

THE SIX TRIALS OF CHRIST

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Chapter 2

THE BETRAYAL

It is somewhere about 2 or 2:30 A.M. when CHRIST returns to His disciples from the agony of Gethsemane. Between this hour and 9 A.M. in the morning, CHRIST will be arrested and experience 6 trials. Some of these trials will be informal, some of them formal.

At 9 A.M. CHRIST will be on a little hill overlooking the city of Jerusalem. It will be a place called Golgotha where He is crucified. He will hang on this cross for 6 hours, the last three hours being in total darkness.

The total time from His arrest, to trial, to conviction, to sentence, to execution of that sentence will be at the most seven hours, and maybe closer to five. There has never been in the history of mankind on earth a greater miscarriage of justice than what is about to take place.

Everything that is about to happen is illegal.

From the arrest to the crucifixion, every principle of justice was violated and the provisions of both criminal and ecclesiastical law flouted. So much is this the case that the Jewish historian, Host, plainly calls it murder, for he does not believe that there was an actual trial.

Edersheim agrees with him, but I believe the facts show otherwise.

There was a trial if that is what it may be called, and it was even done twice in order to give it some semblance of legality. There is no other reason for trying the case twice by the Sanhedrin except they considered it to be a legal trial.

THE PROCESS OF BETRAYAL BEGINS

But the illegal proceedings of the Sanhedrin did not begin this night. They began two days earlier.

"Then assembled together the chief priests, and the scribes, and the elders of the

people, unto the palace of the high priest, who was called Caiaphas, And consulted that they might take Jesus by subtlety, and kill him. But they said, Not on the feast day, lest there be an uproar among the people" (Matthew 26:3-5).

It is now the evening of Wednesday: **"And it came to pass, when Jesus had finished all these sayings, he said unto his disciples, Ye know that after two days is the feast of the passover, and the Son of man is betrayed to be crucified"** (Matthew 26:1-2), and CHRIST tells His disciples that it will be on Friday when He will be killed.

(Actually, the Jewish leaders met following the resurrection of Lazarus and decided the fact of His death: **"Then gathered the chief priests and the Pharisees a council, and said, What do we? for this man doeth many miracles. If we let him thus alone, all men will believe on him: and the Romans shall come and take away both our place and nation. And one of them, named Caiaphas, being the high priest that same year, said unto them, Ye know nothing at all, Nor consider that it is expedient for us, that one man should die for the people, and that the whole nation perish not. And this spake he not of himself: but being high priest that year, he prophesied that Jesus should die for that nation; And not for that nation only, but that also he should gather together in one the children of God that were scattered abroad. Then from that day forth they took counsel together for to put him to death. Jesus therefore walked no more openly among the Jews; but went thence unto a country near to the wilderness, into a city called Ephraim, and there continued with his disciples"** (John 11:47-54). The only undecided factors were the time and the means).

The Sanhedrin meet in secret session in the evening at the home of the high priest. Everything that goes on is illegal because:

1. They were to meet in the Temple. Instead they were meeting in the courtyard of Caiaphas' house.
2. It was a secret meeting. The Sanhedrin were to meet openly and not in secret.
3. It was summoned in the evening. The Sanhedrin's code of jurisprudence said the Sanhedrin had to meet between sunup and sundown.

This meeting was called that the high priest might give his sanction officially to the death of CHRIST JESUS. It was all illegal since they have judged the case before there is any trial, accusation or defense.

They have taken counsel that they might put him to death, but they want to do this quietly and to wait until after the Passover period is over and the great number of the masses that are in Jerusalem for the occasion have returned home. This will be done lest the people should not agree to His death and there be trouble in the city.

JUDAS IS POSSESSED BY SATAN

Then another event occurs: **"Then entered Satan into Judas surnamed Iscariot, being of the number of the twelve. And he went his way, and communed with the**

chief priests and captains, how he might betray him unto them. And they were glad, and covenanted to give him money. And he promised, and sought opportunity to betray him unto them in the absence of the multitude" (Luke 22:3-6)
See further: **"Cursed be he that taketh reward to slay an innocent person. And all the people shall say, Amen" (Deuteronomy 27:25).**

Satan enters Judas and he covenants with them to betray the Lord. This is Satanic possession, not demonic possession.

