

Sermon Title: Betrayed and Arrested
Scripture Text: Mark 14:43-52

Speaker: Jim Harris
Date: 1-5-20

We are in a new year, and we return to our ongoing studies in the Gospel According to Mark. And we put in at one of the most compelling scenes recorded anywhere in the Bible. We have a lot of information about these final days of the life of Jesus, and we'll be fitting it together for you as we work our way through Mark.

But remember that for over a year in the ministry of Jesus, the Sanhedrin—that leading council of the Jews—had been plotting to kill Jesus. Now we are in the days right before the final Passover that Jesus celebrated during His ministry here, and they had already put out the order—this was to be known among all the pilgrims that came to Jerusalem—"that if anyone knew where He was, he should report it" (Jn. 11:57; NASB, and throughout, unless otherwise noted), because they wanted to arrest Him, and they wanted to do it stealthily. So it infuriated them when they didn't get a chance to have Jesus ratted out.

Jesus entered the city in what we call the Triumphal Entry, with thousands of people shouting "Hosanna!" and proclaiming Him to be the Messiah. They were even more furious when Jesus came back into town the next day and cleared the temple of all the merchants who were there by the authority of the Sanhedrin; they were there ripping off the Passover pilgrims, charging ridiculous exorbitant prices for sacrificial animals and ridiculous fees for exchanging money for the temple tax. They were doing all of that in what had, basically, turned the Outer Court of the temple into something like a flea market; it was known as the Bazaar of Annas. The reason for that is that Annas was the former high priest; he had been high priest up until about 20 years before this. He had, under his leadership, built up this business franchise system, where you could pretty much buy a permit to operate one of the booths in the temple; and they were turning it into, as Jesus called it, "A robbers' den" (Matt. 21:13)—or, a "den of thieves" (Matt. 21:13, NKJV)—and it was horribly corrupt.

It was impossible for the Jewish leaders, therefore, to arrest Jesus, because they figured *that* would cause "a riot" (Mk. 14:2). He was so popular after the day that He cleared the temple, He taught openly in the temple in those days leading up to the Passover. It was *even more* excruciating for the hypocritical Jewish leaders who kept coming at Him, trying to trip Him up, trying to discredit Him somehow, trying to turn the people against Him—but they lost *every* verbal debate that they had with Him.

Finally, they caught a diabolical break for their murder plot: Judas Iscariot secretly came to them a day or two before this, and he agreed to betray Jesus to them for the price of "thirty pieces of silver" (Matt. 26:15)—the standard price for a lowly slave in the slave market (Ex. 21:32; cf. Zech. 11:13). He promised to lead them to Jesus in a secluded place where they could arrest Him without causing a riot (Lk. 22:6). Well, the most likely option that was right before them would be: wherever Jesus would celebrate the Passover meal with the disciples. So we've seen the intrigue unfold. Jesus thwarted Judas in *that* effort by working it out so that Judas didn't know where that meal was going to be until he was led there by Jesus, along with the other disciples—other than the two that He sent ahead to set it up for them. By keeping that location secret from Judas, Jesus made it possible to have that leisurely evening with His men—the last bit of calm before the storm.

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They celebrated the final Passover that was authorized by God. Jesus replaced the Passover with what we call "Communion" (1 Cor. 10:16, KJV) or, "the Lord's Supper" (1 Cor. 11:20).

Jesus revealed that He knew that one of the disciples was going to betray Him; He said that early on as they gathered that night. Judas was such a skilled hypocrite that the others actually suspected *themselves* before they suspected Judas. Now, Judas knew what he was going to do, and Jesus knew what Judas was going to do. The others probably were more worried that maybe *they* had done, or might do, something inadvertently that would tip off the leaders of the murder plot; so they were saying, "Is it I, Lord? Is it I?" They didn't know it was Judas. During the evening, Judas slipped out of the gathering on the pretense of doing something on behalf of Jesus and the others, who *still* didn't know that, that's what Judas was up to. He stole away, went across town, and alerted the Sanhedrin that he expected that they could find Jesus in the Garden of Gethsemane, at the foot of the Mount of Olives, because that was their custom, to meet there at night.

