

Matthew 26:47-56. *The Christ is arrested*. After Jesus returned from prayer and to the group of follower, one of the Twelve, Judas Iscariot, arrived. A large armed crowd accompanied him; the crowd had been sent by the pastors and other leaders. Judas, the betrayer, had arranged a signal—“The one I kiss, that is the man; arrest him.” So, going immediately to Jesus, Judas said, “Good evening Rabbi,” and kissed Him.

Comrade—do what you’ve come for. Then the men seized Jesus, arresting Him. But Peter, not a very good swordsman, cut off the ear of Malchus, a servant of the high priest.

Jesus was not pleased—*put it away*, Jesus commanded, *all who draw the sword will die by the sword*. *Don’t you realize I can text My Father to send 72,000 angels to protect Me? But, how would the prophecy of Zechariah⁸ be fulfilled?*

Turning to the crowd He said—*Am I leading a revolt, a rebellion which requires you to come to Me with swords & clubs? If you really wanted to capture Me, why not on one of those many days I sat in the temple courts teaching? You didn’t arrest Me then. But, this has all taken place in this way so that the prophets might be fulfilled.*

After this—ALL His followers did as He had told them they would—they deserted Him and fled.

- Q What name did Jesus use for Judas? And what name did Judas use for Jesus? So?
- Q What does verse 51 tell you about when Matthew penned his record of the Christ?
- Q What was Jesus teaching about those who “draw the sword will die by the sword?”
- Q Why didn’t the Christ call for heavenly Seal-6 to be dispatched?
- Q Why was it important that the prophets be fulfilled?
- Q Why wasn’t Jesus arrested earlier, when it would have been lighter, and easier?

MATTHEW 26:47-56

While he was still speaking, Judas, one of the Twelve, arrived. With him was a large crowd armed with swords and clubs, sent from the chief priests and the elders of the people. ⁴⁸Now the betrayer had arranged a signal with them: “The one I kiss is the man; arrest him.” ⁴⁹Going at once to Jesus, Judas said, “Greetings, Rabbi!” and kissed him.

⁵⁰Jesus replied, “Friend, do what you came for.” [or *Friend, why have you come?*] Then the men stepped forward, seized Jesus and arrested him.

⁵¹With that, one of Jesus’ companions reached for his sword, drew it out and struck the servant [Malchus] of the high priest, [note the absence of a name] cutting off his ear.

⁵²“Put your sword back in its place,” Jesus said to him, “for all who draw the sword will die by the sword. ⁵³Do you think I cannot call on my Father, and he will at once put at my disposal more than twelve legions of angels? [i.e., 72,000] ⁵⁴But how then would the Scriptures be fulfilled that say it must happen in this way?” [see Zechariah 13:7]

⁵⁵At that time Jesus said to the crowd, “Am I leading a rebellion, that you have come out with swords and clubs to capture me? Every day I sat in the temple courts teaching, and you did not arrest me. ⁵⁶But this has all taken place that the writings of the prophets might be fulfilled.” Then all the disciples deserted him and fled.

⁸“Awake, sword, against my shepherd, against the man who is close to me!” declares the LORD Almighty. “Strike the shepherd, and the sheep will be scattered, and I will turn my hand against the little ones.” (Zechariah 13:7)

Matthew 26:57-68. *A trial commences*. Jesus was taken to the home of High Priest Caiaphas; professors and elders had assembled there. Peter followed, but at a distance. He even entered the courtyard to see what was to happen.

The chief priests and the whole Sanhedrin were looking for false evidence to indict Jesus for a capital crime. They couldn't find any, though lots of false witnesses testified. Finally, though, two came forward with true evidence, evidence that supported a capital indictment—

This fellow said he was able to destroy the Temple of God, and then rebuild it in three days!

At this, Caiaphas stood up and said to Jesus—Are you not going to answer? What is this they're talking about? Jesus was silent.

Caiaphas persisted—I charge you by the authority of the living God, tell us the truth. Are you the Messiah, the Son of God?

This time, Jesus was not silent. *Yes, it is as you say, but I say to all of you—in the future you will see the Son of Man sitting on the right hand of the Mighty One, and coming on the clouds of heaven.*

Caiaphas ripped his clothes⁹ in anger—He has spoken blasphemy! We need no more witnesses. Look you've heard it, right here, right now. What is your verdict? He is worthy of death, they answered. Spitting on His face, and striking Him with their fists, some slapped Him, and mocking Him said, "Prophecy to us 'Christ.' Who hit you?"¹⁰

- Q Where did this "meeting" take place? Implications?
- Q Why was it important that Jesus be put to death, according to the religious leaders of the day?
- Q What was so troubling about Jesus' comment regarding destroying the Temple? What really ticked off the folks gathered to "investigate" this Jesus? Did Jesus affirm his indictment? So what?
- Q What was blasphemous about Jesus admitting He was the Christ, the Son of God?
- Q What was so troubling about spitting in the face of Jesus of Nazareth? [Hint: Job 30:10; 17:6; the Family of the Un-sandaled; Deuteronomy 25:7-10]

⁹Interestingly, the high priest was forbidden by the Law to tear his clothes (Leviticus 10:6; 21:10).

¹⁰Mark reports they blindfolded Jesus (Mark 14:65), which explains the mocking command: "Prophecy . . . Who hit you?"

MATTHEW 26:57-68

Those who had arrested Jesus took him to Caiaphas, the high priest, where the teachers of the law and the elders had assembled. ⁵⁸But Peter followed him at a distance, right up to the courtyard of the high priest. He entered and sat down with the guards to see the outcome.

