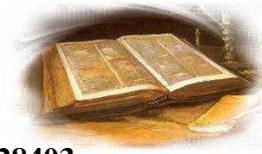


The Examiner



Published by the Winter Park church of Christ
Meeting at: 2122 Market Street; Wilmington NC 28403
www.winterparkcocnc.com

Vol. 9, No. 4

Edited by John Cripps

May 2nd, 2021

The Arrest of Jesus - by Ray Madrigal

The gospels of **Matthew (26:47-56)**, **Mark (14:43-52)**, **Luke (22:47-53)**, and **John (18:2-12)** all narrate the awesome and awful account of Jesus' arrest. The scene seems ominous from the very start. Jesus has already informed his closest companions that one of them would betray him into the hands of sinful men, and yet another would deny any association with him whatsoever. Although the disciples considered it quite difficult to believe that such treason and sedition could be found among them, in fact they all would eventually forsake him that very night. As Jesus contemplated the horrible events that were about to take place, Peter, James, and John were unable to stay awake for even one hour and pray with him during that momentous night. The spirit was willing, but the flesh was quite weak indeed.

The synoptic gospels unanimously describe Judas as "one of the twelve." Why this detail? Could it be that this is a timeless message for all disciples everywhere? If one of the closest companions of our Lord could commit such betrayal, it is certainly possible for me, for you, for any twentieth-century (or third millennium) disciple to commit similar

acts of spiritual treason and perfidy. In truth, it is possible for modern disciples to treat Jesus with great contempt and dishonor whenever they commit apostasy and fall away (**Heb. 6:6**). Ignorance, neglect, indifference, apathy, hypocrisy all have a spiritual dimension that translates into religious rebellion. There is certainly more than one way to betray the Son of man with a kiss. Of course, Jesus knew in advance what Judas would do, and even predicted the course of events that would later transpire that very night. The one who "ate of my bread, has lifted his heel against me" (**Ps. 41:9; Mark 14:18; John 13:18, 26**). Although Judas would later have a change of heart, the damage was done, and could not be reversed.

The gospel of John informs us that a coalition of (Roman) soldiers and (Jewish) officials from the chief priests and Pharisees was formed to arrest Jesus of Nazareth. Although this motley crew was equipped with "lanterns and torches and weapons," they all "drew back and fell to the ground" when Jesus identified himself to them: "I am he" (**18:3, 6**). It is amazing that the combined strength of Jerusalem and Rome could only subdue Jesus on his terms. Even during

this dark night of despair, Jesus was in complete control of the situation. The Son of God voluntarily submitted to the will of the Father, and thus was arrested at the hands of sinful men. Though Jesus could have marshaled the forces of twelve legions of angels (**Matt. 26:53**) to rescue him at this perilous moment, instead, he willingly drank the cup which had been prepared by the Father.

When Jesus' companions finally realized what was happening, "one of those who stood by drew his sword, and struck the slave of the high priest and cut off his ear" (**Mark 14:47**). Although all four canonical gospels depict this remarkable event, only John mentions names. The brave and defiant disciple was, of all people, Simon Peter, who would later deny that he even knew Jesus. The slave's name was Malchus (**18:10**). Only Luke tells us that Jesus immediately "touched his ear and healed him" (**22:51**). The combined details of the gospels tell us in no uncertain terms that this was no time for fighting (although see **Luke 22:35-38**). As Jesus would later tell Pilate, and as Jesus' followers would later learn, "My kingdom is not of this world; if my kingdom were of this world, my servants would fight, that I might not be handed over to the Jews; but my kingdom is not from the world" (**John 18:36**). The miraculous healing of Malchus' ear was yet another obvious reminder of Jesus' authority and power even at this hour of crisis. "When I was with you day after day in the temple, you did not lay hands on me. But this is your hour, and the

power of darkness" (**Luke 22:53**).

In describing the cowardly behavior of the disciples, both Mark and Matthew make note of the direct fulfillment of the Old Testament Scriptures. "All forsook him and fled" (**Mark 14:50-52, cf. 14:27**). Those who had followed Jesus for so long, at this moment of truth, simply ran away. Perhaps confused and disoriented, one young man left his linen cloth behind and "ran away naked." Misunderstanding the nature of the situation, and seeing their leader bound and (seemingly) powerless, the disciples ran away, looking for some place to hide. Since their shepherd seemed defeated and stricken, the bewildered sheep quickly scattered (**Zech. 13:7**).

The record of Jesus' arrest in the garden of Gethsemane portrays a resolute Savior determined to submit to the divine will and endure great suffering in order to secure salvation for all who profess Christ. That he had the power to summon the angelic host to rescue him from this imminent danger only underscores his great love for mankind. Jesus knew in advance what was about to take place. He accepted the worship of those who arrested him, and witnessed the rapid dispersion of his closest friends. Jesus experienced emotional as well as physical pain but was determined to give up everything, including his own life, to make atonement for sins possible. Although the awful and terrible events surrounding Jesus' arrest in the garden would immediately lead to his death by crucifixion, his

bodily resurrection would soon demonstrate the impotence of death itself, and usher in the blessed hope of eternal life. "Thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ" (1 Cor. 15:57). - 8005 Dumont Ct., Temple Terrace, Florida 336

--- Via - Truth Magazine Vol. XLIV: 1 p 3 January 2000

The Scourging of Jesus - by David McClister

Crucifixion was an agonizing, torturous death, but Jesus endured a torture that was nearly as, or perhaps equally, excruciating before he ever got to the cross. This was the pain he suffered when he was scourged.

