

Masterwork of the Messiah

Expositional Study Of Matthew's Gospel

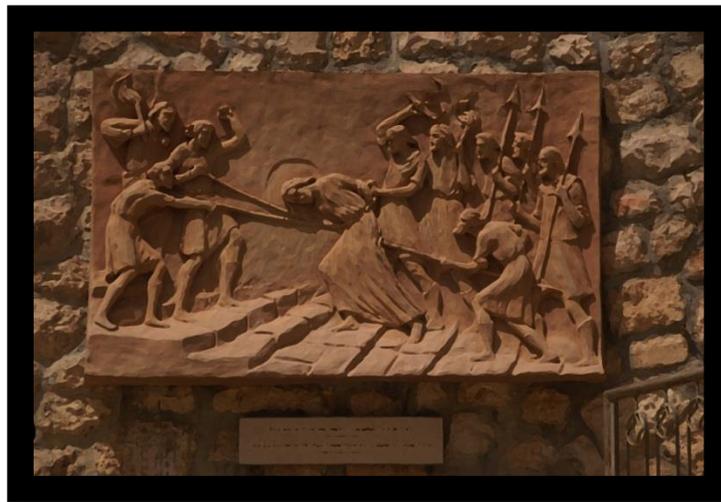
The Fight In The Forest: Part 2

Matthew 26:47-56

Written By

©Pastor Marty Baker

February 1, 2015



When you are attempting to be obedient to the call of God on your life, whether that is to live a holy life before your unsaved husband, to give leadership to a Bible study group, to head to the mission field, to follow God in a move He has placed before you, to represent Christ in the military, to share your faith to classmates at your university, to stay true to a daily spiritual regimen of Bible reading prayer, or the like, you can count on the fact you will, at some point, face a fight in the forest with your Adversary.

Why? His goal is always the same: To get you off course, to shipwreck your faith, to cause you to lose your spiritual passion by means of discouragement, to wear you down so you eventually throw in the proverbial towel and just become a mundane, non-threatening Christian to his carnal cause. He did it to Joseph by working through the jealousy of his brothers to move them to sell him into slavery. He did it to Job by means of bringing waves of loss to the shore of his once tranquil, godly life. He did it to Daniel, when he hauled him off to Babylonian captivity at a young, impressionable age. He did it Paul by repeated verbal and physical assaults. And in Paul's case, the ol' Serpent worked most insidiously by motivating carnal Christians, people who were converts of Paul's evangelistic activity, to repeatedly turn against their spiritual mentor by means of attacking his office, gifting, and ministry.

Been there. Done that myself ... many times. Walking intimately and closely with Christ is, as Paul teaches in Ephesians 6:10ff, a wrestling match with the forces of darkness. How do

you, then, stay in the match and win? How do you keep going when you feel like calling it quits so you can head back to the bench where life is easier? Answer? You study the life of your Lord as He took on the Devil in the Garden of Gethsemane prior to His crucifixion. Yes, you can do no better as a disciple of Jesus, the Christ, than to analyze and apply the principles we glean from His fierce *Fight in the Forest* with the forces inspired by Satan.

The setting, according to Matthew 26, was the Garden of Gethsemane, located due east of the Temple mount just across the Kidron shallow gorge. The time? Probably just after mid-



Looking northeast at the Temple Mount on the left, the Mount of Olives on the right, and the Kidron “Valley” in between them. The Garden of Gethsemane is located where the golden dome Church of All Nations appears just beyond the end-point of the Southern Temple wall.

night. The day? Passover. The characters? The eleven disciples and Jesus. The context? Jesus just finished battling the Devil over His redemptive mission by means of three emotional, gut-wrenching prayers of total obedience to the Father’s holy will. Approaching verse 47, we must bear in mind that Jesus had just awakened the groggy, sleeping disciples and informed them the traitor had arrived. From the ensuing historical narrative, we encounter, once again, the instructive thematic motif:

From The Toughest Of Times Come Timely Truths (Matthew 26:47-56)

While the emotional narrative might seem simple to cognitively grasp at first blush, it does contain numerous lofty and highly pragmatic truths divinely designed to equip us to stand sure-footed when our mission as disciples is thwarted by the Adversary. Of course, those priceless truths are readily gleaned from a close study of the life of our Lord. Eight empowering principles can’t be missed to the thoughtful and methodical exegete.

Do Expect A Rough Road

One of the greatest trials of life is being betrayed by someone you thought was a devout, devoted, loyal believer. At other times it can be a believer who is nothing more than a carnal Christian. Paul encountered his share of them from the Corinthian church he founded. Truly, nothing hurts more than watching someone desert you when you believed they supported and stood with you. Nothing is more troublesome than being betrayed by a so-called “Christian” friend at a critical moment of your walk with God, and at a time when you were, or are, seeking to do a great work for your Lord. I’ve been down that rough road before, but long before I walked down it, our Lord traveled down it. Matthew recounts what happened, from his perspective, when it became readily apparent who was the traitor among the Twelve:

⁴⁷ While He was still speaking, behold, Judas, one of the twelve, came up accompanied by a large crowd with swords and clubs, who came from the chief priests and elders of the people. ⁴⁸ Now he who was betraying Him gave them a sign, saying, “Whomever I kiss, He is the one; seize Him.”