It was experienced in the Garden of Eden when Satan possessed the Serpent and spoke through him. It will be experienced by Judas, and it will happen one more time when the future Antichrist is entered by Satan.

Now two days have elapsed. It is the night of the Paschal Supper. See John 13.

The Lord says to His twelve disciples in the upper room **"one of you shall betray me"** (v. 21).

The disciples did not know who it was: **"Then the disciples looked one on another, doubting of whom he spake"** (v. 22). They were utterly bewildered. They continually looked around on one another.

"And they were exceeding sorrowful, and began every one of them to say unto him, Lord, is it I?" (Matthew 26:22). This verse reveals each disciple around the table one at a time was asking if he might be the one.

No one suspected Judas Iscariot because:

1. He was a clever hypocrite. He had not slipped up.
2. He was treasurer. This was an elevated, trusted position of privilege. (Jews were money minded and material riches were considered a sign of approval).
3. JESUS had not been cool toward Judas even though He knew he was the betrayer: **"Jesus answered them, Have not I chosen you twelve, and one of you is a devil? He spake of Judas Iscariot the son of Simon: for he it was that should betray him, being one of the twelve"** (John 6:70-71). (If CHRIST had been, this would have surely given it away).
4. Judas was in the number one seat at the table. According to Edersheim, the Left hand side at the table was the highest place. Every place at the table had more or less honor to it. **"But when thou art bidden, go and sit down in the lowest room; that when he that bade thee cometh, he may say unto thee, Friend, go up higher: then shalt thou have worship in the presence of them that sit at meat with thee"** (Luke 14:10) and **"And he said unto her, What wilt thou? She saith unto him, Grant that these my two sons may sit, the one on thy right hand, and the other on the left, in thy kingdom"** (Matthew 20:21). John was lying on JESUS' breast. That was CHRIST's right hand (#2 spot), as they were reclining on their left hands. Judas was on CHRIST's left hand (#1 spot), or immediately behind CHRIST.
5. Final reason: The giving of the sop was to Judas first. The master of the dinner gave

the sop first to the honored guest.

It was the custom to give the sop with an invitation for one to put their trust in the MESSIAH and the Messianic kingdom. This was grace on the part of JESUS. The Lord treats Judas as the honored guest even though he has covenanted to betray Him.

But instead of receiving the Son, Judas receives Satan.

So important were these events to Satan that he was not going to allow anything to go wrong by having Judas repent of what he had covenanted to do. We must remind ourselves that the same is true of Satanic possession as demon possession. The person himself is responsible for allowing or permitting this to take place. This occurred because Judas wanted it to occur.

A CHANGE OF PLANS

But what is behind the movement of Judas to leave the feast and go to the Sanhedrin, **"And after the sop Satan entered into him. Then said Jesus unto him, That thou doest, do quickly. Now no man at the table knew for what intent he spake this unto him. For some of them thought, because Judas had the bag, that Jesus had said unto him, Buy those things that we have need of against the feast; or, that he should give something to the poor. He then having received the sop went immediately out: and it was night"** (John 13:27-30).

Simon Peter had asked John to ask CHRIST who it was going to be who betrays him: **"Simon Peter therefore beckoned to him, that he should ask who it should be of whom he spake"** (John 13:24). John asked CHRIST this question for both Peter and also for himself as he too wanted to know: **"He then lying on Jesus' breast saith unto him, Lord, who is it?"** (John 13:25). Both John and Judas could hear the answer because of their positions: **"Jesus answered, He it is, to whom I shall give a sop, when I have dipped it. And when he had dipped the sop, he gave it to Judas Iscariot, the son of Simon"** (John 13:26). CHRIST then prepared the sop.

The sop was similar to the Spanish tortilla. In it was placed pieces of lamb, bitter herbs, and a piece of unleavened bread all wrapped up.

He hands this to Judas. Judas now knows that CHRIST knows who it is that will betray Him, but he knows that John also knows and he will soon tell Peter and eventually everyone will know.

Thus the gag is up; Judas knows he was discovered.

Matthew 26:25 reveals that Judas then asked CHRIST (probably in a whisper), **"Rabbi, Is it I?"** (Judas never called JESUS, "Lord"). CHRIST replied: **"Thou hast said,"** which is an idiom for "Yes it is."

This forced Judas to act.

