

Text: Matthew 26:47-75

Section 1

47While He was still speaking, behold, Judas, one of the twelve, came up accompanied by a large crowd with swords and clubs, who came from the chief priests and elders of the people. 48Now he who was betraying Him gave them a sign, saying, "Whomever I kiss, He is the one; seize Him." 49Immediately Judas went to Jesus and said, "Hail, Rabbi!" and kissed Him. 50And Jesus said to him, "Friend, do what you have come for." Then they came and laid hands on Jesus and seized Him. (Matthew 26:47-50)

Jesus was not the least bit surprised that Judas showed up to betray him and deliver him to the authorities. Very early in His ministry He noted that one of the Twelve was "a devil," and then He said so again earlier the same night He was arrested.

70Jesus answered them, "Did I Myself not choose you, the twelve, and yet one of you is a devil?" 71Now He meant Judas the son of Simon Iscariot, for he, one of the twelve, was going to betray Him. (John 6:70-71)

12"While I was with them, I was keeping them in Your name which You have given Me; and I guarded them and not one of them perished but the son of perdition, so that the Scripture would be fulfilled. (John 17:12)

As you know, many or most of the recorded events of Jesus' life fulfilled Old Testament prophecy in one way or another. Some commentators interpret Judas's betrayal as a fulfillment of the following verse:

**9Even my close friend in whom I trusted,
Who ate my bread,
Has lifted up his heel against me. (Psalm 41:9)**

Judas's betrayal happened because it was the will of the Father that Jesus be betrayed, then tried, convicted, and executed so that the penalty for sins would be paid for all that believe. Although Judas was personally responsible for his sin, he was allowed to carry out his betrayal and seizure of Jesus only because the Father willed that these things happen. Likewise, the Bible teaches that believers are saved because it is the will of God that they be so. The Book of John indicates that God takes an active role in appointing those that He would have be His children.

16"You did not choose Me but I chose you, and appointed you that you would go and bear fruit, and that your fruit would remain, so that whatever you ask of the Father in My name He may give to you. (John 15:16)

37"All that the Father gives Me will come to Me, and the one who comes to Me I will certainly not cast out. (John 6:37)

44"No one can come to Me unless the Father who sent Me draws him; and I will raise him up on the last day. (John 6:44)

In the Book of Revelation it is twice noted that those whose names are "written in the Book of Life" have their names written there "from the foundation of the world." Here is one of those examples:

8"The beast that you saw was, and is not, and is about to come up out of the abyss and go to destruction And those who dwell on the earth, whose name has not been written in the book of life from the foundation of the world, will wonder when they see the beast, that he was and is not and will come. (Revelation 17:8)

God has known since before time began who would be saved and who would not; the Bible even suggests that He has appointed that it be so. Yet do not use this teaching as an opportunity for laziness or fatalism—the Bible also makes it clear that if we wish to be saved we must personally repent and believe, and that everyone that does so will be saved.

9that if you confess with your mouth Jesus as Lord, and believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead, you will be saved; 10for with the heart a person believes, resulting in righteousness, and with the mouth he confesses, resulting in salvation. 11For the Scripture says, "WHOEVER BELIEVES IN HIM WILL NOT BE DISAPPOINTED." 12For there is no distinction between Jew and Greek; for the same Lord is Lord of all, abounding in riches for all who call on Him; 13for "WHOEVER WILL CALL ON THE NAME OF THE LORD WILL BE SAVED." (Romans 10:9-13)

Section 2

51And behold, one of those who were with Jesus reached and drew out his sword, and struck the slave of the high priest and cut off his ear. 52Then 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? 54"How then will the Scriptures be fulfilled, which say that it must happen this way?" 55At that time Jesus said to the crowds, "Have you come out with swords and clubs to arrest Me as you would against a robber? Every day I used to sit in the temple teaching and you did not seize Me. 56"But all this has taken place to fulfill the Scriptures of the prophets." Then all the disciples left Him and fled. (Matthew 26:51-56)

This passage has often been tortured into meaning that Jesus was a pacifist, and that violence is at no time justified. This interpretation, however, creates great inconsistencies with other parts of Scripture. In fact, earlier the same night Jesus instructed the Twelve to arm themselves.

