "Chapter 18."

"Jesus the Nazarene."

⁸ *Jesus answered, "I told you that I am He; so if you seek Me, let these go their way,"*

⁹ *to fulfill the word which He spoke, "Of those whom You have given Me I lost not one."*

¹⁰ *Simon Peter then, having a sword, drew it and struck the high priest's slave, and cut off his right ear; and the slave's name was Malchus.*

¹¹ *So Jesus said to Peter, "Put the sword into the sheath; the cup which the Father has given Me, shall I not drink it?"*

When the time came for Jesus to finish His mission on earth, Jesus left the walled city of Jerusalem to go to the place called the **Garden of Gethsemane**. He is going to this quiet place in order to give His enemies an opportunity to arrest Him. Jesus was betrayed by **Judas** after crossing over the **Kidron Valley** and going to the **Mount of Olives**. It was Jesus' custom when He was in Jerusalem, after He had spent the day teaching, to retire at night *to the mount of Olives*; The **olive grove** was a place where Jesus and His apostles frequently came to spend the night (Luke 21:37, 38),³ and they were not staying in the Hyatt Regency. They would bed down outdoors, probably on the ground, wherever they could find a comfortable spot or shelter.

The Kidron Valley had special historical significance, for **King David** crossed the Kidron Valley when he was rejected by the people of Israel and **betrayed** by his own son, **Absalom**.⁴ Jesus had been **rejected** by His people and at that very moment was being betrayed by one of His own disciples. It is interesting that David's disloyal counselor **Ahithophel** hanged himself (2 Samuel 17:23), and his equally disloyal son **Absalom** was caught in a tree and executed while hanging there (2 Samuel 18:9–17). Judas also went out and hanged himself after betraying Jesus (Matthew 27:3–10).⁵

Jesus knew exactly what was in store for Him, yet He did not hesitate to follow what He knew was the will of His Father. John does not record the agonizing moments Jesus spent in the garden before His arrest. John does not record His praying, "*Father, if possible, let this cup pass from Me.*" Nor does he record Jesus' suffering in the garden. John instead focuses his attention on Jesus' **glory**. He is emphasizing Jesus' deity. The other three Gospel writers focus on His humanness.

When they arrived in the garden, Jesus asked eight of His disciples to remain near the entrance to the garden while He took Peter, James, and John and went to another location to pray.

Matthew 26:36-46 NAS:

³ Walvoord, John F.; Zuck, Roy B.; Dallas Theological Seminary: The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures. Wheaton, IL: Victor Books, 1983-c1985, S. 2:334

⁴ 2 Sam. 15; also note John 18:23.

⁵ Wiersbe, Warren W.: *The Bible Exposition Commentary*. Wheaton, Ill.: Victor Books, 1996, c1989, S. Jn 18:1.

³⁶ Then Jesus came with them to a place called **Gethsemane**, and said to His disciples, "Sit here while I go over there and pray."

³⁷ And He took with Him Peter and the two sons of Zebedee, and began to be grieved and distressed.

³⁸ Then He said to them, "My soul is deeply grieved, to the point of death; remain here and keep watch with Me."

³⁹ And He went a little beyond them, and fell on His face and prayed, saying, "My Father, if it is possible, let this cup pass from Me; yet not as I will, but as You will."

⁴⁰ And He came to the disciples and found them sleeping, and said to Peter, "So, you men could not keep watch with Me for one hour?"

⁴¹ "Keep watching and praying that you may not enter into temptation; the spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak."

⁴² He went away again a second time and prayed, saying, "My Father, if this cannot pass away unless I drink it, Your will be done."

⁴³ Again He came and found them sleeping, for their eyes were heavy.

⁴⁴ And He left them again, and went away and prayed a third time, saying the same thing once more.

⁴⁵ 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.

⁴⁶ "Get up, let us be going; behold, the one who betrays Me is at hand!"

Jesus' human side longed for the kind of encouragement and companionship these three men could give Him at this critical hour; but they went to sleep instead. It was easy for them to talk about their devotion to Christ, but when the test came, they failed miserably. However, before we judge them too severely, we had better examine our own hearts.⁶

John 18:1 NAS:

¹ When Jesus had spoken these words, He went forth with His disciples over the ravine of the Kidron, where there was a garden, in which He entered with His disciples.

