

our sins, we must look to Jesus! In a day when we are instructed to find a life-style that feels good, we must remember that He could say "NO!" to His impulses in order to save us from our certain destiny. When, in order to assuage our sense of guilt, sentimental songs of self-congratulation take the place of God-centered hymns, when chummy pep-talks feebly supplant life-changing messages that exalt the living God and stir us to responsible action, we must look to Jesus! He did not *feel like* going to the cross for anyone. It is to *this* role-model that we are called (Rom. 8:29; I Peter 2:21; I John 2:6; John 13:15).

FACT QUESTIONS

1. List the events that led up to the prayer in Gethsemane.
2. By what general route did Jesus arrive in the garden? Locate Gethsemane. What does this word mean?
3. How did He organize Himself and His men in order to achieve premium opportunity for prayer?
4. What various emotions are attributed to Jesus during this scene?
5. What personal admonitions did He give the disciples for their spiritual protection?
6. Explain the meaning of "watch with me."
7. List and explain the various petitions Jesus included in His prayer.
8. What "cup" did Jesus ask the Father to remove?
9. What reproof did Peter deserve from Jesus?
10. Explain the relationship between watching and praying, then indicate how these protect a person against temptations.
11. How does one "enter into temptation"?
12. Explain why the disciples' "eyes were heavy."
13. How many times did Jesus repeat His prayer?
14. What final rebuke did the disciples merit for their sleeping?

SECTION 68

JESUS IS ARRESTED

(Parallels: Mark 14:43-52; Luke 22:47-53; John 18:2-12)

TEXT: 26:47-56

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. 48 And he that betrayed him gave them a sign, saying, Whomsoever I shall kiss, that is he: take him. 49 And straightway he came to Jesus, and said, Hail, Rabbi; and kissed him. 50 And Jesus said unto him, Friend, *do* that for which thou art come. Then they came and laid hands on Jesus, and took him. 51 And behold, one of them that were with Jesus stretched out his hand, and drew his sword, and smote the servant of the high priest, and struck off his ear. 52 Then saith Jesus unto him, Put again thy sword into its place: for all they that take the sword shall perish with the sword. 53 Or thinkest thou that I cannot beseech my Father, and he shall even now send me more than twelve legions of angels? 54 How then should the scriptures be fulfilled, that thus it must be? 55 In that hour said Jesus to the multitudes, Are ye come out as against a robber with swords and staves to seize me? I sat daily in the temple teaching, and yet took me not. 56 But all this is come to pass, that the scriptures of the prophets might be fulfilled. Then all the disciples left him, and fled.

THOUGHT QUESTIONS

- a. What evidence of meticulous preparation do you see in this arresting party? Why so many armed men needed?
- b. How does Jesus' attitude in this section differ from that expressed during His agony in Gethsemane?
- c. Why does each of the Gospel writers entitle Judas "one of the twelve" as if their readers had never heard of this man already well-introduced earlier in every one of the Gospels? Are they merely copying a stereotyped tradition, or is there some other reason that made this formula necessary?
- d. To arrest a teacher believed heretical, how many men are needed? What does the number of armed men with Judas indicate about their attitude toward Jesus?
- e. The Synoptics relate that Judas *immediately* approached Jesus to betray Him, but John completely ignores the betrayal kiss and gives attention to Jesus' overawing the arresting party. Is a harmony of these facts possible? How should we treat the Gospels when one or more of them does not relate facts chronicled in the others? Are they completely unaware of information related by others?
- f. Why do you think Judas needed to give a sign of recognition?

- Was not Jesus already well known? If so, why need the kiss to point Him out?
- g. Why did Judas call Jesus "Rabbi"? Did not he know His personal name?
 - h. Who do you think Judas thought he was betraying: Jesus or the authorities? Do you think he really hated Jesus? Why did he betray Him?
 - i. Why did Jesus call Judas, "Friend"? Was He appealing to him or rebuking him or something else? What effect could this title produce in Judas?
 - j. If Judas had already given the betrayal sign by kissing Jesus, how could Jesus then say, "Friend, do that for which you are come"? Is not this nonsense? Or do we have a correct translation of Jesus' words?
 - k. Why do you suppose the well-armed men of the arresting force had not attacked Jesus before, or at least when Peter started slashing with his sword?
 - l. What does Peter's violent reaction reveal about the man?
 - m. In what way(s) was he so wrong for using the sword?
 - n. What impression did Peter give others of Jesus' teaching that night?
 - o. What should everyone have understood when Jesus claimed the protection of an innumerable host of angels to avoid this arrest? That angels really exist? Would the Sadducean hierarchy have agreed with Him? Do you?
 - p. What should people have understood when Jesus asserted that the Scriptures foretold even this arrest? How would this help the Apostles?
 - q. Why did Jesus not hesitate to condemn the cowardly attack by His foes?
 - r. Why did the disciples abandon Jesus? Do you think that the soldiers would have arrested the disciples too?

PARAPHRASE AND HARMONY

Now Judas, who betrayed Jesus, also knew about the Garden of Gethsemane, for He had often met there with His disciples. So Judas procured a Roman detachment of 600 infantry and some subalterns of the Temple police dispatched by the chief priests and Pharisees. These went there equipped with lanterns, torches and weapons.

Just as Jesus was still speaking about the near arrival of His betrayer, Judas, one of the Twelve appeared, accompanied by a great crowd armed with swords and clubs, sent by the clergy, theologians and rulers of the nation. Then Jesus, with full awareness of all the things that were going to happen to Him, stepped forward and addressed the mob, "Who are you looking for?"

"Jesus of Nazareth," they answered Him.

