

# THE SIX TRIALS OF CHRIST

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## Chapter 3

### THE ARREST

After the kiss of Judas, everything occurs in rapid succession. With the kiss being accomplished, the One they were to capture has been identified and so the soldiers move in to take their prey.

As CHRIST is speaking for the last time to Judas, the disciples began to see the soldiers move in and apprehend CHRIST. **"Therefore they said to Him, 'Lord, shall we smite with the sword?'"** (Luke 22:49).

Before waiting for an answer, Simon Peter, having one of the two swords among the disciples: **"And they said, Lord, behold, here are two swords. And he said unto them, It is enough"** (Luke 22:38) drew his sword **"and smote the high priest's servant, and cut off his right ear. The servant's name was Malchus"** (John 18:10).

While the others were still talking, Peter was acting.

Here was an historical fact that could be verified, thus John mentioned his name.

In fact, John is the only Gospel writer who mentions Peter's name in connection with this incident. He mentions both of the men by name. Some have felt there is a specific reason why the synoptics do not record who it was that smote the servant of the High Priest.

The Sanhedrin were still in power in Jerusalem, and Peter was living there as the Apostle to the circumcision. At the time of the writing of John's Gospel, Jerusalem is in ruin, and Peter has been martyred.

But this does not seem to be the full answer, for at the time of the writing of the Synoptics Peter could not then have been charged with this crime. No charge could be brought because the man was healed.

The Gospel of John brings out that John knew the High Priest: **"And Simon Peter followed Jesus, and so did another disciple: that disciple was known unto the high priest, and went in with Jesus into the palace of the high priest"** (John 18:15)

and John was responsible for bringing Peter into the courtyard: **"But Peter stood at the door without. Then went out that other disciple, which was known unto the high priest, and spake unto her that kept the door, and brought in Peter"** (John 18:16).

Malchus may have been a personal servant of the High Priest, and therefore, personally known by name by John. John further knew the kinsman of the servant of the high priest who recognized Peter and succeeded in causing him to deny CHRIST **"One of the servants of the high priest, being his kinsman whose ear Peter cut off, saith, Did not I see thee in the garden with him? Peter then denied again: and immediately the cock crew"** (John 18:26-27). The fact that it was one of the High Priest's servants shows too who was doing the actual arresting.

John identifies the Lord's disciple as **"Simon Peter"** indicating it was the old man of Peter that was here acting.

Why had Peter done this? He had meant to kill this soldier, but Peter was better at casting nets than he was at wielding a sword. CHRIST had already told the disciples indirectly to go away: "Jesus answered, I have told you that I am he: if therefore ye seek me, let these go their way" (John 18:8). This was the Lord's will for them. Now Simon was about to get them all into trouble.

When Peter drew his sword, there were over 1000 swords drawn; and everyone was ready for expert use. The garden of Gethsemane was in that instant prepared to become a battlefield.

Peter's sword was a large knife (machaira), or a small ceremonial sword, in contrast to the large swords (romphaia) of the soldiers. Peter with his little ceremonial sword tucked away in his clothing, sets up and uses it as if it were one of the big Roman swords.

The Roman soldiers had been trained to take their sword and with precision accuracy, split the helmet of their opponent at the exact, precise place of the weld so that one blow would not only divine the helmet, but the skull as well. Evidently Peter had seen it done, but fishermen make poor swordsmen.

Being off target about 3 inches, he lopped off the man's right ear.

Peter had not only involved himself in an act of rebellion, but he had endangered the other 10 disciples as well as the Lord Himself (speaking on the human plane). How truthfully Paul wrote later, "None of us liveth to himself, and no man dieth to himself" (Romans 14:7).

Why had Peter acted this way?

First, he hadn't prayed as CHRIST had suggested he should have done in the garden. Had he been in fellowship with the Lord, he would have known the perfect will of the Lord, and would have done it. But from the human standpoint, Peter had bragged too much this very night: **"Peter answered and said unto him, Though all men shall be offended because of thee, yet will I never be offended. Jesus said unto him, Verily**

**I say unto thee, That this night, before the cock crow, thou shalt deny me thrice. Peter said unto him, Though I should die with thee, yet will I not deny thee. Likewise also said all the disciples"** (Matthew 26:33-35). Peter's honor was at stake. In the oriental expression, he was now forced to "save face" to avoid humiliation.

Peter by his actions was giving the Lord's enemies justification for coming out with swords and staves as against a dangerous person.

Oh, how great can be the damage of one careless act or word not in the will of GOD. It can undo the good of 10,000 words and acts done in the SPIRIT's power and in the Lord's will.

This is always the fate of those who do not watch and pray. We are here prayerfully reading and studying these Bible studies because we have to be in order to live for the Lord. Bible study is not optional; it is essential. This is the reason why the verses are given in full - and not just the references. It is one thing to study "about" the Bible -- and a totally different thing to study "the" Bible.

The spirit is willing to live for the Lord, but the flesh is weak. As the old saying goes, "Seven days without prayer and Bible study makes one weak."

Simon, by this act, had almost removed the possibility of the Lord saying to Pilate, **"If my kingdom were of this world, then would my servants fight . . ."** (John 18:36).

