

Betrayed, Arrested, Abandoned -- Mark 14:43-52

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Please bow your heads with me for prayer.

Lord, take me and consecrate me as Your messenger. We need to hear a message from You. We all need to experience revival. Transform us into who You created us to be – a living, vibrant church that shines with the light of Your love until all of Lancaster is lighted up, and then all of Ohio, and finally the entire globe is at last lightened with Your glory. We pray for this in Jesus' name, amen.

Our story today is the first in a series in which Jesus surrenders Himself into the hands of the Sanhedrin, the Supreme Court of the Jewish nation. God had given them through Moses a criminal justice system that perfectly blended mercy and justice. So, by way of introduction we will look at a few of the protocols that relate to today's story. We will look at more of them as we progress through the book of Mark. The late Judge Harry Fogle did extensive research on the Jewish court system. I have compiled a list of 17 protocols as a result of his research. We will look at five of them today:

- (1) The accused is presumed innocent until proven otherwise.
- (2) A trial had to be performed in public during the day.
- (3) The Sanhedrin was the only court qualified to execute the death penalty.
- (4) The Sanhedrin acted not only as judge but also as the jury, so anyone on the court with a personal acquaintance of the accused or the facts was disqualified from taking part in the case.
- (5) Each member of the court was required to act on behalf of the accused.

As we proceed, you will see how each one of these protocols relates to events in our story today.

Here is a summary as we begin:

Judas, followed by a mob, came up to Jesus in Gethsemane and greeted Him with a kiss. Seeing the people arrest Jesus, one of His disciples took out his sword and cut off the ear of the high priest's servant. Jesus spoke to the crowd, exposing their need for secrecy. All of His disciples fled, leaving Him alone. One young man who followed Jesus that night was also seized, but he ran away, leaving his linen covering in the people's hands.

We will now consider what Jesus experienced in this story. First of all, He experienced being betrayed. The location of our story is Gethsemane. In Mark 14:42 Jesus had just awakened His disciples to see a group of people approaching them. Now in verse 43 Mark begins with the word "immediately". This follows Mark's style of writing. He wants us to be clear that what Jesus had foretold in verse 42 is quickly fulfilled in verse 43.

Three separate groups are identified in Mark 14:43. The first is Judas. Mark takes the time to remind us that he was "one of the twelve". Perhaps he wanted to reveal the extent of the crime Judas was about to perform. A second group that met Jesus that night in Gethsemane was "a great multitude with swords and clubs". According to John 18:3, they also came carrying lanterns and torches. The third group identified in Mark 14:43 are the "chief priests, and the scribes, and the elders". These consisted of the Sanhedrin. You may remember from our introduction that they constituted the Supreme Court of the Jewish nation. They acted as judges and jury. And yet here we see them acting as prosecutors. They were the ones who sent this mob and Judas to arrest Jesus.

Mark 14:44 mentions that Judas had given the people "a signal", so there would be no confusion as to who they were supposed to arrest. At the bottom of this plan was a fear of failure. Maybe they would arrest the wrong person. Maybe Jesus would escape. Maybe there would be a resistance. Notice what the signal was: "Whomever I kiss, He is the One" (vs. 44). The word translated, "kiss", is the Greek word "phileo", which means "love". It does not refer to the attraction between lovers. That Greek word is "eros". "Phileo" is a familial affection. In Acts 20:37 when Paul was leaving the church in the city of Ephesus, the believers were sorrowful that they would never see him again. Part of their grief and affection for Paul is expressed with the

word, "phileo", and is translated, "kissed". Also, in Jewish culture at this time it was common for a host to give a kiss to his/her guests. It was part of showing hospitality. Jesus referred to this in Luke 7:45 when He addressed Simon, who was hosting a meal at his house.

Judas had commanded the people in Mark 14:44 to "seize" Jesus and to "lead Him away safely". The root word from which we get the word translated, "safely", means to "not fail". It seems that Judas' main concern was not so much for the people to handle Jesus gently, but that they make sure He didn't get away from them.

Mark repeats his use of "immediately" in verse 45. As soon as Judas arrived in Gethsemane, he went directly up to Jesus. We see that Judas was on a mission. He didn't waste any time. Perhaps he acted excited to see Jesus. He addressed Him as "Rabbi", which means master or teacher. Mark says that Judas then kissed Jesus. The Greek word here, "phileo", though, has an intensive prefix added to it. The idea can either portray earnestness or repetition. In his zeal to not look suspicious I believe Judas here acted unnaturally. I find it unlikely that this was Judas' usual way of greeting Jesus, seeing how disconnected he and Jesus had become.