36And He said to them, "But now, whoever has a money belt is to take it along, likewise also a bag, and whoever has no sword is to sell his coat and buy one. 37"For I tell you that this which is written must be fulfilled in Me, 'AND HE WAS NUMBERED WITH TRANSGRESSORS'; for that which refers to Me has its fulfillment." 38They said, "Lord, look, here are two swords." And He said to them, "It is enough." (Luke 22:36-38)

In the Law it is specifically noted that self-defense of one's life, family, or property is indeed justified.

2"If the thief is caught while breaking in and is struck so that he dies, there will be no bloodguiltiness on his account. (Exodus 22:2)

However, at this present time, Jesus told the disciples to refrain from defending Him. For one thing, twelve men with two swords attacking a heavily armed mob would have been suicidal. Additionally, these things were happening so that the Scriptures would be fulfilled. Jesus had to die so that we could be saved. He knew full well that after enduring these events He would sit enthroned at the right hand of the Father, ruling over the universe.

44"In the days of those kings the God of heaven will set up a kingdom which will never be destroyed, and that kingdom will not be left for another people; it will crush and put an end to all these kingdoms, but it will itself endure forever. (Daniel 2:44)

55But being full of the Holy Spirit, he gazed intently into heaven and saw the glory of God, and Jesus standing at the right hand of God; 56and he said, "Behold, I see the heavens opened up and the Son of Man standing at the right hand of God." (Acts 7:55-56)

When He was questioned by Pilate, Jesus said that His Kingdom could not be established by violence or conquest.

36Jesus answered, "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." 37Therefore Pilate said to Him, "So You are a king?" Jesus answered, "You say correctly that I am a king For this I have been born, and for this I have come into the world, to testify to the truth Everyone who is of the truth hears My voice." (John 18:36-37)

Instead, Christ's Kingdom would be established by changing men's hearts.

33"But this is the covenant which I will make with the house of Israel after those days," declares the LORD, "I will put My law within them and on their heart I will write it; and I will be their God, and they shall be My people. 34"They will not teach again, each man his neighbor and each man his brother, saying, 'Know the LORD,' for they will all know Me, from the least of them to the greatest of them," declares the LORD, "for I will forgive their iniquity, and their sin I will remember no more." (Jeremiah 31:33-34)

Again, Jesus allowed Himself to be betrayed, arrested, tried, and executed so that the Scriptures would be fulfilled and so that the penalty for our sins would be paid by Him on our behalf. Isaiah 53 vividly describes His life, His willingness to die for us, and His taking our sin upon Himself, that we might have everlasting life.

1Who has believed our message?

And to whom has the arm of the LORD been revealed?

2For He grew up before Him like a tender shoot,

And like a root out of parched ground;

He has no stately form or majesty

That we should look upon Him,
 Nor appearance that we should be attracted to Him.

3He was despised and forsaken of men,
 A man of sorrows and acquainted with grief;
 And like one from whom men hide their face
 He was despised, and we did not esteem Him.

4Surely our griefs He Himself bore,
 And our sorrows He carried;
 Yet we ourselves esteemed Him stricken,
 Smitten of God, and afflicted.

5But He was pierced through for our transgressions,
 He was crushed for our iniquities;
 The chastening for our well-being fell upon Him,
 And by His scourging we are healed.

6All of us like sheep have gone astray,
 Each of us has turned to his own way;
 But the LORD has caused the iniquity of us all
 To fall on Him.

7He was oppressed and He was afflicted,
 Yet He did not open His mouth;
 Like a lamb that is led to slaughter,
 And like a sheep that is silent before its shearers,
 So He did not open His mouth.

8By oppression and judgment He was taken away;
 And as for His generation, who considered
 That He was cut off out of the land of the living
 For the transgression of my people, to whom the stroke was due?

9His grave was assigned with wicked men,
 Yet He was with a rich man in His death,
 Because He had done no violence,
 Nor was there any deceit in His mouth.

10But 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.

11As 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.