Don't you find it interesting that Judas, the most despicable, devious disciple, is called “one of the twelve”? All kinds of pejorative names could have been rightfully leveled against him; however, the Scripture includes him, even at this critical juncture, as one of Christ's disciples. Why? I think the answer is simple. Matthew wanted to demonstrate the absolute sinister nature of the treacherous activity of Judas. What better way to do this than to call him “one of the twelve.” Who among the disciples would have ever thought Judas, the accountant among them, would be the traitorous disciple? Nobody ... but he was.

While still waking from their deep sleep and trying to get focused on what was going on, the disciples immediately focus on a large contingent club bearing, sword carrying people, with Judas leading the way in the flickering light of their numerous torches. Who were these people? After combing through the parallel accounts, we quickly learn this mixed group was composed of several groups: (1) officers from the Temple (Luke 22:52), (2) chief priests (Luke 22:52), (3) elders of Israel (Luke 22:52), a cohort or contingent of Roman soldiers from the Antonia Fortress (John 18:30), and the chief servant of the High Priest, Malchus (John 18:10). Since a Roman cohort consisted of some 600 soldiers, it is quite possible the crowd assembled to arrest Christ numbered close to 1,000. Shocking, isn't it? They came loaded for bear, didn't they? One thousand heavily armed men in battle gear against eleven innocent, historically peaceful disciples. Why such a formidable group? Jesus had a penchant for getting away from eluding and escaping from groups bent on seizing Him (cf. John 7:32, 44-46; Luke 4:16-30). More on this thought in a moment.

Judas had already worked out how with the authorities how he would identify Jesus to them so he could get his thirty pieces of silver. He would walk up and kiss him in the traditional Jewish fashion typically seen between a rabbi and his disciples. All they had to do was watch who he kissed on the cheek and then they'd know who to haul away for trail. Simple, yet so utterly sinister. Judas could have chosen other ways to identify Jesus. He could have pointed to him. He could have said, “Here He is.” He could have said, “He's the man in the white tunic over there with the long beard.” He chose, on the contrary, to kiss Christ in a customary middle-eastern fashion, any by so doing he played his game of deception all the way to the end. When the moment finally came for him to give the sign to the authorities behind him, Matthew tells us what happened:

⁴⁹ Immediately Judas went to Jesus and said, “Hail, Rabbi!” and kissed Him.

In Greek, “Hail” is *chaire* (Χαίρε) from the word meaning “Greetings!” or “Good day!” or “Glad to see you!” What a lie from the pit of hell, but, then, the Devil possessed Judas at this moment. Obviously, the title was a lie from the father of lies. Further, he still couldn't bring himself to call Jesus, Lord, only the lesser term, Rabbi. And when it came to finally giving Him the kiss of a traitor, ol' Judas went overboard. The Greek at the end of this clause in verse 49 denotes this by switching from the simple verb “to kiss,” *phileo* (φιλέω) ... from which we get the word “friend,” like in Philadelphia “the city of brotherly love” ... to the compound and intensive form of the

same verb with a preposition affixed to the front of it, *kataphileo* (καταφιλέω). Ostensibly, this means Judas didn't just kiss Christ on one cheek but he kissed Him on each cheek probably multiple times. What a mockery! What a joke!

Why did Judas have to identify Jesus? For one, it was a dark forest, making it difficult to see anyone clearly. For another, not everyone in that mob necessarily knew Christ ... or had even heard of Him. Finally, Galileans might have all looked very similar at night: long tunics and long beards. These are just a few reasons why Judas identified Jesus with a kiss. Don't you know that traitorous action has haunted Judas these last 2,000 years in hell? "What was I thinking?" "Why did I do that? It so wasn't worth it!"

From this section of the narrative we learn that we should expect opposition to God's mission and call on our lives from the most unexpected people. We should not be shocked or dumbfounded when attack and desertion originates from someone we might have leaned on and trusted. Jesus counsels us to take up our cross and follow Him, and we need to remember that cross bearing is always a difficult venture in a godless, carnal day. Again, I've encountered Judas on more than one occasion in my spiritual life.

Once while I lived in and pastored a church in California, a large church wanted my resume. I sent it to them and eventually the elder board considered my experience, educational training, and gifting. An older staff pastor who knew me to a limited degree attended the meeting. He, who I thought supported me, quickly spoke up and passed lies about me and my wife to the board, lies which undercut my leadership ability and cast me in a bad light. Since everyone assumed he spoke truth, they all immediately pulled my resume from the candidates list. Nobody bothered to question him or to even talk with me. Had they spoken with me, I could have easily and quickly (and truthfully) rebuffed his fallacious statements designed to control the hiring process for his ulterior purposes. Yes, I've felt the sting of betrayal in the quest to follow the leadership of Christ, and it is never easy, but it should be expected. If you don't expect it, chances are it will not only take the wind out of your sails, it just might sink your boat. So, wake up and gear up. Half of winning the spiritual battle is to be prepared for what might happen.

Do Use Calming Words

I find Christ's response to Judas simply jaw dropping and eye-popping:

⁵⁰ And Jesus said to him, "Friend, do what you have come for." Then they came and laid hands on Jesus and seized Him.

Jesus called Judas, "Friend." Are you kidding me? He, who knew what Judas was up to, could have called him, "Traitor," but He didn't. He didn't chose the more endearing term, *phileo*, but the lesser term *hetaire* (ἑταῖρε). Nevertheless, Jesus still employed a kind, gentle term to the man bent on His destruction and demise. Why did He do this? For one, to fulfill and live out what He taught back in Matthew 5:

³⁹ But I say to you, do not resist him who is evil; but whoever slaps you on your right cheek, turn to him the other also (Matthew 5).