Second of all, Jesus experienced being arrested. Jesus' betrayal was by a friend. His arrest was by outsiders. Mark 14:46 is short and to the point: "Then they laid hands on Him and took Him." Mark doesn't say specifically who arrested Jesus. It would seem that Mark is referring to the crowd that followed Judas. However, in John 18:12 we find that there were three specific groups involved in Jesus' arrest: (1) "a detachment", (2) "the captain" and (3) "the officers of the Jews". A "detachment" was approximately 600 men from the Roman military. A "captain" was a commander of 1000 Roman soldiers. The "officers" were servants or soldiers who, according to John 18:3, worked for the high priests and Pharisees.

Mark 14:46 says these men "laid hands on" Jesus. The original Greek word used here means to "throw upon". It pictures these men being very rough with Jesus. The word translated "took" means "to seize", revealing once again a rough treatment. The religious leaders had been wanting to get their hands on Jesus for quite some time. In fact, Mark 12:12 uses the same word, that's translated here, "laid hands on", to describe what they wanted to do to Jesus back then. You may remember that one of the protocols for how to treat someone accused of a crime was that they be treated as if innocent until proven guilty. The Sanhedrin, already treating Jesus as a convicted criminal, were breaking yet another rule in the Jewish criminal justice system.

As I pictured these soldiers seizing Jesus' hands, there seemed to be a real irony: (1) Jesus' hands had been used to heal the sick, to feed the hungry, and to comfort those in sorrow. But now these men were treating these hands as if they were instruments of crime. (2) Jesus had spoken all creation into existence. But now He is arrested by those whom the Bible refers to as dust (Gen. 3:19; Ps. 103:14), vapor (Ps. 39:5, 11), grass that withers (Isaiah 40:7, 8), and a flower that fades away (Job 14:1-2).

Third, Jesus experienced the resistance of a friend. Mark 14:47 next pictures "one of those who stood by". The Greek word here is in the perfect tense, which gives the idea that it was one of Jesus' disciples who had been by His side throughout the night. In fact, John 18:10 identifies this person as being Peter. The sword that he pulled out that night was the same as that carried by the crowd. Sadly, it seems that Peter had more in common with them than he did with Jesus that night. Peter had yet another problem, though. He was only one facing a large crowd.

Mark 14:47 describes Peter as hitting the high priest's servant with his sword and cutting off his ear. This would have been one of the "officers of the Jews" mentioned in John 18:12. So why did Peter only take off an ear? It seems that that would only have enraged those he was trying to fight off. Did he just have bad aim? After all, he was a fisherman, not a soldier, right? Or did the servant see the drawn sword just in time to duck out of the way? We don't know for sure. But one thing is for sure. Peter's response was one that the religious leaders had anticipated. Perhaps what they hadn't expected, though, was that Peter would be the only one who responded that way. In fact, according to Luke 22:51, Jesus untied Himself, reached down, and put the servant's ear back in place. Also, Matthew 26:52, 53 reports that Peter was rebuked by Jesus. This would explain why there was no further skirmish that night.

Fourth, Jesus experienced exposing injustice. The soldiers had arrested Jesus' hands. But Jesus arrested the crowd's conscience. Mark does not specify who Jesus addressed. Luke, however, cites three specific groups addressed by Jesus that night: (1) the high priests, (2) the temple guards, and (3) the elders. In Mark 14:48 Jesus called attention to the fact that they were treating Him like a "robber". This was someone equivalent to a hardened criminal, someone who wreaked havoc and destruction. Jesus then states their reason for coming out to Gethsemane: "to take Him". This word in the Greek means "to capture". It's as if they have been on a mission to capture this elusive villain.

Jesus then exposes this as the fraudulent act that it is: "It was daily with you in the temple". Jesus had repeatedly been in a public place during the day. In contrast, the Jewish leaders had come against Him at night and in secret.

Jesus continued to expose their actions as unwarranted. He had not been plundering and destroying people's lives. He had been teaching the common people about the heart and will of God. Jesus' next words in Mark 14:49 are introduced with the word "but", the strongest possible contrast in the Greek language. In contrast to their corruption were the pure, unchangeable Holy Scriptures. In other words, Jesus was saying, "What you are doing is so wrong! But so you know why your plans are being allowed, this is exactly what the Scriptures have said would happen."