Well, after Judas left, Jesus spent a long time that night teaching the remaining 11 while the Sanhedrin were gathering and putting together their plan, wherever they were. Then, after He taught them everything that we have in John 14, 15, and 16, He prayed that marvelous prayer in John Chapter 17, a great chapter to spend a lot of time in. After that, they concluded the Passover gathering, sang the hymns according to the custom, and then Jesus took them to the Garden of Gethsemane.

Now, on our last visit to Mark, they had arrived at the Garden of Gethsemane, and Jesus left eight of the disciples, apparently near the entrance to the garden, and told them to wait there while He went to pray. He took Peter, James, and John a little bit farther into the garden, and then He gave them a "sit, stay" command and said, "You sit here and wait and pray while I go farther and pray." That's where Jesus prayed that incredibly fervent prayer as He contemplated taking upon Himself the sins of the world (Is. 53:6). He agonized in that prayer, to the point of sweating the bloody sweat—or, as it's called: "great drops of blood" (Lk. 22:44, NKJV). He came back and He found Peter, James, and John sleeping. He told them, "Wake up! Keep watching and keep praying." And He went off and prayed some more, and He came back, and they had fallen asleep again. And He did it again; and they did it again.

Here's where we left off: Mark Chapter 14, Verse 41, after their third nap. It says: "And He came the third time, and said to them, 'Are you still sleeping and resting? It is enough; the hour has come; behold, the Son of Man is being betrayed into the hands of sinners. Get up, let us be going; behold, the one who betrays Me is at hand!' " They were about to find out: it's Judas.

So today, we come to what is the record of, arguably, the best-known act of human infamy of all time. To this day, the term "Judas kiss" stands forever to be an expression of any act of disloyalty that causes great emotional hurt or personal harm. And we're going to see the betrayal go down, and we're going to see Jesus be arrested. So, "Betrayed and Arrested"—that's the theme. It's a narrative passage; it's pretty easy to analyze it this way: We'll see it in five points—The Mob, The Kiss, The Melee, The Absurdity, and The Escapees.

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Now, as I mentioned: No one of the four Gospels contains every detail of this, so we'll work from Mark—that's the one we're studying—and we're going to fill in some bits from the others. If you want to compare all four of the Gospels, you can stick three fingers into other chapters of your Bible, and be ready to turn to them if you want to. The parallel passages are in Matthew 26, Luke 22, and John 18.

Well, let's start out by meeting The Mob in Mark 14:43—"Immediately while He was still speaking"—what was He "still speaking"? Well, we just read: "Behold, the one who betrays Me is at hand!" (vs. 42)—"While He was still speaking, Judas, one of the twelve, came up accompanied by a crowd with swords and clubs, who were from the chief priests and the scribes and the elders." When the Sanhedrin got their chance to seize Jesus, they went for it with gusto! I can't imagine what story they must have come up with to get the Romans involved, but they did. This group was *huge*.

John Chapter 18, Verse 3 tells us that it included a "Roman cohort." A "cohort" could have been as many as 600 soldiers! Now, I'm not sure you could fit 600 soldiers, plus the temple guard, into the Garden of Gethsemane; they probably brought a much smaller detail, but it was a big deal. It also included that temple guard—the temple police. And this huge display, when you put the four Gospels together, you know that they also came with "torches" (Jn. 18:3) and "swords and clubs" (Matt. 26: 47; Lk. 22:52). If you look in Matthew's Gospel, he calls it "a great multitude with swords and clubs" (Matt. 26:47, NKJV). Humanly speaking, it was massive overkill; but unless Jesus went quietly, they didn't bring anywhere near enough. No one could overpower Jesus (see Lk. 4:29-30; Jn. 7:30), but they tried.

Along with the Roman soldiers in the arrest mob, it says it was "officers from the chief priests and the Pharisees" (Jn. 18:3)—those were the "temple guards" (cf. Ac. 4:1; 5:24); they were the security force for the temple; and Rome allowed the Jews to have their own "muscle," if you will, because of the problems of Gentiles being on the temple mount, and all of that stuff. So they did all of this.

