

The Betrayed Christ Protects His Own

Scripture: John 18:1–11

Code: 43-101

We come now to the eighteenth chapter of the gospel of John, the eighteenth chapter. We have finished the prayer of our Lord, the model of His constant intercession for His own. It is by His ministry of mediation intercession that He brings all His sons to glory; and in His interceding for us at the Father's throne, we find that we are secure. He secures us by His intercessory ministry so that all that the Father gives Him, He will bring to glory.

Here in chapter 18 is an immediate illustration of the safety of believers, protected because of His personal love for them. Chapter 17 describes the words that He prays on our behalf. Chapter 18 gives a dramatic illustration of the action He takes to protect us. It is also a one-of-a-kind dramatic event in the gospel records. In chapter 18 in the opening eleven verses, we come again to see our Great High Priest, our Advocate, the Lord Jesus Christ, concerned about His own, securing His own in a moment that could have devastated them, while He Himself is in the midst of being betrayed and being arrested. Let me read the opening eleven verses of 18.

John 18, verse 1: "When Jesus had spoken these words, He went forth with His disciples over the ravine of the Kidron, where there was a garden, in which He entered with His disciples. Now Judas also, who was betraying Him, knew the place, for Jesus had often met there with His disciples. Judas then, having received the Roman cohort and officers from the chief priests and the Pharisees, came there with lanterns and torches and weapons. So Jesus, knowing all the things that were coming upon Him, went forth and said to them, 'Whom do you seek?' They answered Him, 'Jesus the Nazarene.' He said to them, 'I am He.' And Judas also, who was betraying Him, was standing with them. So when He said to them, 'I am He,' they drew back and fell to the ground. Therefore He again asked them, 'Whom do you seek?' And they said, 'Jesus the Nazarene.' Jesus answered, 'I told you that I am He; so if you seek Me, let these go their way,' to fulfill the word which He spoke, 'Of those whom You have given Me I lost not one.' Simon Peter then, having a sword, drew it and struck the high priest's slave, and cut off his right ear; and the slave's name was Malchus. So Jesus said to Peter, 'Put the sword into the sheath; the cup which the Father has given Me, shall I not drink it?'"

In chapter 12, verse 23, our Lord said, "The hour is come." In chapter 13 on that Thursday night, He started out that wonderful evening with His disciples in the upper room. In verse 1, John says He knew His hour had come. Chapter 17 begins, again, with the statement that Jesus knowing His hour had come. What hour is this? This is the hour when He completes His work. This is the hour that begins with the cross, and then the resurrection, and then forty days of instruction, and then the ascension, and then the exaltation, and then the launching of His ministry of intercession; and all of that is going to happen in the next six weeks.

We now come to the dark, the gloomy, the tragic part of His life. Up to this point, He has been verbally criticized; He's never been touched physically. There have been men dogging His steps, wanting Him dead, but it never happened because His hour was not yet come. This, however, is His hour. And by God's appointment, He will die at this Passover as God's true Passover Lamb.

Rightly so, we look at this and we see the horror of these events: agony, sweating blood, anguish, loneliness, betrayal, arrest, injustice, torture, execution by being nailed to a cross. But John wants us to be certain of one thing - Jesus is no victim; Jesus is no victim.

We remember the purpose for John's writing; he gave it at the end of this wonderful gospel in chapter 20, and verse 31. He said this: "These have been written so that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing you may have life in His name." His purpose for writing is that you would believe that Jesus is the Messiah, the Anointed One, God's Son incarnate, and that believing you might have life. He has an evangelistic purpose, and necessary to that evangelistic purpose is the revelation of the glory of Christ. And so true to His intention, true to His goal, you will find the glory of Christ on majestic display through all the events that begin in chapter 18. What on the surface and to everybody around may have looked as if it were the blackest and darkest of all times puts the glory of Christ on majestic display.

