

## CHURCH OF THE REDEEMER

717 North Stapley Drive, Mesa, AZ 85203 Phone: (480) 833-7500

<b>Series:</b>	<b>The Miracles of Jesus</b>		Pastor/Teacher
<b>Number:</b>	<b>10</b>		Gary L.W. Johnson
<b>Text:</b>	<b>Matthew 26:51; Mark 14:47; Luke 22:50; John 18:1-27</b>		
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### THE HEALING OF MALCHUS' EAR (Part II)

Guilt and Grace in The Garden. This is how the late noted Bible teacher Warren Wiersbe describes this miracle. The scene has recently been described in a popular book this way: "The traitor Judas leads a pack of Temple guards into the garden. Each man carries either a club or a sword, and some also wield the torches and lanterns that cut through the darkness. Yet the flames are not bright enough to ensure that the guards can see which of the bearded men before them is Jesus. Judas has anticipated this and walks innocently to the Nazarene. *Greetings, Rabbi*, he says coldly, kissing Jesus on the cheek. This is the agreed-upon signal between Judas and the Temple guards. *Friend*, Jesus replies, *do what you came for*. He then turns and looks at the guards. *Who is it you want? Jesus of Nazareth*, comes the reply. *I am he*, Jesus answers. The Temple guards are not Gentile Roman soldiers but Jewish employees of the Temple courts. Nonetheless, they are physical men, well acquainted with the force needed to make an arrest. Before Jesus's wrists can be tied, however, Peter draws his new sword and cuts off the ear of Malchus, the servant of Caiaphas. *Put your sword away*, Jesus commands the ever-impulsive Peter. *For those who draw the sword must also die by the sword*. Then Jesus submits to being bound and led away. For Judas, all has gone according to plan. At this late hour, few have seen the commotion."<sup>1</sup>

- I. **THE SETTING.** "The Kidron Valley is located east of Jerusalem, between the city wall and the Mount of Olives, and the garden of Gethsemane is on the western slope of Olivet. Jesus often went to this garden with His disciples, no doubt to rest, meditate, and pray (Luke 22:39). Jerusalem was filled with pilgrims attending the Passover, and Jesus would want to get away from the crowded city to a private place. He knew that Judas would come for Him there, and He was ready. Human history began in a garden (Gen. 2:8ff.), and the first sin of man was committed in that garden. The first Adam disobeyed God and was cast out of the garden, but the Last Adam (1 Cor. 15:45) was obedient as He went into the garden of Gethsemane. In a garden, the first Adam brought sin and death to mankind, but Jesus, by His obedience, brought righteousness and life to all who will trust Him. He was *obedient unto death, even the death of the cross* (Phil. 2:8). History will one day end in another garden, the heavenly city that John describes in Revelation 21 and 22. In that garden, there will be no more death and no more curse. The river of the water of life will flow ceaselessly, and the tree of life will produce bountiful fruit. Eden was the garden of disobedience and sin; Gethsemane was the garden of obedience and submission; and heaven shall be the eternal garden of delight and satisfaction, to the glory of God. The name *Gethsemane* means *oil press*. Even today there are ancient olive trees in Gethsemane, though certainly not the ones that were there in Jesus' day. The olives would be picked and put into the press for their oil. What a picture of suffering! So our Lord would go through the *oil press* and the *winepress* (Isa. 63:3) and taste our judgment for us. The brook Kidron is also significant. The name means *dusky, gloomy*, referring to the dark waters that were often stained by the blood from the temple sacrifices. Our Lord and

His disciples were about to go through *dark waters*, and Jesus would experience the *waves and billows* of God's wrath (Ps. 42:7; also note Jonah 2:3). The Kidron had special historical significance, for King David crossed the Kidron when he was rejected by his nation and betrayed by his own son, Absalom (2 Sam. 15; also note John 18:23). Jesus had been rejected by His people and at that very moment was being betrayed by one of His own disciples! It is interesting that David's treacherous counselor Ahithophel hanged himself (2 Sam. 17:23), and David's treacherous son Absalom was caught in a tree and killed while hanging there (2 Sam. 18:9-17). Judas, of course, went out and hanged himself (Matt. 27:3-10)."<sup>2</sup>

