

Betrayed by Eternal Design

John 18:1-12

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Introduction: After eating the last passover, instituting a new memorial, we call communion and praying for His disciples and all believers since, Jesus is ready to fulfill His primary purpose on Earth. He has lived a perfectly sinless life which He credits to all who believe Him and He is now ready to take the punishment of their sins, Both of these are Christ's gift to you. He exchanges your sins for His righteousness in a supreme act of love that cannot be explained apart from love, mercy and grace.

Our chapter begins the description of Christ's betrayal and arrest. Judas is carrying out God's will not his own. The Roman forces were doing the bidding of the Captain of the Lord's Hosts and not their own commander as they imagined that night. Isaiah revealed it 5 centuries before this night.....

Isaiah 53:10-11 ¹⁰ But the LORD was pleased To crush Him, putting *Him* to grief; If He would render Himself *as* a guilt offering, He will see *His* offspring, He will prolong *His* days, And the good pleasure of the LORD will prosper in His hand. ¹¹ As a result of the anguish of His soul, He will see *it and* be satisfied; By His knowledge the Righteous One, My Servant, will justify the many, As He will bear their iniquities.

Jesus spoke of it in the weeks leading up to this night.....

John 10:17-18 ¹⁷ "For this reason the Father loves Me, because I lay down My life so that I may take it again. ¹⁸ "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."

Peter preached about it 51 days later at Pentacost.....

Acts 2:22-24 ²² "Men of Israel, listen to these words: Jesus the Nazarene, a man attested to you by God with miracles and wonders and signs which God performed through Him in your midst, just as you yourselves know-- ²³ this *Man*, delivered over by the predetermined plan and foreknowledge of God, you nailed to a cross by the hands of godless men and put *Him* to death. ²⁴ "But God raised Him up again, putting an end to the agony of death, since it was impossible for Him to be held in its power.

This is the account of how God carried out His Eternal plan to save you from your sin and rebellion. Salvation originates with God. Religion and ritual can point to Christ. They can remember Christ. They can be used to worship and love Christ, but they cannot save. That is done by God and comes to us through trusting faith in Christ's gracious gift on the Cross. Today we will see the precision with which God carries out His plan now that the "hour" has finally come.

John 18:1-12 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. 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, "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?" ¹² So the *Roman* cohort and the commander and the officers of the Jews, arrested Jesus and bound Him,

Before we look at each participant here, let's talk for a moment about the setting.

THE GARDEN:

John 18:1 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.

Jesus had been inside Jerusalem until this moment. In order to get to the Garden, which Mark and Matthew both identify as Gethsemane, the disciples had to follow Jesus down into a creek bed [called the Kidron] on the eastern side of the city and up the other side to the Mount of Olives.

Gethsemane means "oil press." It was likely a private orchard of trees where olive oil was produced. There are trees and gardens still in this area that date back to the time of Jesus. According to Luke and Mark the disciples had spent every night of this last week sleeping in the Garden.

JUDAS:

Now Judas also, who was betraying Him, knew the place, for Jesus had often met there with His disciples [2]: Until tonight Judas has always been with them. Earlier he had left the supper and went to the Jews and betrayed Christ for 30 pieces of silver. The present tense here means that Judas was in the process of betraying Jesus. It took some time. He had to decide to do it, make a deal with the enemy, and then lead them to the place where they could arrest Jesus. It would be unlikely that they could have found Him without the help of a traitor who could lead them right to Jesus.

This was what Judas had been up to since leaving the upper room. Satan is scheming, but Christ and the Father are controlling every detail. Jesus even commands Judas to go and do it quickly, thus indicating He was totally aware of what Satan was doing.

John 13:27 Then after he had taken the morsel, Satan entered into him. Jesus said to him, "What you are going to do, do quickly."

THE ARESTING PARTY:

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

A Roman cohort was between 600 and 1000 in number. This is probably the entire number of Romans in Jerusalem during the passover week. Most people think it unlikely that they all would have come out after one man, but there were enough of them present that they required a commanding officer. [vs. 12]

“John’s reference to the larger unit or which this detachment was a part was a figure of speech. In much the same way, to say that the fire department put out a fire, does not imply that the entire department was involved.” *John MacArthur*

Officers from the chief priests: These guys were temple police. They did this kind of work for the religious leaders who did not want to get their own hands dirty. We encounter them on the Temple Mount during one of Jesus’ appearances at the feast.