Here in these events, maybe more clearly than anywhere else - surely more clearly than anywhere else - we see the glory of the Son of God. His wondrous perfections shine through the ugliness, shine through the darkness, shine through the hatred, shine through the pain and suffering. And we know because he is the Son of God. He has always exhibited total control over all people, all individuals, all people in a collection, all events, all circumstances. He has always demonstrated total control over all of that, and that control continues in His arrest, in His mistreatment, in His unjust trial, in His execution, in His burial, in His resurrection, and all the way to His exaltation. The hour had come. In one sense, it is the worst hour; it is Satan's hour. In another sense, it is the best hour; it is God's hour.

Now, in the opening eleven verses that I read to you, John wants us to see the glory of Christ in His arrest - betrayal and arrest. This is as ugly a scene as we could expect. Judas, the ugliest of all apostates, the traitor of all traitors, the archetypal hypocrite is on display. It is in the middle of the night, everything is dark, and the darkest of it all is the hearts of the people surrounding Jesus and the disciples. But in the midst of this darkness, John shows us our Lord's glory. We see His divine resolve, we see His divine power, we see His divine love, and we see His divine righteousness. Those four things are going to come through in this passage. The wretchedness, the injustice, the hellishness of Satan's plot to kill Jesus unfolds.

But it isn't just Satan's plot to kill Jesus, as we heard Peter say from Acts 2 - it is God's predetermined plan. So here, God and Satan come together on the same person for two very different reasons, and God triumphs. Instead of debasing Christ, as the devil intended, He is exalted in these scenes to the highest heaven. His unbounded magnificence explodes on us in all these settings.

Now let's look at the beginning and see His divine resolve, His divine resolve, or His divine determination, or perhaps His divine courage. Back to verse 1: "When Jesus had spoken these words, He went forth with His disciples over the ravine of the Kidron, where there was a garden, in which He entered with His disciples. Now Judas also, who was betraying Him, knew the place, for Jesus had often met there with His disciples. Judas then, having received the Roman cohort and officers from the chief priests and the Pharisees, came there with lanterns and torches and weapons. So Jesus, knowing all the things that were coming upon Him, went forth."

Back in verse 1 it says, “He went forth.” Here it says, “He went forth.” This is His divine resolve, His divine determination, His divine courage. He moves to His own death. He is undaunted. He is unhesitating. He is courageous - courage far beyond a martyr dying for a good cause without forsaking truth. That’s noble, and many have done it. But to go to a death that is not just a physical death, but a death in which He will absorb all the wrath of God for all the people who have ever believed in Him through all of human history. And God will unleash that *massive* amount of wrath in a period of three hours in which He will be forsaken by God to go to that event - that pure, spotless, eternally sinless Son of God - and to do it with resolve shows a divine level of courage.

He is totally pure. He’s absolutely sinless, and He is now to be pounded by the fury of God over the sins of His people – infinite courage. Watch how it unfolds: “When Jesus had spoken these words, He went forth with His disciples [eleven of them] over the ravine of the Kidron, where there was a garden, in which He entered with His disciples.” They had been with Him all evening. This is now Friday, in the morning, in the darkness. They had been with Him since Thursday when they celebrated Passover. They’ve really been around Him all week at the Passover and the Passion Week and all the events of the week.

They’re still with Him. They follow Him out of the upper room earlier in the evening. He teaches them as they walk through Jerusalem in the darkness. They stop with Him and they hear His prayer in John 17 so that they have knowledge of His intercessory ministry for them. Then they begin to walk again, and they head toward this garden on the Mount of Olives, a familiar place. The other gospel writers tell us it was called “the garden of Gethsemane.” It’s over the brook Kidron.

Many, many times Jesus had left Jerusalem and gone through what some call Stephen’s Gate, to go to Bethany, because two miles beyond that wall was the little town of Bethany. And that’s where His beloved friends Mary, Martha, and Lazarus lived. And often He had spent time there, and stayed there, and rested there; and before all the events of this Passion Week began, He was there. That was a place of comfort and care and safety and fellowship.