When you are wronged by the Judas-types, the natural, fleshly temptation is to get down and dirty, or to condescend to their level and call them negative names ... even if those names are valid. Kingdom members are to live differently, and Jesus showed us the way at a most troublesome time in His life. We are to reach out to the godless, not by going tit for tat with them, but by being meek and mild in our actions and our speech.

- Is somebody out to wreck your career?
- Is a higher ranking officer making your rank advancement a nightmare?
- Has someone said and done mean things to unjustly lower you in the eyes of your peers?
- Has someone done you dirty in your family?

If so, I think you know how you should respond in a future fight in a forest with this person. Paul learned from Jesus and applied that learning well in his lifetime. Listen to his advice:

⁶ Let your speech always be with grace, as though seasoned with salt, so that you will know how you should respond to each person (Colossians 4).

Perhaps your speech has been seasoned with arsenic lately. Make this the day you grab the salt and head back into the forest foray prepared to speak like a true disciple of Jesus Christ.

Piecing all the parallel accounts together, we learn that somewhere in this exchange with Judas, Jesus incontrovertibly proved His divinity.

Do Validate Divinity (John 18:5-6)

John's account of the treasonous behavior of Judas contains additional details not found in Matthew.

⁴ Jesus therefore, knowing all the things that were coming upon Him, went forth, and said to them, "Whom do you seek?" ⁵ They answered Him, "Jesus the Nazarene." He said to them, "I am He." And Judas also who was betraying Him, was standing with them. ⁶ When therefore He said to them, "I am He," they drew back, and fell to the ground (John 18).

If this occurred right before Judas kissed Christ on the cheek, it makes the actions of Judas even more shocking. How so? Let me show you.

When the leaders in the crowd wanted to know which one of them was Jesus the Nazarene, Jesus responded "I am He." The pronoun "He" is not present in the Greek text but is supplied to complete the sentence for English readers. Literally, Jesus said emphatically, "I AM," employing the divine title of God from the Old Testament. Grammatically, the title is built on the first person personal pronoun, *ego* (Εγώ), and it is followed by the first person verb to be, *eimi* (εἰμι). In the Greek Septuagint (LXX), this is the Greek used to translate the Hebrew term denoting the person of God (Deuteronomy 32:39; Isaiah 43:10, 13, 25; 48:12; 51:12; 52:6). It is the very term Jesus used to identify himself to the disciples as He walked on the water of the Galilee in a storm near their boat (John 6:21), and it is the term Jesus used to classify Himself as the eternal God who lived prior to Abraham in John 8:58. He, and He alone, is the I AM, the eternal,

self-existent, all-powerful God Almighty, and that is the reason why the minute He pronounced His amazing name, all one thousand people in that mob were literally blown to the ground. You might need to read that again. With one mention of His true identity they all were knocked back and then down like helpless bowling pins.¹

¹ Here are the lexical meanings for the word “to fall,” viz., *pipto* from Walter Bauer, *A Greek-English Lexicon of The New Testament And Other Early Christian Literature* (pp. 815-816). Note well: This fall had absolutely nothing to do with showing reverence to or for Christ. These men came to arrest and put him on trial, not to fall before Him in adoration. With this in mind, consider the lexical options: **πίπτω** (Hom.+) impf. ἔπιπτον; fut. πεσοῦμαι (B-D-F §77; Rob. 356); 2 aor. ἔπεσον and ἔπεσα (B-D-F §81, 3; W-S. §13, 13; Mlt-H. 208; W-H., app. p. 164; Tdf., Prol. p. 123); pf. 2 sg. πέπτωκας **Rv 2:5** (πέπτωκες v.l.; B-D-F §83, 2; W-S. §13, 16; Mlt-H 221), 3 pl. πέπτωκαν **Rv 18:3** v.l. (W-S. §13, 15; Mlt-H. 221)

① **to move w. relative rapidity in a downward direction, fall**, the passive of the idea conveyed in βάλλω.

