

## CFM Matthew 26; Mark 14; John 13 – Ep 204



In this outline are a few links to some of my favorite books that have really helped me understand the context and content of the scriptures. [Click here to see all of my favorite books on Amazon.](#) As an Amazon Affiliate, I do earn a small commission from qualifying purchases (at no extra cost to you).

### The Last Week of the Savior's Mortal Ministry

#### Focus: Wednesday-Thursday

#### 14 Events

1. The second day before the Passover. The events of Wednesday are unknown.
2. The Last day before Passover, Jesus prophesies of his death (Matt. 26.1-2; Mark 14.1).
3. Caiaphas' conspiracy (Matt. 26.3-5; Mark 14.1-2; Luke 22.1-2).
4. Judas promises to turn Jesus over to the enemy (Matt. 26.14-16; Mark 14.10-11; Luke 22.3-6).
5. The first day of unleavened bread (Matt. 26.17-19; Mark 14.12-16; Luke 22.7-13).
6. The Last Supper begins (Matt. 26.20; Mark 14.17; Luke 22.13-14; John 13.1-2).
7. "One of you will betray me" (Matt. 26.21-25; Mark 14.18-21; Luke 22.21-23; John 13.18-30).
8. The Sacrament instituted (Matt. 26.26-29; Mark 14.22-25; Luke 22.15-20).
9. Peter, you will deny me! (Matt. 26.31-35; Mark 14.27-31; Luke 22.31-38; John 13.36-38).
10. The Intercessory prayer of the Messiah (John 17).
11. Judas turns Jesus over to the chief priests in Jerusalem (Matt. 26.47-50; Mark 14.43-46; Luke 22.47-48; John 18.2-3).
12. Those arresting Jesus fall to the ground when Jesus says "I AM!" (John 18.4-9).
13. Peter defends Jesus with his sword (Matt. 26.51-55; Mark 14.47; Luke 22.49-51; John 18.10-11).
14. Jesus arrested, the disciples run away (Matt. 26.56-57; Mark 14.46-52; Luke 22.52-54; John 18.12).

In order to faithfully adhere to the chronological order of events as presented in the gospel narratives, we made the deliberate decision to structure our podcast recordings accordingly. We acknowledge that this deviation from the prescribed lesson plans outlined in the Come Follow Me format may pose challenges for those using our podcasts for personal study or lesson planning. Please accept our apologies for any inconvenience. We appreciate your listenership.

1. **The second day before the Passover. The events of Wednesday are unknown.**
2. **The Last day before Passover, Jesus prophesies of his death (Matt. 26.1-2; Mark 14.1).**

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 (Matt. 26.1-2).

#### 3. Caiaphas' conspiracy (Matt. 26.3-5; Mark 14.1-2; Luke 22.1-2).

**The Plot to kill Jesus: Matt. 26.1-5; Mark 14.1-2; Luke 22.1-2; John 11.45-53**

"The Jewish leaders made several formal attempts to arrest and dispose of Jesus before the feat was actually accomplished. The record shows that the Pharisees held several councils and consulted with others to plot the death of Jesus. When he was finally betrayed by Judas and taken captive, it was the culmination of more than two years of planning."<sup>1</sup>

#### **4. Judas promises to turn Jesus over to the enemy (Matt. 26.14-16; Mark 14.10-11; Luke 22.3-6).**

##### **Why did Judas betray Jesus?**

One scholar offered a summary of the ideas that have been debated over the years:

Some people have thought that he did it for the money (see Matt. 26:14-15; John 12:4-6). This is possible, of course, but the "thirty pieces of silver" is a reference to a fulfilment of prophecy in the Hebrew Bible (Zech. 11:12), and so may not be historically accurate; that is, it doesn't pass the criterion of dissimilarity.<sup>2</sup> Some have argued that Judas had grown disillusioned when he realized that Jesus had no intention of assuming the role of a political-military messiah. Others have reasoned that he wanted to force Jesus' hand, thinking that if he were arrested he would call out for support and start an uprising that would overthrow the Romans. *Each of these explanations has some merit, but in the end, I'm afraid we'll never know.*<sup>3</sup>

The JST offers this in reference to Judas' motive:

Nevertheless, **Judas Iscariot**, even one of the twelve, went unto the chief priests to betray Jesus unto them; for he turned away from him, and was *offended because of his words* (Mark 14.31 JST, emphasis added).

This subtle addition tells modern Latter-day Saints that there was something going on in Judas' mind besides a pittance of 30 pieces of silver in exchange for betraying the Savior.

#### **5. The first day of unleavened bread (Matt. 26.17-19; Mark 14.12-16; Luke 22.7-13).**

**Now the first day of the feast of unleavened bread the disciples came to Jesus, saying unto him, Where wilt thou that we prepare for thee to eat the passover? And he said, Go into the city to such a man,**

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<sup>1</sup> Robert J. Mathews, [Behold the Messiah](#), Granite Publishing, 2003, 265.

<sup>2</sup> Bart Ehrman is interested in the "historical Jesus," meaning, as a historian, he is primarily interested in what the actual Jesus of Nazareth taught, and he comes to this research with a certain set of fundamental assumptions. One of these assumptions is that the Gospels are not entirely historically accurate, hence, he works to identify what Jesus might have actually taught as he analyzes both texts and traditions about Jesus. In historical Jesus research, scholars use a set of criteria to determine the likelihood of whether certain sayings or actions attributed to Jesus in the Gospels are historically accurate or not. One of these criteria is the [criterion of dissimilarity](#), which asks whether a particular saying or action attributed to Jesus is dissimilar to what the early Christian community would have expected or wanted Jesus to say or do.

When Ehrman says that the idea that Judas betrayed Jesus for thirty pieces of silver doesn't pass the criterion of dissimilarity, he means that this explanation is not particularly distinctive or unusual. In other words, it is not unexpected or surprising that a disciple might betray his teacher for money, and so this explanation does not help us to understand why Judas specifically would have betrayed Jesus. Ehrman suggests that the reference to the thirty pieces of silver may have been added to the story of Judas to make it more theologically significant, rather than to accurately reflect the historical details of the event.