But it was too late for Bethany now. He would not head for Bethany. He would not make that familiar walk around the edge of the Mount of Olives into the little village of Bethany to find the familiar home of His friends. He would go rather into the fatal garden. He knew exactly what was awaiting Him. He knew precisely what was going to happen, verse 4 says, “Jesus, knowing all things that were coming upon Him, went forth.” This is resolve. So they would have left Jerusalem by the gate, down the steep slope into the ravine that is the Kidron ravine with a little brook running through it, up the slope of the Mount of Olives, to the familiar Garden of Gethsemane.

A symbolic reality must have faced our Lord when He crossed that little brook. Up in the temple ground, through that day and the next day, there was a massacre of lambs. All the Passover lambs were being slaughtered, and their blood was running down the altar like a river, and it would run into channels, and those channels would take that blood out the back side of the temple mount, down the temple slope, into the very same Kidron brook. It would be bright red with blood.

The number of lambs slain at that Passover we don’t know. But we have a record of a Passover thirty years after this, and there is a census of the number of lambs: 256,000 lambs were slaughtered. It was a bloodbath. You can imagine what the temple courts were like when the blood of

all those lambs was flowing down the altar, down the channels, down the back, and into the Kidron. And there it is that Jesus steps across all that blood that cannot take away sin on the way to offer Himself as the only sacrifice who can. Surely His own sacrifice would be vividly in His mind.

Having crossed the Kidron, He would then ascend up the slope of the Mount of Olives to that “garden called Gethsemane.” The other writers – Matthew, Mark, and Luke – tell us its name. And “Gethsemane” means “oil press.” It is, after all, the Mount of Olives, and olives are pressed to make olive oil. Jesus and His disciples had been there; they’d been there many times. They’d been to that garden many times.

Many of the people in the city of Jerusalem outside the city on the Mount of Olives - they would have little fences around their gardens, or walls around their gardens, and a gate to keep them private – they were private gardens – and I would assume that this garden, because the Lord went there so many times, was always made available to Him.

Perhaps He and His disciples were given a key by the owner. The eleven knew it well, Jesus knew it well, and Judas knew it well. Jesus then enters the garden it says. “He entered it,” the end of verse 1, “with His disciples.”

I wonder. I wonder if He thought of 2 Samuel 15. I wonder if He thought back to Absalom rebelling against his father David - David being betrayed by Ahithophel, who was an Old Testament kind of Judas. I wonder if Jesus remembered that His father David long ago had been betrayed, and that a revolution was starting by David’s own son against David. And David had to flee Jerusalem, and he had to cross the same brook with his faithful followers and leave the city of Jerusalem.

Why did He go to the Garden of Gethsemane? Why there? Well, it was, after all, a kind of home to him. It was a kind of home. I say that because there’s a very interesting comment made at the end of the seventh chapter of John. In most of the Bibles it’s included. It says – this is at the end of our Lord’s conversation with the crowd - “Everyone went to his home.” “Everyone went to his home.” And then verse 1 of chapter 8 says, “Jesus went to the Mount of Olives.”

Everybody went home; Jesus went to the Mount of Olives. You remember He said, “The foxes have holes, the birds have nests; the Son of Man has not where to lay His head.” So they say maybe He went there because it was a place familiar to Him, it was kind of home. It was also a place that He went to pray. He couldn’t go to the home of Mary, Lazarus, and Martha to pray because they loved Him so much they would never leave Him alone. So He would go to the Mount of Olives alone to pray. And He had already prayed in the Garden of Gethsemane before He was arrested and sweat great drops of blood. The disciples were supposed to pray with Him, but they were far away from where He actually was, sleeping.

It would be right to say maybe He went there because it was a place of rest and it was a home. It would be right to say He went there to pray, because He did. It would be right to say He went there to get away from the crowds and get away from the conflict. It would be right to say He went there with His disciples very often, so maybe He went there again because He enjoyed the fellowship of His own. All of that would be true, because He did pray. He did escape the crowds; He did fellowship with His disciples in that garden. But none of those is the reason this time. The reason He went there is because He knew that place was where Judas was coming. That’s where Judas would come,

because that's where He had been going night after night.

