

Matthew Chapter 26-28 – The Crucifixion and Resurrection of Jesus – Part 5
Matthew 26:47-75 – Arrest, Trial, and Betrayal

Introduction

This section in Matthew is the final narrative of the book. This section gives the account of events from the Mount of Olives to the last Passover, from Gethsemane to Golgotha, from the cross to the resurrection, and for the eleven, from followers to commissioned apostles.

In the Garden of Gethsemane, Jesus demonstrates His humanity in His prayers, expressing the desire to not go through the torture of the cross, but He, in His humanity, yields to the Father and prepares Himself for the loneliness, the torture, the separation from the Father, and the death on the cross.

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

The Arrest of Jesus – Matthew 26:47-56

While Jesus was still speaking, Judas and a large crowd came with weapons. Judas was leading the way because he knew where Jesus would be (John 18:1-3).

We also know from John that this large crowd was a Roman cohort and officers from the chief priests; this large crowd was between 600-800 people.

Judas went to Jesus and said, “Hail, Rabbi!” and kissed Him. Why was this necessary?

Judas did this to confirm that this one was indeed Jesus. The cohort and officers may not have been familiar with Him. Also, Jesus probably did not stand out (Isaiah 53:2). I also think that Judas wanted Jesus to know that it was he who had led them there.

I think everyone would agree that the betrayal with a kiss is one of the worst acts in history.

The word *kiss* in this context is “φιλέω *phileo*” and “καταφιλέω *kataphileo*,” which is a display of love, friendship. This may have been a kiss, but it was most likely an embrace.

Jesus then tells Judas to do what he had come for. And they arrested Him.

In verse 51, we see a response from “one of those who was with Jesus.” Mark says, “But one of those who stood by....” Luke records “And one of them.” John identifies this one, “Simon Peter then, having a sword, drew it and struck the high priest’s slave, and cut off his right ear.”

John really trolls Peter, John beats Peter in a foot race, and Peter goes fishing. Peter is aggressive but unskilled, impulsive, and reacting out of fear and desperation.

Jesus then prevents any more violence and saves the eleven from being imprisoned (Luke 22:51; John 18:7-9). Jesus then explains three points to the disciples:

1. Live by the sword, die by the sword.
2. I have full authority over all the hosts in heaven.
3. Scriptures must be fulfilled.

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Live by the sword, die by the sword – This may be a general proverb – “Violent means have violent ends.” Or this may have been simply about this situation, “If you think you can fight your way out of this, you will die.”

Jesus tells Peter to put the sword back in its sheath, not to throw it away. In fact, earlier, Jesus tells them to bring the sword (Luke 22:35-38).

Therefore, this statement better fits this situation and is not a general attitude of pacifism.

Jesus is the Lord of Hosts, but in His humanity, He has put aside His glory to live and die for the sins of the world. Jesus could, at any time, call for His own defense, but Scripture must be fulfilled through betrayal, trial by the elders, and crucifixion.

Zechariah 11:12-13; Psalm 118:22-24

Jesus is not being arrested unexpectedly; the disciples now understand that Jesus is ready to permit His arrest.

Then the disciples left and fled. He had predicted that they would all fail because of Him. This is their first failure. He would go to the cross alone. They could not help Him, and they were all too weak to stand up for Him.

The Trial of Jesus before Caiaphas – Matthew 26:57-68

In John, we see that Jesus went to Annas first. Annas was the father-in-law of Caiaphas and was a very influential person, even though he was retired. Some have referred to Annas as the godfather of the Jewish Sanhedrin, where Caiaphas was the heir apparent.

Jesus was escorted to Caiaphas, probably his house. Although the location of Annas' and Caiaphas' residence is unknown, it was most likely located somewhere on the top of the Western Hill with a good view of the Temple Mount (maps). Peter was able to get in with John to observe what would happen (John 18:15-16).

By the time Jesus arrived, Caiaphas had gathered the scribes and the elders. These were members of the Sanhedrin. The phrase *the whole Council*, in Greek, is the whole Sanhedrin. The Sanhedrin was the ruling body of Israel, led by the high priest.

The accusers *kept trying to obtain* false testimony.

ζητέω *zeteo* – to seek – Imperfect Tense indicates a perpetual action in the past. This process went on for some time. The false testimony was ineffective, easily able to be disproven, or not punishable by death. Finally, two came forward and made the accusation that Jesus said that He would destroy the temple and rebuild it in three days.

I am confused by this accusation. How is this a violation? It was a violation of the elders to speak against the temple, but was it worthy of death by crucifixion?

The Synoptics do not record Jesus saying this about the temple, but it is captured in John (John 2:18-22). But back to Matthew, Jesus does not answer these false accusations. Finally, Caiaphas

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asks Jesus directly, “Are you the Christ, the Son of God.” Jesus answers in the affirmative and proclaims a judgment.

The judgment is from the Messianic passages in Psalm 110:1 and Daniel 7:13-14.

Jesus was not crucified for a false accusation; He was not a lawbreaker. False accusations did not cause a guilty verdict, and even the false representation of what Jesus had said did not stick. Jesus gave them what they needed to call for death by crucifixion. Jesus was arrested, tried, found guilty, and eventually crucified for a truth. Jesus was killed for being the Messiah.

Peter’s Denial of Jesus – Matthew 26:69-75

What is the significance of this? The word of Jesus is absolute. Peter learned that what Jesus says is truth, even if we try to thwart it with every effort.

Peter had denied Jesus’ words that he would deny Him. You would think that Jesus’ revelation that Peter would deny Him would have had the opposite effect. But Peter is too emotional, too exhausted, and too out of control to even stay silent. Out of fear, Peter denied Jesus and did so three times, even with adamant swearing and colorful metaphors.

After the rooster crowed, Peter remembered. Luke is a bit more descriptive (Luke 22:56-62).

Next week, we will work our way up to the crucifixion.