John 7:32 ³² The Pharisees heard the crowd muttering these things about Him, and the chief priests and the Pharisees sent officers to seize Him.

But they did not arrest Him that day, even though they were specifically tasked to do so.

John 7:45-46 ⁴⁵ The officers then came to the chief priests and Pharisees, and they said to them, "Why did you not bring Him?" ⁴⁶ The officers answered, "Never has a man spoken the way this man speaks."

WHY? BECAUSE HIS HOUR HAD NOT YET COME!

The Pharisees: They wanted to kill Him so badly they could not resist going along to watch the arrest. Remembering that Jesus had so impressed the temple police that last time, they went along to make sure He did not have that affect on them this time. Luke tells us that there were also some Chief Priests present.

Luke 22:52 ⁵² Then Jesus said to the chief priests and officers of the temple and elders who had come against Him, "Have you come out with swords and clubs as you would against a robber?"

Again...Jesus is in complete control of this situation although it would appear differently to a casual observer. Christ is the keeper of the universe He created, of which, your life, health and circumstances are a part. Everything is under the authority and direction of God for His own purposes. Luke therefore adds these words of Jesus to the story...

Luke 22:53 ⁵³ "While I was with you daily in the temple, you did not lay hands on Me; but this hour and the power of darkness are yours."

They came there with lanterns and torches and weapons.[3b]: Although it was a full moon they came out with their own light and weapons. Some speculate that they were preparing for a pursuit in case Jesus tried to run for it. The important thing here would be that John was there and witnessed the event. He noticed this detail and reported on it. The Bible accounts are not just produced from imagination or conjured up by the writers. These men saw the events and reported on them.

Who are the enemies of Jesus Christ represented here? Satan...no surprise here. Civil government. Religion...even God designed and ordained religion [Judaism]. And people who know better and have experienced the teachings and love of Christ. This is the default condition of men. They do not love God. They do not even like Him. He offends them and His presence and proclamation causes them to dig in and be confirmed in their sin and unbelief. Once Christ returned to the Father men only had Christ's followers to dislike and hate. Peter after his restoration warned us....

1 Peter 4:12-14 ¹² Beloved, do not be surprised at the fiery ordeal among you, which comes upon you for your testing, as though some strange thing were happening to you; ¹³ but to the degree that you share the sufferings of Christ, keep on rejoicing, so that also at the revelation of His glory you may rejoice with exultation. ¹⁴ If you are reviled for the name of Christ, you are blessed, because the Spirit of glory and of God rests on you.

JESUS:

So Jesus, knowing all the things that were coming upon Him, went forth and said to them, "Whom do you seek?" They answered Him, "Jesus the Nazarene!" [4]: Not only does Jesus not flee as they suspected He might...He comes straight up to them. His actions are purposeful, deliberate....planned.

He said to them, "I am He.": Actually what Jesus said was..."I AM!" **evgw, eivmi]** Where have we heard this before? Hummm....

John 8:57-58 ⁵⁷ So the Jews said to Him, "You are not yet fifty years old, and have You seen Abraham?" ⁵⁸ Jesus said to them, "Truly, truly, I say to you, before Abraham was born, I am." **evgw, eivmi**

And how did Christ's hearers respond to this statement?...

John 8:59 ⁵⁹they picked up stones to throw at Him, but Jesus hid Himself and went out of the temple.

Why? Because this is the unspeakable name of the living God. Every Jew knew this.

Exodus 3:13-14 ¹³ Then Moses said to God, "Behold, I am going to the sons of Israel, and I will say to them, 'The God of your fathers has sent me to you.' Now they may say to me, 'What is His name?' What shall I say to them?" ¹⁴ God said to Moses, "I AM WHO I AM;" and He said, "Thus you shall say to the sons of Israel, 'I AM has sent me to you.'"

Let me try to make this as clear as possible...The God of Creation is speaking here. God's words are not like our words. They are powerful and they do not merely describe things, they cause things to happen and even to exist.