"I am He," Jesus told them. (Judas, the traitor, was standing there with them.) When the Lord said, "I am He," they lurched backward and fell all over themselves. Once more He questioned them, "Who is it you want?"

"Jesus of Nazareth," they repeated.

"I already told you that I am your man," Jesus responded. "So, if I am the one you want, let these other men go." This was how the word He had prayed came true, "I did not lose a single one of these You gave me."

Now the betrayer had arranged a signal with them, saying, "The man I greet with a kiss is your man. Arrest him and lead him away well-guarded." Going at once to Jesus, he said, "Hello, Teacher!" and kissed Him affectionately.

But Jesus challenged him, "What are you doing here, friend? Judas, would you use a *kiss* to betray me, your Messiah?"

At this they stepped forward, grabbed Jesus and held Him tight. When those who were around Him saw what was going to happen, they shouted, "Lord, shall we use our swords now?" At this point Simon Peter, one of those who stood by Jesus, reached for his sword, drew it and slashed at the high priest's slave and sliced off his right ear. (The slave's name was Malchus.) But Jesus stopped Peter, "Sheath your sword! Killing only leads to more killing! Those who wantonly take justice into their own hands and kill, rightly deserve death. Do you suppose that I cannot appeal to my Father or that He would not instantly place more than 72,000 angels at my disposal? On the other hand, how could the Bible texts be fulfilled, that say it must happen this way? The Father has given me a cup of suffering to drink; shall I refuse to drink it?"

(To those who held Him, Jesus said,) "Let me do this much at least." He then touched the man's ear and miraculously restored it.

At that point Jesus said to the chief priests, the Temple police and the elders who were there to arrest Him, "Did you have to march out heavily armed to capture me, as if I were a dangerous outlaw?"

Day after day, when I was in your reach, sitting in the Temple courts teaching, you never laid a finger on me. But this is the hour you choose and the authority darkness gives you! Yet all this has occurred just like the writings of the prophets said it would.”

Then the Roman detachment and their colonel along with the Jewish subordinates took hold of Jesus and tied His hands. Then all the disciples deserted Him and escaped. But a certain young man, wearing nothing but a linen cloth about his naked body, was following Him. They grabbed him, but he slipped out of the linen cloth and escaped naked.

SUMMARY

Judas led a large contingent of men armed with weapons and judicial authority to arrest Jesus. However, He overwhelmed them by offering Himself up to them. When they regained their composure, Judas brazenly gave the betrayal signal. This moved the authorities to action, but also unleashed the armed disciples. Peter started carving with his sword, but Jesus blocked any further action and healed the wounded man. Further, He attributed all that was happening to the express will and planning of God. He then reproached the authorities for their moral cowardice evident in this night arrest of a man whom they could easily have taken in broad daylight. But this too was foreseen in Scripture. Jesus permitted them to bind Him and lead Him away, while His followers made good their escape, that is, all but one who “barely” made it.

NOTES

THE MAN WHO REFUSED TO FIGHT

Jesus, our model of forbearance and restraint

I. THE AUDACIOUS, ALL-OUT ATTACK BY EVIL MEN (26:47-49)

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.** Matthew does not state when Judas left the Apostolic band to begin his evil mission, but simply presupposes what John records, that he rushed away from the Pass-over supper (John 13:30).

Why continue to call *Judas, one of the twelve*, when he was already well-known to Matthew's reader? (Cf. 10:4; 26:14.) Rather than term this expression "a stereotyped, traditional formulation," there are simpler solutions:

1. *Judas* shared this common name with hundreds of Judases in first-century Israel. (Cf. 13:55; Acts 1:13; Jude 1; John 14:22; Acts 5:37; Acts 9:11; 15:22.) Since Matthew had not reported Judas' hasty departure from the apostolic group at the Passover supper (John 13:30), he must now identify the posse's guide as the *Judas* who was *one of the twelve*. And precisely because of the commonness of names, would not the Synoptics identify the man all the more carefully, lest confusion arise in later years? But could the treachery of *Judas* Iscariot ever be mistakenly laid at the door of any other Judas?
2. This descriptive, *one of the twelve*, repeated here also has the flavor of shame and anguish that such a betrayal by one of His chosen disciples could happen. (See on 26:14.) Cannot Matthew register his shock more than once? Is this any stranger than repeating the list of conspirators, "*chief priests and elders of the people*," which, for the godly in Israel, must have been just as unbelievable, because these leaders might be presumed to welcome, not crucify, God's Christ (26:3, 47, 57, 59; 27:1)?

Judas could be surer of a decisive strike because Jesus habitually used this olive grove as a camping spot (Luke 21:37) and possibly also a meeting place (*sunéchthe*, John 18:2). This detail points to Jesus' consistent efforts to convince Jerusalem (23:37f.; Luke 19:41ff.; 23:27ff.; John 2:13ff.—3:21; 5:1ff.; 7:10—10:39). Because Jesus knew Judas knew this, He facilitated the arrest for Judas by going there.

Great multitude, swords, staves, "lanterns, torches and weapons," (John 18:3), ropes or chains (John 18:12) were prepared and *Judas* came as guide with his pre-arranged signal. That so many armed men were detached to bring in an itinerate Rabbi, Jesus Himself will term irresponsible overkill (26:55). From this critics could reject the Gospel report as grossly overstated. However, looked at from the viewpoint of the Jews, every precaution underscores the thoroughness of their preparation, their fear of resistance or rescue by Jesus' many friends then in Jerusalem, or their fear that He might simply elude them, as on previous occasions. (Cf. John

7:45f.; 8:59; 10:31, 39.) So, if Judas were not totally trusted, or if a Zealot ambush were feared, or if personal misgivings about attacking a miracle-working prophet, should paralyze the manliest among them, perhaps they could find psychological strength in numbers.

