

The Son of Man Is Betrayed

Mark 14:42–52

While you are finding **Mark 14**, listen to **Psalm 2**:

Why do the nations rage and the peoples plot in vain? ² The kings of the earth set themselves, and the rulers take counsel together, against the LORD and against his Anointed, saying, ³ “Let us burst their bonds apart and cast away their cords from us.”

⁴ He who sits in the heavens laughs; the Lord holds them in derision. ⁵ Then he will speak to them in his wrath, and terrify them in his fury, saying, ⁶ “As for me, I have set my King on Zion, my holy hill.”

⁷ I will tell of the decree: The LORD said to me, “You are my Son; today I have begotten you.

⁸ Ask of me, and I will make the nations your heritage, and the ends of the earth your possession.

As we move from the Lord’s Supper in the upper room, through the Garden of Gethsemane, and now to the betrayal and arrest of the Son of Man, all the powers of Hell are in full assault against God who sits in the heavens, and his incarnate King Jesus. They rage with all they have and plot in vain to derail God’s plan to redeem the world. But the Father holds them in derision and instead gives the nations as a heritage to the Son according to plan. Not only is death and the darkness defeated, but God sovereignly governs all the evil aimed at Christ to fully accomplish the mission that he intended.

Mark 14:42–52 [We take up as Jesus concludes the great season of prayer in the Garden] —

⁴² Rise, let us be going; see, my betrayer is at hand.” ⁴³ And immediately, while he was still speaking, Judas came, one of the twelve, and with him a crowd with swords and clubs, from the chief priests and the scribes and the elders. ⁴⁴ Now the betrayer had given them a sign, saying, “The one I will kiss is the man. Seize him and lead him away under guard.” ⁴⁵ And when he came, he went up to him at once and said, “Rabbi!” And he kissed him. ⁴⁶ And they laid hands on him and seized him. ⁴⁷ But one of those who stood by drew his sword and struck the servant of the high priest and cut off his ear. ⁴⁸ And Jesus said to them, “Have you come out as against a robber, with swords and clubs to capture me? ⁴⁹ Day after day I was with you in the temple teaching, and you did not seize me. But let the Scriptures be fulfilled.” ⁵⁰ And they all left him and fled.

PRAY

To underscore, as it were, the reality that we are seeing the full and extreme effort of Satan and his dupes to defeat Christ and his saving work, so many polar opposites in this short account are set in

2

contrast to one another — God's eternal Kingdom vs Satan's rebel coup. In the contrast we see that no power of Hell, no scheme of man can thwart God's kingdom. The arrest highlights these contrasts:

- The power of darkness¹ against the Light of the world.
- The dark machinations of men over against the fixed and unchanging word of God. (We see the phrase "But let the scriptures be fulfilled" as sinful men think they are outwitting God.)
- False and feigned friendship versus the Friend of Sinners who lays down his life for his friends, thus demonstrating what love is.
- An act of love and friendship — a kiss — is misused as a sign to seize the loving Savior.
- The impotent efforts of men armed with weapons versus the power of the word of God. When Jesus asked them who they were seeking, he said "I AM he"² — **ego eime** — the armed soldiers fall backward, incapacitated by the power of the name of self-existent God revealed to Moses.
- The effort of the demonic domain to derail the redemption of the world versus the Lord sovereignly completing the mission established before the foundation of the world.
- The efforts of godless religious leaders to prosecute their contrived agenda over against the Good Shepherd, who completes the father's plan and loses none who are given to him.
- Silly confidence in the flesh versus supernatural resurrection power and boldness. The disciples run in spite of their claims that they never would.

I could go on, but the point is to show that God who came to save sinners will not be defeated because he cannot be defeated. Have you ever imagined that the outcome of God's plan was in question? Have you mistakenly thought that Jesus was exhausted after this, having spent all his energy to eek out a victory? Certainly we know that in his humanity Christ gets weary. He takes naps in boats. He takes breaks from ministry to rest and pray. But in his deity, he is omnipotent. He is God. He holds all things together by the counsel of his will. He upholds all things by the power of his word. He is not worn down. All the power that God has expended to this point is infinitely less than the infinite power that he has. This battle was never in jeopardy. Indeed, He is crushing the head of the serpent who opposes him, just as prophesied in Genesis 3.

This is an hour of darkness, as Luke describes it. But believer, be encouraged at the unstoppable work of your Savior. He who holds you in his hand will never weaken in his grip. You are not maintained by your consistent efforts or deeds. You are held by the One who came to seek and save

¹ Luke 22:53

² John 18:5–8

3

you. Believe this and look away from yourself. If anyone could have wiggled their way out of his hand these cowardly disciples would have found a way. But I remind you of what he said in v 27 & 28 — “You will all fall away, for it is written, ‘I will strike the shepherd, and the sheep will be scattered.’²⁸ But after I am raised up, I will go before you to Galilee.” He knew they would abandon him. And he still made breakfast reservations on the beach following his resurrection. He has similarly made reservations with you at the Marriage Supper of the Lamb. He will do it.

Now in fairly short order I want to look a bit more specifically at the people we see in this event, and then consider Jesus’s certainty in completing his mission.