Genesis 1:3 ³ Then God said, "Let there be light"; and there was light.

Psalm 33:6 ⁶ By the word of the LORD the heavens were made, And by the breath of His mouth all their host.

What happens next is the harbinger of how this story ultimately ends....When Christ returns in the final day.....

Revelation 19:15 ¹⁵ From His mouth comes a sharp sword, so that with it He may strike down the nations, and He will rule them with a rod of iron; and He treads the wine press of the fierce wrath of God, the Almighty.

And Judas also, who was betraying Him, was standing with them. [5b]: Judas, into whom Satan has entered, is about to experience the power of the Word of the Living God.

So when He said to them, "I AM He," they drew back and fell to the ground. [6]: Skeptics suggest that they were just startled. There is really nothing divine going on here. But there are a couple of hundred armed men here expecting trouble. One single solitary Clerical Jew does not knock this many people on the ground. They fell on the ground!! After having fallen backwards.

QUESTION: Why didn't this happen every time Jesus spoke then? Because Jesus was clothed in humanity and humility. He only revealed Himself a couple of times in His full Glory while on earth.

Philippians 2:5-8 ⁵ Have this attitude in yourselves which was also in Christ Jesus, ⁶ who, although He existed in the form of God, did not regard equality with God a thing to be grasped, ⁷ but emptied Himself, taking the form of a bond-servant, *and* being made in the likeness of men. ⁸ Being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross.

This is how God the Son could live and walk in the world and appear to be a mere man. It was power under His control. He humbled Himself. That this is true is obvious by what happens next.

John 18:7 ⁷ Therefore He again asked them, "Whom do you seek?" And they said, "Jesus the Nazarene."

Jesus asks them the same question again, they give the same answer and He gives the same response....only this time they do not all fall backwards onto the ground.

Jesus answered, "I told you that I AM He [8a]: This is a little bit of legalism actually. Jesus asked this arresting party two times who they were seeking. Both times they responded with the orders they had been given. Arrest Jesus the Nazarene. They were

not told to arrest the disciples and therefore had no legal right to do so. SO after getting the second response from them Jesus says...

So if you seek Me, let these go their way," To fulfill the word which He spoke, "Of those whom You have given Me I lost not one." [8b, 9]: Jesus is talking about something that He had said in the past months...

John 6:37-40 ³⁷ "All that the Father gives Me will come to Me, and the one who comes to Me I will certainly not cast out. ³⁸ "For I have come down from heaven, not to do My own will, but the will of Him who sent Me. ³⁹ "This is the will of Him who sent Me, that of all that He has given Me I lose nothing, but raise it up on the last day. ⁴⁰ "For this is the will of My Father, that everyone who beholds the Son and believes in Him will have eternal life, and I Myself will raise him up on the last day."

The arrest and execution of these beloved disciples, before God had empowered them with the Holy Spirit would have be catastrophic. Let me quote **John MacArthur** once more here:

"Does that mean that salvation can be lost? That faith can fail? If left up to us, of course. But we will never be lost nor will saving faith fail, precisely because our Lord keeps us secure. He never allows anything to come upon us that would be more than our faith could handle."

PETER:

But Peter, John tells us, pretty much ignores everything Jesus just said. Instead he was captivated by the awesome display power in Christ's Words. Jesus has just bought them a release. NOW LISTEN...He has traded His life for theirs. He did this willingly. Take me, kill me, but let these go free. But Peter is feeling invincible at this moment...

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. [10]: We need to listen to what Jesus says even today. Just because God has power to heal any man does not mean that He will. Just because He owns all the riches in Creation does not mean that He will give them to you. God's purposes are not our purposes. Paul came to understand this and under inspiration wrote about it.

2 Corinthians 12:7-10 ⁷ Because of the surpassing greatness of the revelations, for this reason, to keep me from exalting myself, there was given me a thorn in the flesh, a messenger of Satan to torment me-- to keep me from exalting myself! ⁸ Concerning this I implored the Lord three times that it might leave me. ⁹ And He has said to me, "My grace is sufficient for you, for power is perfected in weakness." Most gladly, therefore, I will rather boast about my weaknesses, so that the power of Christ may dwell in me. ¹⁰ Therefore I am well content with weaknesses, with insults, with distresses, with persecutions, with difficulties, for Christ's sake; for when I am weak, then I am strong.