Although the mob was *from the chief priests and elders of the people*, i.e. representing the entire authority of Israel including the Pharisees (John 18:3; see on 26:3), the ecclesiastical leaders themselves came along. (See on 26:55.) Hendriksen (*Matthew*, 922) suggested that, because Jesus hurried Judas out into the night aware that his plot is discovered, he must have alarmed the authorities to take instant, decisive action lest the entire operation be compromised by some unpredictable reaction on Jesus' part. Further, a secret night raid, when Jesus' supporters were least expecting it, had a better chance of success, because any eventual resistance could be overcome more easily. Did the Jews among them simply not observe their Passover supper due to their primary preoccupation with capturing Jesus, or were they summoned away from it, being already alerted to assemble at a moment's notice?

Matthew's estimate, *a great multitude*, does not exaggerate the size of the contingent, because John specifies that the conspirators had been satisfied with bringing nothing less than "the cohort" (*labòn tèn sepefan*, note the article). This military detachment, a tenth part of a legion, usually consisted of 600 men under the command of a Roman tribune or chiliarch (John 18:3, 12). That Romans garrisoned the Castle Antonia during feasts to maintain order and quell riots is well-documented by Josephus (*Ant.* XVII,10,1; XX,5,3; *Wars* V,5,8). John's language seems to distinguish the cohort from the Jewish officers, the Temple police (*hoi huperéti tôn Ioudaion; strategous tou hierou*, John 18:3, 12; Luke 22:52). Because Jewish officers had been swayed by Jesus' discourses before (John 7:45f.), implacable Romans are added to guarantee arrest this time.

Nevertheless, because *speira* is also used in the ancient authors to refer to the Latin *manipulus*, a detachment of 200 men. John may not mean the entire Roman cohort, since this would leave the fortress undermanned and the city dangerously unguarded, if Pilate had brought only a 600-man cohort for this feast. Even so, 200 Romans with their officers, not counting the Levitical guards and other Jews, still amounts to a *multitude* involved in the arrest of a teacher! However, if the authorities feared popular resistance and if the rest of the legionaries remained in the

fortress, the larger number would by no means be thought exaggerated, and the Roman officers would lead a detachment adequate to meet the supposed need.

Therefore, the Romans were involved in Jesus' arrest. But their participation at this early stage means that the Roman involvement began much earlier than the hearing of Jesus' case before Pilate. Would not this, in turn, imply that the elimination of Jesus had already been decided by common agreement between the religious and political authorities, by the Sanhedrin led by the priesthood as well as by Pilate? Are Pilate's attempts to save Jesus, then, to be written off as a farce? Again, one must explain the "disappearance" of the Romans during the Jewish trials of Jesus, as well as from the Synoptic accounts. Attempts to solve this mystery are varied:

1. THE SYNOPTICS REWROTE HISTORY. Some attribute the Roman's absence from Jesus' Jewish trials as due to a tendency in Christian tradition to transfer guilt for Jesus' death from the Romans to the Jews. But by what right can "theological interest of the Evangelist" justify *inventing fact*? Such tampering with truth undermines confidence in any other "fact" they report, leaving nothing certain. Further, if Roman soldiers were needed only for the arrest which succeeded, why should they be further required to continue what Jewish guards can now safely handle?
2. JOHN EXAGGERATED. Others, taking the opposite point of view, say that John simply added the Roman participation at Jesus' arrest for good measure to emphasize the numerical strength and superiority of Jesus' enemies. John is thought to argue that this big multinational force needed to take Jesus could not capture Him, had He not turned Himself over to them spontaneously (John 18:1ff.). Further, Pilate's question suggests that he knew nothing about the cause of Jesus' arrest (John 18:29). Hence, he could not have ordered his men to collaborate with the Jews in effecting it. Therefore, John too rewrote history. But Pilate's purely formal question merely opens the trial and says nothing of what he himself already knew. (See also below.)
3. THERE NEVER WERE ANY ROMANS INVOLVED IN THE ARREST. Perhaps John used the military terms "cohort" (*speira*) and "tribune" (*chiliarchos*) in a non-technical sense to indicate the size and organization of the Jewish band. Luke used "captains" (*strategoï*) in a similar way, and by adding "of the Temple," indicates their

strictly Jewish character. However, by calling the Jewish Temple police *huperétai* (John 7:32, 45; 18:12). John seems to distinguish them from the Roman cohort.

4. PILATE ENTRUSTED A COHORT TO CAIAPHAS. Is it not plausible that, in the interests of prejudicing Rome against the Nazarene. Caiaphas request a cohort from Pilate to capture a dangerous revolutionary? By not specifying further the exact character of Jesus' movement the wily priest could avoid "complications." Perhaps Caiaphas need not even address his request to Pilate, but to the tribune. Was not such a guard at Jewish disposal at other times (cf. 27:65)? However, is it unthinkable that Pilate should have granted it personally, on the assumption that political co-operation in this unthreatening way could relieve tension in Judea? And would not Pilate's otherwise inexplicable availability early the next morning be more credible, if his men reported to him on their unusual activities the night before (27:1f.)? His reactions during the trials point to high-quality intelligence reports concerning the true character of their so-called "dangerous subversive" and indicate he possessed a good grasp of events (cf. 27:18, 23f.; Luke 23:4, 14f., 22).