II. ***TWO MIRACLES OCCURRED.*** Spurgeon observed: "The two remarkable miracles which our Lord wrought in the Garden of Gethsemane ought not to be lightly passed over. The first was the falling to the ground of the soldiers and the servants of the priests. Jesus did but speak to them, and there was such power and majesty about his presence and his voice that *they went backward, and fell to the ground.* They were quite unable to seize him. Here was a display in some measure of Christ's divine power. These men would have fallen into the grave, and into hell itself, if Jesus had put forth the full force of his strength. He only spake a word, and down they fell; they had no power whatever against him. Beloved, take comfort from this miracle. When the enemies and foes of Christ come against him, he can easily overthrow them. Many times have there been crises in the Church's history when it seemed as if the truth would be destroyed. Then has come the opportunity for divine interposition. A word from Christ has vanquished his enemies. They that were waiting, like lions ready to leap upon their prey, have been disappointed. Jesus has but spoken, and they have fallen backward to the ground. Wherefore, take heart, and be not dismayed even in the darkest hour. Let Christ only utter a word, and the victory is certain to be with him."<sup>3</sup>

III. ***A DEMONSTRATION OF JESUS' MAJESTY.*** As the mob approached, Jesus said "Who is it you want?" and they replied, "Jesus of Nazareth," and Jesus declared "*I AM HE.*" "He even repeats the reply, *I am He.* This it was that caused the multitude to go backward and then to fall to the ground. Both verbs have their subjects only in their endings: *apelthon* and *epesan* -- *they went back, and they fell down*, two aorists to denote the two facts. The preposition in the first verb (*apo*) indicates that they shrank and retreated *from* Jesus, who was facing them. This cannot mean that only some of the men stumbled backward and fell. We might imagine it so, but John, who with his own eyes saw what happened, does not say this. He could easily have inserted *some* or another limiting subject; but he writes no subject at all, the verb endings are sufficient. He, indeed, might have added *all*, either with or without emphasis; but by leaving out an expressed subject, the verbs carry the emphasis: *they went backward, and they fell to the ground.*"<sup>4</sup> Isaiah 43:10-13 highlights the significance of Jesus claiming to be *I AM HE.*

IV. ***A DEMONSTRATION OF JESUS' MERCY AND GRACE.*** Malchus is actually leading the mob and is at the forefront, and this suggests that he was doing the speaking. Therefore, Peter struck him with his sword. The immediate healing of the man's ear is now followed by Jesus' obedience to his Father's will. "Behind the actions of sinful men the unalterable purposes of God were being accomplished. Jesus simply said, *Shall I not drink the cup the Father has given me?* It was not what Jesus suffered at the hands of men that made atonement for sin, it was what he suffered at the hands of God the Father. He was made to be sin! Death did not burden him, but death as the bearer of sin did make him sweat drops of blood. He dreaded and shrank from the coming separation from God, something he had never known. To be separated from God is the greatest tragedy in the

world. To be forever separated from God is hell. In his humiliation, Jesus suffered greatly, and in drinking the cup he showed subservience, obedience, and meekness. Verse 12 says, *They bound him*. It is laughable. While it is a statement of fact, it could be read with a question mark, *They bound him?* The *band*, the council, the chief captain, and the temple police rushed at him, knotted the ropes, and thought they bound him! What really bound him? His love for you and me. His love for the elect. *That* was what bound him – not the hemp cords of sinful, foolish, desperate men – but the eternal cords of divine love. This scene affords an apt illustration of the doctrine of substitution. As the Good Shepherd steps to the front of the army and demands release for his flock, he is doing on a small scale what he did once for all at Calvary. He willingly submitted himself to the penalty due sin – the shame of the cross, the sharpness of death, the separation from God, the humiliation of the grave – all of this, that we might not be sin’s captives.”<sup>5</sup>

## ENDNOTES

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<sup>1</sup> Bill O’Reilly and Martin Dugard, *Killing Jesus: A History* (Henry Holt, 2013), p. 223.

<sup>2</sup> Warren Wiersbe, *Be Transformed: NT Commentary John 13-21* (David Cook, 1986), p. 105.

<sup>3</sup> *A Treasury of Spurgeon on The Life and Work of Our Lord: The Passion and Death of our Lord IV* (rpt. Baker, 1979), p. 163.

<sup>4</sup> R. C. H. Lenski, *The Interpretation of St. John’s Gospel* (Augsburg, 1942), p. 1180.

<sup>5</sup> P. W. Comfort and W. C. Hawley, *Opening The Gospel of John* (Tyndale, 1994), p. 283.