<sup>3</sup> [Bart Ehrman, Jesus: Apocalyptic Prophet of the New Millennium](#), Oxford University Press, 1999, p. 218-219.

and say unto him, The Master saith, My time is at hand; I will keep the passover at thy house with my disciples. And the disciples did as Jesus had appointed them; and they made ready the Passover (Matt. 26.17-19).

#### **6. The Last Supper begins (Matt. 26.20; Mark 14.17; Luke 22.13-14; John 13.1-2).**

Now when the even was come, he sat down with the twelve (Matt. 26.20).

#### **7. "One of you will betray me" (Matt. 26.21-25; Mark 14.18-21; Luke 22.21-23; John 13.18-30).**

##### **Lord, is it I? (Matt. 26.22)**

I wonder what each of us would do if we were asked that question by the Savior. Would we look at those around us and say in our hearts, "He's probably talking about Brother Johnson. I've always wondered about him," or "I'm glad Brother Brown is here. He really needs to hear this message"? Or would we, like those disciples of old, look inward and ask that penetrating question: "Is it I?"

In these simple words, "Lord, is it I?" lies the beginning of wisdom and the pathway to personal conversion and lasting change...

Brethren, we must put aside our pride, see beyond our vanity, and in humility ask, "Lord, is it I?"

And if the Lord's answer happens to be "Yes, my son, there are things you must improve, things I can help you to overcome," I pray that we will accept this answer, humbly acknowledge our sins and shortcomings, and then change our ways by becoming better husbands, better fathers, better sons.<sup>4</sup>

#### **8. The Sacrament instituted (Matt. 26.26-29; Mark 14.22-25; Luke 22.15-20).**

##### **I will not drink henceforth of this fruit of the vine, until that day when I drink it new with you in my Father's kingdom (Matt. 26.29)**

The statement made by Jesus in Matthew 26:29, "I will not drink henceforth of this fruit of the vine, until that day when I drink it new with you in my Father's kingdom," is a significant one in the Christian tradition. It is commonly understood as a reference to the future time when Jesus will share a meal with his followers in the "Marriage Supper of the Lamb" described in the book of Revelation (Rev. 19.9). This meal is seen as a celebration of the ultimate victory of God's kingdom over the forces of evil and the culmination of God's plan for humanity.

The phrase "fruit of the vine" is also significant. It is often interpreted as a reference to wine, which was a common drink in Jesus' time and a symbol of joy and celebration in Jewish culture. In the context of the Last Supper, the "fruit of the vine" refers to the wine that Jesus and his disciples drank during the Passover meal. By saying that he will not drink of it again until the future meal in the Father's kingdom, Jesus is connecting the Last Supper to the eschatological feast of the Kingdom of God.

The reference to Exodus 24 is also important. In this passage, Moses and the elders of Israel share a meal with God on Mount Sinai after the covenant is established between God and Israel. This location is also important, as it is the typological equivalent of the Holy of Holies. The meal shared between Yahweh and the Seventy Elders of Israel and Moses, Aaron, Nadab, and Abihu can be seen as a symbol of the

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<sup>4</sup> Dieter F. Uchtdorf, ["Lord, Is It I?," October 2014 Conference.](#)

community of faith that has been established through the covenant and the blood of the Lamb. This is a shared meal, and is a beautiful sign of the bond between God and his people. The reference to this passage in Matthew's Gospel underscores the idea that the Last Supper is not only a commemoration of the Passover, but also a symbol of the new covenant that Jesus is establishing with his followers, and a looking forward to a future day when the "Rome" of this world will no longer be dominant in the lives of the Saints.

On the whole, this brief statement made by Jesus in Matthew 26.29 is a powerful expression of hope and anticipation for the ultimate victory of God's kingdom through the power of the Atoning blood of his Son. It is a reminder that the as Latter-day Saints, our faith is not just about looking back to the events of the past, but also looking forward to the future fulfillment of God's plan. The imagery of this future shared meal in the Kingdom of God is a powerful symbol of the community of faith and the bond between God and his Saints, and even after 2,000 years, it remains an important part of Christian ritual and practice in most Christian traditions.

### **9. Peter, you will deny me! (Matt. 26.31-35; Mark 14.27-31; Luke 22.31-38; John 13.36-38).**

#### **Location**

Andrew Skinner provides the following:

At the same time the tragic drama of the Savior's inquisition unfolded inside the palace of the high priest, another drama was being played out outside the palace. There the apostle Peter endured an inquisition of his own.

When the other disciples fled as Jesus was being arrested, Peter followed his Master and the arresting party "afar off unto the high priest's palace" (Matthew 26.58). This palace seems to have housed the residences of both Caiaphas and Annas, before whom Jesus was arraigned first. In keeping with his presentation of unique details, John adds that Peter "followed Jesus, and so did another disciple" who "was known unto the high priest." This disciple went into the palace with Jesus and eventually "spake unto her that kept the door, and brought in Peter" (John 18.15–16). It is not known who this other disciple was, but some scholars have suggested it was John himself.

Given that Matthew and Mark clearly state that at some point Peter "sat without in the palace" (Matthew 26.69), or "Peter was beneath in the palace" (Mark 14.66), ***it is likely that Peter was first admitted to Jesus' arraignment before Annas and later sat out in the courtyard while his Master's next hearing, before Caiaphas, took place in another part of the palace complex.*** This surmise accords well with the archaeological evidence of a courtyard set down the hill below the main palace complex.

The traditional, and probably accurate, location of the high priest's palace is high above the Hinnom Valley on the western hill of Jerusalem, then inside the city walls, and later known as Mount Zion. A fourth-century traveler to Jerusalem, nicknamed the Pilgrim of Bordeaux, said: "In the same valley of Siloam you go up to Mount Sion and you see the site where the house of Caiaphas stood" (St. Peter "in Gallicantu," 2). In the fifth century after Christ, a church was built on this site, and the Crusaders later named it *Gallicantus*, "the cock-crow."<sup>5</sup> ***In modern times, a dungeon, scourging room, courtyard,***

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<sup>5</sup> See: [Church of St. Peter in Gallicantu](#). Accessed 2.28.23.