John gives us more detail—that's where he says they brought "lanterns and torches and weapons" (Jn. 18:3). That's quite a display in a dark, quiet garden after midnight. Here comes a mob carrying torches and lanterns. Who are they searching for? "The Light of the world" (Jn. 8:12). Here they come with this array of human weapons to arrest Whom? The "Prince of Peace" (Is. 9:6). Oh, and by the way—He's unarmed. *All of this* was to arrest one unarmed man who had never harmed anyone or threatened anyone (see 1 Pet. 2:23; cf. Is. 53:9b). So we call them The Mob.

Now let's look at The Kiss. For one last time, Judas feigned love for Jesus; he had been doing it for three and a half years (Jn. 6:64). It was a sickening display of hypocrisy when he treated Jesus as a precious friend, but it was all just for a public display so the Romans—who hadn't been paying attention, I'm sure—the ones who didn't know Jesus, they would know the target of this lynch mob. He came up and he kissed Jesus—that would be the custom of men kissing men on the cheek. He kissed Jesus on the cheek *just as if* they were true, close friends; and he called Him "Rabbi," just as if he actually believed what Jesus taught.

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Here it is in Verses 44 and 45 of Mark 14: "Now he who was betraying Him had given them a signal, saying, 'Whomever I kiss, He is the one; seize Him and lead Him away under guard.' After coming, Judas immediately went to Him, saying, 'Rabbi!' and kissed Him." Can you imagine the shock of the other eleven? It was Judas! And it wasn't a mistake—*he brought this group* (Acts 1:16)!

We have The Mob, we have The Kiss, and now I want to introduce you to The Melee—Verses 46 and 47. This encounter didn't take very long. John adds a tasty little tidbit or two, though. He recorded that, before Jesus allowed them to arrest Him, Jesus made them say who they wanted, so they were forced to specify: "Jesus' the Nazarene" (Jn. 18:5)—that way, He could make sure that the disciples would not be arrested.

Then, Jesus did something you need to see, so let's flip over to John 18 for just a moment. It says this, right in the same flow where we are in Mark 14:44: "So Jesus, knowing all the things that were coming upon Him"—He knew *every single step* of this dance; He knew everything that was going to happen; he knew what was going on in every heart of every person there (Jn. 2:24b)—"knowing all the things that were coming upon Him," He "went forth"—so He's there, with the Eleven; He stepped out 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." Judas was standing with the murderous mob, facing Jesus. They said, "Jesus the Nazarene"—that means "Jesus, the one from Nazareth"—it does not refer to Jesus's denominational affiliation; He was obviously from an Independent Bible Synagogue, where He had grown up.

The answer was given by several people. We know that, because the verb form is plural. They were probably reciting the words of their official orders. Jesus speaks on behalf of all of them: "Whom do you seek?" "Jesus the Nazarene." And He says: "I am He." That simply means: "Yes, I am Jesus of Nazareth—you don't need to look any farther; I'm your guy." But Jesus worded His answer not only to identify Himself, but to also reinforce His deity. It's translated in our Bibles as, "I am He"; the Greek is just "*Ego eime*"—"I Am"—the emphatic pronoun "I" and the verb "to be," in the form of "I Am," first person singular. That's exactly the way He said it seven times, as recorded in the Gospel of John, but especially in John 8:58; and when He said, "I Am," they picked up stones to stone Him. Why? Because He was using the name of God! That name "I Am," based on the verb "to be," comes from Exodus 3:14, back when God revealed Himself by that name to Moses, when Moses was going to go to Pharaoh.

Now, I want you to try to picture this: Imagine yourself as a soldier there that night. You are armed to the hilt. You've got your brother-soldiers all around you. You've been led to believe that you are pursuing a dangerous criminal who needs to be executed, and you're going after him at night in a dark olive grove. Suddenly, there appears an unarmed man who steps forward and willingly asks you who you want. You tell Him, and He calmly says, "That's Me!" And *then*—oh, I love this! Keep going in John Chapter 18, Verse 6—"So when He said to them, 'I am He,' they drew back and fell to the ground." Now, that's kind of a difficult phrase to translate. "Drew back and fell to the ground" is a euphemism for what happened; it was one of two little miracles that are embedded in this situation.