The audacity of hypocrisy

26:48 **Now he that betrayed him gave them a sign, saying, Whomsoever I shall kiss, that is he: take him.** The kiss is decidedly part of the plot, not an afterthought on Judas' part. With many Paschal pilgrims crowding around Jerusalem, in case of a fight they ran the risk of arresting the wrong person in the dark. Why select *this* signal? Because this type of salutation was common among orientals when friends meet after a long absence, especially when a disciple greets his beloved teacher. However, it is unnecessary to think that the betrayer would select a signal as far as possible from his true sentiment, so as better to mask his perfidy. By contrast to the commentaries, the Gospel writers are surprisingly subdued in describing Judas and his betrayal kiss.

1. If the kiss were thought not absolutely necessary for the success of the plot, was this choice the backlash of vengefulness? Could not Judas have pointed Jesus out to the authorities without committing himself so openly, remaining in the background? Does not this hypocritical greeting prove that Jesus' friend had been transformed into a mortal foe? If so, rather than be either revolting

or repulsive to Judas, would not such a kiss be but part of the deep satisfaction of his demand for revenge? However, for men grimly determined to succeed, some definite, unmistakable sign of recognition was necessary in the semi-darkness to eliminate confusion and mistakes. So it is more likely that the kiss was selected, because it permits the betrayer to approach the victim for the most positive identification possible.

2. Was it that he was trying to assuage whatever in his conscience yet accused him of acting in a manner untrue to himself? Was this habitual act of formal respect and affection intended by Judas to hide from himself the full impact of his sin while doing it? Not too likely, because he may not have considered his act a sin in the final analysis, especially if he viewed the ensuing crisis as merely a crucial step in the final exaltation of Jesus to the Jewish Messiahship with its material throne, economic power and political clout. (See notes on 26:14.)
3. In harmony with his own warped views of Messiahship, this kiss was but an essential step toward the mistaken goal he envisioned. It was, thus, neither hypocritical nor vengeful, but simply part of the mechanism necessary to make his plan work. He himself could hold Jesus firm, distract Him and give the guards time to grab Him. At the same time, did Judas expect the kiss to have even a *positive* effect on Jesus, persuading Him of Judas' loyalty despite the fierceness of the crisis now beginning? Judas stood to gain, if Jesus were convinced of this. Thus, *for Judas, the kiss is not a betrayal of Jesus but of the enemies who stood in the way of Iscariot's Kingdom of the Messiah.* What Judas said publicly to the enemy (26:15, 48) may have no relationship to his own secret motives. Here is his hypocrisy.

This agrees better with Judas' consciousness of Jesus' many miracles, even if he forgot the Lord's ability to read the motives of his heart. This refusal to read baseness in Judas' manner is not to clothe the man with motives more or less respectable, but to understand how a common disciple like me could ever become capable of committing so terrible a sin as turning the Savior of the world over to His enemies. In fact, "The worst opponents of Christ are still those who betray with a kiss—such as those who oppose His claims while affecting to revere His character, and deny His Saviourship while acknowledging the excellence of His doctrine" (*P.H.C.*, XXIII, 543).

26:49 **And straightway he came to Jesus, and said, Hail, Rabbi; and kissed him.** *Straightway* should be understood in a relative sense,

i.e. "immediately" in reference to what? Did Judas, instantly upon arrival at the garden, walk right up to Jesus, give Him the betrayal kiss and turn Him over to His enemies who immediately hauled Him away, with the sole interruption of Peter's defense? John, however, clearly remember Jesus' bold self-surrender to the mob, an act that so overpowered them that He almost had to insist that they take Him (John 18:4-9). Solutions are related to the respective locations of Jesus, Judas, the apostles and the various components of the arresting party inside or outside the garden:

1. Would Jesus' bold challenge have had the startling moral ascendancy that it did, if Judas strode *straightway* up to Jesus, as the mob expected him to, and gave the prearranged signal in a manner obvious to all? On the other hand, in the shadows cast by the flickering torches and the Paschal moon, Judas may have acted prematurely. If, in his eagerness to betray Jesus, he forged ahead of the mob, he may have approached Jesus directly and awkwardly betrayed Him with a kiss before the main body of troops and authorities could make out what he had done. (The same effect would occur, if, out of fear of Jesus, the troops and authorities held back somewhat, and consequently in the half-darkness missed Judas' signal.) After Judas' designation, then, Jesus identified Himself to the mob, majestically challenging them to arrest Him and free His men. Some prefer this view because Jesus' regal bearing and unexpectedly bold challenge could still shake the sternest of men even after Judas' kiss and *precisely because they knew Him to be* their quarry. See Lenski on *John*, 1181f., for his own and Luther's arguments in favor of a miracle.
2. The PARAPHRASE AND HARMONY presents the view that Jesus, alone and unarmed, anticipated Judas' betrayal. Complete master of the situation, He offered Himself before Judas could act. This moral supremacy focused all attention on Him and avoided a universal round-up of His men. Then, to complete his part in the plot, Judas, who hitherto had been standing with the posse (John 18:5), blundered forward to give the now practically superfluous confirming kiss that signalled for anyone yet in doubt that Jesus is the one to arrest.

However, this gesture was neither totally worthless nor without effect. If the soldiers took the foreground, leaving the priests who knew Jesus behind them, for those officers who did not know Jesus

of Nazareth personally, His self-identification might have been interpreted as shielding the real insurrectionist they sought. If the Romans had orders from their superiors to arrest only the man whom Judas identified by the kiss, they would not have acted until he did. Further, by daring to approach their Foe and touching him, Judas broke the spell of whatever fear they had of His divine majesty or of some terrible miracle He might use to defend Himself from them. (Cf. John 18:4-7.) This emboldened them to act.