Luke tells us of these busy days, that week, that Passion Week. And in Luke 21:37 it says, "During the day, He was teaching in the temple, but at evening He would go out and spend the night on the mount that is called Olivet. And all the people would get up early in the morning to come to Him in the temple to listen to Him."

Chapter 22, verse 39, "He came out, proceeded as was His custom to the Mount of Olives; and the disciples followed Him there." That was the night He was tempted. But that's where He would go each night during that week, teaching in the temple, going to the Garden of Gethsemane, spending the night in safety and quiet there.

John wants us to know that Jesus went there because He knew Judas would know that's where He would be. He is no victim. He moved to His betrayal resolutely. He moved to His arrest. He moved to His own execution. He is not trapped; He is not tricked; He is not deceived; He is not fooled; He's not surprised.

The leaders of Israel wanted to get Him. They wanted to get Him sooner, but they feared the people. In Matthew 26, verses 4-5, it says: "They wanted to arrest Him, but they feared that if they did it, it would start a riot, because He was so popular."

So Jesus made it easy for them. Judas knew that's where He'd be. Judas informed the authorities that He would be there, and that's why Jesus went there. He took His eleven with Him, which is risky – as we'll see. But He took them with Him so that they might know that He was not seized as a helpless victim. But that they could see that He voluntarily gave up His life.

Back in John 10 He said, verses 17-18, "No one takes My life from Me; I lay it down of Myself." "No one takes My life from Me; I lay it down of Myself."

I think it's pretty obvious that a coward would have gone anywhere and everywhere but there. A man in fear would never have gone there. A man trying to escape, that would be the one place he wouldn't go. But, as He said in Luke 22:53, to the chief priests and the officers and the elders - the ones who came after Him - when they finally arrived in the garden He said, "I was with you daily in the temple; you did not lay hands on Me."

And we know why from Matthew 26 - they were afraid of a riot. He says, however, now: "This hour and the power of darkness are yours. You are now the agents of hell to do the will of God." Satan and hell, God and heaven, meet at the same scene with entirely opposite intentions, and God triumphs.

On previous occasions, He avoided His enemies, passed out of their midst, got away from them. It was not His hour; it was not His hour. Now it was His hour, and the Good Shepherd is going to lay down His life for His sheep. He is no victim. "He went forth," verse 1. "He went forth," verse 4.

Jesus has been moving through the darkness, finally arriving at the Garden of Gethsemane after the time of prayer. Judas, at the same time, has been planning his strategy thoroughly. He left the upper room before the Lord's Table. Satan filled him, took total control. He is now possessed with Satan.

He has been pursuing in the blackness of night, the world's darkest treachery, the blackest work that any man or demon ever did.

The Romans and the Jewish temple police have been gathered together with the elders and the chief priests, led by Judas. He has pulled this diabolical force together. Matthew 26:47 says, "A great multitude with swords and spears and clubs" - they come armed to the teeth.

Why would they arm themselves like that? Because earlier in the week, all by Himself, He had run everyone out of the entire temple ground – hundreds of thousands of people. They knew the power of His person. They saw it at the beginning of His ministry; they saw it earlier that week.

So we come to verse 2, "Judas also, who was betraying Him, knew the place, for Jesus had often met there with His disciples. Judas then, having received the Roman cohort and officers from the chief priests and the Pharisees, came there with lanterns and torches...weapons."

This is really an amazing, amazing group. Officers, that's the temple police, the Jewish police, the security, the security people who took care of the massive crowds of hundreds of thousands milling around in the temple and the area outside of it. There were several hundred temple police for sure. We don't know how many hundreds, but there were a number of them.

And then it says there was a "cohort"; and it is Roman, so it's appropriate to add that it's a "Roman cohort." The word is *speira* in the Greek. A Roman cohort usually consisted of six hundred men. There could be a detachment from a cohort called a *maniple*, which would have two hundred men. So it could be as many as six hundred men, and add a few hundred of the temple police and a few others. And maybe as the crowd moved through the darkness, they could have collected other people on the way. You could have as many as a thousand people coming into the darkness of that little place.