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I looked at the words, and I came up with the most literal translation; it would be something like: "When He said to them, 'I am He,' they departed toward the rear things and fell to the ground." Picture it: On what part of your anatomy do you land if you are suddenly impelled backward? Been there, done that. Jesus did not say, "You may be seated"—He knocked them on their backsides with *two words*! Is that cool, or what? The very words of His mouth, because He intended it to be so, knocked the whole mob—including Judas—to the ground, immediately backward. Who's in control of this situation? It's not the big, brave soldiers with all their swords and clubs and torches; it's Jesus!

Verse 7 of John 18—"Therefore He again asked them, 'Whom do you seek?' And they said"—I think I would read it this way [timidly]: " 'Jesus the Nazarene.' " I suspect they were a little more subdued the second time that they answered Him. Well, this time, Jesus didn't knock them on their backsides, but He made it clear what He was doing: He was looking out for His guys! He was taking care of the disciples. Verses 8 and 9 of John 18—"Jesus answered, 'I told you that I am He'—at which point, I'm sure they all braced themselves—"so if you seek Me, let these"—I'm sure, motioning to His men—"go their way,' to fulfill the word which He spoke, 'Of those whom You have given Me I lost not one.' " When had He spoken those words? A little bit earlier that night—go find it in John Chapter 17—He had told the Father: "Those whom You gave Me I have kept; and none of them is lost" (vs. 12, NKJV).

I can't help but smile and marvel every time I read this passage, and I picture this mob knocked off their feet by two words from the Prince of Peace that they're trying to arrest. Now, I called this section "The Melee" in our outline; I was being ironic. You're *expecting* a melee, if you're bringing hundreds of armed men to an ambush! But the encounter between Jesus and the mob was *only* Jesus knocking them all backward onto the ground, and then giving Himself up (Is. 53:7).

Well, there is one little part that you *might* call melee, but it would be more like "melette"—it's a really little melee. Let's go back to Mark Chapter 14, Verses 46 and 47—"They laid hands on Him and seized Him. But one of those who stood by drew his sword, and struck the slave of the high priest and cut off his ear." So they came forward to arrest Jesus, probably still a little bit touchy about whether He was going to knock them on their backsides again. And we're told from the other Gospels that the "one of those" who "drew his sword" was Peter. Peter had one more chance to make a public fool of himself, and he came through! He did it. Knowing there would be trouble that night, knowing that he had made some very strong promises—"I will *never* let anyone arrest You! I will *never* let anyone kill You! I will go to death for You!"—Peter had spoken, and they had *all* said it (Matt. 26:35), but Peter was the big mouthed one, and so he brought a sword with him that night; not a giant sword, but the little *machaira*—it's a very sharp two-edged sword; it's the word used as an analogy for the Word of God in Hebrews Chapter 4, Verses 13 and 14; this was the sword that's used for close combat.

We know from the other Gospels that it was Peter. We also know that the guy he attacked was named "Malchus," and he was "the high priest's servant" (Jn. 18:10). And we know that Jesus healed the damage done by Peter (Lk. 22:51).

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Now, what's going on here? Well, I would imagine, first of all: Peter came ready to fight; he had said he was going to; he'd made those promises. I can imagine Peter was greatly emboldened by how Jesus knocked the mob off their feet. "If I pull out my sword, Jesus will miraculously hold them down while I kill them all!" He was intent on fulfilling his rash promises. Great intentions, but bad judgment.

By the way: Peter was not a surgeon, he was a fisherman. He was pretty good with nets. Apparently, he wasn't so great with the *machaira*—I'm sure he did not intend to perform an ear-ectomy; that wasn't what he was going for. That was the weapon that would be used when you would grab somebody and get ahold of them and slit their throat. I'm sure that's what he was trying to do, but Malchus ducked and he wound up losing only an ear. Interestingly, Luke 22, written by Dr. Luke—he always includes more of the medical stuff—he's the one that says Jesus "touched his ear and healed him" (vs. 51). And here's your trivia for the morning: That's the only healing recorded that Jesus ever did for a fresh wound; everything else, people had been suffering with.