Scourging, called verberatio by the Romans, was possibly the worst kind of flogging administered by ancient courts. While the Jews administered whippings in the synagogues for certain offenses, these were mild in comparison to scourging. Scourging was not normally a form of execution, but it certainly was brutal enough to be fatal in many cases. A person certainly could be beaten to death by the scourge if that was desired. Its purpose was not only to cause great pain, but to humiliate as well. To scourge a man was to beat him worse than one would beat a stupid animal. It was belittling, debasing, and demeaning. It was considered such a degrading form of punishment that, according to the Porcian (248 B.C.) and Sempronian (123 B.C.) laws, Roman citizens were exempt from it. It was, therefore, the punishment appropriate only for slaves and non-Romans, those who were

viewed as the lesser elements in Roman society. To make it as humiliating as possible, scourging was carried out in public.

The instrument used to deliver this form of punishment was called in Latin a flagellum or a flagrum. This was much different from the bull whip that is more common in our culture. It was instead more like the old British cat o' nine tails, except that the flagellum was not designed merely to bruise or leave welts on the victim. The flagellum was a whip with several (at least three) thongs or strands, each perhaps as much as three feet long, and the strands were weighted with lead balls or pieces of bone. This instrument was designed to lacerate. The weighed thongs struck the skin so violently that it broke open. The church historian Eusebius of Caesarea recounts with vivid, horrible detail a scene of scourging. He says, "For they say that the bystanders were struck with amazement when they saw them lacerated with scourges even to the innermost veins and arteries, so that the hidden inward parts of the body, both their bowels and their members, were exposed to view" (Ecclesiastical History, Book 4, chap. 15).

The victim of a scourging was bound to a post or frame, stripped of his clothing, and beaten with the flagellum from the shoulders to the loins. The beating left the victim bloody and weak, in unimaginable pain, and near the point of death. It is no doubt that weakness from his scourging was largely the reason Jesus was unable to carry his cross all the way to Golgotha

(Matt. 27:32 and parallels).

As noted above, the beating administered by synagogues was not nearly as drastic as a Roman scourging. First, the instrument used in the synagogues was a lighter whip and was not weighted with metal or bone. Second, according to the tradition recorded in the Mishnah (tractate Makkot), the judges would determine if the victim could survive the full measure of the beating required by the law (forty lashes). If he could not, the number of lashes was reduced. Third, the Law of Moses limited whippings to forty lashes (Deut. 25:3), which was a provision to prevent excessive humiliation. The Jews usually stopped at thirty-nine (lest they counted wrong and violated the law by giving more than forty; cf. Paul's reference to "thirty-nine stripes" in 2 Cor. 11:24). Scourging, however, was much more traumatic, even to the point of being fatal. The flagellum was a much more torturous instrument, the lashes were delivered without any compassion or consideration for the victim's health, and Roman law imposed no limit to the number of lashes inflicted at scourging. Roman law mandated scourging as part of capital sentences, but this probably had the effect of shortening the victim's agony once on the cross. The victim would have been so weak from blood loss and pain that he would die more quickly than if he had not been scourged. This seems to have been the case with Jesus (although the scourging was probably not the only thing that caused him to die relatively quickly).

Why did Pilate have Jesus scourged? While Roman law required capital sentences to be accompanied by scourging, the decision to scourge Jesus was made before it was determined that he would be crucified. After Jesus was scourged, Pilate attempted to release him (John 19:1ff). Only when the crowd threatened riot at this suggestion did Pilate allow Jesus to be crucified, and then still reluctantly. It seems that Pilate had two things in mind. First, it may be that Pilate, while he was unable to find out exactly what Jesus had done to cause the Jews to be so angry with him, suspected that Jesus was at least a troublemaker and had probably done something to deserve a flogging. It was Pilate's job to keep and enforce peace in his region of the empire, so he probably felt no guilt at having Jesus scourged for having caused such an uproar. Second, Pilate hoped that if he humiliated Jesus enough the mob would be satisfied and he would not have to execute a man he believed to be innocent (cf. Luke 23:16). He stood the scourged Jesus before them wearing a crown of thorns and a mock robe. Pilate told them, "Behold, the man!" (John 19:5). By this he meant, "Look at him now. He will not go around calling himself a king any more, and he will not cause you any more trouble." However, the mob was not satisfied with only a humiliated Jesus. They demanded his death.

Like everything else about his death, Jesus knew that he would be scourged. He mentioned it when He predicted his sufferings for the third time (Matt. 20:19 and parallels). He knew that before he died of the torture of the cross he would have to endure a savage, brutal beating at the hands of the Romans who were more than ready to vent their hatred against Jews. He accepted those blows, and his body was ripped open at the post, for us. He was taking the punishment of the sins of the world so that we might not have to suffer the consequences of our transgressions. By his stripes we are healed. - 2210 71st St. W., Bradenton, Florida 34209 --- Via - Truth Magazine Vol. XLIV: 1 p 11,12 January 2000