Last of all, Jesus experienced being abandoned. Mark 14:50, speaking of Jesus' disciples, is very brief: "Then they all forsook Him and fled." In Mark 14:27 Jesus had predicted this would happen. So He was not taken by surprise. Clearly, things had not gone as Peter and the others had planned. They didn't understand why Jesus was allowing Himself to be arrested. So, fear took over. They ran away for their own safety.

Peter and the other ten disciples were not the only ones to flee that night. Verses 51-52 of Mark 14 highlight a young man, mentioned only by Mark. Who is this young man? We don't know for sure, but Mark's reference to this young man is similar to how John refers to himself in his gospel record. In John 21:20-24 Jesus was walking with Peter, while John was tagging along behind. Referring to John, Peter says to Jesus, "Lord, what about this man?" In that context, John then refers to himself as "this disciple". So, it is possible that in Mark 14:51-52 Mark is referring to himself.

This "young man" had a "linen cloth" thrown around him. The word translated, "linen cloth", here is the same word that Mark will use in chapter 15:46 to describe what was used to wrap Jesus' body before they laid Him in the tomb. As Jesus was led away that night, this young man was following behind. Mark 14:50 says that the people "laid hold" of him. In other words, they seized him just as they had seized Jesus. It seems that this young man stood out and caught the people's attention. Perhaps it was the linen cloth. Maybe they could tell that this man sympathized with Jesus. They might have even known who he was. For whatever reason, though, they decided to arrest him as well.

This young man, though, acted a lot like Peter and the other disciples. He fled. And when he did, he was exposed. He left the linen cloth in his enemies' hands. But he was scared enough to not care. It's a strange incident at the end of our story, but I like to think of it as Mark's way of saying, "I was there. I am an eye witness to these things. My experience that night was a lot like that of Jesus' closest followers."

Let's now consider how Jesus is revealed as our example in this story. Jesus' actions give us a pattern to follow when we as Christians find ourselves in similar situations. His life is an indicator of how we should act. One way in which Jesus is revealed as our example is that He received His betrayer's kiss. Mark is silent concerning Jesus' reaction to Judas' betrayal. Matthew and Luke, however, are not. Matthew 26:50 records Jesus as saying to Judas, "Friend, why have you come?" What gentle and searching words! Luke 22:48 records Jesus asking Judas a question as well: "Are you betraying the Son of Man with a kiss?" Jesus read Judas' heart. He knew what Judas was doing all along. Yet He never tangled with Judas. How easy it would have been to say: "Get away from Me, you two-faced, money-hungry, back-stabbing hypocrite!" That's exactly what Judas was. But Jesus had His other disciples in mind. He was modeling for them how to love a brother who has fallen away from the Lord.

Jesus had told His disciples earlier that night, "A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another, as I have loved you, that you also love one another. By this all will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another" (Jn. 13:34, 35). And when Judas came up to Jesus that very night and betrayed Him with a kiss, Jesus had a perfect opportunity to model for His disciples how to do exactly that.

Jesus shows us that a healthy Christian is someone who rises above the unkindness, injustice, disrespect, and faults of others in the church. In the minds of the other eleven disciples, Judas was not an outsider. He was one of them. He was a close brother. If Jesus had openly rebuked, exposed, and cast off Judas, He would have likely lost the hearts of the other eleven disciples.

Incidentally, Jesus did not have to punish Judas. Judas punished himself. Matthew 27:3-5 reveals Judas' demise later that night. He went out and hung himself. If someone in the circle of believers has fallen away from the Lord, they will often "hang themselves". You won't need to.

Secondly, Jesus is revealed as our example in that He exposed injustice. Jesus did not deal with the high priests, the temple guards, and the elders in the same way as He dealt with Judas. He was pretty pointed in His words to them that night: "This is wrong! The only reason your plans will succeed is because this is what the Scriptures have said would happen." The young man in our story ran away exposed, but Jesus words exposed the hearts of these leaders of the Jewish nation.

Just as with Judas, when Jesus exposed the injustice of these religious leaders, He had His own disciples in mind. Later, they would recall His words that night. They would realize that Jesus saw clearly through the actions and hearts of His enemies. They would also understand why Jesus allowed Himself to be arrested in such an unjust manner.