I picture Jesus—they hadn't bound His arms, though they may have had a rope around Him or something—I picture Him raising a hand to quiet the crowd, because you could picture a fight breaking out when a guy whips out a sword and whacks off somebody's ear. They, of course, would stop. Why? Because the *last* time Jesus said something, they all wound up on the ground! Remember: He's in charge here! He is running this show. Then I picture Jesus—this is not in the Bible, but I think it would be a great touch if Jesus picked up the ear off the ground, blew the dirt off of it, and put it back on. Luke just says He "touched" the ear and "healed" it. I think the guy got a brand new ear out of the deal.

Matthew's record, then, includes more. This time, we go to Matthew 26, Verses 52 to 54. If you read a Harmony of the Gospels, you can see all of this weaves together perfectly. Matthew 26, starting at Verse 52—"Then Jesus said to him, 'Put your sword back into its place; for all those who take up the sword shall perish by the sword. Or do you think that I cannot appeal to My Father, and He will at once put at My disposal more than twelve legions of angels? How then will the Scriptures be fulfilled, which say that it must happen this way?' " How many is a legion? 6,000. So Jesus is saying, "Look, if I wanted to, I could call 72,000 angels." He could have called more than that; He could have called *all* the angels, if He wanted to (see Rev. 5:11). He had already shown with the two words, "I Am," that He didn't need anything more than a *word* to squash this whole mob, so He's speaking hyperbole to make the point for Peter: "Peter, put that thing away! Nice try—that's not what we're here for."

So He let Peter know that He was fully in charge. He let Peter and all the rest know that everything happening there was the will of God (Acts 2:23a); it was unfolding *exactly*, just as it had been revealed earlier in the Word of God. Jesus was *not* the victim of this mob! Jesus was not a victim for any split second of His life! He went *voluntarily* to the Cross (Jn. 10:17-18; cf. Is. 53:10; Matt. 20:28; Gal. 2:20), even though those who led Him there were desperately wicked (Matt. 26:24; Ac. 7:51-52). Jesus was *sinlessly* using the *sinfulness* of all the people who were there to do evil (see Acts 4:27-28; cf. Gen. 50:20), and it was—there are the words right there—"to fulfill the Scriptures" (Mk. 14:49).

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Well, it's unfolding before us: The Mob, The Kiss, The Melee. Now: The Absurdity. Look at Verses 48 and 49—"And Jesus said to them..." Okay, put the sequence of things together: The mob shows up; Jesus steps out and says, "Whom do you seek?" They answer, "Jesus the Nazarene." It knocks them on their backsides. They get up. Jesus says, "Who did you say?" They respond, "Jesus the Nazarene." He replies, "Well, that's Me. I'm here. What's all the fuss about?" And then, Peter's whip-out-the-sword thing. Humanly speaking, there easily could have been a brawl; but Jesus ends that, quashes the melee, puts the ear back together, and then He says: "Have you come out with swords and clubs to arrest Me, as you would against a robber? Every day I was with you in the temple teaching, and you did not seize Me; but this has taken place to fulfill the Scriptures." He's pointing out the absurdity! "Look, I've just illustrated your cowardice! If it's so important, if I *must die*, why didn't you come get Me when I was in public?" It's absurd!

Beyond that, the show of force is utterly ridiculous! On the one hand, it was *totally* unnecessary to bring that much force to arrest one unarmed, peaceful man. But don't forget—on the other hand, they couldn't begin to cope with His power, so there weren't enough armed men in the *world* to be able to arrest Jesus! He went voluntarily; He yielded Himself to the will of God to go to the Cross (Phil. 2:8)—even anticipating how *horrible* that time of sin-bearing was going to be, even when He said, "If it is possible, let this cup pass from Me; yet not as I will, but as You will" (Matt. 26:39). The anticipation was excruciating, but He went there willingly, nevertheless.