⁵⁹The chief priests and the whole Sanhedrin were looking for false evidence against Jesus so that they could put him to death.

⁶⁰But they did not find any, though many false witnesses came forward.

Finally two came forward ⁶¹and declared, "This fellow said, 'I am able to destroy the temple of God and rebuild it in three days.'"

⁶²Then the high priest stood up and said to Jesus, "Are you not going to answer? What is this testimony that these men are bringing against you?" ⁶³But Jesus remained silent.

The high priest said to him, "I charge you under oath by the living God: Tell us if you are the Christ, the Son of God."

⁶⁴"Yes, it is as you say," Jesus replied. "But I say to all of you: In the future you will see the Son of Man sitting at the right hand of the Mighty One and coming on the clouds of heaven."

⁶⁵Then the high priest tore his clothes and said, "He has spoken blasphemy! Why do we need any more witnesses? Look, now you have heard the blasphemy. ⁶⁶What do you think?" "He is worthy of death," they answered.

⁶⁷Then they spit in his face and struck him with their fists. Others slapped him ⁶⁸and said, "Prophecy to us, Christ. Who hit you?"

Matthew 26:69-75. *An interlude of betrayal.*

While all this was going on, Peter was enjoying the peace of the high priests' courtyard. While hanging out, a servant girl approached him quizzically and asked, "You were also with Jesus of Galilee."

Peter freaked and denied it right there in front of everyone. "I don't know what you're talking about." Retreating to the gateway, another girl saw and told the people there—"This dude was with Jesus of Nazareth."

Super freaked, Peter swore an oath—"I don't know the man." A little while passed and one of the crowd went up to Peter and said, "Hey dude—you are one of them—your Galilean accent tells all."

Peter was not happy; calling curses on himself, he even cussed them out. "I don't know the man."

And then it happened—the rooster crowed. Peter remembered. Jesus told him—*Before the rooster crows, you will disown Me three times*. Leaving the courtyard, he went out and wept, bitterly.

- Q How did the first girl know Peter was associated with this Jesus of Galilee?
- Q How did the second girl know Peter was associated with this Jesus of Nazareth?
- Q How the guy at the gate area know Peter was "one of them?"
- Q What is about you that identifies you are with Jesus of Galilee? Jesus of Nazareth? What is it about your accent that identifies you as one of the followers of Jesus the Christ?
- Q Why did Matthew record this incident of Peter in the courtyard and gate of the house of Caiaphas?
- Q What is the best way to disown/deny/retreat from the Christ, and get away with it?

1. It's just business.
2. I was just following orders.
3. My friends would think I'm bigoted, offensive, and/or close-minded.
4. Avoid commenting on politics for we might lose our tax-status (a la the Johnson amendment).
5. It's just a rooster-like coincidence; I really didn't disown Him, I just decided that discretion is the greatest better part of valor.
6. Well, we're going to get married anyhow, so what does it matter?
7. I'm busy—got to get to church.

MATTHEW 26:69-75

Now Peter was sitting out in the courtyard, and a servant girl came to him. "You also were with Jesus of Galilee," she said.

70But he denied it before them all. "I don't know what you're talking about," he said.

71Then he went out to the gateway, where another girl saw him and said to the people there, "This fellow was with Jesus of Nazareth."

72He denied it again, with an oath: "I don't know the man!"

73After a little while, those standing there went up to Peter and said, "Surely you are one of them, for your accent gives you away."

74Then he began to call down curses on himself and he swore to them, "I don't know the man!"

Immediately a rooster crowed. 75Then Peter remembered the word Jesus had spoken: "Before the rooster crows, you will disown me three times." And he went outside and wept bitterly.

- 26:30** *hymn.* The Passover fellowship was concluded with the second half of the Hallel Psalms (Ps 115-118).
- 26:31** *all fall away.* Not Peter only, but all the eleven (Judas had previously withdrawn, John 13:30). The meaning of the words "fall away" is seen in Peter's denial (vv. 69-75) and in the terrified flight of the other disciples (v. 56).
- 26:34** *before the rooster crows.* The reference may be to the third of the Roman watches into which the night was divided (see note on 14:25; see also Mk 13:35). Or, it may simply refer to early morning when the rooster crows.
- 26:36** *Gethsemane.* The name means "oil press," a place for squeezing the oil from olives (one of Jesus' favorite places; see Lk 22:39; Jn 18:2).
- 26:37** *Peter and the two sons of Zebedee.* The latter were James and John. These three disciples seem to have been especially close to Jesus. Among the foremost apostles (see Paul's comment in Galatians 2:9). Along with John's brother, James, they had been especially close to Jesus (Mk 9:2; Acts 13:3; Acts 14:33; Luke 22:8). Arrested together (Acts 4:3), they were also together in Samaria (Acts 8:14).
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- 26:47** *a large crowd armed with swords and clubs.* See note on Mk 14:43. *chief priests and the elders.* See notes on v. 3 and 24.
- 26:48** *the one I kiss.* See note on Luke 22:47.
- 26:49** *Rabbi.* Hebrew word for "(my) teacher."
- 26:51** *one of Jesus' companions.* Peter (see John 18:10). *servant of the high priest.* Malchus (see John 18:10).
- 26:61** *I am able to destroy the temple of God.* Evidently an intentional distortion of Jesus' words (John 2:19).
- 26:63** *I charge you under oath.* Jesus refused to answer the question of v. 62 (see v. 63a). But when the high priest used this form, he was legally obliged to reply.

¹¹Adapted, corrected, and revised by D. Thomas Porter from Compton's Interactive NIV © 1996.