By kissing Him with particular fervor (*katephilesen*) as opposed to a simple kiss (*phileso*, v. 48), some believe Judas merely prolonged the unrepeatable sign to assure the guards of Jesus' identity. This would be consistent with his ostentatious, *Hail, Rabbi*. (Cf. 26:25, not "Lord, but 'Rabbi.'") Some see in this his conscience and affection that struggle with a stern will to get it over with. However, the kiss expressed strong emotion not inconsistent with his secret soul which he never sold out to Jesus' enemies. Dreaming only of future wealth, how would he treat the man who is his ticket to incalculable wealth and power? After all, he does not suspect that he is really turning Jesus over to His death. (Cf. 27:3; see notes on 26:14.)

II. HIS CHALLENGE TO MORAL SENSE (26:50)

26:50 **And Jesus said unto him, Friend, do that for which thou art come. Then they came and laid hands on Jesus, and took him.** Addressing Judas as *Friend (hetaïre)*, Jesus treats the man, not as a beloved "friend" (*philos*, cf. John 15:14f.), but holds him at the briefest of distance, "Buddy, mate." As in English, *Friend* can be used to address "someone whose name one does not know" (20:13; 22:12; Arndt-Gingrich, 314). Depending on context, *hetaïros* refers to one's companion or comrade in arms, one's mate on ships, at table, in slavery, etc. Consequently, it can also mean "lover, disciple, follower, adherent, partisan, body-guard" (Rocci, 776).

Reminding Judas of all that they had shared together, this exquisite word combines a rebuke of Judas' treachery with a touching appeal to his heart and conscience to dissuade the man from his determination. After all, Judas has not yet killed himself: he could yet repent as would Peter. This view harmonizes with the words whereby Jesus also challenged and shamed Judas, "Would you betray the Son of man with a kiss" (Luke 22:48)? By calling Judas' act by its real name, betrayal, His words were calculated to shock the man with the real

enormity of his sin. These words should haunt him, if he would but abandon his own mistaken views of Messiahship, while the gentleness of Christ's pleading could not yet arouse his conscience, break his heart and lead him to repent and ask forgiveness. Over Akeldama the noose was not yet tied for Judas Iscariot. . . .

Do that for which thou art come. Translated this way, this sentence is nonsense; for, by betraying Jesus with a kiss, Judas had *already* done that for which he had come. Jesus could know that his role in the entire procedure had just been played. So, why should the Lord still urge his betrayer to carry out his mission? Further, since the verb "do" does not appear in Greek here, the phrase (*hetaïre, eph' ho pâirei*) really breaks off suddenly, leaving His thought incomplete. Therefore, something must be supplied to complete it.

1. Some, like the RSV, treat it as a question: "Friend, for what are you come?" or, "Friend, what are you doing here?" Robertson (*Word Pictures*, I,215) believes Deissmann "has proven conclusively that it is a question, *eph'ho* in late Greek having the interrogative sense of *epi ti* (Robertson, *Grammar*, p. 725). . . . Most of the early translations (Old Latin, Old Syriac) took it as a question." However, *ho* is a not normally an interrogative pronoun, but a relative-demonstrative. Arndt-Gingrich (588) admit the possibility that the relative be used to take the place of the interrogative pronoun in a direct question but confess that the only example of this construction in our literature, i.e. Matthew 26:50, is much in dispute. Arndt-Gingrich (587) suggest as missing words, "friend, (are you misusing the kiss) for that (purpose) for which you are here?" or perhaps "in connection with that (= the purposes), for which (= for the realization of which) you have appeared (do you kiss me)?"
2. Blass-Debrunner (§ 300) term it . . .

"Controversial Matthew 26:50 . . . : hardly a direct question 'For what?' The easiest solution is to take it as a painful, ironic reminiscence of a toast like the one attested on a goblet from Syria: . . . 'Enjoy yourself! for that's why you are here.'"

It could be viewed as an sad exclamation, almost a groan: "What you are here for!" Judas, Jesus' companion, was on the wrong side, so the Lord's reaction compels him to grasp the outrageousness of what he is doing.

Either way, because Judas hid his dream of self-aggrandizement from Jesus, the Lord rightly rejects this apparently real affection as expressive of Judas' true motive.

Then they came and laid hands on Jesus, and took him. Matthew and Mark present this seizure before Peter's attack, while Luke and John appear to place it afterwards. However, the latter give general summaries of the night's activities, not a calculated refutation of their colleagues' affirmations. No one included a precise notation of the time or sequence. Accordingly, upon Judas' signal, when guards began to seize Jesus, Peter dashed in, his sword flashing. This temporarily halted the arrest. When Jesus halted Peter, the guards finished what they had begun. Then, as everyone turned his attention on Jesus, the disciples were permitted to escape with greater safety.

Having given His consent to suffer what He Himself had predicted and the Scriptures foresaw, declining every form of rescue whether from earth or heaven, He now willingly accepted those bonds that would be removed only to nail Him to the tree. But the only bonds which would or could hold Jesus, were not the puny chains of human manufacture, but love: "He loved me and gave Himself up for me."

The interruption by violence (26:51)

26:51 And behold, one of them that were with Jesus stretched out his hand, and drew his sword, and smote the servant of the high priest, and struck off his ear. Some other armed disciple (Simon the Zealot?), misinterpreting Jesus' earlier remark about buying swords (Luke 22:35ff.) and ignoring Jesus' demand that the disciples be permitted to leave (John 18:8), and recognizing the imminent danger in which Jesus now stood, cried out, "Lord, shall we strike with the sword?" (Luke 22:49). Not waiting for the answer and possibly emboldened by Jesus' overpowering His would-be assailants (John 18:6), the dauntless Peter drew his sword and rushed to attack a superior force single-handedly. With the courage of the desperate, he was determined to take out as many as he could before getting killed himself. He would show Jesus here and now the sincerity of his earlier promises of loyalty unto death!