ⓐ *fall (down)* from a higher point, w. the ‘point from which’ designated by ἀπό (Hom. et al.) ἀπό τῆς τραπέζης *from the table* **Mt 15:27; Lk 16:21**. ἀπό τοῦ οὐρανοῦ **Mt 24:29**. ἀπό τῆς κεφαλῆς **Ac 27:34** v.l. (of the falling out of hair, as Synes., Calvit. 1, p. 63b). The direction or destination of the fall is expressed by an adv. ἀπό τοῦ τριστεγίου κάτω *down from the third story* **Ac 20:9**. ἀπό τοῦ κεράμου χαμαί *from the roof to the ground* Hm 11:20. ἐκ τινος *from someth.*: ἐκ τοῦ οὐρανοῦ (Sallust. 4 p. 8, 19; Job 1:16; 3 Km 18:38.—SibOr 5, 72 ἐξ ἄστρων) **Mk 13:25**; of lightning (Ps.-Plut., Vi. Hom. 111 εἰ ἐκπίπτει ἡ ἀστράπη; Ps.-Clem., Hom. 9, 5; 6) **Lk 10:18** (Lycophron, vs. 363 of the image of Athena ἐξ οὐρανοῦ πεσοῦσα. Cp. σατάν; *be thrown* is also possible here); **Rv 8:10a**; the destination is added ἐκ τοῦ οὐρανοῦ εἰς τὴν γῆν **9:1** (Ps.-Callisth. 2, 10, 10 ἐξ οὐρανοῦ εἰς τὸ ἔδαφος πεπτωκότες). W. only the destination given ἐν μέσῳ τῶν ἀκανθῶν *among the thorns* **Lk 8:7**. ἐπὶ τι *on someth.* **Rv 8:10b**. ἐπὶ τὴν γῆν (Aeschyl., Ag. 1019; Am 3:5; JosAs 16:16) **Mt 10:29** (with the patristic v.l. εἰς παγίδα cp. Am 3:5 and Aesop, Fab. 193 P.=340 H.//284 Ch.//207 H-H. of a bird: ἐπιπίπτει εἰς τοὺς βρόχους); **13:8**; Hm 11:21 (here the ‘place from which’ is designated by an adv.: ἄνωθεν).—ἐπὶ τὰ πετρώδη **Mt 13:5**; cp. **Mk 4:5** (ἐπὶ 4bγ). ἐπὶ τὰς ἀκάνθας **Mt 13:7** (ἐπὶ 4bδ). A pers. falls down ἐπὶ τὸν λίθον *on the stone* **Mt 21:44a; Lk 20:18a**. Conversely the stone falls on a pers. **Mt 21:44b; Lk 20:18b**. Likew. ἐπὶ τινα **23:30; Rv 6:16** (cp. on both Hos 10:8).—In imagery ὁ ἥλιος π. ἐπὶ τινα *the (heat of the) sun falls upon someone* **Rv 7:16** (Maximus Tyr. 4, 1a ἡλίου φῶς πίπτει εἰς γῆν; Alex. Aphr., An. Mant. p. 146, 9 Br. τὸ φῶς ἐπὶ πάντα πίπτει). ὁ κλῆρος π. ἐπὶ τινα (κλῆρος 1) **Ac 1:26**. *come (upon) ἐπὶ τινα someone* ἀγλὺς καὶ σκότος **Ac 13:11**. **Rv 11:11** v.l. (φόβος 2a).—εἰς τι (Hes., Op. 620) εἰς τὴν γῆν (Phlegon: 257 Fgm. 36, 1, 5 Jac. πίπτει εἰς τὴν γῆν) **Mk 4:8; Lk 8:8; J 12:24; Rv 6:13**; 1 Cl 24:5. εἰς τὴν ὁδὸν Hn 3, 7, 1. εἰς βόθυνον **Mt 15:14**; cp. **Lk 14:5**. εἰς τὰς ἀκάνθας **Mk 4:7; Lk 8:14**. εἰς τὸ πῦρ Hn 3, 7, 2. παρὰ τι *on someth.* παρὰ τὴν ὁδὸν (Iambl. Erot. p. 222, 22) **Mt 13:4; Mk 4:4; Lk 8:5**. ἐγγὺς τινος *near someth.* ἐγγὺς (τῶν) ὑδάτων Hn 3, 2, 9; 3, 7, 3.

ⓑ of someth. that, until recently, has been standing (upright) *fall (down), fall to pieces*

α. of persons

κ. *fall to the ground, fall down (violently)* εἰς τὸ πῦρ καὶ εἰς τὸ ὕδωρ **Mt 17:15** (but HZimmern, Die Keilinschriften u. d. AT³ 1903, 366; 363f, and JWeiss ad loc. take the falling into fire and water to mean fever and chills). ἐπὶ τῆς γῆς (SibOr 4, 110; 5, 100) **Mk 9:20** (π. under the infl. of a hostile spirit; sim. Jos., Ant. 8, 47). ἐπὶ τὴν γῆν (SibOr 4, 110 v.l.) **Ac 9:4**; cp. **22:7** (s. ἔδαφος). χαμαί (Job 1:20; Philo, Agr. 74) **J 18:6**. ἔπεσα πρὸς τοὺς πόδας αὐτοῦ ὡς νεκρός **Rv 1:17**.—Abs. *fall down* GPt 5:18 v.l. *Fall dead* (Paradox. Vat. 37 Keller πίπτει; Mel., P. 26, 184 πρηγῆς δὲ ἔπιπτε σιγῶν) **Ac 5:5, 10; 1 Cor 10:8** (cp. Ex 32:28); **Hb 3:17** (Num 14:29). Specifically *fall* in battle (Ael. Aristid. 46 p. 233 D.; Appian, Hann. 56 §236; Jos., Vi. 341; 354) **Lk 21:24** (cp. στόμα 4 and Sir 28:18; 4 [6] Esdr [POxy 1010, 3–11 σὺ ἐν ῥομφαίᾳ πεσῆ ... πεσοῦνται ἐν μαχαίρῃ]).