The office of the Jewish priest was to teach, and pray, and offer sacrifice. After teaching and praying for His disciples, which is what is meant when John writes, "When Jesus had spoken these words," it was then time for Jesus to offer Himself as the sacrifice for the sin of all His disciples. Christ had said all He had to say as a prophet, and now He addresses himself to His calling as a priest, to make Himself an offering for sin.⁷

⁶ Wiersbe, Warren W.: *The Bible Exposition Commentary*. Wheaton, Ill.: Victor Books, 1996, c1989, S. Jn 18:1

⁷ Henry, Matthew: *Matthew Henry's Commentary on the Whole Bible: Complete and Unabridged in One Volume*. Peabody: Hendrickson, 1996, c1991, S. Jn 18:1

John 18:2, 3 NAS:

² *Now Judas also, who was betraying Him, knew the place, for Jesus had often met there with His disciples.*

³ *Judas then, having received the Roman cohort and officers from the chief priests and the Pharisees, came there with lanterns and torches and weapons.*

According to 1 Timothy 6:10, “*The love of money is a root of all kinds of evil.*” So it is not surprising that Judas betrayed Jesus for money.⁸ Judas was not an exceptionally evil man. He was simply a common man who gave in to the sin of greed, which Satan used to get Judas to do what he wanted him to do. The detachment of Roman soldiers was a cohort (*speiran*, 10th part of a legion), which here included about 600 men.⁹

They were quartered in the Castle of Antonia, at the northern edge of the temple area (cf. Acts 21:31, 32¹⁰). Apparently, the Jewish authorities were able to call upon these forces for help in any emergency that threatened the public interest. The city was filled with pilgrims attending the Passover Feast, many of whom were sympathetic to Jesus and might have given trouble if they had been nearby when He was being apprehended. There were also a number of temple police who were in the service of the Jewish rulers (Acts 5:22).¹¹

After the Last Supper Judas most likely went to see Caiaphas, or some other leading member of the Sanhedrin, informing him of where Jesus was heading, and telling him that he was ready to fulfill his part of the bargain in order to accomplish the arrest of Jesus. It was not their intention to arrest Jesus during the feast in the crowded city because the people might riot in order to protect Him (Matthew 26:5). That is why arrangements were made with Judas to arrest Jesus in the garden. Disciples greeted a rabbi by kissing him; it was a sign of devotion and obedience. When people today pretend to know and love the Lord and claim to be Christians when they do not even know what that means, they are committing the sin of Judas. It is bad enough to betray Christ, but to do it with *a kiss*, a sign of affection, is a despicable evil.¹²

John 18:3-11 NAS:

³ *Judas then, having received the Roman cohort and officers from the chief priests and the Pharisees, came there with lanterns and torches and weapons.*

⁴ *So Jesus, knowing all the things that were coming upon Him, went forth and said to them, "Whom do you seek?"*

⁸ John 12:4-6; Matt. 26:14-16.

⁹ Walvoord, John F.; Zuck, Roy B.; Dallas Theological Seminary: *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures*. Wheaton, IL: Victor Books, 1983-c1985, S. 2:334

¹⁰ cf. stands for *confer* which means “compare”

¹¹ Pfeiffer, Charles F.; Harrison, Everett Falconer: *The Wycliffe Bible Commentary: New Testament*. Chicago: Moody Press, 1962, S. Jn 18:3

¹² Wiersbe, Warren W.: *The Bible Exposition Commentary*. Wheaton, Ill.: Victor Books, 1996, c1989, S. Jn 18:2

⁵ They answered Him, "Jesus the Nazarene." He said to them, "**I am** He." And Judas also, who was betraying Him, was standing with them.

⁶ So when He said to them, "**I am** He," they drew back and fell to the ground.

⁷ Therefore He again asked them, "Whom do you seek?" And they said, "Jesus the Nazarene."

⁸ Jesus answered, "I told you that **I am** He; so if you seek Me, let these go their way,"

⁹ to fulfill the word which He spoke, "Of those whom You have given Me I lost not one."