12Therefore, I will allot Him a portion with the great,
 And He will divide the booty with the strong;
 Because He poured out Himself to death,
 And was numbered with the transgressors;
 Yet He Himself bore the sin of many,
 And interceded for the transgressors. (Isaiah 53:1-12)

3For I delivered to you as of first importance what I also received, that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures,
 4and that He was buried, and that He was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures, (1 Corinthians 15:3-4)

Section 3

57Those who had seized Jesus led Him away to Caiaphas, the high priest, where the scribes and the elders were gathered together.
 58But Peter was following Him at a distance as far as the courtyard of the high priest, and entered in, and sat down with the officers
 to see the outcome. 59Now the chief priests and the whole Council kept trying to obtain false testimony against Jesus, so that they
 might put Him to death. 60They did not find any, even though many false witnesses came forward. But later on two came forward,
 61and said, "This man stated, 'I am able to destroy the temple of God and to rebuild it in three days.'" 62The high priest stood up and
 said to Him, "Do You not answer? What is it that these men are testifying against You?" 63But Jesus kept silent And the high priest
 said to Him, "I adjure You by the living God, that You tell us whether You are the Christ, the Son of God." 64Jesus said to him, "You
 have said it yourself; nevertheless I tell you, hereafter you will see THE SON OF MAN SITTING AT THE RIGHT HAND OF POWER,

and COMING ON THE CLOUDS OF HEAVEN." 65Then the high priest tore his robes and said, "He has blasphemed! What further need do we have of witnesses? Behold, you have now heard the blasphemy; 66what do you think?" They answered, "He deserves death!" 67Then they spat in His face and beat Him with their fists; and others slapped Him, 68and said, "Prophecy to us, You Christ; who is the one who hit You?" (Matthew 26:57-68)

Mark is a bit more clear in describing how the Jewish authorities were unable to find anyone to give false testimony against Jesus—they found people willing to testify, but their testimonies were not admissible because they did not agree with one another.

55Now the chief priests and the whole Council kept trying to obtain testimony against Jesus to put Him to death, and they were not finding any. 56For many were giving false testimony against Him, but their testimony was not consistent. (Mark 14:55-56)

Then, they found two men that referred to the following statement by Jesus. They thought He claimed that He would tear down the gigantic Temple of Herod and then rebuild it in three days. This was a misunderstanding of the following statement by Jesus, which John explained clearly.

18The Jews then said to Him, "What sign do You show us as your authority for doing these things?" 19Jesus answered them, "Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up." 20The Jews then said, "It took forty-six years to build this temple, and will You raise it up in three days?" 21But He was speaking of the temple of His body. (John 2:18-21)

Jesus claimed to be God, because He was and is God. The unbelieving Jewish authorities, however, interpreted this as blasphemy, and agreed that the penalty for blasphemy prescribed in the Law was death.

16'Moreover, the one who blasphemes the name of the LORD shall surely be put to death; all the congregation shall certainly stone him. The alien as well as the native, when he blasphemes the Name, shall be put to death. (Leviticus 24:16)

Yet, as we've noted before, the Scripture teaches that the coming Messiah would be God Himself. For Jesus the Messiah to claim to be God was not blasphemous—for Him to not claim to be God would be a lie, and therefore sinful.

**6For a child will be born to us, a son will be given to us;
And the government will rest on His shoulders;
And His name will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God,
Eternal Father, Prince of Peace. (Isaiah 9:6)**

Earlier in His ministry Jesus challenged the Jews on this point, stating that His works indicated that He was both God and Christ.

36do you say of Him, whom the Father sanctified and sent into the world, 'You are blaspheming,' because I said, 'I am the Son of God'? 37'If I do not do the works of My Father, do not believe Me; 38but if I do them, though you do not believe Me, believe the works, so that you may know and understand that the Father is in Me, and I in the Father.'" (John 10:36-38)

Of all the Jewish authorities, only two seemed to “get it.” One was Joseph of Arimathea, who took Jesus’ body following the crucifixion and laid it in his own tomb. He was assisted in this by Nicodemus, a Pharisee and “**ruler of the Jews**” who very early on recognized who Jesus was because of His works. Nicodemus understood, and the rest didn’t, or didn’t want to. They were indeed without excuse.