ζ. *fall down, throw oneself to the ground* as a sign of devotion or humility, before high-ranking persons or divine beings, esp. when one approaches w. a petition (LXX; TestAbr A 18 p. 100, 29 [Stone p. 48]; JosAs 14:4; ArcSed 14:2), abs. **Mt 2:11; 4:9; 18:26, 29; Rv 5:14; 19:4; 22:8** (in all these places [except **Mt 18:29**] π. is closely connected w. προσκυνεῖν [as Jos., Ant. 10, 213 after Da 3:5 and ArcMos 27]. Sim. in many of the places already mentioned). W. var. words added (Jos., Ant. 10, 11 πεσὼν ἐπὶ πρόσωπον τ. θεὸν ἰκέτευε; Gen 17:3, 17; Num 14:5) ἐπὶ πρόσωπον (αὐτοῦ, αὐτῶν) **Mt 17:6; 26:39; Lk 5:12; 17:16** (ἐπὶ πρόσωπον παρὰ τοὺς πόδας αὐτοῦ); **1 Cor 14:25**; ἐπὶ τὰ πρόσωπα αὐτῶν **Rv 7:11; 11:16**; ἐπὶ τῆς γῆς **Mk 14:35**. Further, the one to whom devotion is given can be added in var. ways: ἐνώπιόν τινος (cp. 2 Km 3:34) **Rv 4:10; 5:8; 7:11**. ἔμπροσθεν τῶν ποδῶν τινος **19:10**. εἰς τοὺς πόδας τινός (Diog. L. 2, 79) **Mt 18:29** v.l.; **J 11:32** v.l. ἐπὶ τοὺς πόδας **Ac 10:25** (v.l. adds αὐτοῦ). παρὰ τοὺς πόδας τινός **Lk 8:41; 17:16** (s. above). πρὸς τοὺς πόδας τινός **Mk 5:22; J 11:32; Ac 10:25** D; Hn 3, 2, 3.

Think about the magnitude of this show of raw, divine power.

The crowd came with weapons. Why? I'm sure the religious authorities had spread their share of disinformation to the police and soldiers. They could have dropped into the conversation that several of Christ's men were reported to be zealots and sicarri, or dreaded Jewish terrorists.² They were formerly associated with such groups, but their faith relationship had dramatically changed their behavior, as is evidenced by their activity with Christ over the last few years of ministry. Christ's opponents by-passed this evidence and used a propagandist approach to painting Him in a negative light, I'm sure.

Think the Judas-types of the world have forgotten this useful technique? Think again.

In my (short) lifetime (of 57 years), I've watched Christianity and Christians go from being accepted and respected in the culture to being anti-science, anti-freedom, anti-earth, anti-intellectualism, anti-reason and even classified as terrorists ... even though the evidence doesn't support the volatile claims. Such Christophobic classifications is how totalitarian, despotic-loving, truly intolerant people mis-characterize Christians (and Christ) so they marginalize them so they can, in turn, live and let live with no moral boundaries or spiritual accountability. Carroll and Shiflett's book *Christianity On Trial: Arguments Against Anti-Religious Bigotry* is a helpful primer to help equip you for the rough road ahead.

How do we respond when the mobs come with clubs and swords of disinformation? We stand up for truth, especially in relation to the person and work of Jesus Christ. Debating with

β. of things, esp. structures *fall, fall to pieces, collapse, go down* (Appian, Iber. 54 §228; Jos., C. Ap. 1, 192, Ant. 16, 18) of the σκηνή Δαυίδ (σκηνή end) **Ac 15:16** (Am 9:11). Of a house *fall (in)* (Diod S 11, 63, 2 τῶν οἰκιῶν πιπτουσῶν; Dio Chrys. 6, 61; 30 [47], 25; Aristaeus Hist.: 725 Fgm. 1, 3 Jac. [in Eus., PE 9, 25, 3]; Job 1:19) **Mt 7:25, 27; Lk 6:49** v.l. (Diod S 15, 12, 2 τῶν οἰκιῶν πιπτουσῶν because of the influx of the ποταμός). τὰ τεῖχη Ἱερικῶ ἐπεσαν **Hb 11:30** (cp. Josh 6:5, 20.—Appian, Bell. Civ. 1, 112 §524; Ael. Aristid. 25, 42 K.=43 p. 813 D.: τὰ τεῖχη π.). ἐφ' οὗς ἐπεσεν ὁ πύργος *upon whom the tower fell* **Lk 13:4** (of a πύργος X., Hell. 5, 2, 5; Arrian, Anab. 6, 7, 5; Polyaeus 6, 50; Jos., Bell. 5, 292; SibOr 11, 12.—π. ἐπὶ τινα Job 1:19). οἶκος ἐπὶ οἶκον πίπτει *house falls upon house* **11:17** (Jülicher, Gleichn. 221f). Of a city (Oenomaus in Eus., PE 5, 25, 6) Ox 1, 18f (=GTh 32); cp. **Rv 11:13; 16:19**.—Fig. *become invalid, come to an end, fail* (Pla., Euthyphr. 14d; Philostrat., Ep. 9) **Lk 16:17** (cp. Josh 23:14 v.l.; Ruth 3:18); **1 Cor 13:8**.

② **to experience loss of status or condition, fall, be destroyed**, in ext. sense of 1.

ⓐ *fall, be destroyed* ἐπεσεν, ἔπεσεν Βαβυλῶν (B. as symbol of humans in opposition to God and God's people; cp. Is 21:9; Jer 28:8.; Just., D. 49, 8.—Repetition of the verb for emphasis as Sappho, Fgm. 131 D.² οὐκέτι ἴξω ... οὐκέτι ἴξω [Campbell 114 p. 138: οὐκέτι ἴξω ... οὐκέτι ἴξω]; Aristoph., Equ. 247; M. Ant. 5, 7; Ps.-Libanius, Char. Ep. p. 33, 5 ἐρῶ, ἐρῶ. This is to remove all possibility of doubt, as Theod. Prodr. 5, 66 εἶδον, εἶδον='I have really seen'; Theocr. 14, 24 ἔστι Λύκος, Λύκος ἐστὶ=it really is a wolf; in Rv w. focus on lamentation, s. reff. Schwyzer II 60) **Rv 14:8; 18:2**.