He rushes out into the night and tells the Sanhedrin he has been discovered. If they want him to betray CHRIST, it will have to be at once, or never. This forces the Sanhedrin to act even though they had previously said: "Not on the feast day . . . ". The Lord is the master of ceremonies, and He is controlling everything.

Through the entire time period of the Upper Room discourse, of the walk and instruction through the streets of Jerusalem, of the high priestly prayer at the brook Cedron and of the agony in the garden, Judas was waiting while elaborate preparation were made to capture this One.

Because it was the Passover it was a full moon.

JUDAS' COMPANY

Here came a great company, being led by Judas, coming out of the city crossing the Cedron and ascending into the Garden. "**Judas then, having received a band (of men) or officers from the chief priests and Pharisees, cometh thither with lanterns and torches and weapons**" (John 18:3)

"A band" is actually "the speiran." It refers, in military language, to a cohort of soldiers which is a tenth part of a legion. Each legion of 6000 men plus auxiliaries was divided in 10 cohorts. A cohort of soldiers would be a minimum of 600 and as many as 1000.

These were the Romans who were controlling Judea along with Syria and administered by a Roman official who resided in Caesarea, fifty miles away from Jerusalem, but had a palace in Jerusalem. Pilate, at this particular time, was governor and on this particular night was in Jerusalem. Along with him were a number of troops to preserve order at this time when so many additional people from all over Palestine had come to Jerusalem.

These soldiers had already been used to put down an insurrection: "**And there was one named Barabbas, which lay bound with them that had made insurrection with him, who had committed murder in the insurrection.**" (Mark 15:7) They were ready for anything.

The high priest summons their assistance in capturing a dangerous rebel and conspirator. The fact is that this cohort of Roman soldiers was probably already under his control: "**Pilate said unto them, Ye have a watch: go your way, make it as sure as ye can**" (Matthew 27:65).

Beside these Roman soldiers, there were the "**officers from the chief priests and Pharisees**" or "the Temple Guard." They were the sergeants of the Temple and had the actual task of arresting JESUS. The Roman cohort was there to give them assistance if needed.

They all came with lanterns and torches and weapons. If He hides Himself they need light to find Him. If He defends Himself they need weapons to capture Him.

But why such a great company -- at least 1000 men?

(1) This served as a mask to the Romans that they were capturing a dangerous conspirator and rebel. After all they knew why they were taking Him and it was to put Him to death. For this they needed Roman cooperation.

(2) They did not know either whether He and His disciples would fight but if they did they had them outnumbered 100 to 1.

(3) But remember also that the Sanhedrin had not wanted to apprehend Him on the feast day lest there be an uproar of the people. They were forced to act this night because Judas had been found out.

If they had to act they were glad they could do their work under the cover of darkness.

"For every one that doeth evil hateth the light, neither cometh to the light, lest his deeds should be reproved" (John 3:20) -- spoken to a member of the Sanhedrin.

Very definitely we may be assured that these soldiers were ordered to be as quiet as possible, for the one thing that they did not want was an awakened populace until they had completed their work.

(4) But having said all this, we have probably not touched one of the main reasons which would never have been breathed by anyone that night, but of which all the Jews would have been aware. The Sanhedrin were well aware of the miracles of CHRIST: **"we know . . . for no man can do these miracles that thou doest, except God be with him"** (John 3:2).

Furthermore, they know of the events that transpired when soldiers were sent to capture Elijah in the Old Testament.

"Then the king sent unto him a captain of fifty with his fifty. And he went up to him: and, behold, he sat on the top of an hill. And he spake unto him, Thou man of God, the king hath said, Come down. And Elijah answered and said to the captain of fifty, If I be a man of God, then let fire come down from Heaven, and consume thee and thy fifty. And there came down fire from Heaven, and consumed him and his fifty. Again also he sent unto him another captain of fifty with his fifty. And he answered and said unto him, O man of God, thus hath the king said, Come down quickly. And Elijah answered and said unto them, If I be a man of God, let fire come down from Heaven, and consume thee and thy fifty. And the fire of God came down from Heaven, and consumed him and his fifty. And he sent again a captain of the third fifty with his fifty. And the third captain of fifty went up, and came and fell on his knees before Elijah, and besought him, and said unto him, O man of God, I pray thee, let my life, and the life of these fifty thy servants, be precious in thy sight. Behold, there came fire down from Heaven, and burnt up the two captains of the former fifties with their fifties: therefore let my life now be precious in thy sight" (II Kings 1:9-14)

Twice fire came down from Heaven and consumed the captain of fifty with his fifty.