## **CHRIST IS MASTER OF THE SITUATION**

Instantly CHRIST understands the danger of the situation for the air has been electrified with tension. He steps in between His disciple who was about to have a premature death and the charging soldiers and commanded: "Suffer ye thus far" (Luke 22:51).

It is impossible from our vantage point to know exactly to whom this is addressed, for it could be

- (1) the soldiers who were ready to cut Peter up, that He stopped;
- (2) it could be the soldiers that had apprehended Him to permit Him to do this one thing; and
- (3) it could be His words to His disciples that this is far enough.

Here are ways in which all three fit well into the context.

It is not without possibility that this spoke to everyone in this moment of crisis.

**"And he touched his ear, and healed him"** (Luke 22:51). Luke is the only writer that mentions this healing, though all four mention the event of the high priest's servant's ear being cut off by one of the disciples. It is the only incident recorded in the Gospels where CHRIST heals a fresh wound, and it is significant that the doctor records it.

It is the only time that a miracle was performed on an enemy where there was no faith

or gratitude. It is a revelation of the hardness of these men. No effect was produced by it upon this crowd.

Had CHRIST not performed this miracle, there could have been a true charge brought against the Lord and His disciples.

## THE MIRACLE ITSELF

But there seems to be more involved in this miracle than just what has been said. Since the miracle is only given in Luke, Luke's Gospel alone should be considered to understand it (remembering that each Gospel writer was writing for a different purpose and one event may be used by different men to teach different things).

(1) Luke informs us that CHRIST had specifically wanted the disciples to have swords: **"And he said unto them, When I sent you without purse, and scrip, and shoes, lacked ye any thing? And they said, Nothing. Then said he unto them, But now, he that hath a purse, let him take it, and likewise his scrip: and he that hath no sword, let him sell his garment, and buy one. For I say unto you, that this that is written must yet be accomplished in me, And he was reckoned among the transgressors: for the things concerning me have an end. And they said, Lord, behold, here are two swords. And he said unto them, It is enough"** (Luke 22:35-38)

(2) Luke alone records that all the disciples including Peter asked, **"Shall we smite with the sword?"** Thus they were seeking His will as revealed in Luke's Gospel.

(3) Luke records no prohibition to this. CHRIST never answered "No," and then one of the Lord's disciples did it anyway.

(4) Luke, who certainly knew this was Peter who did this, does not record his name lest we would certainly get our eyes on this particular disciple rather than upon CHRIST and what He is doing through this incident. It was the Lord in Luke's account (as is true in the other three Gospels) who was directing the entire series of events and was in complete control of the situation. His control included His disciples having swords, and it included one of the disciples using his sword so that CHRIST could perform His last miracle before His resurrection before this crowd that had come to apprehend Him.

(5) Luke alone records CHRIST's words: **"Suffer ye thus far,"** which may be best taken as addressed to both Peter and the swordsmen of the opposition: "This is as far as you can go."

(6) Luke alone records the miracle as we have said.

(7) Luke does not include in his gospel any rebuke to the disciple that did this thing. The reason is because this would have been entirely out of keeping with the purpose of Luke's account. It records the action as necessary -- this much being the Lord's will. After all, swords are to be used, not looked at; and it was necessary for the disciples to have swords that night.

We can thus conclude that Luke presents this incident and subsequent miracle as a part of the Lord's program, while Matthew and John reveal that this was the permissive will of the Lord which He allowed and used, but not His directive will.

**"Then said Jesus unto him, Put up again thy sword into his place: for all they that take the sword shall perish with the sword. Thinkest thou that I cannot now pray to my Father, and he shall presently give me more than twelve legions of angels? But how then shall the scriptures be fulfilled, that thus it must be." (Matthew 26:52-54)**

**"Put up again thy sword into his place" Notice that the sword has a lawful place: "Let every soul be subject unto the higher powers. For there is no power but of God: the powers that be are ordained of God. Whosoever therefore resisteth the power, resisteth the ordinance of God: and they that resist shall receive to themselves damnation. For rulers are not a terror to good works, but to the evil. Wilt thou then not be afraid of the power? do that which is good, and thou shalt have praise of the same: For he is the minister of God to thee for good. But if thou do that which is evil, be afraid; for he beareth not the sword in vain: for he is the minister of God, a revenger to execute wrath upon him that doeth evil. Wherefore ye must needs be subject, not only for wrath, but also for conscience sake. For this cause pay ye tribute also: for they are God's ministers, attending continually upon this very thing" (Romans 13:1-6)**

## **SPIRITUAL WARFARE**

Governmental authority and self defense is one thing; rebellion is another.

1. Using the sword as the Lord's servant is inconsistent with reason. If you fight this way, you will die this way ultimately.
2. Using the sword is inconsistent with spiritual truth. The battle is spiritual.