***artifacts, and a Hebrew inscription have been unearthed on the site that are consistent with expectations associated with the residence and judicial functions of the high priest.***<sup>6</sup>

Elder Talmage gives the following:

The Lord's reference to His impending separation from them troubled the brethren. Peter put the question, "Lord, whither goest thou?" Jesus answered: "Whither I go, thou canst not follow me now; but thou shalt follow me afterwards. Peter said unto him, Lord, why cannot I follow thee now? I will lay down my life for thy sake." Peter seems to have realized that his Master was going to His death; yet, undeterred, he asserted his readiness to follow even that dark way rather than be separated from his Lord. We cannot doubt the earnestness of Peter's purpose nor the sincerity of his desire at that moment. In his bold avowal, however, he had reckoned with the willingness of his spirit only, and had failed to take into full account the weakness of his flesh. Jesus, who knew Peter better than the man knew himself, thus tenderly reprov'd his excess of self-confidence: "Simon, Simon, behold, Satan hath desired to have you, that he may sift you as wheat: but I have prayed for thee, that thy faith fail not: and when thou art converted, strengthen thy brethren." The first of the apostles, the Man of Rock, yet had to be converted, or as more precisely rendered, "turned again" for as the Lord foresaw, Peter would soon be overcome, even to the extent of denying his acquaintanceship with Christ. When Peter stoutly declared again his readiness to go with Jesus, even into prison or to death, the Lord silenced him with the remark: "I tell thee, Peter, the cock shall not crow this day, before that thou shalt thrice deny that thou knowest me."

The apostles had to be prepared to meet a new order of things, new conditions and new exigencies; persecution awaited them, and they were soon to be bereft of the Master's sustaining presence. Jesus asked of them: "When I sent you without purse, and scrip, and shoes, lacked ye anything? 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." The Lord was soon to be numbered among the transgressors, as had been foreseen, and His disciples would be regarded as the devotees of an executed criminal. In the mention of purse, scrip, shoes, and sword, some of the brethren caught at the literal meaning, and said, "Lord, behold, here are two swords." Jesus answered with curt finality, "It is enough," or as we might say, "Enough of this." He had not intimated any immediate need of weapons, and most assuredly not for His own defense. Again they had failed to fathom His meaning; but experience would later teach them.<sup>7</sup>

### **Why did Peter do this?**

What gives us pause at this point is consideration of Peter's motivation for denying that he knew his Master. ***Why did he deny Him?*** The reasons usually given range from fear of personal harm, to weakness, to embarrassment, to pride, to indecision, or to some other flaw or weakness in Peter's character. Yet ***these reasons seem to contradict everything else we have read about the chief apostle*** in the New Testament, including his bold, unequivocal confession of the Savior's Sonship at Caesarea Philippi, when

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<sup>6</sup> Skinner, "Peter's Denial," [Golgotha](#), "Betrayal and Arrest." Deseret Book, 2004.

<sup>7</sup> Talmage, [Jesus the Christ](#), p. 288-289.

a diverse set of opinions regarding Jesus was floating about the land, and his single-minded resolve not to allow anyone to harm the Savior.

In every instance when the impending arrest or death of Jesus had come to Peter's attention, he had been both quick and forceful to say that he would not let such a thing happen (Matthew 16.21–23), and he would protect Jesus at all costs, even at the peril of his own life, which is what happened in Gethsemane when the armed forces of the chief priests could not intimidate a chief apostle who was ready to do battle with all of them (John 18.7–12). Now we are to believe that in the face of a challenge initially put forward by a slave girl, the most unimportant person imaginable in Jewish society, Peter denied even knowing Jesus for fear of being exposed as a follower? (The word *damse*<sup>8</sup> used in Matthew 26.69 does not convey the lowly position of Peter's first interrogator, but the footnote to that verse in the LDS edition of the Bible approaches it.)

### **President Kimball's Thoughts on the Matter**

Years ago President Spencer W. Kimball invited us to reevaluate our understanding of Peter's actions in a magnificent address entitled *Peter, My Brother*. Speaking of his model and mentor, this modern-day apostle asked penetrating questions: Do we really know Peter's mind and heart? Are we sure of his motives? Do we understand the circumstances of Peter's denial as well as we think we do? President Kimball began his discussion with this admission:

Some time ago a newspaper in a distant town carried an Easter Sunday religious editorial by a minister who stated that the presiding authority of the early-day church fell because of self-confidence, indecision, evil companions, failure to pray, lack of humility, and fear of man...

As I read this, I had some strange emotions. I was shocked, then I was chilled, then my blood changed its temperature and began to boil. I felt I was attacked viciously, for Peter was my brother, my colleague, my example, my prophet, and God's anointed. I whispered to myself, "That is not true. He is maligning my brother."<sup>9</sup>

President Kimball discussed the tremendous strength, power, faithfulness, and other apostolic attributes of Peter, including his boldness. Then he said:

Much of the criticism of Simon Peter is centered in his denial of his acquaintance with the Master. This has been labeled "cowardice." Are we sure of his motive in that recorded denial? He had already given up his occupation and placed all worldly goods on the altar for the cause...

Is it conceivable that the omniscient Lord would give all these powers and keys to one who was a failure or unworthy?...

If Peter was frightened in the court when he denied his association with the Lord, how brave he was hours earlier when he drew his sword against an overpowering enemy, the night mob. Later defying the people and state and church officials, he boldly charged, "Him [the Christ] . . . ye have taken, and by wicked hands have crucified and slain." (Acts 2:23.) To the astounded populace at the healing of the cripple at the Gate Beautiful, he exclaimed, "Ye men of Israel . . . the God of our fathers, hath glorified his Son Jesus; whom ye delivered up, and denied him in the presence of Pilate. . . . ye denied the Holy One. . .

<sup>8</sup> The Greek word here is *παιδίσκη* - *paidiske*, meaning a little girl (Matt. 26.69).

<sup>9</sup> Kimball, *Peter, My Brother*, 488. See: [Peter, My Brother](#).

. . . And killed the Prince of life, whom God hath raised from the dead; whereof we are witnesses." (Acts 3.12–15.)

Does this portray cowardice? Quite a bold assertion for a timid one. Remember that Peter never denied the divinity of Christ. He only denied his association or acquaintance with the Christ, which is quite a different matter...