¹⁰ Simon Peter then, having a sword, drew it and struck the high priest's slave, and cut off his right ear; and the slave's name was Malchus.

¹¹ So Jesus said to Peter, "Put the sword into the sheath; the cup which the Father has given Me, shall I not drink it?"

The purpose of sending Roman soldiers along with the Temple police was to insure order. Judas expected that Jesus might use some kind of trick in order to escape. He had probably been a personal witness to many of Jesus' miracles and the way He had of simply disappearing when the authorities had tried to arrest Him previously. Judas therefore arranged to identify Jesus by kissing Him (Matthew. 26:48–49). Remember in previous incidents, when the enemies of Jesus tried to close in on Him, He hid Himself. Apparently He could just disappear miraculously. Now Jesus offers no resistance for He knows His time has come. This is very important to understand. Jesus surprised both Judas and the arresting officers by stepping forward and giving Himself up. He was now ready to *willingly* lay down His life for His sheep. In addition, by surrendering, Jesus helped to protect His disciples. So He gave Himself up. Do not think for a moment that Jesus was some meek, frail little man who was trapped and arrested without a fight. There was no need for resistance because the true test of courage and obedience to the Father was about to come in His scourging and crucifixion. If Jesus had wished to resist, all the weapons and legions in the world could not have kept Him from overpowering them.

Jesus did not wait for Judas to point Him out to the Temple police, but stepped forward and spoke to them. The fact that they fell back certainly suggests some kind of fear, or respect, or perhaps both, for the figure that confronted them. That situation was only temporary, however, as they again resumed their conversation. Jesus' request that the disciples should be allowed to leave can be seen as a fulfillment of the statement Jesus made in John 17:12. The "*sword*" which Peter is said to be carrying was most likely some kind of dagger. Severing the servant's ear was so typical of Peter's impulsive way of reacting to such a situation and it made absolutely no sense. The reference to the *cup* suggests that Peter had not yet come to understand Jesus' commitment to do what He had been sent to do by the Father.

Jesus was in total control here. He knew what was about to happen as He had described

this scene earlier to His apostles:

John 13:1, 3, 11 (NLT):

¹ *Before the Passover celebration, Jesus knew that his hour had come to leave this world and return to his Father. He had loved his disciples during his ministry on earth, and now he loved them to the very end.*

³ *Jesus knew that the Father had given him authority over everything and that he had come from God and would return to God.*

¹¹ *For Jesus knew who would betray him. That is what he meant when he said, "Not all of you are clean."*

John 16:17 (NLT):

¹⁷ *Some of the disciples asked each other, "What does he mean when he says, 'In a little while you won't see me, but then you will see me,' and 'I am going to the Father'?"*

Why did the arresting soldiers draw back and fall to the ground when Jesus told them, "*I am He*"? The Jews among the arresting officers would be stunned by His response with an "**I AM**" statement, which was a statement letting them know that He was God. The Romans, who were in the majority, would have been intimidated by His commanding nature, which He often revealed in difficult situations. The Jewish leaders had tried to have Jesus arrested before, always without success. The soldiers were ready for a fight, and when they saw Jesus calmly step forward and surrender they were quite surprised and undoubtedly a bit suspicious.

Perhaps it was Jesus' way of expressing His divine power and majesty, as the psalmist wrote in Psalm 27:2: "*When the wicked, even mine enemies and my foes, came upon me to eat up my flesh, they stumbled and fell.*"

During this season of Advent when we look forward to celebrating the first coming of Jesus as a Baby, it seems very appropriate to be reminded of the real reason **He came: to die for us**. We also look forward to His second coming, when Jesus will return to earth to set up His kingdom. In between these momentous events, the Holy Spirit is calling you. He is calling you to come to Jesus and receive Him as your personal Savior. He is calling you to then dedicate your total being to living a life that **honors** Him.

Where are you today? Do you need to respond to His call to salvation? Do you need to respond to His call for total surrender of your life to Him? Is there still some area in your life where you need to let Him be Lord?

While He says, "*Come to Me*" (Matthew 11:28) let us also respond, "*Even so, come Lord Jesus*" (Revelation 22:20).