

(Matt. 26:47) – *“AND WHILE HE YET SPAKE, LO, JUDAS, ONE OF THE TWELVE, CAME, AND WITH HIM A GREAT MULTITUDE WITH SWORDS AND STAVES, FROM THE CHIEF PRIESTS AND ELDERS OF THE PEOPLE.”* Here, the unbelieving world is represented by Romans and Jews (John 18:3,12) united in their mutual hatred of the Lord Jesus Christ and the message of salvation by God’s free and sovereign grace in and by Christ (Acts 4:26-27). This is the natural enmity (hatred, hostility) that all unregenerate people have against the true and living God (Rom. 8:7; cf. John 3:19-20; 15:18—16:3). It takes a sovereign, invincible work of the Holy Spirit in the new birth to remove this natural enmity and bring sinners to be reconciled to God and to love Christ and His truth. Until the Holy Spirit gives us spiritual life and faith in Christ, until He brings us to submit to Christ as the Lord our Righteousness, we are all enemies of God in our minds evidenced by wicked works, not only sins that men by nature recognize as immoral and perverse, but also man’s best efforts to save himself by his works (Col. 1:21). This enmity is removed by the Holy Spirit when He shows us that the just and holy God is reconciled to His people and His people are reconciled to Him on the one ground of Christ’s righteousness imputed alone (2 Cor. 5:19-21).

(Matt. 26:48-49) – Judas, the betrayer of Christ, betrayed Him with a kiss. We are told in *Psalms 2:12* to *“Kiss the Son, lest He be angry, and ye perish from the way, when His wrath is kindled but a little. Blessed are all they that put their trust in Him.”* This is the kiss of faith in and love for Christ Who is our sovereign Lord and Savior. But the Judas-kiss is the kiss of betrayal and evil. Judas’s hypocrisy is heightened by his own words – *“HAIL, MASTER.”* Judas had no love for Jesus, and he was no true servant or disciple of the Master.

(Matt. 26:50) – The Lord said to Judas, *“FRIEND, WHEREFORE ART THOU COME?”* Christ knew exactly why Judas and this company had come. He said this to make the point that these were not friends but enemies. Their purpose was evil, yet, they were fulfilling the sovereign will of God to bring about the salvation of His people by what Christ would accomplish in His death on the cross (Acts 2:23-24; cf. Rom. 8:28; Gen. 50:18-21). Some have made the false assumption that Judas could have been a true disciple because Christ called him “friend.” But the word He used for “friend” here is not the same as He used to describe His true disciples who were truly saved. The word “friend” here could describe anyone who had accompanied Him on His travels such as even one like Judas. But His true spiritual friends are those who do what He commands and continue in His Word (John 15:9-17). His use of this word pertaining to Judas also was the fulfillment of Old Testament prophecy as recorded in a messianic psalm – *“Yea, mine own familiar friend, in whom I trusted, which did eat of my bread, hath lifted up his heel against me” (Psalm 41:9).*

“THEN CAME THEY, AND LAID HANDS ON JESUS, AND TOOK HIM.” John tells us that this happened only after they had all fallen to the ground when Jesus announced Himself as the “I AM” showing His power as God manifest in the flesh (John 18:6). Again, we need to emphasize that He was not taken by force, but He gave Himself willingly to do what was required in His suffering unto death for the sins of His people. John also informs us how the Lord Jesus at this point stepped forward, and according to *John 18:8* and said, *“I have told you that I am He: if therefore ye seek Me, let these go their way.”* We can see in this statement by our Lord the truth He had spoken in *John 10:11* – *“I am the good shepherd: the good shepherd giveth His life for the sheep.”* So, He said, “Come take Me, but let my people go,” and that of course is the way we go free. They did come and take Him, and they put Him to death, but as of by virtue of what they did to Him, in making Him the sin-bearer and sin-offering, we who have believed in Him do go free. As John also recorded the Lord’s word, all this was done *“that the saying might be fulfilled, which he spake, Of them which Thou gavest Me have I lost none”* (*John 18:9; cf. John 17:12*).

(Matt. 26:51-54) – John tells us that it was Peter who *“DREW HIS SWORD, AND STRUCK A SERVANT OF THE HIGH PRIEST’S, AND SMOTE OFF HIS EAR.”* He also tells us that the servant’s name was Malchus (*John 18:10*). The Lord rebuked Peter telling him to *“PUT UP AGAIN THY SWORD INTO HIS PLACE: FOR ALL THEY THAT TAKE THE SWORD SHALL PERISH WITH THE SWORD.”* He reminded them that He had the power to pray to His Father Who could send *“TWELVE LEGIONS OF ANGELS”* to deliver Him. *“BUT HOW THEN SHALL THE SCRIPTURES BE FULFILLED, THAT THUS IT MUST BE?”* He emphasized the fact that He must suffer unto death for the glory of His Father and the salvation of His people as recorded by John – *“Then said Jesus unto Peter, Put up thy sword into the sheath: the cup which My Father hath given Me, shall I not drink it?”* (*John 18:11*). This shows that we who believe in defending the faith are not to use physical weapons or engage in physical warfare. Our battle is spiritual (*2 Cor. 10:3-5; Gal. 5:16-18; Eph. 6:10-18*).

(Matt. 26:55-56) – Here the Lord proves that even though they were treating Him as a common criminal, *“A THIEF,”* and seeking to apprehend Him with physical weapons, He reminded them that He was with them every day *“TEACHING IN THE TEMPLE,”* and they left Him alone. His point is this – He was no criminal, never a sinner, but a teacher of truth for which the world hated Him and His disciples (*John 15:18–16:3*). All that was happening here *“WAS DONE, THAT THE SCRIPTURES OF THE PROPHETS MIGHT BE FULFILLED”* as foretold in the Old Testament. *“THEN ALL THE DISCIPLES FORSOOK HIM, AND FLED.”* Being in fear for their lives, they gave in to the flesh and forsook Him. If the Lord did not keep us, we would all forsake Him in times of trouble. Thank God He is faithful never to forsake us, and He does, by His grace and power, keep us from falling away unto eternal destruction.