Growing up in the Seventh-day Adventist Church, I have often heard the argument regarding corruption and immorality in our society, "It's a sign of the last days. This is what the Bible predicted would happen." Such comments are truthful. 2 Timothy 3 highlights clearly the increasing evil in the last days. And yet this fact is often used as an excuse to not speak out against the wrongs being committed.

The fact is our nation, the United States of America, has a history similar to that of the Jewish nation. Both were founded upon biblical principles and values. Our legal system used to be a lot like the one God set up in Israel. Upholding Christian values has been the foundation of our country's success and have made this country a safe place worship God according to our own consciences and convictions. Over the last few generations, however, the fabric of our nation, woven by our country's founders, has gradually been being undone and replaced with non-Christian values and agendas.

We could talk all day about the various areas where this is taking place, from our legal system to our educational system. That night in Gethsemane Jesus could have exposed all kinds of injustices in His day. But He simply exposed the corruption immediately in front of Him at that time. What non-Christian values and agendas are currently facing you? For my family one of the most disconcerting is the unraveling of Christian beliefs and values in our nation's educational fabric. For years our nation's public school system has not allowed the Bible to be included in the curriculum. Evolution and the "alternative lifestyle", though, are freely advocated. Well, now, the federal government is implementing what is called Common Core. Here's a definition of Common Core from Wikipedia.com:

The Common Core State Standards Initiative is an education initiative in the United States that details what K-12 students should know in English language, arts and mathematics at the end of each grade.

If you would like to learn more about Common Core, **thecorestandards.com** is a great resource. Here is a statement on this website from a book entitled, What is Common Core? by Darcy Pattison:

The Common Core has set new copyright precedent by creating a privately copyrighted document, then asking State Departments of Education to accept the document as a public policy document. To our knowledge, there's never before been a public policy document that is privately copyrighted. This misuse of

copyright law—intended to make sure that the standards are not modified at a local level—is a startling political development.

Here is another interesting insight from the same website:

No modifications (of Common Core) are allowed. States either take the whole thing as is, or nothing. Nowhere are there provisions or procedures for modifying, clarifying, customizing, or otherwise changing the standards. States can-not change a single thing to fit the needs of their students specifically. They can add to the document (the Common Core restricts this to only adding 15%, and discourages even this), but they cannot change any-thing. Only the copyright holders can do that. It is a brilliant use of copyright law to make sure that education standards are accepted without any change. Perfectly legal; morally questionable.

This scenario is being repeated in other areas, besides education. Laws are being misused and even changed in order to carry out agendas that take away our liberties and are misaligned with a Christian worldview. As we follow Jesus' example in exposing injustice, it is a blessing to know that we are not a lone voice. There are many agencies and ministries already in place that are speaking out against movements in our country aimed at taking away personal liberties endowed by our Creator and to undo the Christian fabric of our nation. You can support and join forces with them. Many Seventh-day Adventists did this back in the 1800's with health reform and religious liberty agencies.

In closing I would like to make an observation from within the Seventh-day Adventist Church: we often get these two above points (how Jesus is revealed as our example) switched around. We are often quick to speak out against those who are in the inner circle of believers. And yet we rarely speak publically against the efforts of those who are working to undo the Christian framework our country's founders set in place. While we fight amongst ourselves, our liberties are being taken away.

Last day events will take place as Scripture has predicted. But let us not think that this means God wants us to remain silent when those outside of this inner circle of believers are carrying out injustice.

The original source for the quote is disputed but it applies well: *All that is necessary for the triumph of evil is that good men do nothing.*

The other 12 of the 17 Protocols in the Jewish legal system

1. Conviction for an offense required two witnesses who agreed in every particular
2. Accused had right to employ an attorney or have one appointed for him
3. Accused could not be required to testify against himself
4. A voluntary confession was not sufficient for conviction
5. Circumstantial evidence was not acceptable
6. Hearsay evidence (relating what someone else said) was not allowed
7. No evidence could be produced unless the accused was present
8. Lying in court was perjury, punishable by death
9. A majority vote by ballot was required to acquit or convict
10. If vote was to convict, one day was required for judges to ponder their decision
11. Meanwhile the accused remained innocent, and any judge who voted to convict the accused could change his vote for an acquittal, but any judge who voted to acquit could not revoke his earlier vote.
12. A unanimous verdict of guilty resulted in acquittal of the accused