But in doing so, he struck an ill-considered blow for worldly Messiahship, the same dangerous concept that drove Judas to create this crisis for Jesus. Peter's violence reflected against the Lord Himself by justifying His enemies' fear that the Lord was the revolutionary

head of a band of cut-throats. He was robbing Jesus of His right to claim, "My Kingdom is not of this world. If it were, my officers would fight to prevent my arrest by the Jews. But now my kingdom is from another place" (John 18:36). Lenski (*Matthew*, 1050) wrote: "Peter acts as though Jesus meant none of the things he said. His love does not listen and obey. . . ."

We too fall for Peter's temptation when we put our trust in material weapons for the advancement of the Church of Christ. Wealth, political influence, power-plays and materialistic world-views that secularize in order to popularize, are methods that possess no divine power to save. However well meaning, these attempts to grab a larger slice of power and prestige in a power-hungry world are but the same violent slashing of swords. It denies Jesus' true goals and spiritual methods, and if unhindered, renders Scripture useless and effectually shuts the Kingdom of heaven against men. Such a program is as much an embarrassment to Jesus' cause now as Peter's violence was to Him then. (Contrast II Cor. 10:3-5.)

Smote Malchus (John 18:10) *the servant of the high priest*. This slave was a trusted personal agent of the high priest, a fact that explains his intervention to arrest Jesus. *Struck off his ear*: unquestionably, Peter aimed a deadly blow that could have split the skull of Malchus, but the servant's instinctive sidestep foiled Peter's thrust, so he lost only his right ear (Luke 22:49; John 18:10). If the slave wore armor, the blow harmlessly thudded into his shoulder armor. Peter really intended to kill the man.

The indefinite description of Peter as *one of them that were with Jesus* (John 18:10) furnishes incidental evidence of the early dating of Matthew's document. In the darkness the soldiers did not learn the identity of the one who took up arms to resist arrest. To name him while he were alive could have meant unnecessary trials for the man who not only resisted in Gethsemane but also continued to be a thorn in the side of the Sanhedrin which was still ruling when the Synoptic Gospels were penned. (Mary of Bethany is a parallel case, 26:7.) Should Matthew's book, supposedly current only among Christians, contain information that informers among false brethren could transform into vicious arms against the Church? (Cf. notes on 24:10.) But John, who alone names him, wrote long after Peter's death under Nero sometime before 68 A.D. (Eusebius, *Eccl. Hist.* II,25; III,24).

Alford's refutation of this hypothesis is ill-founded, because in the high priest's courtyard Peter's recognition as the assailant

of the servant had lost its sting, precisely because Jesus had healed the man. Thereafter none could complain without admitting Jesus' supernatural power to heal hence His God-given right to say what they rejected.

III. HIS CALL FOR RESTRAINT

A. The Law That Forbids Violence (26:52)

26:52 Then saith Jesus unto him, Put up again thy sword into its place: for all they that take the sword shall perish with the sword. If the use of violence in defense of Christianity were ever justified, this is the moment to establish its appropriateness. Nevertheless, Jesus moved decisively to block His defenders. What did He mean here?

1. He did not proscribe the legitimate use of weapons of their ownership. It remained *your sword* to be *put again into its place*. However, some interpret these words as expressing Jesus' repudiation of ownership of any sword and of every use of it as having nothing to do with His cause. However, Jesus never demanded that Peter *throw it away*, as if He had a policy of *absolute* non-resistance, for this would be a contradiction of Luke 22:36. Rather, His defense is not the cause, time nor place to use it.
2. Nor does He repudiate the appropriate use of the sword in human justice (Rom. 13:4), as if He hereby threatened constituted authority. To the contrary, Jesus' words may be considered as a legal sentence pronounced, not as a simple future, but as the imperative future (Alford, I,278). Thus, His maxim becomes a virtual parallel to Genesis 9:6 to justify capital punishment: "Those who wantonly take justice into their own hands and kill, rightly deserve death." Thus, Jesus stood up for the maintenance of law and order, even if His own trial would be illegal and its sentence unjust.
3. A divine law of retribution? "Use the sword against men and God will similarly destroy you." In this violent spirit there is no time for mercy or forgiveness (18:21-35). Despite their evil use of the legal system, these are "little ones" whose importance to God must not be despised (18:6-14). They know not what they do!
4. A practical consideration? "Killing leads only to more senseless killing. You cannot avoid escalation. Success in eliminating some does not mean destroying all. You too may be killed." (Cf. Sirach

3:26.) Ironically, this futile, bloody course was followed by many demagogues in Israel in their last desperate bid for freedom from Rome, and received what they deserved in blood.

5. An ethical principle? The use of bloodshed or violence, militarism and inquisitions to advance Christ's Kingdom, is hereby forbidden. (Cf. John 18:36.) If even saving the King, the supreme justification, is interdicted, how much less justified is the use of force to defend its lesser interests? Otherwise, Christianity's foes will take up the sword to attack the Kingdom, question its motives, block its interests, hinder its progress and silence its message,—all in reaction to sword-swinging Christians. The only way to transform the course of history is through loving persuasion, not through belligerence and bluster.

So, Jesus commanded Peter to sheath his sword, not because all use of the sword is wrong, since Jesus Himself did not believe this, but because all taking the law into one's hands by violent measures is wrong. Because the rule applied to every instance of private vengeance, Peter's was a case in point and required correction.