If it is going to be won, it must be won on a spiritual basis: **"Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might. Put on the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places. Wherefore take unto you the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand. Stand therefore, having your loins girt about with truth, and having on the breastplate of righteousness; And your feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace; Above all, taking the shield of faith, wherewith ye shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked. And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God: Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, and watching thereunto with all perseverance and supplication for all saints"**  
(Ephesians 6:10-18)

JESUS told Peter that if He asked the Father, he would instantly have 12 legions of angels. The Romans against them were only a cohort, or 1/10th part of a legion. Furthermore, there would be one legion of spiritual forces for each one of the disciples.

Peter, if you fight the battle the Lord's way, you will always be able to say: **"They that be with us are more than they that be with them"** (II Kings 6:16).

But you must fight the spiritual battle on a spiritual basis if you want to win spiritually.

So, as the soldiers and warriors of CHRIST, we do not resort to the physical - but the spiritual. Our swords are not made of steel, but is the Word of GOD.

Here was the One who with only the words, "I am" caused the entire cohort of soldiers to fall backwards. In fact, here was the Son of GOD who with a word could have had legions of angels minister to His every need, but He did not; and good angels cannot operate on their own. They are servants sent forth by the Father to do His will at His command. All the angels could do at this scene was "look on" as spectators - though no doubt their hands were on the hilt of their mighty swords - itching to do battle with these that would arrest their MASTER.

Notice also that never once did CHRIST in His incarnation command angels Himself because of the kenosis. He had power to do so as GOD, but He relinquished His rights in order to be the perfect, submissive and obedient servant of JEHOVAH.

Here in place of doing something evil to His enemies by praying the Father to send angels, He bends down and does something good. He returns good for evil and so has become our example.

That which gains the victory for the Lord's people is patience in the midst of trial and testing.

**"And labour, working with our own hands: being reviled, we bless; being persecuted, we suffer it: Being defamed, we entreat: we are made as the filth of the world, and are the offscouring of all things unto this day"** (I Corinthians 4:12-13).

**"(For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strong holds;) Casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ"** (II Corinthians 10:4-5).

**"My brethren, count it all joy when ye fall into divers temptations; Knowing this, that the trying of your faith worketh patience. But let patience have her perfect work, that ye may be perfect and entire, wanting nothing"** (James 1:2-4).

3. Using the sword is inconsistent with Scripture.

Scripture must be fulfilled that He go willingly to the cross. Example: Isaac at mount

Moriah when Abraham was to slay him at GOD's command.

**"Then said Jesus unto Peter, Put up thy sword into the sheath: the cup which my Father hath given me, shall I not drink it?"** (John 18:11).

4. Using the sword is inconsistent with Gethsemane's answer and the Father's will.

Peter, you have been talking too much and praying too little, and this is why your actions are getting you into trouble. This is only the beginning of Peter's mistakes and the Lord's rebuke to him.

## **JESUS REPROVES HIS CAPTORS**

Having corrected His disciple, He now reproves His captors.

**"In that same hour said Jesus to the multitudes. Are ye come out as against a thief with swords and staves for to take me? I sat daily with you teaching in the temple, and ye laid no hold on me. But all this was done, that the scriptures of the prophets might be fulfilled"** (Matthew 26:55-56a).

Mark 14:48-49 records the same thing.

**"Then Jesus said unto the chief priests and captains of the temple, and the elders, which were come to him, Be ye come out, as against a thief, with swords and staves? When I was daily with you in the temple, ye stretched forth no hands against me: but this is your hour, and the power of darkness."** (Luke 22:52-53)

The Lord addresses the rulers of Israel because they were responsible. They were doing their work under cover of darkness because their deeds were evil.

**"This is your hour."** Whatever they want to do, they are going to be permitted to do it unhindered. The holy angels will only be spectators.

**"and the power of darkness."** Behind the actions of men will be the controlling influence of the whole underworld of fallen angels and demons.

This is their hour -- this is their inning, His will come later. CHRIST's hour is not as vindictiveness because of what has happened personally to Him, but as **RIGHTEOUSNESS** against iniquity, and **JUSTICE** against all injustice.

With this, His disciples "all forsook him and fled" (Mark 14:50).

**"Then the band"** = of Romans.

**"and the captains"** = The officer in charge of the Romans.

**"and the officers of the Jews"** = The temple guard.

**"took Jesus, and bound him"** (John 18:12).

The synoptic Gospels show that the multitude laid hands upon the Lord before Peter struck the servant of the High Priest. In fact, this was the cause of Peter's action. Afterward, the Romans bound Him and led Him away.

### **THE ARREST WAS ILLEGAL**

The arrest was actually performed by both the Romans and the Jews that all mankind might be guilty of this crime before GOD. It was not ONLY the Jews that killed CHRIST.

The arrest was illegal because:

1. It was at night and according to the laws of the Sanhedrin, the taking of any steps in criminal proceedings after sunset was expressly prohibited.
2. It was accomplished on the charge of an accomplice or informer, and taking or giving a bribe was contrary to the Law.

"And thou shalt take no gift: for the gift blindeth the wise, and perverteth the words of the righteous" (Exodus 23:8)

"A wicked man taketh a gift out of the bosom to pervert the ways of judgment" (Proverbs 17:23).

3. The court that was to try JESUS hired the betrayer, and some of the judges themselves participated in the arrest in their eagerness to see that nothing went wrong.

~ end of chapter 3 ~

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