ⓑ *fall* in a transcendent or moral sense, *be completely ruined* (Polyb. 1, 35, 5; Diod S 13, 37, 5; Pr 11:28; Sir 1:30; 2:7; TestGad 4:3)=fall from a state of grace **Ro 11:11** (fig. w. πταίω [q.v. 1]), **22; Hb 4:11** (perh. w. ref. to the final judgment). Also in a less severe sense=*go astray morally* τοὺς πεπτωκότας ἔγειρον 1 Cl 59:4.—In wordplay 'stand and fall' (cp. Pr 24:16) **Ro 14:4; 1 Cor 10:12; 2 Cl 2:6**. μνημόνευε πόθεν πέπτωκες *remember (the heights) from which you have fallen* **Rv 2:5**.

ⓒ *ὑπὸ κρίσιν π. fall under condemnation* **Js 5:12** (on π. ὑπὸ τι cp. Diod S 4, 17, 5 π. ὑπ' ἐξουσίαν [Just., D. 105, 4]; Herodian 1, 4, 2; 2 Km 22:39; Tat. 8, 2 ὑπὸ τὴν εἰμαρμένην; Hippol., Ref. 4, 3, 5 ὑπὸ τὴν ἐπίσκεψιν *fall under scrutiny*; Did., Gen. 211, 5 ὑπὸ κατάραν; Theoph. Ant. 2, 25 [p. 162, 12] ὑπὸ θάνατον).

ⓓ π. ... εἰς νόσον καὶ ἔσχατον κίνδυνον *in sickness and extreme peril* AcPl Ha 4, 15.¹

ⓔ *fall, perish* (Philo, Aet. M. 128) πίπτοντος τοῦ Ἰσραήλ B 12:5. οἱ πέντε ἐπεσαν *five have perished, disappeared, passed from the scene* **Rv 17:10** (cp. also π.=die' Job 14:10).—B. 671. DELG. M-M. TW. Spicq.

² For a good article on Zealots and Sicarri go to the following web address:

http://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/jsource/judaica/ejud_0002_0021_0_21428.html

one of these types this week, he let me know from the outset he had reason and we Christians simply had unsubstantiated, unreasonable faith. I responded by giving him the mathematical impossibility of Christ fulfilling just eight of the sixty exact ancient prophecies concerning him³, leaving us with no other conclusion, logically speaking, than to conclude that He was, in fact, the prophesied God in the flesh, as prophesied. My challenge to the man of reason was, “What will you do with this incontrovertible reasonable evidence?” The problem, as Ravi Zacharias points out in his book *Jesus Among Other Gods*, “is not the absence of evidence; it is, rather, the suppression of it.”⁴

To those who drank the cool-aid and opposed Him on erroneous grounds and to those had exposure to Him and still chose to disbelieve and oppose Him, Jesus quickly acquainted them with His divinity. As they lay on the ground, wondering what just knocked them all over instantly, they had a few minutes to consider that He just might be, in fact, the great I AM. If this occurred right before Judas kissed Christ, his betrayal is even more mind-numbing. Hatred and unbelief, when mixed together, make for a concoction which will bring deep spiritual blindness to any soul. Note this passage well: In similar hostile circumstances, don't be afraid to debunk the *Christophobia* you encounter by articulating the solid evidences for the divinity of Jesus. A good starting point just might be Lee Strobel's *The Case For Christ*.

Don't be shocked, however, when the Judas-types and Judas supporters reject, outright, the incontrovertible evidences you place before them. Put differently, don't be shocked at their love of blind unbelief held tenaciously as if were informed belief. As I've said many times before in other settings, the problem with unbelief is not informational but volitional. Don't let this reality (Romans 1:18ff) deter you from standing up for the person and work of Jesus, the true Christ and Savior of the world.

After Judas got up from the ground and kissed Christ to seal His fate is probably when Peter impulsively sought to capitalize on the moment. After all, many of the soldiers were probably stunned and got up slowly from being blown over. He used a sword to try and defend Christ, but he quickly found out he had picked up the wrong weapon. From this part of the narrative our Lord teaches us one crucial concept when fighting in the forest with the Devil and his minions.

Do Use The Right Weapons

Peter, in his typical fashion, reacted impulsively to the deteriorating situation among the olive trees:

⁵¹ And behold, one of those who were with Jesus reached and drew out his sword, and struck the slave of the high priest and cut off his ear.

John informs us that Peter attempted to kill Malchus, the head servant and probably the spokesman of the Chief Priest (John 18:10-11). Fortunately, Peter wielded a fishing net better than he did a sharp, dagger-like sword. Aiming for the man's head, he cut off the right ear, most likely as the man dodged the potentially fatal blow.

³ Christ fulfilling eight of sixty prophecies is one in 10¹⁷. That's equivalent to covering Texas two feet deep in silver dollars, placing a dot on one silver dollar, throwing it arbitrarily anywhere in the state and then asking someone to reach down and pick it up on the first try.

⁴ Ravi Zacharias, *Jesus Among Other Gods* (Nashville: Word Publishing, 2000): 50.