B. The Heavenly Might That Protects Him (26:53)

26:53 Or thinkest thou that I cannot beseech my Father, and he shall even now send me more than twelve legions of angels? This reproaches His rash follower: "Do you really suppose I could not escape if I wanted to?" If a Roman *legion* was comprised of 6000 soldiers, He had 72,000 *angels* at His command. This potential Heaven-sent defense force provides two excellent reasons for not fighting to defend Jesus:

1. Peter's feeble efforts are absolutely unnecessary and worse than useless in light of the virtually unlimited, formidable fire-power at His disposal, should He choose to use it. If little children are watched by the angels (18:10), how much more God's only Son? If God's prophets are protected by heavenly might. (Remember II Kings 6:8-17: Elisha surrounded at Dothan!), how much more so His Son?
2. The mob's efforts to take Him against His will could avail nothing. It is immaterial whether or not Jesus' overawing the soldiers (John 18:4-6) be a supernatural expression of His divine power and

majesty, no number of men on earth could touch Him, unless He permitted it.

If the Lord willingly surrendered, one arresting officer was enough. If He really resisted, all the world's armies would never suffice! The irony of *twelve* defenders (Jesus and the eleven Apostles) against a multitude of Roman soldiers is only surpassed by the incomparably greater defence by *twelve legions of angels* whom Jesus sees ready to march but whom He refuses to summon. So He would die, not because unprotected or because a single foe got behind His line of defense, but because He deliberately abandoned His protection.

C. The Bonds That Hold Him (26:54)

26:54 How then should the scriptures be fulfilled, that thus it must be? Here is another argument against fighting: Any kind of deliverance was completely irreconcilable with the destiny predicted for the suffering Servant of Jahveh (Isa. 53; Ps. 22; Zech. 12:10). Therefore, by attempting Jesus' defense, anyone who agreed with Peter was rejecting the deliberate purpose of God stated in *the Scriptures*.

In a critical moment such as this, a man's character and his confidence in his religion are revealed for what they are. The hardest character trait of all to duplicate is a patient, long-suffering love that quietly submits to this outrage. But unfaked godliness is born of confidence in Scripture: *it has to be this way, because the Bible says so*. Despite the fact that those prophetic Scriptures predicted His suffering and revealed that His death was absolutely necessary, Jesus does not hesitate to point men to them as true and God-sent. (See on 26:56.) We trust the Old Testament, because our Lord did, even though it meant death for Him to believe it.

IV. HIS REPROACH OF COWARDICE (26:55)

The Moral Inconsistency of Their Tactics

26:55 In that hour said Jesus to the multitudes, Are ye come out as against a robber with swords and staves to sieze me? I sat daily in the temple teaching, and ye took me not. The specific group addressed is "the chief priests and captains of the temple and elders, who had come out against him" (Luke 22:52). The presence of these dignitaries in this night raid is not at all improbable. They would have come to

direct the arrest and make instant decisions, if such became necessary, as well as to give this lynch mob a show of legitimacy (Luke 22:52f.).

Because *lestés* also means "revolutionary, insurrectionist" (Arndt-Gingrich, 474), *as against a robber* suggests two interpretations:

1. He draws an ironic contrast between His own conduct as He sees it and the way they see Him: on the one hand, a Jewish rabbi quietly lecturing in the Temple and, on the other, a dangerous terrorist engaged in subversive activity to support a revolution! Fully the Master of Himself, He scorns the crude arms to which they must now resort, since *they have no other*. Quiet Dialogue, convincing Scriptural argument, intelligent, fair-minded debate and honest, free decision are weapons they do not possess. But these are the arms with which He met His foes and with which He would have us promote His interests. (Cf. 28:18; II Cor. 10:3ff.; II Tim. 2:24f.; Titus 1:9ff.) It is one of the paradoxes of history that, whereas Jesus' enemies feared that He might be a dangerous revolutionary challenging the Establishment's power structure, Judas probably betrayed Jesus precisely because He had refused to do just that!
2. *As against a robber* alludes to their manner of arrest, a night foray with its ridiculous show of force, that treated Him as a rebel leader and fugitive from justice, as if His privacy in the garden were an attempt to escape from His well-deserved fate as a nationalist guerilla who justified his lawlessness in the name of patriotism. Jesus was no Barabbas (Mark 15:7; Luke 23:19; John 18:40). On the contrary, His daily teaching the way of truth and righteousness in broad daylight in the most public place possible, the Jerusalem Temple in the very heart of Judaism, proved that His was no clandestine, guerilla movement of opposition to the Roman regime, but one that was open, fearless and honest. He had made no effort to conceal Himself or flee. In fact, of His own accord, He had just come forward to turn Himself over to them. And yet they call out the army just to cope with a *teacher* (cf. 26:47)?

Unless Jesus refers exclusively to the events of the Last Week, *I sat daily in the temple teaching* points to a considerable ministry in Jerusalem, incidental Synoptic confirmation of John's reports (John chaps. 2, 5, 7-10). *Ye took me not*. These treacherous leaders had made no public move to arrest Him and when they attempted something, their men returned empty-handed (John 7:45f.).

At His trial Jesus would again expose this cowardly attack launched in the absence of people who could more honestly judge of its injustice (cf. John 18:20f.). While the corruption, cowardice and malice of Jesus' accusers do not prove His innocence, that He has such as enemies is circumstantial evidence in His favor and suggests further examination of His character and claims.