1. First, Judas. He is completely given over to sin. There is no restraint from evil in his heart whatsoever. While we can find ourselves in a dangerous position, when we harden, our hearts and see her are consciences, none of us will reach the spiritual degradation of the son of perdition. Much like a warning sign check list for cancer, we can note symptoms in our own hearts that may be pointers to deeper spiritual issues of rebellion that will produce death. Some of the deadly spiritual things he gave himself to is the love of money.

He was a thief. He stole money from the treasury, he sold out the Lord for about 6 months of wages. Recall the contrast between the woman who anointed Jesus with perfume, which cost a year’s wages. She understood that Christ was supremely and infinitely valuable above all else. Judas saw his relationship with Christ as a commodity from which he might gain.

In a sort of “Judas light” theology, the church in the West is frequently seen pedaling Christ based on how he can improve life or grant financial success or relational happiness. The prosperity gospel in its different forms places you and your happiness at the center of the universe — just as Judas was seeking gain from his relationship with Christ. The Gospel Jesus preached was deny yourself and take up your cross and follow him. In so doing, there is eternal gain. Christ redeemed us — he died for all, that those who live might no longer live for themselves but for him who for their sake died and was raised.³ His glory is the goal. Worship of Christ is where our life is found. He is worthy of this.

Judas calculated how to further engage in his sin, rather than putting it to death. In v 10 he calculates the value of his insider relationship and negotiates a sum of money. In v 44 he calculated the arrest right down to the sign he would use – a kiss — almost as though he has rehearsed it.

³ 2 Corinthians 5:15

4

Our Romans 6 memory work commands that we must consider ourselves dead to sin and alive to God in Christ Jesus. We are to present ourselves to God, not to unrighteousness. Judas chose the opposite. Let us heed this life-giving command.

He was a liar. He manipulated his relationship with the son of God, pretending to love him, all the while hating him. The language used for the betraying kiss reveals a dramatic show that he puts on. It wasn't just a quick peck on the cheek, but I repeated kiss that would indicate deep fondness. Let us love God with a pure heart, for the sake of loving God, not for lux and other benefits. This is the essence of a converted heart: we have had our affections transformed to love God.

If any good has come out of Judas's life, let it be this warning sign list, so that we would never have hearts inclined in the direction of this damned soul, or cry out for mercy if we see these deadly signs.

2. Consider the Jewish religious leaders who were hatching this plot. In a similar way to Judas, they are using the office of the shepherds of Israel to gain political power, and the praise of men. Their assignment was to know guard, and make him known to the people. Instead, they stubbornly resisted any correction from Christ as he challenged and rebuked them, and became instruments of Satan himself. We are reminded of Jesus words in John 15: if you remain in me you will bear much fruit. They rejected Christ, and soul accomplish nothing of any eternal value, but suffer eternal loss. It will be no less for us if we do not abide in Christ.

3. In a similar way, consider Peter and the disciples who are present with Christ, but seek to advance his Kingdom according to their understanding rather than God's way. Jesus has said three times since chapter 8 that he is going to be handed over to the elders and die. But Peter determines to intervene in this redemptive pipeline and rework the mission, cutting off a servant's ear. Matthew tells us that Jesus rebuked him with the obvious: You think your sword is more powerful than the 12 legions of angels my Father would send if any of this wasn't according to plan? Enough of this!

How many well intended people actually work counter to the kingdom and the king because they don't listen to God and think they know better than God. Oh, how I fear there is way too much well-intended Peter still alive in me. And probably in you, too. If we take time to listen to the Lord at all, we want to then evaluate what he says, and figure out in our own minds, some plan that suits us. Rather than simply bowing before the king.

5

4. Jesus. From a human perspective, in this hour of darkness it may appear that evil is winning, or at least has a lot of momentum. But Christ is ruling over all things well — even evil actions — fulfilling all of his word, and all of his work. See the unthwarted plan of God in action:

Jesus is not hiding in the garden, shrinking back from the mission. Indeed, he chose this very familiar place where Judas knew where he would be. As the temple police are approaching, He is on his way toward the soldiers. He advances headlong with great determination to complete what the father has assigned to him. And the Good Shepherd who is going to lay down his life for the sheep protects the sheep even in this moment. He tells them that he is the one they are seeking; let everyone else go.

This is Romans 8 level sovereignty: God is working all things together for good, for the redemption of mankind and the glory of the Savior. Everything about this fulfills the prophetic word of God. All the sin in Judas's heart bowed to King Jesus. All the schemes of the Scribes and religious leaders were orchestrated to put him on the cross as the Passover Lamb. All the evil hurled at him by sinful people and demonic powers were simply moving him to the cross according to the Father's plan to bear away the sin and guilt of those who come to him in faith and repentance, even fleeing disciples.

Behold your God. Sin does not thwart the loving grace of God toward you — neither yours nor anyone else's. Nothing can separate you from the redeeming love of Christ neither death nor life, nor angels nor rulers, nor things present nor things to come, nor powers, nor height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord.

There's more here, but we have other important Kingdom matters to discuss this morning, so let's wrap up for today. The detail about a young man escaping capture by slipping out of a cloak, and running away, naked is a fascinating detail. I don't know who it is, and neither do you. But one fascinating thing about it is that it is an eyewitness account of what happened. Even in this little detail that we don't fully understand, we see that God's word is not a Hollywood script, but real events documented by those who witnessed and studied them.

Thank you for your word, Lord Jesus. Every prophesy fulfilled, every truth reliable, never changing, and always instructing our hearts, leading us to our living Lord and Savior.