There's The Mob, The Kiss, The Melee, The Absurdity. Finally: The Escapees. Jesus didn't escape the situation, but a whole lot of people did. Mark 14, Verse 50—"And they all left Him and fled." The disciples—the remaining 11—they left Him and fled. Now, on the one hand, them fleeing was the corollary to Jesus protecting them; He had made the mob specify: "It's Jesus the Nazarene we want." He says, "Okay—then let My guys go." So He's gotten them out of the way; in a sense, He was even using their own fear and their littleness of faith to get them out of harm's way, at the moment. On the other hand, though, realize: This was the first stage of the process that was going to turn those men into mighty instruments in the hand of God for furthering His program. They were going to be the ones who would be the foundation upon which the Church would be built (Eph. 2:20).

It was a tumultuous night; it was a night of agony for those 11 men. Their agony would extend through the next two days and nights, until the morning of the Resurrection. I think it would be a safe thing to surmise that probably, the only sleep any of them got that night was their three little naps in the Garden of Gethsemane; I can't imagine them sleeping any more than that. All the disciples left Him and fled.

Now, our passage includes two more verses; they're about the cowardice of a young man who was *not* one of the Apostles. It's mentioned here in Mark—it's not in Matthew, it's not in Luke, and it's not in John. Mark 14:51 and 52—"A young man was following Him, wearing nothing but a linen sheet over his naked body; and they seized him. But he pulled free of the linen sheet and escaped naked."

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Now, if you've been around awhile, if you've heard people preach through the Gospels, you may have heard that this was Mark himself. People say that because it is included only in Mark's Gospel, so they speculate that Mark mentions himself here as a follower of Jesus Christ who *also* panicked that night, but this is Mark's way of validating that he was an eyewitness of at least some of these things. That can make for persuasive preaching—as long as you're willing to base your preaching on what the Bible *doesn't* say. Does it say it's Mark? No. So we don't know it's Mark! And if anybody says, "We know this is Mark," they're making stuff up!

But, if you're going to make something up, you can turn this into a great story; you can build on that fictional account by adding—here's another theory—that maybe the mob first went to Mark's mother Mary's house. We know Mark's mother was named Mary; we know she had a house in Jerusalem—that's where the group was that Peter went to when Peter was released from prison in Acts Chapter 12. This theory is that, maybe the group went to her house first to search for Jesus, *and*—oh, it gets even better! As long as you're making stuff up, you can say: That's probably where they had the Passover Meal.

Now, you can go full Hollywood-style adaptation while you're making stuff up; you can include a scene where Mark is tossing and turning in bed, he hears this noise, he suspects what might be happening, and he hurries to follow the multitude. And in your made-up scene, you can show Mark grabbing a linen sheet and hastily wrapping it around himself as he jumps out of bed and runs out the door. You can say how he escapes capture and he runs away, and in so doing, his covering is pulled off and he's left wearing nothing at all—or at least, nothing but undergarments...Choose which one of those you want, whether you want your movie to be rated "PG" or "PG-13."

Listen: All that about Mark is *made up!* No one knows that! Well, I suppose Mark does, but he's not here telling us, in person. What do we *actually* know? A young man followed Jesus to the arrest. Where did he come from? The right answer is: We don't know. Maybe he lived next to the Garden of Gethsemane. I don't know—maybe he was a caretaker of the olive garden there. Maybe he lived in a little shack on the premises. We don't know any of that! We *do* know they tried to arrest him along with Jesus—maybe because the Apostles got away faster than he did; and one thing we *can* infer from this being here in the text is: They *would have* arrested Jesus's men, if they had gotten ahold of them, because this guy wasn't even one of the Apostles, and they were going to arrest *him*. He *did* escape, wearing only whatever he had apparently worn to bed that night.

So, is this included to show that Mark was an eyewitness of these things? The text doesn't say that—and *if* that's why this was here, I think we would be told that's why this is here. All we know is that it *is* here, and it immediately follows something. What comes right before it? "They all left Him and fled" (vs. 50). So this tells us that even after the Apostles were gone, these guys would round up *anybody* who was on Jesus's side, to try to get them arrested as well. The only safe point that we can make from this is that, Jesus went to His trial alone. His disciples *and* others—at least *one* other—who were there where He was arrested, ended up scattering and running for their lives. We're going to pick it up at that point next time.