Some criticize Jesus' rejection of their tactics as vengeful and unworthy of Him. On the contrary, His dignified protest reveals their sin to their face, that they might repent of it. That they did not immediately do so does not mean that His self-possessed, godly manner did not affect any of them or would not haunt them until their death and serve as their condemnation at judgment.

V. HIS SOURCE OF CONFIDENCE: EVERYTHING ACCORDING TO PLAN (26:56)

26:56 But all this is come to pass, that the scriptures of the prophets might be fulfilled. Then all the disciples left him, and fled. Jesus calmly accepted the indignity of it all, because He was convinced that His suffering was part of a larger picture painted, even if in dark colors, by the prophets. This conviction of the true significance of His suffering tended to calm His spirit. His resignation here is tantamount to saying: "Let the Scriptures be fulfilled" (Mark 14:49). Let God's Word be true, even if it means a cross for me! Lenski (*Matthew*, 1055):

"Here are the real forces at work in what is taking place this night: God is carrying out his prophetic plans, Jesus is thus voluntarily putting himself into his captors' hands. That and that alone is why this army is scoring such a huge victory against a single humble man!"

The hand that moved events that night, was not that of evil men but the divine purpose of God. Plummer (*Matthew*, 375) asks:

Did this serene statement of His reason for submitting without resistance convey to the disciples, and in particular to Judas, any impression of Christ's confidence that His cause would in the end be triumphant? Here may be the turning-point in the attitude of Judas from greed and resentment to remorse. He [i.e. Judas] had been absolutely successful; and, at the very moment of his success, his Victim claims, with unruffled assurance, to be

fulfilling the prophecies respecting the Messiah. . . . It is certainly remarkable that Judas is nowhere said to have borne witness against Jesus at any of the trials before the Sanhedrin or Pilate or Herod. And he could have quoted utterances which would have told against Christ in a prejudiced court; e.g. His predictions of His coming again in glory, and of the destruction of the Temple and of Jerusalem. . . . What was it that withheld him from doing so? Some change apparently had begun.

However, if Judas were already hoping for Jesus' supernatural victory, whereby the betrayer manipulated God's power for his own promotion, he would never desire to testify against Him, only for Him. Hence, Judas could believe in Jesus' victory *as he himself understood it*, but would not change until his own dream were crushed by Jesus' being sentenced to death (27:3).

Then all the disciples left him, and fled. These courageous men had not fled. A word from their Commander would unleash their attack. But if they are not permitted to resist Jesus' arrest, they are strangely unneeded. Stunned by His order prohibiting all resistance, they stood paralyzed by His inexplicable inaction. They lost their will to resist because He apparently had none, blindly convinced that Scripture justified the arrest. Since the soldiers were uninterested in the disciples, the temptation to flee now became imperious.

The disciples' abandoning Him appears somewhat less cowardly in light of Jesus' request of the authorities that the disciples should be permitted to go (John 18:8). Further, their flight was less culpable than it was providential, because of what might have happened, had some of them been caught and tried either with Jesus or separately. Stunned more deeply than Simon Peter, they might not have stopped with denying Jesus. They might also have been shocked so irreparably that nothing could have saved them. Like the remorseful Judas, they might not have lived to see the resurrection nor be transformed by its victory. By opening the door for His disciples to leave—whether by precipitate flight or by prudently and quietly fading back into the protective cover of surrounding darkness—Jesus lovingly shielded them. This is one sense in which Jesus' prayer found fuller realization: "Of those whom you gave me, I lost not one" (John 18:9; 17:12).

However, He was abandoned by human friends, God's Lamb in the hands of the wolves. The "scandal" they had earlier repudiated as unthinkable had just taken place, and they abandoned Him. They dismissed His promise to meet them in Galilee, unaware that

it guaranteed their preservation and victory as much as His. As faithfully as he would record any triumph, Matthew records his own dishonorable failure in faith with absolute honesty. He too ran. . . .

What may be learned about ourselves in this section? How short-lived is human steadfastness, even when bolstered by earnest promises! How self-deceptive is the intention to promote one's own happiness while making loud protestation of loyalty to Christ! Religious noises do not equal costly submission to God's will. Of what inconceivable wickedness are even godly men capable!

What may be learned about Jesus? Gone is the spiritual turmoil of His earlier agonizing over the cross. He is possessed by the peace of God that passes understanding. There is not even a hint of rage or contempt in His demeanor. Fully Master of Himself, He reigns as Lord of the situation. He responds to Judas with marvelous mildness. Peter's wild onslaught is halted with remarkable decision. With reasonableness and effectiveness, without bitterness and spite, He exposed this night attack by the authorities as cowardly. Despite every attempt to humiliate Him, His every move reflects the majesty of God and the authority of Scripture in His life. Just as at His baptism, His every move says, "Let it be so now; it is proper for us to do this to fulfill all righteousness." God's will is the only thing that counts. Barclay (*Matthew*, II,388): ". . . the man who would not fight is enthroned for ever in the hearts of men."

FACT QUESTIONS

1. State in detail what happened at the arrest of Jesus giving the correct order of the events.
2. How was the arresting force composed? Were Romans involved in it?
3. How did Judas act during the arrest?
4. What was Jesus' reaction to Judas? Explain the meaning of "Friend."
5. In what other ways should we translate "Do that for which thou art come"? Why?
6. How successful was Peter's attack? What did Jesus do about Peter's results?
7. What is the meaning of "Put your sword back into its place; for all who take the sword will perish by the sword"?
8. To what Scripture(s) did Jesus allude which were fulfilled by His enemies' ungodly attack on God's Messiah?
9. With what words did Jesus rebuke the arresting party? What did He mean?