Here this night was the power of darkness in operation and there was unquestionably a secret fear of meeting opposition. Never before in the conflict of the ages had there ever been a time when Satan's works were not opposed by the Lord's forces and the Lord's forces opposed by Satan's. Satan never expected that this would be any different. But here was a play in which the opposition was allowed to capture the ball and run for a touchdown without ever being opposed once. Nothing like this had ever occurred before.

Judas was in the lead because (1) he knew the place where JESUS could be found and (2) he was the one who had covenanted to betray Him with a kiss.

TREACHERY OF JUDAS PROPHESED

The Lord JESUS CHRIST in His humanity could not be distinguished from any other man or even from His own disciples. There was no halo around his head. There was nothing about His appearance that made Him stand out from other men.

Therefore, it was necessary for one to identify Him with a kiss.

Here were the disciples being awakened from a deep sleep. Here was the Lord JESUS standing in complete composure. Here was Judas coming ahead of the others with a task to perform.

Though Scripture does not say, it is very likely that Satan still possessed him, for the point of all the conspiring was to accomplish the actual betrayal. The Lord had said, **"And truly the Son of man goeth, as it was determined: but woe unto that man by whom he is betrayed!"** (Luke 22:22).

Judas had made **"a covenant with death, and with hell was he in agreement"** (Isaiah 28:15). In this he is a picture of the nation itself, both then and in the tribulation.

CHRIST had known from the very first who would betray him: **"Jesus answered them, Have not I chosen you twelve, and one of you is a devil? He spake of Judas Iscariot the son of Simon: for he it was that should betray him, being one of the twelve"** (John 6:70-71).

Furthermore, the Old Testament Scriptures had said concerning this one:

"Yea, mine own familiar friend, in whom I trusted, which did eat of my bread, hath lifted up his heel against me" (Psalm 41:9)

"For it was not an enemy that reproached me; then I could have borne it: neither was it he that hated me that did magnify himself against me; then I would have hid myself from him: But it was thou, a man mine equal, my guide, and mine acquaintance" (Psalm 55:12-14)

"Let his days be few; and let another take his office" (Psalm 109:8). Quoted again in Acts: **"For it is written in the book of Psalms, Let his habitation be desolate, and**

let no man dwell therein: and his bishopric let another take" (Acts 1:20), of Judas.

"Let their habitation be desolate; and let none dwell in their tents" (Psalm 69:25).

Also quoted in Acts 1:20.

In the near view of prophecy it does refer to him, but in the far view it refers to the nation of Judas and Jerusalem whom he represents.

"And the Lord said unto me, Cast it unto the potter: a goodly price that I was prised at of them. And I took the thirty pieces of silver, and cast them to the potter in the house of the Lord" (Zechariah 11:13).

What made Judas act as he did?

The possessing of his body by Satan was only the end result of a long process. To summarize it in a single word: "Pride." It is the very same sin that caused Satan to fall in Heaven.

Judas had formed a grandiose picture of the kingdom, and visualized himself in an exalted position in it. When this did not materialize, and just the reverse was announced by the SAVIOUR, that is, that they would suffer and be persecuted and cast into prison, he seizes not only the money of the disciples of which he was the treasurer and hated that the costly ointment was not sold so he could have that money too: **"Then saith one of his disciples, Judas Iscariot, Simon's son, which should betray him, Why was not this ointment sold for three hundred pence, and given to the poor? This he said, not that he cared for the poor; but because he was a thief, and had the bag, and bare what was put therein"** (John 12:4-6), but adds to it 30 more pieces of silver.

This he felt would compensate him in a small way for his disappointment for not being great in a glorious kingdom.

Trials test men, for good or worse.

Many an individual has turned against a church or a SPIRIT directed movement to which he belonged when it did not materialize into that vision of grandeur that he had expected, or when he did not become a kingpin in it.

Here then are the events in sequence:

Judas is with the entire company when something unexpected happens.