The Romans were stationed at Fort Antonia during feasts. Usually they were on the coast in Caesarea. But when the great feasts came, like Passover, they moved into Fort Antonia, which had a tower that overlooked the temple ground. So from that tower they could keep control of the crowds. Here they are in the middle of the night, all converging, all led by Jesus. However large the group was - multiple hundreds of them – it was large enough, verse 12 says, that it was a cohort with a commander. It's likely then that it wasn't just a sort of representative group. It wasn't just a small detachment. But they had their full force under full command. This is, of course, a recognition on all their parts of the power of Jesus. They recognized His power. They'd seen it on display in the temple. They knew that He had raised Lazarus from the dead. They knew He was a miracle worker. They were very aware of His power.

Such is the idiocy of unbelief. They send an army to take an unarmed Galilean carpenter and teacher.

They were also aware of His popularity, and it may have been that they had a full force in the event that this thing got out of hand. And a crowd began to gather, and they had to do crowd control – fully armed. It was a similar group in Acts 23 that came to arrest the apostle Paul, by the way.

It's interesting to me that they had "torches," "torches." It just happens that at Passover time you

have full moon – full moon - beautiful, clear skies in the land of Israel. Night is almost like daylight, yet they came “with...torches.” Why? Well, they made an assumption that He was going to run. It was an olive orchard. And then there were trees everywhere beyond that. The obvious reality was that, “We’re going to have to subdue Him. We have to be armed to the teeth, and anybody who tries to defend Him - and then we’re going to have to hunt Him down.” That doesn’t happen. The idea was, “We’ll hunt Him down; we’ll take our clubs and swords, and we’ll crush Him into submission.”

By the way, the only name is “Judas,” the only name is “Judas” in the entourage, with the exception of “Malchus.” And “Malchus” was there because he was a slave of the high priest, not a soldier. And, oh, by the way, he was there so Jesus could do one more miracle, just to make their crime worse – giving him back an ear, creating an ear.

Judas is the only one mentioned as if he’s the only one there. He is the key to the whole thing. He is a vile, tragic, apostate man. People wonder, “Well, why didn’t he just come in and say, ‘It’s Him; it’s Jesus, over there’?” His intention was not simply to point out Jesus; his intention was to communicate to Jesus the idea that he was back, that he was back to join the group. He could have pointed to Jesus, but insanity, mental confusion, wretchedness, satanic possession degenerate into the most brutal kind of inexplicable stupidity.

He has a kind of devilish refinement, an unheard of combination. The sign that this is Jesus is a kiss; and as Matthew, Mark, and Luke tell us, he goes up and kisses Jesus on the face, repeatedly - the traditional kiss of affection. His cunning turns into archetypal hypocrisy. Inferiors kiss the hand, slaves kiss the foot, but kissing the face is a sign of love and intimacy and affection between equals. He’s just wanting Jesus to believe for a moment that he’s just back; maybe so Jesus, for a moment, thinks He has nothing to fear and they can grab Him.

This evil is intensified by the kiss. It is an unforgettable kiss. It is feigned innocence, feigned innocence. Jesus unmasks him immediately. Jesus says to him, “Are you betraying the Son of God with a kiss?” and he was unmasked.

Verse 4: “Jesus, knowing all the things that were coming upon Him, went forth.” There is that divine resolve. He knew everything that was going to happen, and He stepped right into it. And He had known it; He had known it since He could understand Genesis 3, Genesis 22, Isaiah 53, Zechariah 10-12. He had known it as the Son of God from all eternity. He was the Lamb slain from before the foundation of the world.

He had told His disciples, “They’re going to arrest Me. The rulers of Israel are going to arrest Me. They’re going to arrest Me; they’re going to beat Me up; they’re going to punch Me; they’re going to spit on Me; they’re going to crucify Me.” He knew it all; He’d always known it. He knew it before He was incarnate. He knew it during His life. He knew it from Scripture. He knew exactly every single detail that was going to happen because of His omniscience. So, in a sense, He anticipated it all every moment of His life.

