

Jesus Seized and Betrayed

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As Jesus was leaving his place of prayer he encountered his disciple Judas. Judas kissed Jesus, identifying him for the conspirators who planned to put him to death. Jesus confronted Judas, "Friend why are you here?"

"Then they came and laid hands on Jesus and seized him (Matt 26:50)."

One of Jesus' followers tried to protect him. Using one of the swords that they brought with them to Gethsemane (Luke 22:38), he cut off the ear of the "slave of the high priest (Matt 26:51)." Jesus told his disciple to put his sword back in place and Luke then says that Jesus healed the person who had been injured. Jesus asked of those who had seized and arrested him:

"Have you come out as against a robber, with swords and clubs to capture me?" He reminded them that in the days preceding his arrest, "Day after day I sat in the temple teaching, and you did not seize me (Matt 26:55)."

Jesus was taken that evening for his preliminary arraignment before Caiaphas, a chief priest and member of the Council of Elders, known as the Sanhedrin. Jesus' disciples had all fled except Peter who followed from a distance. Some who accompanied Caiaphas that late Thursday evening bore testimony against Jesus. When asked by Caiaphas if he was the Son of God, Jesus responded that they would "see the Son of man seated at the right hand of Power and coming on the clouds of Heaven (Matt 26:54)." This elicited jeers and repudiation.

Peter, Jesus' principal disciple, had assured Jesus that evening that he would always remain loyal:

"Though they all fall away because of you, I will never fall away (Mark 14:29)." He sat quietly and without protesting. When asked about his association with Jesus, Peter cursed and swore that he was not Jesus' disciple.

Jesus thus found himself alone with not even his principal disciple courageous enough to stand up to the Sanhedrin.

Because Jesus was without a single follower, Satan could challenge God:

"How many disciples does Jesus have? How many followers does he really have? He does not have even have one. Conspirators clamor for his death and not one of his closest disciples stands up for Jesus. Those who have denounced Jesus, those who have abandoned Jesus, who do they belong to? Are they your followers or are they mine? They belong to me..."

Satan was thus in a position to barter with God:

"And so, God, if you want to save them, let's make an exchange. Give me someone more precious than all of them. Give me him! Yes, give me Jesus, the Nazarene!"

All was taken away. At this moment in history, God, more than any time since the fall, was Job. In surrendering Jesus, God, like Job, lost everything but was compelled to continue to keep faith, to forgive and to love his enemies.