Is it possible that there might have been some other reason for Peter's triple denial? Could he have felt that circumstances justified expediency? When he bore a strong testimony in Caesarea Philippi, he had been told that "they should tell no man that he was Jesus the Christ." (Matthew 16:20.)<sup>10</sup>

***To what, then, might we attribute Peter's denial? Perhaps it could be attributed to Jesus himself—to a request or command he made that Peter should deny knowing him, not to deny his divinity but to deny knowing him as the religious rebel the Jewish leaders saw him to be. Why? To ensure Peter's safety as chief apostle and to ensure the continuity and safety of the Quorum of the Twelve.***

Some may object that God would never command any of his children to do such a thing, but we do not know all that God knows, nor do we know all that went on in this situation. Moreover, we find interesting contradictions, or seeming contradictions, in other scriptural passages that put this episode in a different light. For example, God commanded Abraham that his wife, Sarah, should tell the Egyptians that she was Abraham's sister so that he would be protected, just as Jesus wanted the apostles protected (Abraham 2:23–25). We also remember Deity commanding Nephi to slay Laban in order to keep a whole nation safe spiritually and to bring forth God's righteous purposes (1 Nephi 4:13). The Prophet Joseph Smith taught:

But we cannot keep all the commandments without first knowing them, and we cannot expect to know all, or more than we now know unless we comply with or keep those we have already received. That which is wrong under one circumstance, may be, and often is, right under another.

God said, "Thou shalt not kill;" at another time He said, "Thou shalt utterly destroy." This is the principle on which the government of heaven is conducted—by revelation adapted to the circumstances in which the children of the kingdom are placed. Whatever God requires is right, no matter what it is, although we may not see the reason thereof till long after the events transpire. If we seek first the kingdom of God, all good things will be added. So with Solomon: first he asked wisdom, and God gave it him, and with it every desire of his heart, even things which might be considered abominable to all who understand the order of heaven only in part, but which in reality were right because God gave and sanctioned by special revelation.<sup>11</sup>

Remember, by the time of his arrest, Jesus was protective of his apostles, and the safety of the Quorum had become a major concern for him. As we have indicated, in his great high priestly prayer, the Savior prayed for the safety of the apostles. "I pray not that thou shouldst take them out of the world, but that thou shouldst keep them from the evil" (John 17:15). When he was arrested in the garden, he said to the mob, "I have told you that I am he: if therefore ye seek me, let these go their way" (John 18:8). Jesus did not want anything to happen to those who were ordained to take over the earthly leadership of the Church. He had already averted wholesale slaughter in Gethsemane when first, in the upper room, he

<sup>10</sup> Kimball, Peter, My Brother, 488–89. See: [Peter, My Brother](#).

<sup>11</sup> [Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith](#), 256.

restricted to two the number of swords carried by the apostles (Luke 22:38). Later, while being arrested, he told Peter to put away his sword, "for all they that take the sword shall perish with the sword" (Matthew 26:52). It will be remembered that some of the apostles asked, "Lord, shall we smite with the sword?" (Luke 22:49) while Peter went ahead and lopped off Malchus's ear without waiting for an answer.

Jesus had told Peter at the Last Supper that He had prayed that Peter's faith would not fail—and it did not. As President Kimball stated: "Peter was under fire; all the hosts of hell were against him. The die had been cast for the Savior's crucifixion. If Satan could destroy Simon now, what a victory he would score. Here was the greatest of all living men. Lucifer wanted to confuse him, frustrate him, limit his prestige, and totally destroy him. However, this was not to be, for he was chosen and ordained to a high purpose in heaven, as was Abraham"<sup>12</sup>

Matthew tells us that Peter went to the high priest's palace "to see the end" (Matthew 26:58). The implication is that Peter went as a witness of the last events associated with the life of the mortal Messiah. Had Peter been inclined to cowardice, it seems likely he would not have gone to the palace and put himself in harm's way. How grateful we are to have had Peter there as an eyewitness of that part of the atoning sacrifice.

In sum, it is apparent that Jesus knew of Peter's fearlessness in defending him. He had seen several manifestations of Peter's unswerving, almost reckless, commitment to prevent any physical harm to the Savior. And this was something Jesus knew could get Peter into trouble if it were not tempered. It would put the chief apostle in grave physical danger. Therefore, **it is possible that when Jesus told Peter he would deny him thrice before the cock crowed twice, it was not a prediction—it was a command.** This is, in fact, a possible reading of the Synoptic texts, according to the grammatical rules of Koine Greek, which is the language in which early manuscripts of the New Testament were written. In their accounts of this episode, Matthew (26:34, 75), Mark (14:30, 72), and Luke (22:34, 61) all use the same verb and verb form, ἀπαρνῆση *aparnese*, which can be read either as an indicative future tense or as an imperative (command) tense. One Latter-day Saint scholar of classical languages arrived at the following conclusion:

When the Lord had informed the eleven who remained with Him to finish the Last Supper that they would soon be scattered, Peter protested that he would never abandon the Savior, but sooner go to his death. Tradition portrays Christ as then prophesying of the three-time denial of Peter to come that very night (Matthew 26:31–35; Mark 14:27–31; Luke 22:31–34; John 13:36–38). However, close examination of the original Greek of John's account (John 13.38) reveals that the phrase "till thou hast denied me thrice" is structured around the verb ἀπαρνῆση, a second person singular future indicative verb form. Virtually the same verb ἀπαρνῆση, in the same second person singular future indicative form, appears in Matthew (26:34), Mark (14:30), and Luke (22:34). Although the tense is future, and may accurately be construed as indicating a prediction or prophecy of Peter's future behavior, it is possible that such a rendering is not at all the meaning of Christ's statement. ***In Greek, a future tense verb in the second person can also be construed to express a command, just as if it were an imperative form of the verb.***<sup>13</sup>

<sup>12</sup> Peter, My Brother, 488–89; emphasis added.