I’d like to think that those of us who are human have a conscious and an unconscious mind. He didn’t have an unconscious mind; everything was vivid in His immediate consciousness. He knew. And it wasn’t that He knew He was walking toward physical pain, walking toward nails, walking toward a scourge that – no. He was walking into the blast furnace of the wrath of God, His Father.

This is the divine resolve. And Judas, this is his big moment in human history. But all the glory goes to Christ. He is a horror.

Then we see His divine power on display immediately. He said to them, verse 4, “Whom do you seek?” They answered Him, “Jesus the Nazarene.” He said to them – literally “He said,” *Eg eimi* in the Greek, “I am!” the tetragrammaton, the name of God. “And Judas also, who was betraying Him, was standing with them.”

That is so hard for me to comprehend - that kind of devilish boldness. But, of course, he's standing there because he's under the full control of Satan. Any sensible hypocrite would have run for the darkness. But in one sense, there are no sensible hypocrites, certainly not this one.

Jesus doesn't wait for anybody to say anything, He speaks first to Judas, “Are you going to betray Me with a kiss?” And then He faces them and says, “Whom do you seek?”

Why does He ask that? He wants to hear them give the warrant. Who do they have a right to arrest? Whose name is on the warrant? They said, “Jesus the Nazarene.” He said to them, “*I am.*” And when He said that to them, verse 6, “they drew back and fell to the ground.” All the hundreds of them collapsed in a heap on the ground – these great, strong soldiers; these angry, hostile, aggressive temple police. The religious leaders, chief priests - they went down like dominos. This is His power.

John, again, is not going to let us see Christ in any scene where He isn't all glorious. He gives the name of God. He declares His deity. All authorities and powers are literally falling backwards at the power of His name - one single, unarmed figure. And they were armed to the teeth and ready for war. He simply speaks the name of God and they collapse.

He is no victim. He has complete control over them; one word is enough. He is the one of whom Isaiah says that “He will strike the earth with the rod of His mouth” (Isaiah 11:4). He is the One of whom Paul says, “He will slay the lawless with the breath of His mouth.” He is the One coming out of heaven at His return, and coming out of His mouth is a great, sharp sword, a sword of execution.

There is power in His words, power in His words. He created by a word; He can destroy by a word. He spoke and it came into existence. He will speak and it will all go out of existence. And while it's in existence, He controls it with whatever He says. They fell helpless at His feet.

Divine resolve and divine power. Thirdly, divine love. And here's where we see the illustration of His prayer in 17. Verse 7: “Therefore He again says to them, ‘Whom do you seek?’ and they said, ‘Jesus the Nazarene.’” As they're picking themselves up off the ground, He asks them the same question. He answered and said, “I told you that I am He.”

Here's His point: “So if you seek Me, let these go their way.” He is saying, “You have no official warrant to arrest My disciples. I want to hear your orders: ‘Jesus the Nazarene.’” That's a formal declaration of the warrant that they had for the arrest of Jesus. That's their orders.

Then He says, “Let these go their way. You have acknowledged twice now that you have no authority to arrest My disciples - you have none. Let the disciples go.” They have now repeated their orders twice, and they have declared that they have no right to lay their hands on the disciples. Why

is that an issue? Verse 9 explains: "To fulfill the word which He spoke." Back in chapter 17, verse 12 - in the prayer - He said, "Of those whom You have given Me, I lost not one." So He protects them out of that love that He has for them, in a moment when if they had been taken prisoner they would have been lost.

I want you to think about that. He does not allow the disciples to be arrested and brought to trial and judgment. He protects them from that so that He will fulfill the Scripture that they will not be lost. Hypothetically then, had He allowed them to get arrested, their faith would have been completely overwhelmed. It was hard enough as it was. They scattered, and Peter was a rabid denier of Christ. But our Lord knew that if they were arrested and put through what He was going to be put through, their faith would fail.

You say, "Wait a minute. I thought faith couldn't fail." Yes, faith can fail, unless the Lord doesn't let it fail. If I say this to you again, you'll think I'm redundant. If I could lose my salvation, I would lose it. It's not dependent on me. The reason we all get to heaven, twofold: the Lord prays us into glory and prevents us from those things that would be deadly to our faith.