1Now there was a man of the Pharisees, named Nicodemus, a ruler of the Jews; 2this man came to Jesus by night and said to Him, "Rabbi, we know that You have come from God as a teacher; for no one can do these signs that You do unless God is with him." (John 3:1-2)

Section 4

69Now Peter was sitting outside in the courtyard, and a servant-girl came to him and said, "You too were with Jesus the Galilean." 70But he denied it before them all, saying, "I do not know what you are talking about." 71When he had gone out to the gateway, another servant-girl saw him and said to those who were there, "This man was with Jesus of Nazareth." 72And again he denied it with an oath, "I do not know the man." 73A little later the bystanders came up and said to Peter, "Surely you too are one of them; for even the way you talk gives you away." 74Then he began to curse and swear, "I do not know the man!" And immediately a rooster crowed. 75And Peter remembered the word which Jesus had said, "Before a rooster crows, you will deny Me three times." And he went out and wept bitterly. (Matthew 26:69-75)

Back in verse 56 we saw that “*all the disciples left Him and fled.*” And now Peter, perhaps the most eager to do and to please of all the disciples, has three times denied Christ to servant girls and unarmed bystanders. Yet, a short time later all of these men would become powerful preachers and evangelists, fearlessly proclaiming salvation through the Name of Jesus Christ even unto the death. What

changed? After the death and resurrection of Christ they received the Holy Spirit, whom Jesus had promised to them and who enables and empowers every Christian to serve and glorify God.

5"But now I am going to Him who sent Me; and none of you asks Me, 'Where are You going?' **6**"But because I have said these things to you, sorrow has filled your heart. **7**"But I tell you the truth, it is to your advantage that I go away; for if I do not go away, the Helper will not come to you; but if I go, I will send Him to you. **8**"And He, when He comes, will convict the world concerning sin and righteousness and judgment; **9**concerning sin, because they do not believe in Me; **10**and concerning righteousness, because I go to the Father and you no longer see Me; **11**and concerning judgment, because the ruler of this world has been judged. **12**"I have many more things to say to you, but you cannot bear them now. **13**"But when He, the Spirit of truth, comes, He will guide you into all the truth; for He will not speak on His own initiative, but whatever He hears, He will speak; and He will disclose to you what is to come. **14**"He will glorify Me, for He will take of Mine and will disclose it to you. **15**"All things that the Father has are Mine; therefore I said that He takes of Mine and will disclose it to you. (John 16:5-15)

Immediately upon receiving the Holy Spirit, the disciples preached powerfully and fearlessly, with the former coward Peter in the forefront.

1When the day of Pentecost had come, they were all together in one place. **2**And suddenly there came from heaven a noise like a violent rushing wind, and it filled the whole house where they were sitting. **3**And there appeared to them tongues as of fire distributing themselves, and they rested on each one of them. **4**And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit was giving them utterance. **5**Now there were Jews living in Jerusalem, devout men from every nation under heaven. **6**And when this sound occurred, the crowd came together, and were bewildered because each one of them was hearing them speak in his own language. **7**They were amazed and astonished, saying, "Why, are not all these who are speaking Galileans? **8**"And how is it that we each hear them in our own language to which we were born? **9**"Parthians and Medes and Elamites, and residents of Mesopotamia, Judea and Cappadocia, Pontus and Asia, **10**Phrygia and Pamphylia, Egypt and the districts of Libya around Cyrene, and visitors from Rome, both Jews and proselytes, **11**Cretans and Arabs--we hear them in our own tongues speaking of the mighty deeds of God." **12**And they all continued in amazement and great perplexity, saying to one another, "What does this mean?" **13**But others were mocking and saying, "They are full of sweet wine." **14**But Peter, taking his stand with the eleven, raised his voice and declared to them: "Men of Judea and all you who live in Jerusalem, let this be known to you and give heed to my words. **15**"For these men are not drunk, as you suppose, for it is only the third hour of the day; **16**but this is what was spoken of through the prophet Joel:

17'AND IT SHALL BE IN THE LAST DAYS,' God says,

**'THAT I WILL POUR FORTH OF MY SPIRIT ON ALL MANKIND;
AND YOUR SONS AND YOUR DAUGHTERS SHALL PROPHECY,
AND YOUR YOUNG MEN SHALL SEE VISIONS,
AND YOUR OLD MEN SHALL DREAM DREAMS;**

18EVEN ON MY BONDSLAVES, BOTH MEN AND WOMEN,
I WILL IN THOSE DAYS POUR FORTH OF MY SPIRIT
And they shall prophesy.