<sup>13</sup> Wallace talks extensively about the imperative force of some futures; see *Greek Grammar Beyond the Basics*, Zondervan, 1997. Here is an example: Οὐ μοιχεύσεις, Οὐ κλέψεις, Οὐ ψευδομαρτυρήσεις "You shall not commit



This usage is given the grammatical term of the "jussive future." It occurs not infrequently in both classical and koine Greek. Accordingly, if the future in these passages is interpreted as a jussive future, then Christ would seem actually to be giving Peter a command to deny knowing Him, and Peter's protestation would seem to reflect his dissatisfaction about such an instruction. This rendering appears very much in keeping with Peter's natural courage. Restraint would test Peter's faith so much more, for he was being refused permission to expose himself to the tribulations that Christ must undertake alone...<sup>14</sup>

When Christ was taken, instead of acting impulsively, Peter did demonstrate great restraint both in not trying to interfere in the process of Jesus' death and in protecting himself that he might live to fulfill his mission. How he must have wanted to wield his sword and free the Savior! How he must have desired to proclaim Jesus as the Christ to those assembled in the courtyard! Although Peter never denied the divinity of Christ, ***he must have been in tremendous turmoil not to be able to admit to his friendship with Jesus, and could even have felt as if this practically constituted a denial of his friend.*** Each time Peter was questioned as to his association with Jesus and compelled to deny it, seemingly contradicting his own pledge of loyalty unto death, what faith was put into the charge Christ had given him for the future! ***Peter was neither impetuous, nor did he lack faith. Quite the opposite.*** The man who had fearlessly struck with his sword at Gethsemane, was the same man who evidenced fearless and faithful restraint in the courtyard of the high priest. John's telling of the account shows Peter's faith, not his fear.<sup>15</sup>

## 10. The Intercessory prayer of the Messiah (John 17).

### John 17: The Great Intercessory Prayer of Jesus, the Great High Priest

#### John 17 as the meeting place between heaven and earth

William Hamblin explains:

John 17 should be contextualized within the larger Passover narrative of the last days of the life of Jesus. In John 11 and 12, Jesus raises Lazarus from the dead, followed by his anointing by Mary of Bethany (John 12:1–11), and his triumphal entry into Jerusalem (John 12:12–19). In John 13, Jesus washes the feet of the disciples (John 13:1–11)—which parallels a temple ritual, since feet needed to be clean before entering the temple precincts. As the Mishnah emphasizes: a man "may not enter into the Temple Mount . . . with the dust upon his feet." Then, on Passover eve, Jesus gives his Last Discourse to

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adultery, you shall not steal, you shall not bear false witness." See also: [Future Indicative: The Imperative Future, New Testament Greek](#), accessed 2.28.23.

<sup>14</sup> This concept, as taught by Hall, as I see it, undo some of what I assert in the podcast where I speak of Christ telling his followers that they will be perfect (Matt. 5.48, see [episode 190](#)). However, the statement "Ἔσεσθε οὖν ὑμεῖς τέλειοι" can be translated as "Therefore, you will be perfect" or "So you shall be perfect" and is not necessarily a command. In Koine Greek, the future tense verb "Ἔσεσθε" (esesthe) can be used to express a future action or a statement of fact rather than a command. However, the context in which this statement is used could imply a command or a strong suggestion to strive for perfection. For example, if the statement is part of a set of instructions or advice, then it could be interpreted as a command or a strong suggestion. Ultimately, the interpretation would depend on the context in which the statement is used. Because of this, and because of how I see the Savior's invitations in Matt. 5, I see this future indicative as just that, a future and not an imperative. But obviously not everyone translates it this way.

<sup>15</sup> John F. Hall, [New Testament Witnesses of Christ](#), Covenant Communications, 2002, p. 65-66, emphasis added.

his disciples, found in John 13–17. John 17, the conclusion of this discourse, is an extended prayer, in which Jesus blesses the disciples. It is immediately followed by Jesus’s departure to Gethsemane, arrest (John 18:1–19), trial (John 18:20–9:16), crucifixion (John 19:16–37), and resurrection (John 20:1–30). John 17 thus holds a central position in the Gospel: the transition point between Jesus’s mortal ministry and the return to the celestial glory of the Christ. In this regard, John 17 serves as a symbolic temple for the Gospel of John—it is the meeting place of heaven and earth, where man encounters God. In this paper I will briefly examine six temple themes in John 17.<sup>16</sup>

### Jesus prays for his disciples (John 17.1-12)

#### Temple themes in this prayer

One of the most important trends in the past decade of Johannine studies is the increasing recognition of the centrality of temple theology in the Fourth Gospel. While John 17 has been called Christ’s “High Priestly Prayer” since at least the sixteenth century, recognition of this chapter’s temple theology is often not fully appreciated.<sup>17</sup>

1. Christ is given the name of the Father by the Father (John 17.11-12).<sup>18</sup>
2. Christ makes known the Father’s name to his followers (John 17.6, 26).
3. Christ glorifies the Father<sup>19</sup> (John 17.1, 4). Christ’s glory comes from the “one God” (John 5.44; John 8.54).<sup>20</sup>

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<sup>16</sup> Hamblin, p. 62.

<sup>17</sup> William Hamblin, [“I Have Revealed Your Name”: The Hidden Temple in John 17](#), *Interpreter: A Journal of Latter-day Saint Faith and Scholarship* 1 (2012): 61-89.

<sup>18</sup> After explaining how God’s name became something that was not to be spoken or pronounced in Jewish tradition after the destruction of the First Israelite Temple, Hamblin writes (p. 72), “It is in this context of Jewish name theology that we need to examine John’s account of Jesus revealing the name of the Father while blessing his disciples. By the time of Jesus there was a strong tradition of the sacred secrecy of God’s name, which could only be pronounced by priests in the temple.” He continues, explaining why this is important, “For a Jewish reader, the claim that Jesus revealed the name of the Father to his disciples would also imply that Jesus claimed the authority of the High Priest to reveal the Name, reflecting the divine authority/*eksousia* Jesus claims in John 17:2, where the Father gives “Jesus authority over all flesh, to give eternal life.” He was thus acting to bring about the eternal atonement and reconciliation of Israel with God.”

<sup>19</sup> ἐγὼ σε ἐδόξασα ἐπὶ τῆς γῆς “I have glorified thee upon the earth!” (John 17.4).