Here is a dramatic illustration of the Great High Priest, out of love, protecting His weak sheep. They're not going to be arrested. He acts in a special, unique way. It's kind of like 1 Corinthians 10:13. You could take that as a personal promise: "No temptation will ever come to you such as is common to man; and God will make a way of escape that you maybe be able to" - What? - "be able to bear it."

The reason we get to heaven is not just because God says it. It's because He sees to it; He's active in it. Our Lord is making certain that the love gifts that the Father has given Him do not undergo what their faith cannot handle. And some people say, "Well, you're saying that someone could lose their salvation?" Of course, unless God disallowed it. What this does teach us is no matter how weak, how vacillating, how fast we run and scatter, we'll never be put through something that would be destructive to our faith. You cannot be lost, because Jesus will pray you into heaven, and He'll protect you into heaven.

"I've lost none." This doesn't just happen; He sees that it happens. This is why I said to you in John 17, this is the "much more ministry" of Christ, much more. He died in hours; He rose in days. He ever lives in the "much more ministry" to bring us to heaven. Supreme, protective love.

Now Peter just should have stood there and said, "Wow, thank You, Lord." But, no. "Simon Peter then," verse 10, "has a sword." So he draws it and takes a whack at the head of Malchus, who's just a slave for the high priest. Malchus has got decent reactions; he ducks and only loses an ear.

You know, we're so much like Peter. The Lord says to us, "I'll protect you. I'll protect you. Just relax; stay where you are. I will protect you. You don't need to grab your own sword and hack your way through the world. I'll take care of you. I'll take care of you. You foolish" - big stuff, stepping out of Christ's protection, to take on the whole hostile world on his own. And the Lord then performs the last miracle before the cross - an astounding miracle in front of the whole crowd. You'd think they'd all fall down again - in worship.

Jesus provided a shelter of care for His beloved - He always does that - and He even gathers us

back in when we rashly run out into danger. None of us will ever be lost because of the supreme love that causes Him to protect us.

Now that leads us to a final reality. We've seen His divine resolve and His divine power and His divine love. His divine righteousness comes through in verse 11. Jesus said to Peter, "Put the sword into the sheath." "Put the sword away, Peter." You know what else He said (Matthew 26:52)? You know what He said right after that? "All they that take the sword shall perish by the sword."

What's He doing? He's upholding God's law. What law is that? Genesis 9:6, "You slay a man, you give up your life." God instituted capital punishment. Our Lord upheld capital punishment, even in the case of Peter. "Peter, you take a man's life, and they'll take your life, rightly so."

Jesus said, "My kingdom is not of this world, otherwise My servants would fight." We don't fight. He is dying voluntarily; Peter has to be stopped. "Stop, Peter! You're trying to stop My death; I'm trying to stop you."

Peter intruded in the purposes of Christ so many times: "No, no, Lord; You're not going to die; You're not going to die." Jesus says, "Get behind Me, Satan." So you see the glory of Christ - divine righteousness. He upholds the law as always.

So with that display of His glory He says at the end of verse 11, "The cup which the Father has given Me, shall I not drink it?" The cup of wrath, the cup of fury, the cup of the vengeance of God, "Shall I not drink it?"

This is no victim. This is the all-glorious Son of God, willingly, voluntarily - in an act of supreme obedience to which He agrees joyfully - giving Himself up in our place. "The Father has given Me the cup to drink for the sake of all the people He has given Me to love everlastingly. Shall I not drink it?"

Father, we thank You for the glory of our Christ seen in this, which could on the surface, of course, look like the darkest and gloomiest of moments. Christ just dominates with His majesty. We're so grateful, so thankful for Christ - for our always victorious, triumphant Lord. Thank You for giving us a glimpse of Him again.

And for any who are here now who have never embraced Him as Savior and Lord, may they resist no longer. May they realize they will either spend eternity with Him or eternity with Judas. That's a horrible, horrible thought. May they run to Christ - stand with those who love Him, call Him Lord, and who worship Him. Move on hearts, we pray.

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