Instead of waiting for them to find him, JESUS comes forward to meet them: **"Judas then, having received a band of men and officers from the chief priests and Pharisees, cometh thither with lanterns and torches and weapons. Jesus therefore, knowing all things that should come upon him, went forth, and said unto them, Whom seek ye? They answered him, Jesus of Nazareth. Jesus saith unto them, I am he. And Judas also, which betrayed him, stood with them"** (John 18:3-5)

Judas had not expected this. They were to surprise Him, but He instead surprised them. He was and will be in all complete MASTER of the situation.

But notice what happens: Jesus asked: "**Whom seek ye?**" They answered Him: "**Jesus of Nazareth.**" JESUS said unto them: "**I am.**" (Cross out the "he" which is in italics and not in the Greek). The whole significance is found in CHRIST being the great "**I am**" of the burning bush.

"As soon then as he had said unto them, I am, they went backward, and fell to the ground" (John 18:6).

It is interesting to see what men want to do to this verse. One commented that the soldiers were falling over one another because JESUS surprised them. Some soldiers, if this be the case. But this is how ridiculous men become in trying to diminish the supernatural.

When CHRIST said: "**I am,**" these soldiers were struck to the ground with this one word, and they could not move.

This merely shows the power of His word when He will exercise to the full when he comes the second time and smites the nations: "**And out of his mouth goeth a sharp sword, that with it he should smite the nations: and he shall rule them with a rod of iron: and he treadeth the winepress of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God**" (Revelation 19:15).

Had CHRIST desired, it being in the will of GOD, these soldiers would have remained on the ground until they rotted! This whole band lie prostrate at His feet by a single word from His lips.

Again He asked them: "**Whom seek ye?**" And they said: "**Jesus of Nazareth.**" CHRIST replied the same but added, "**if therefore ye seek me, let these go their way**" (John 18:7-9).

This gave permission for the Lord's disciples to move away, for this is His will. He has not requested their release, but commanded it. This was the Lord's signal to them to leave, but they didn't obey their commander-in-chief, and got into trouble.

It is only now that Judas comes forth to betray CHRIST with a kiss since this was the signal, and they were not taking anyone without the signal being given. Up to this time Judas has been pinned to the ground with the rest.

As Judas approaches CHRIST to kiss him, the Lord says: "**Judas, betrayest thou the Son of man with a kiss?**" (Luke 22:48). Judas went ahead anyway: "**Master, master; and kissed him**" (Mark 14:45).

Judas never called JESUS, "Lord."

THE KISS OF BETRAYAL

The word "kiss," here signifies that intense warm kiss that a young man would give his bride-to-be. This same word is used of the woman who was a sinner when she kissed the foot of the SAVIOUR.

The signal had been, "Whomsoever I shall kiss that same is he; take him, and lead him away safely."

Why this signal?

The kiss was a sign of discipleship in the East. Students used this as an expression that they are followers of a teacher, and it is very likely that this custom prevailed among CHRIST and His disciples.

Furthermore, when we become the Lord's disciples, we may be said to kiss Him. **"Kiss the Son, lest he be angry, and ye perish from the way, when his wrath is kindled but a little. Blessed are all they that put their trust in him"** (Psalm 2:12).

Here is an act that is sacred, being profaned. This has been Satan's tactic -- to pollute things "holy" and true.

Here is hypocrisy to its fullest -- to say one thing, to perform another. He confesses with his mouth, but his conduct belies him.

CHRIST said to Judas: **"Friend, wherefore art thou come?"** (Matthew 26:50).
"Companion, why did you come and do this thing?"

Here is the eternal farewell to the Son of perdition. Think of what eternity will be with these words continually ringing in his ears.

WHY STUDY JUDAS?

If we feel that this doesn't apply to us, look out, we are already in a fleshly state. Let none of us say, I am thankful I am not like this man.

There is a Judas living in every one of us in the person of the old sin nature, our flesh.

All that Judas was and did is what we have in germ in our breasts.

"Let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall."

GOD has no program of removing, nor of improving the old nature until we see the Lord face to face. Until that time it is destined for perdition but still lives on seeking "opportunity" to betray CHRIST and our faith.

Until this time we are to **"give diligence to make"** our **"calling and election sure."**

Only if we do these things shall we not stumble and fall. **"Wherefore the rather, brethren, give diligence to make your calling and election sure: for if ye do these things, ye shall never fall"** (II Peter 1:10).

"This I say then, Walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfil the lust of the flesh" (Galatians 5:16).

~ end of chapter 2 ~