<sup>20</sup> **What does it mean that Christ glorifies the Father?** Christ does not make God more glorious, but reveals God’s already existing luminous glory to an uncomprehending world (John 1.5, 10, 14). When the Father makes the Son glorious, the Son thereby reveals the glory of the Father. One element of this concept is that the resurrection will reveal the glory of the Son, and thereby the Son will reveal the ultimate glory of the Father. “Now is the Son of Man glorified, and God is glorified in him. If God is glorified in him, God will also glorify him in himself, and glorify him at once” (John 13:31–32). In other words, there is a reciprocal glorification of the Father and the Son. Hamblin, p. 75-76. I would add one thing to this: it is the exact same for the Saints! As they manifest the glory of God, through their patience and faith, their testimony and righteousness, Jesus is glorified. This relationship is reciprocal. As the Saints glorify God, he gives unto them glory. I see this at the heart of the teachings of D&C 84 and this prayer by Jesus in John 17. I would say that it seems that Hamblin is seeing this as well when he writes: “this glorification language in John 17 has three themes. (1) Mutual shared glorification of the Father, Son and disciples. (2) through this mutual glorification comes mutual oneness (John17:22). (3) The disciples will be where Jesus is, in the presence of the Father, where they will see Christ’s full glory. Among first century readers this glorification language in John 17 would have evoked ideas of God’s glorious theophanies in the temple, and Christ’s postmortal glorification by the Father would imply a glory-theophany in the Celestial Temple.” Hamblin, p. 76-77.

4. In glorifying his Father, Jesus transferred glory<sup>21</sup> to his followers (John 17.22, 24) and he is glorified “in them” (John 17.10).<sup>22</sup>
5. The “evil one”<sup>23</sup> is cast out (John 17.15). At the beginning of the discourse, Jesus informs his hearers that “the ruler of this cosmos will be thrown out” (John 12.31).<sup>24</sup>
6. Jesus, the Great High Priest, sanctifies himself, (John 17.19), by washing himself (Lev. 16.4), offering a bull for himself (Lev. 16.6), as well as putting on the sacred vestments of the priesthood (Lev. 16.4). In this way, he is sanctified, or made holy.<sup>25</sup>

### Celestial Ascent/Theosis/Deification/Unification (John 17.20-24)

This passage represents all that Jesus is working to do in us, to us, and for us. He seeks our eternal lives. He seeks the exaltation of all who are willing to come to him and partake of eternal life and exaltation. I present this with Hamblin’s emphasis:

I do not ask for these [disciples] only, but also for those who will believe in me through their word, that they may all be one, just as you, Father, are in me, and I in you, that they also may be in us, so that the world may believe that you have sent me. **The glory that you have given me I have given to them**, that they may be one even as we are one, I in them and you in me, that they may become perfectly one, so that the world may know that you sent me and loved them even as you loved me. Father, I desire that they also, whom you have given me, *may be with me where I am, to see my glory* that you have given me because you loved me before the foundation of the world. (John 17.20–24)

Hamblin<sup>26</sup> explains: This passage describes three interrelated themes: glorification, ascent, and unification... The idea of the Glory of God and its relation to the temple (has already been discussed). Here... the focus shifts from the mutual glorification of the Father and the Son, to the Son sharing his glory with the disciples, as Jesus says: the “glory that you have given me I have given to them” (John 17:22). The idea here is not that the disciples merely see or recognize Jesus’s glory. Rather, they are given the glory by the Son precisely as the Son is given the glory by the Father. **Why is this glory given?** “That

<sup>21</sup> δόξα, glory. Also: magnificence, excellence, preeminence, dignity, grace, majesty, a most exalted state.

<sup>22</sup> So much of these ideas are wrapped up in the “Adoption Theology” practiced in the early restored Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. See: Jennifer Ann Mackley, [Wilford Woodruff’s Witness: The Development of Temple Doctrine](#), High Desert Publishing, 2014.

<sup>23</sup> τηρήσης αὐτούς ἐκ τοῦ πονηροῦ “that you might guard them from the *ponēros*/wicked one!” (my translation). This harkens back to the events in the Day of Atonement ritual, where the scapegoat or Azazel is cast out (see Lev. 16.21).

<sup>24</sup> νῦν ὁ ἄρχων τοῦ κόσμου τούτου ἐκβληθήσεται ἔξω· “NOW the ruler of this Cosmos will be thrown out!” (My translation.) Because Satan is cast out by Christ, the disciples are protected from his power, as described in John 17:15. “The ritual expulsion of evil from the community of Israel was symbolized in ancient times by the temple scapegoat ritual. With evil banished, the community could be purified and prepared for the presence of YHWH. Likewise, by casting out the Evil One, and atoning for sin, Christ prepares the disciples to be where Christ is, that is, in the celestial temple with the Father.” Hamblin, p. 78-79.

<sup>25</sup> “Christ’s language here parallels that pattern. He says explicitly, “For their sake I make myself holy (*hagiazō*, singular present active = consecrate myself, sanctify myself) so that they [the disciples] may be made holy (*hēgiasmenoi* (plural passive) = consecrated, sanctified) in truth” (John 17:19). To first-century Jewish readers, this language of consecration would have evoked the temple, with its rituals of purification, consecration, and atonement.” Hamblin, p. 80.

<sup>26</sup> Hamblin, p. 81-84, emphasis added.

they may be one even as we are one” (John 17:22). That is, being given the glory of Jesus is a necessary prerequisite for unification...

Second, Christ prays that the disciples may “be with me where I am, to see my glory” (John 17:24). That is, Christ is not fully glorified until after his resurrection and ascent to heaven. Only when the disciples are “where he is” can they fully “see his glory” (John 17:24). As (has been demonstrated), the temple is the place where we see the glory of God. The language describing Jesus’ descent to earth and return to the Father in the Father’s house with many rooms (John 14:2–3) alludes to the celestial temple.