19AND I WILL GRANT WONDERS IN THE SKY ABOVE
AND SIGNS ON THE EARTH BELOW,
BLOOD, AND FIRE, AND VAPOR OF SMOKE.

20THE SUN WILL BE TURNED INTO DARKNESS
AND THE MOON INTO BLOOD,
BEFORE THE GREAT AND GLORIOUS DAY OF THE LORD SHALL COME.

21'AND IT SHALL BE THAT EVERYONE WHO CALLS ON THE NAME OF THE LORD WILL BE SAVED.' **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. **25**"For David says of Him,

**'I SAW THE LORD ALWAYS IN MY PRESENCE;
FOR HE IS AT MY RIGHT HAND, SO THAT I WILL NOT BE SHAKEN.**

26'THEREFORE MY HEART WAS GLAD AND MY TONGUE EXULTED;
MOREOVER MY FLESH ALSO WILL LIVE IN HOPE;

27BECAUSE YOU WILL NOT ABANDON MY SOUL TO HADES,
NOR ALLOW YOUR HOLY ONE TO UNDERGO DECAY.

28'YOU HAVE MADE KNOWN TO ME THE WAYS OF LIFE;

YOU WILL MAKE ME FULL OF GLADNESS WITH YOUR PRESENCE.' **29**"Brethren, I may confidently say to you regarding the patriarch David that he both died and was buried, and his tomb is with us to this day. **30**"And so, because he was a prophet and knew that GOD HAD SWORN TO HIM WITH AN OATH TO SEAT one OF HIS DESCENDANTS ON HIS THRONE, **31**he looked ahead and spoke of the resurrection of the Christ, that HE WAS NEITHER ABANDONED TO HADES, NOR DID His flesh SUFFER DECAY. **32**"This Jesus God raised up again, to which we are all witnesses.

33"Therefore having been exalted to the right hand of God, and having received from the Father the promise of the Holy

Spirit, He has poured forth this which you both see and hear. 34"For it was not David who ascended into heaven, but he himself says:

"THE LORD SAID TO MY LORD,

"SIT AT MY RIGHT HAND,

35UNTIL I MAKE YOUR ENEMIES A FOOTSTOOL FOR YOUR FEET.'" 36"Therefore let all the house of Israel know for certain that God has made Him both Lord and Christ--this Jesus whom you crucified." (Acts 2:1-36)

Their preaching, empowered by the Holy Spirit, convicted the Jews, and he commanded them to repent and believe. God used this preaching to add thousands of new Christians to their number.

37Now when they heard this, they were pierced to the heart, and said to Peter and the rest of the apostles, "Brethren, what shall we do?" 38Peter said to them, "Repent, and each of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins; and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. 39"For the promise is for you and your children and for all who are far off, as many as the Lord our God will call to Himself." 40And with many other words he solemnly testified and kept on exhorting them, saying, "Be saved from this perverse generation!" 41So then, those who had received his word were baptized; and that day there were added about three thousand souls. (Acts 2:37-41)

Repent and believe. To repent means to turn away, to change directions, forsaking sin and following Christ. Peter commanded the Jews to do so, and three thousand were saved. Peter also had to repent following his denials, as Jesus had, after the resurrection, challenged him three times to declare his love for Christ. Peter did, and was restored.

15So when they had finished breakfast, Jesus said to Simon Peter, "Simon, son of John, do you love Me more than these?" He said to Him, "Yes, Lord; You know that I love You " He said to him, "Tend My lambs." 16He said to him again a second time, "Simon, son of John, do you love Me?" He said to Him, "Yes, Lord; You know that I love You." He said to him, "Shepherd My sheep." 17He said to him the third time, "Simon, son of John, do you love Me?" Peter was grieved because He said to him the third time, "Do you love Me?" And he said to Him, "Lord, You know all things; You know that I love You " Jesus said to him, "Tend My sheep. (John 21:15-17)

Likewise, when we as believers inevitably fail, Christ will forgive us if we only ask. What a great and comforting promise!

9If we confess our sins, He is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. (1 John 1:9)