Can you blame Peter? Jesus had just told him he would deny knowing Him three times before the coming sunrise, and now he had just seen the breath-taking display of Christ's raw, unstoppable power. Who wouldn't have seized the moment, seeking to take as many with you, while thinking Jesus, with all that power, could easily step forward and take the rest of them on ... and then establish the kingdom. He couldn't have been more wrong.

Christ rebuked Peter, as He had done on many other occasions:

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.

Note, Jesus didn't tell him to get rid of the sword, but to just put it away. This night was not a night for warfare, and if Peter chose to live by violence at the moment then he would rightly pay the price for violent behavior at the hands of the State (Romans 13). ⁵ Despite all of Christ's teaching, Peter still didn't understand the nature of Christ's purpose and mission, nor did he understand the weapons at his disposal.

Christ's heavenly kingdom was not of this world. As Jesus would later tell Pilate while on trial:

³⁶ Jesus answered, "My kingdom is not of this world. If My kingdom were of this world, then My servants would be fighting so that I would not be handed over to the Jews; but as it is, My kingdom is not of this realm" (John 18).

His kingdom was heavenly, first and foremost. It will be earthly, as He taught in Matthew 24 through 25; however, his followers were not to use earthly weapons to establish His empire. No bombs. No AK 47s. No tanks. No planes. No ships. No helicopters.

The weapons of the believer are far different, and Peter needed to realize this ... and he eventually did as we read in Acts and in his letters. Our weapons to propel our Lord's kingdom are many:

⁵ In Luke 22:35-38, a parallel account of Christ's arrest, the disciples report they have two swords. This is probably in addition to Peter's own sword, meaning three weapons were present. Does this mean Jesus supported the use of force in advancing His kingdom. No. He puts that notion to rest with His rebuke of Peter. How, then, are we to view the presence of the swords. *The Bible Knowledge Commentary* gives us the views (p. 260): "22:35-38. Jesus pointed out to His disciples that they had never lacked **anything** while they were with Him and were sent out to minister for Him (cf. 9:3). However, now that He was to be taken away from them, they would have to make preparations for their ministries including a **purse ... a bag, and ... a sword** for personal protection. Jesus was about to die and be **numbered with the transgressors**, a quotation from Isaiah 53:12.

When the disciples responded that they had **two swords**, Jesus replied, **That is enough**. This response has been interpreted in at least four ways: (1) Some understand the words as a rebuke to the disciples. If that were the case, then Jesus was saying, "Enough of this kind of talk!" (Leon Morris, *The Gospel according to St. Luke: An Introduction and Commentary*, p. 310) (2) Others understand the words to denote the fact that even two swords are enough to show human inadequacy at stopping God's plan for the death of Christ. Swords could not stop God's purpose and plan. (3) Jesus may simply have been saying that two swords were adequate for the 12 of them. (4) Others see the clause in conjunction with the quotation from Isaiah and understand Jesus to mean that by possessing two swords they would be classified by others as transgressors or criminals. This fourth view seems preferable.³⁶ To this I would add another view which states the disciples had the swords for defensive, not offensive, purposes, and if that was the case, then Christ was okay with it.

- Teaching about His historical and verifiable resurrection (Acts 1:9ff; 4:10).
- Relying on the presence of the Holy Spirit, which fills His Church (Acts 1:8).
- Utilizing bold, powerful preaching (Acts 3:11-26; 4:20-21).
- Tapping into God's power through prayer (Acts 4:29-31).
- Using the Word of God to counter false thinking and sinful living (Hebrews 4:11-12).

Regarding the weapons of the believer, Paul has taught us well:

³ For though we walk in the flesh, we do not war according to the flesh, ⁴ for the weapons of our warfare are not of the flesh, but divinely powerful for the destruction of fortresses. ⁵ We are destroying speculations and every lofty thing raised up against the knowledge of God, and we are taking every thought captive to the obedience of Christ ... (2 Corinthians 10).

Pastor Warren Wiersbe opens the meaning up of this pivotal text with his usual lucid observations.

The answer (vv. 3–6). This reveals what spiritual warfare is all about. Because the Corinthians (led by the false teachers) judged Paul's ministry by the outward appearance, they completely missed the power that was there. They were evaluating things "according to the flesh" (2 Cor. 10:2) and not according to the Spirit. The Judaizers, like some "great religious personalities" today, impressed the people with their overpowering abilities, their oratorical powers, and their "commendations" from church leaders.

Paul took a different approach; for, though he was as human as anyone else, he did not depend on the human but on the divine, the spiritual weapons provided by the Lord. His warfare was not according to the flesh, because he was not fighting against flesh and blood (see Eph. 6:10ff). You cannot fight spiritual battles with carnal weapons.

The word *warfare* in 2 Corinthians 10:4 means "campaign." Paul was not simply fighting a little skirmish in Corinth; the attack of the enemy there was part of a large satanic campaign. The powers of hell are still trying to destroy the work of God (Matt. 16:18), and it is important that we not yield any ground to the enemy, not even one church!