Here Jesus is praying that the disciples may “be where I am,” that is ascend to heaven. This is generally understood by modern Christians to refer to the post mortal ascent of the soul to God, as is implied in John 13:36, where Jesus tells Peter “where I am going, you cannot follow me now; but you will follow afterward,” which means, presumably, after death. However, in the context of the first century, visionary ascent by mortals to the heavenly temple was a widespread belief and practice among both Jews and Christians.<sup>27</sup> This is most clear from the book of Revelation, in which John has an explicit vision of the temple in heaven.<sup>28</sup> Paul also famously describes his visionary ascent to heaven in 2 Corinthians 12:1–9. Early Christian literature likewise contains numerous accounts of celestial ascent,<sup>29</sup> as do the contemporary Jewish texts of Hekhalot and Merkabah mystics, written after the destruction of the temple in AD 70. Jesus’s call to his disciples to come to “where he is going” to “see his glory” fits well into this mythos of ascents to the celestial temple.

Third, the unification language in this passage is powerful and direct. Jesus prays: “that [the disciples] may all be one, just as you, Father, are in me, and I in you, that they also may be in us” (John 17:21)

**“they may be one even as we are one” (John 17:22), and “that they may become perfectly one” (John 17:23)**

Christians have been exploring the meaning of this glorification and unification language for two thousand years, and many different interpretations have been offered from different perspectives and periods. *I suspect it can only be fully understood by one who has actually attained that state.* But what is clear is that, according to John 17, the disciples can somehow receive the glory of God and become one with the Father and the Son.

Many early Christians believed that this and related language in the New Testament describes what they called theōsis, or deification... The Greek Orthodox tradition has retained the most continuity with this ancient Christian idea. Among Catholics it has largely faded into a vague background, while many Protestants are unaware that deification is an important ancient Christian idea. **Basically, many Protestants see the idea of the deification of Man as challenging the omnipotence of God, whereas**

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<sup>27</sup> For a general introduction see M. Himmelfarb, *Ascent to Heaven in Jewish and Christian Apocalypses*, New York: Oxford University Press, 1993. See also: C. Rowland and C. Morray-Jones, *The Mystery of God: Early Jewish Mysticism and the New Testament*, Leiden: Brill, 2009. See also: P. Gooder, *Only the Third Heaven? 2 Corinthians 12.1–10 and Heavenly Ascent* (London: T&T Clark, 2006), surveys the scholarly literature and debates.

<sup>28</sup> Revelation 1:5–20, 4–5, 7, 11:3–13, 19:1–10, 21, 22:1–7. The Transfiguration may also be understood as a visionary celestial ascent of Jesus: Matthew 17:1–9; Mark 9:2–10; Luke 9:28–36.

<sup>29</sup> See: *Apocalypse of Peter*, in K. Elliott, ed., *The Apocryphal New Testament* (New York: Oxford, 1994), 591–615 (hereafter ANT); *Apocalypse of Paul* (ANT 617–644); *The Assumption of the Virgin*; *Acts of Andrew and Mathias* 17 (ANT 290); *Question of Bartholomew* (ANT 652–72); *Letter of James* 14–16 (ANT 680– 1); *Ascension of Isaiah*.

**many Greek Orthodox see the deification of Man as the ultimate manifestation of the omnipotence of God.**<sup>30</sup>

I will leave the final word to Joseph Smith:

“These teachings of the Savior most clearly show unto us the nature of salvation, and what he proposed unto the human family when he proposed to save them—that **he proposed to make them like unto himself, and he was like the Father, the great prototype of all saved beings**; and for any portion of the human family to be assimilated into their likeness is to be saved; and to be unlike them is to be destroyed; and on this hinge turns the door of salvation.”<sup>31</sup>

**11. Judas turns Jesus over to the chief priests in Jerusalem (Matt. 26.47-50; Mark 14.43-46; Luke 22.47-48; John 18.2-3).**

And Judas also, which betrayed him, knew the place: for Jesus oftentimes resorted thither with his disciples. Judas then, having received a band of men and officers from the chief priests and Pharisees, cometh thither with lanterns and torches and weapons (John 18.2-3).

### The Kiss

**And while he yet spake, behold a multitude, and he that was called Judas, one of the twelve, went before them, and drew near unto Jesus to kiss him. But Jesus said unto him, Judas, betrayest thou the Son of man with a kiss? (Luke 22.47-48)**<sup>32</sup>

The Synoptic Gospels report that Judas did step forward and verify the identity of his Master by kissing him, but they make no mention of Jesus' identifying himself to the armed mob as the Gospel of John does. Nonetheless, Judas's kiss has become the hallmark event of the night of betrayal. That there is exact and pointed agreement among the Synoptics regarding Judas's position as a member of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles perhaps reflects the shock and intensity with which that moment was felt by those disciples present. Surely the fact that Judas held the keys of the apostleship, along with the other special witnesses, added to the Savior's grief as Judas singled him out.<sup>33</sup>

Joseph Smith, speaking on the subject of friendship and loyalty, taught:

“I don't care what a man's character is; if he's my friend—a true friend, I will be a friend to him, and preach the Gospel of salvation to him, and give him good counsel, helping him out of his difficulties. Friendship is one of the grand fundamental principles of 'Mormonism'; [it is designed] to revolutionize and civilize the world, and cause wars and contentions to cease and men to become friends and brothers. . . . It is a time-honored adage that love begets love. **Let us pour forth love—show forth our**

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<sup>30</sup> From my many conversations with Protestants, I (Mike Day) would concur with Hamblin's assessment. Many find the idea of *theosis* to be repugnant to them, as if it somehow denigrates God by him exalting his children. I have found this to be a stumbling block to the Evangelicals that have been willing to openly discuss these things with me.

<sup>31</sup> *Lectures on Faith*, 7.14-16, emphasis added.

<sup>32</sup> See also Matt. 26.48 and Mark 14.44. John doesn't mention the kiss, but all synoptics do.

<sup>33</sup> Skinner, “Betrayal.”

**kindness unto all mankind**, and the Lord will reward us with everlasting increase; cast our bread upon the waters and we shall receive it after many days, increased to a hundredfold.”<sup>34</sup>

Andrew Skinner continues:

***The great kiss of betrayal evokes an irony matched by few other episodes. By New Testament times, a kiss in public was a symbol both of distinction and of elevation.*** Among the ancient Israelites, a kiss often signified reconciliation between separated or estranged parties, as when Esau ran to Jacob after a long and wrenching conflict and "embraced him, and fell on his neck, and kissed him: and they wept" (Genesis 33:4). After years of separation, Joseph "kissed all his brethren, and wept upon them: and after that his brethren talked with him" (Genesis 45:15). When the Lord sent Aaron to meet Moses, he found him "in the mount of God, and kissed him" (Exodus 4:27).