Peter was on a power high when he did this. The church ministers in weakness, just like Christ did. It is our calling in the world so that....We will not be glorious and proud but that Christ will be exalted. Christ is our greatest treasure

2 Corinthians 4:7 ⁷ But we have this treasure in earthen vessels, so that the surpassing greatness of the power will be of God and not from ourselves;

1 Corinthians 2:3-5 ³ I was with you in weakness and in fear and in much trembling, ⁴ and my message and my preaching were not in persuasive words of wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power, ⁵ so that your faith would not rest on the wisdom of men, but on the power of God.

Jesus has a mission to accomplish. He is going to the Cross to die for your sins and theirs. But in the process He is protecting His lambs. He is keeping the promise of God that none shall be lost. And as Peter clearly demonstrates, it will not be because we are good, clever, wise or even listen carefully. It is because Jesus keeps us for all eternity.

So Jesus said to Peter, "Put the sword into the sheath; the cup which the Father has given Me, shall I not drink it?" [11]: Jesus stops Peter from getting them all killed. This was not the plan. The cup of the cross had to be drunk and the Disciples had to go free. It was the eternal design and not the Romans, the Jews, Satan or even Peter would stand in its way. Jesus is still in control of even Peter's reckless behavior...

Luke 22:51 ⁵¹Jesus said, "Stop! No more of this." And He touched his ear and healed him.

So the Roman cohort and the commander and the officers of the Jews, arrested Jesus and bound Him [12]: You and I need to remember what Jesus said to His tormentors after He allow Himself to be arrested. It is still the same today. It will change at the very end when Christ will return and subdue and rule the world that is rightfully His....but for now what Jesus said is still true.....

John 18:36 ³⁶ "My kingdom is not of this world. If My kingdom were of this world, then My servants would be fighting so that I would not be handed over to the Jews; but as it is, My kingdom is not of this realm."

CONCLUSION: God planned redemption in order to show His grace and mercy to fallen humanity. Nothing in the world reveals Christ like the Cross. The church is not a political force in the world it is a spiritual force. Jesus was and still is the Sovereign God. Any perceived weakness was by design. God is Sovereign in the world. What power men have is given to them by The God of Creation.

Matthew 26:52-54 ⁵² Then Jesus said to him, "Put your sword back into its place; for all those who take up the sword shall perish by the sword. ⁵³ "Or do you think that I cannot appeal to My Father, and He will at once put at My disposal more than twelve legions of angels?"

If Christ rules the universe He created....and He does.....then He is Lord. The events and circumstances of your life are His doing and never, ever random and without purpose. Satan and the world will tempt you to think they are, but Christ proves at His arrest that even the most seemingly out of control circumstance is fully directed by His Sovereign Power.

Christ is calling out to you to rest in this knowledge. To know of a certainty that He loves you! If you doubt it for even a moment then look at the Cross. Christ who created the world, set His affection on you before He ever did it. He and the Father planned His coming into the world in eternity past. He would live for you and die for you as well. He would take sin that was not His and give you righteousness that is not yours. After rehearsing all this to the Romans, Paul asks this blessed rhetorical question.....

Romans 8:31-39 ³¹What then shall we say to these things? If God *is* for us, who *is* against us? ³² He who did not spare His own Son, but delivered Him over for us all, how will He not also with Him freely give us all things? ³³ Who will bring a charge against God's elect? God is the one who justifies; ³⁴ who is the one who condemns? Christ Jesus is He who died, yes, rather who was raised, who is at the right hand of God, who also intercedes for us. ³⁵ Who will separate us from the love of Christ? Will tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? ³⁶ Just as it is written, "FOR YOUR SAKE WE ARE BEING PUT TO DEATH ALL DAY LONG; WE WERE CONSIDERED AS SHEEP TO BE SLAUGHTERED." ³⁷ But in all these things we overwhelmingly conquer through Him who loved us. ³⁸ For I am convinced that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, ³⁹ nor height, nor depth, nor any other created thing, will be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.