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Now, I understand: Peter is going to sneak back around and he's going to be there, and he's going to have a chance to fulfill the other prophecies—we will pick it up there, and come back to that next time.

Now, there are some lessons that I think need to be taken from this passage. One is: Man's fulminations against God are pathetic, and ultimately useless (see Prov. 21:30; Dan. 4:35). And yes: for the New Year, I used the word "fulminations" on purpose, because you don't know what it means—more than likely. Go look it up—it's *perfect* for the situation! Torches and weapons *will never stop to plan of God!* Do you understand the difference between the power of God and the power of man? "Now to Him who is able to do exceedingly abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that works in us, to Him be glory" (Eph. 3:20-21, NKJV). Man can fuss and fume—he can't do *anything* that God does not want done (see Prov. 16:1; 21:1, 31; Is. 14:27; Lam. 3:37; Amos 3:6).

Second lesson: God *never* "doesn't know" what's going on (Ps. 147:5b). He *never* lacks the power to change a situation (Is. 46:9-10). God has *never* been victimized by any act of man, no matter how incredibly wicked it is (Acts 5:39).

Here's another lesson—this is a really sad one: The greatest stupidity in the world is to think that you can do what Judas did, and get away with it (Gal. 6:7). To think that you can kiss God in mockery and get away with it... You say, "Well, I can't walk up and kiss Jesus and get Him arrested!" No, but you could feign love for Him, and yet not belong to Him (Ps. 66:3; cf. Jn. 5:42; 1 Cor. 16:22a). That's an *awful* thing to do. You do that, and you *will* join Judas in "the lake of fire" (Rev. 20:10; cf. Matt. 7:21-23; 26:24; Jn. 6:70-71; 17:12; Acts 1:25); you will eternally reap the benefits and the fruits of your hypocrisy (Ps. 81:15; Dan. 12:2; Matt. 24:51; 25:41; Mk. 9:43-48; 2 Thess. 2:7-9; Rev. 14:10).

Another pretty obvious lesson here is: Jesus always takes care of His own. I *love* that song that we're singing, that we just found a while back: "He will hold me fast, for my Savior loves me so! He will hold me fast" ("He Will Hold Me Fast," lyrics by Ada Habershon, 1906). Do you believe that you're safe in His hand? (see Jn. 10:27-28) You are "protected by the power of God" for your "inheritance" (1 Pet. 1:4-5)—but you say, "Yeah, but I just read this week that a *few dozen more* Christians were exterminated in Nigeria! Jesus didn't protect them!" Where do you think they are? They are *with Him!* (Lk. 16:22-25; 23:43; Acts 7:55-60; Phil. 1:21, 23; Rev. 6:9-11). Nobody thwarts the will of God (see Jn. 6:39).

Now, from your limited human perspective, you will never know the understanding of all the facets of God's timing, *including* His allowing accidents—things that we *call* "accidents"—and allowing things that we recognize as unjust in this fallen world (see Rom. 11:33). But God *sinlessly* uses even the *sinfulness* of the most wicked of people (e.g., Gen. 50:20; Acts 2:23; 4:27-28).

One of the most obvious lessons—we've been seeing it almost every passage here in the latter days of Jesus's life. You can bank on this one: Jesus is in control (see Heb. 1:8; cf. Matt. 28:18).

Sermon Title: Betrayed and Arrested
Scripture Text: Mark 14:43-52

Speaker: Jim Harris
Date: 1-5-20

Let's pray:

Our Father, thank You for this record of what Your Son did on our behalf: enduring the Cross, despising the shame—now seated at Your right hand, having accomplished everything for our redemption, for our eternal life. Father, thank You for recording it as such, so that we may see that Your power is always on display, even in the midst of these, what we would call horrible circumstances.

Thank You for calling us to Yourself. If there is anyone here today that has not accepted that invitation to come to Jesus Christ and find rest for their soul, please make this the day. God forbid that anyone here would, in essence, just feign love for You, and not love You in reality, from the heart. You have made it possible for us to be forgiven, redeemed, restored, and made alive in Christ! Thank You for that, and put that message on our hearts, that we may proclaim it with full joy and all of Your authority, in Jesus' name. Amen.