

## The Arrest

### Three Days

When Jesus and the twelve disciples reclined at the last Passover feast, Jesus said, *"I have **earnestly desired** to eat this Passover with you before I suffer; for I say to you, I shall never again eat it until it is fulfilled in the kingdom of God"* (Luke 22:15-16). Jesus conveyed the strong emotion He felt by using two very descriptive words. He said, *"**With great desire, I have desired**"* to eat this particular Passover meal. It is the end of a long line of Passovers, which began the night before Israel departed Egypt. This meal ends Jesus' earthly work to fulfill the promises made to Eve, Abraham, and David. After this, He will yield Himself to others to be scourged and crucified. The world would soon know the full love of God as *"He Gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish, but have eternal life"* (John 3:16).

There is a striking similarity between one of Jesus' disciples and an individual in King David's court. A close friend to David was part of a conspiracy. *"Even my close friend in whom I trusted, Who ate my bread, Has lifted up his heel against me"* (Psalms 41:9). One of those closest to Jesus, who ate meals with Him, the disciple Judas, *"Went to the chief priests and said, 'What are you willing to give me to betray Him to you?' And they weighed out thirty pieces of silver to him"* (Matthew 26:14-15). That is the price for a slave, as given in Exodus 21:32. It is also the price mentioned in Zechariah 11:12, as part of the messianic prophecies.

The chief priests and elders had not arrested Jesus in the Temple. They feared the crowds who believed that God was with Him. Judas knew where Jesus went to pray and knew the masses would not be there. The leaders could do as they wished. Leading the chief priests with their guards, Judas approached Jesus and delivered the predetermined signal to the Jews, a kiss on the cheek. In the culture of first-century Israel, a kiss on the cheek was a standard greeting for a student to a teacher, a sign of deep respect. It was also a display of honor, and brotherly love (Luke 7:45; Romans 16:16; 1 Corinthians 16:20; 2 Corinthians 13:12; 1 Thessalonians 5:26; 1 Peter 5:14). Jesus acknowledged this hypocritical action, *"Jesus said to him, 'Judas, are you betraying the Son of Man with a kiss?'"* (Luke 22:48).

In 2004, the National Geographic Society (NGS) presented lengthy articles on The Gospel of Judas, a gnostic document from the second century A.D. The NGS, along with PBS, worked very hard to use the fabricated, four-part codex, to contradict the Bible account of Jesus and Judas. The basic story in the Gospel of Judas contradicts other gnostic gospels. It states that only Judas understood Jesus' teaching. Jesus needed someone to betray Him so that He could fulfill prophecy and, therefore, chose Judas to turn Him over to the Jews. If Judas were obeying Jesus' instructions, why did Jesus call Judas *"son of perdition,"* John 17:12? Why did Jesus state that it would have been better if Judas had never been born, Matthew 26:24? And why did Judas commit suicide when he realized that Jesus was to be crucified (Matthew 27:5)?

The days of Jesus' active work on earth ended. He now submitted to Temple guards and the squad of Roman soldiers who had come with Judas. The timing of this event, between midnight and 3:00 A.M., is unusual from several aspects. The Sanhedrin did not have a regularly-armed band. The chief priests, with a Roman appointed High Priest, had guards and a Roman detachment to enforce their law. Some of the Sanhedrin were believers and not welcome for the planned trial. This unlawful arrest was just the beginning of events that Jesus told His disciples would happen. In Galilee almost

seven months earlier, Jesus had said that *"He must go to Jerusalem, and suffer many things from the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed"* (Matthew 16:21).

So the Roman cohort and the officers of the Jews, *"arrested Jesus, bound Him, and led Him to Annas first; for he was father-in-law of Caiaphas, who was high priest that year"* (John 18:12-13). Annas was High Priest from 7 A.D. to 14 A.D. before being replaced by Roman decree. Caiaphas was appointed High Priest in 25 A. D. The Law of Moses appointed the office for the life of the person. With the arrest of Jesus, the preference went to Annas, who by Jewish Law still held that office even though Rome controlled the Ephod of the High Priest.

The "assembly of elders," or Sanhedrin, finally assembled with Caiaphas to hear the testimony against Jesus. A guilty Judgement could only be given if two or more witnesses agreed. The elders could not even pay witnesses to agree. Finally, *"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.' Jesus said to him, 'You have said it yourself'"* (Matthew 26:63-65). With that confirmation, they sent Jesus to the Romans for sentencing for declaring Himself to be the Son of God and King of Israel.

Do we send Jesus away?