There are walls of resistance in the minds of people, and these walls (like the walls of Jericho) must be pulled down. What are these "mental walls"? Reasonings that are opposed to the truth of God's Word. Pride of intelligence that exalts itself. Paul was not attacking intelligence, but intellectualism, the high-minded attitude that makes people think they know more than they really

do (Rom. 12:16). Paul had faced this “wisdom of men” when he founded the church (1 Cor. 1:18ff), and it had surfaced again with the coming of the Judaizers. Paul’s attitude of humility was actually one of his strongest weapons, for pride plays right into the hands of Satan. The meek Son of God had far more power than Pilate (see John 19:11), and He proved it. Paul used spiritual weapons to tear down the opposition—prayer, the Word of God, love, the power of the Spirit at work in his life. He did not depend on personality, human abilities, or even the authority he had as an apostle. However, he was ready to punish the offenders, if necessary, once the congregation had submitted to the Lord.⁶

As with Christ, Satan sought to thwart and destroy Paul’s divine mission, but Paul, like His Lord, understood how to use the spiritual weapons at his disposal to secure a spiritual victory. We can do no less. We know what the weapons are God has put in our spiritual armories to fight effectively in the forest. Now, let us use them, even when false religions around the world utilize real weapons to burn churches to the ground and harm fellow believers, might we stand resolute, as Jesus did in the presence of physical weapons, to use the spiritual weapons to take on the kingdom of darkness.

To read Peter’s two epistles in the New Testament is to see a man who learned from his mistake this tragic evening. Might you learn as well.

In addition to using the right weapons for the battle against spiritual darkness, positively Christ’s response to Peter cutting off the servant’s ear shows us it is most appropriate that we ...

Do Show Mercy (John 18:10; Luke 22:51).

John identifies the servant as Malchus, while Luke is the only gospel writer to say what happened after he tragically lost his ear:

⁵¹ But Jesus answered and said, ‘Stop! No more of this.’ And He touched his ear and healed him (Luke 22).

He who turned water to wine, fed the 5,000, raised the dead boy from Nain, gave sight to countless blind people (as prophesied in Isaiah 35:5; 42:7) reached out and gave Malchus a new ear. Note well, it doesn’t say he re-attached the old one. He just created a new one in the bloody spot where the original one was missing. Once again, He demonstrated His absolute divinity (which they still rejected in their unbelief), plus He showed us how we are to respond to those arrayed against us in the forest. Above all things, we are to look for opportunities to show ourselves merciful. Will you be merciful for those out to harm you because of your faith? Don’t you know that Malchus was never the same again? Mercy does that to people, you know.

Additionally, as the battle heats up among the trees of your life, realize that in order to make it you shouldn’t look at the forces arrayed against you. No. Don’t look at their weapons, their money, their education, their number, and so forth. On the contrary ...

Do Look Up

⁶Wiersbe, Warren W. *The Bible Exposition Commentary. Volume 1* (Wheaton, IL: Victor Books, 1996): 664.

How did Jesus keep perspective that night? He kept His mind on the things above, not on the things of the earth. He went vertical.

⁵³ “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?”

With one Roman legion consisting of roughly 6,000 men, Jesus quickly informed Peter that had He wanted to deal with these 1,000 soldiers He could have easily asked for 72,000 angelic troops to materialize. And since one angel in the Old Testament wiped out 186,000 Assyrian troops by just passing through their camp (2 Kings 19:35), what could 72,000 of them do to this seemingly powerful, well-armed band of men? Jesus didn't need Peter's sword. He needed Peter's heart. He needed Peter to understand that He had this situation completely under control, even though it looked completely out of control. His calm demeanor under tremendous pressure was directly related to His upward glance into the forces at His disposal in the heavenlies.

What do we learn from this? Much. Too often I think we are fearful of the forces we see with our eyes, we get all worried about the amount of adversaries we encounter in the forest, all while forgetting that God has got this. If you are in a fight in the forest right now, I know one thing you need to do today. You need to set your mind on heavenly concepts so you will not be unduly overcome by the earthly combat.

Lastly, Christ's model leaves us with this closing counsel:

Do Stay The Course

Jesus was not about to let anything the Devil would hurl His way to keep Him from fulfilling His redemptive mission by going to the cross for our sins. You catch His utter determination in the final wording of this powerful, penetrating passage:

⁵⁴ “How then will the Scriptures be fulfilled, which say that it must happen this way?” ⁵⁵ At that time Jesus said to the crowds, “Have you come out with swords and clubs to arrest Me as you would against a robber? Every day I used to sit in the temple teaching and you did not seize Me. ⁵⁶ “But all this has taken place to fulfill the Scriptures of the prophets.” Then all the disciples left Him and fled.

He lived to fulfill all the ancient prophecies, especially the ones calling for His substitutionary death for sinners (Psalm 22; Isaiah 53; Daniel 9:26; Zechariah 13:7). He came to die for us. He had to die for us because we couldn't possibly, as sinners, be THE perfect sacrifice (Romans 5:9-10; Ephesians 2:13; 1 Timothy 2:13; Galatians 1:3; Hebrews 9:28). He would, therefore, take even this brutal, ruthless, and emotionally painful fight in the forest and divinely use it to accomplish His greater, loftier redemptive purpose for you and for me. Amazing.

The disciples momentarily didn't stay the course because they weren't prayed up, nor did they fully embrace the reality of all these ancient prophecies about Jesus, the Messiah. Later they came around and the world has never been the same.

What about you? Will you let your fight in the forest get you off your spiritual mission? Will you let it cool your passion for Jesus? Or will you, like your Lord, say, “I live to fulfill God's mission for me”? And what is that mission? It has many facets, as articulated in the Bible; however, I can think of one key component stated by our Lord:

This gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in the whole world as a testimony to all the nations, and then the end will come (Matthew 24)

I'd dare say it is time to go.