Among the later Jews, a kiss was a token of respect with which pupils or disciples greeted their great rabbis or teachers. Among Christians, a kiss was a demonstration of fellowship and brotherhood. When he was visiting Simon the Pharisee's house, the Savior rebuked Simon, saying, "Thou gavest me no kiss" (Luke 7:45). The apostle Paul counseled early Church brethren to "greet all the brethren with an holy kiss" (1 Thessalonians 5:26). In our own day, one recalls that President Spencer W. Kimball was fond of greeting some of his associates and friends with a kiss on the cheek. I vividly remember a teenage friend telling me of walking along a street in downtown Salt Lake City with his father several years before. All of a sudden there was a flurry of activity as an energetic old man came running across the street, stopping traffic, walking up to his father, and greeting him with a kiss on the cheek. Much to my friend's surprise, he found himself staring at President Kimball. My friend's father had been called as a stake president several years earlier by then-Elder Kimball, and they had remained close friends. President Kimball's kiss was a tangible sign of his respect and affection.

The custom of greeting special friends with a kiss is still current in certain Middle Eastern countries. A few years ago, I was with a group of American students in Egypt, waiting for a guide who would take us to some archaeological sites. As it turned out, the guide assigned to us that day was a wonderful man who had become a friend through the years. Therefore, when he arrived, he immediately walked over to me and kissed me on both cheeks, much to the surprise of the students gathered in the parking lot of our Cairo hotel.<sup>35</sup>

### **Greek usages**

Luke uses the word φιλήσαι to describe Judas' sign of affection (Luke 22.47),<sup>36</sup> as well as φίλημα, a word denoting a kiss (Luke 22.48). Matthew and Mark both use the subjunctive<sup>37</sup> of the same word as contained in Luke 22.47.

### **12. Those arresting Jesus fall to the ground when Jesus says "I AM!" (John 18.4-9).**

<sup>34</sup> *Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith*, p. 316, emphasis added.

<sup>35</sup> Skinner, "Betrayal."

<sup>36</sup> This is the aorist infinitive of φιλέω, to show love or affection, sanction, or friendship. φιλέω = "to love, like, regard with affection." See: [φιλέω](#), Henry George Liddell, Robert Scott, *A Greek-English Lexicon*. The antonym for this word in Greek is μισέω, which means "hate." See: Luke 14.26.

<sup>37</sup> φιλήσω, aorist active subjunctive of φιλέω.

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. As soon then as he had said unto them, I am *he*, they went backward, and fell to the ground (**John 18.3-6**).<sup>38</sup>

"One cannot help but be struck with the tremendous difference between Christ's behavior during those terrible hours and the actions of those around him. Throughout, it becomes clear that Jesus was the only one who was not thrown off balance by the passions of that night and the following day. Judas betrayed him, then committed suicide, apparently in a great overflowing feeling of guilty remorse. The armed party sent out to arrest him fell back in fright when he told them he was Jesus. Peter vowed perfect support and then failed miserably as fear washed out his determination. The high priest was thrown into a rage by the calm demeanor of the accused. Pilate, symbol and wielder of Roman might, became a frightened vacillating man when faced with the King of the Jews. Even the hardened Roman soldier was awed by Christ's manner of dying. Throughout, it becomes clear that Jesus was not the victim but the Master."<sup>39</sup>

### **13. Peter defends Jesus with his sword (Matt. 26.51-55; Mark 14.47; Luke 22.49-51; John 18.10-11).**

Then Simon Peter having a sword drew it, and smote the high priest's servant, and cut off his right ear. The servant's name was Malchus. (John 18.10)

Elder Neal A. Maxwell taught:

"The living prophets are not perfect men, but they live close to him who is perfect. It is no real reflection on them that in their imperfections these great men at times wish to hold back or to hasten history. Peter smote off the ear of one of those who came to take Jesus captive on the Mount of Olives. (Matthew 26:51.) Peter did not understand that the 'arrest' of Jesus should not be arrested, because the unfolding events would move from Gethsemane to Golgotha and then to an empty grave, all of which he would witness and preach about for years after."<sup>40</sup>

"...he that arms himself with Gun, sword, or Pistol except in the defense of truth, will sometime be sorry for it. I never carry any weapon with me bigger than my Pen Knife, when I was dragged before the

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<sup>38</sup> Note that the text italicizes "he" here. Jesus literally issued the divine name "I AM," and this group of men fell to the ground. John 18.5 reads as follows: ἀπεκρίθησαν αὐτῷ Ἰησοῦν τὸν Ναζωραῖον λέγει αὐτοῖς ὁ Ἰησοῦς, Ἐγὼ εἰμι εἰστήκει δὲ καὶ Ἰούδας ὁ παραδιδούς αὐτὸν μετ' αὐτῶν "They answered him, Jesus of Nazareth, Jesus says to them, 'I AM,' but Judas who turned Jesus over to them, stood among them" (my translation). Andrew Skinner adds this commentary, "Jesus was no shy or retiring leader. Neither did he fear his captors. He boldly identified himself to the mob by using language that equated him with God—"I Am." That is the very name of Deity as revealed to Moses (Exodus 3:13–14). The translators of the King James Version of the Bible added the word he after each use of the phrase "I Am" in this passage, believing it rounded out the translation." Andrew Skinner, *Golgotha*, "Betrayal and Arrest." Deseret Book, 2004.

<sup>39</sup> *Selected Writings of Gerald N. Lund: Gospel Scholars Series*. Deseret Book, 1999, 308.

<sup>40</sup> Neal A. Maxwell, *Things As They Really Are*, p. 77.

Cannon and muskets in Missouri, I was unarmed. God will always protect me until my mission is fulfilled."<sup>41</sup>

**Put your sword into her place! Ἀπόστρεψόν σου τὴν μάχαιραν εἰς τὸν τόπον αὐτῆς (Matt. 26.52)**

These are not the words of a violent revolutionary (26.47). End-time schemes often included a great battle between the people of light and the people of darkness, and Jesus certainly expected violence (24.1-2); but his own followers were to stay clear of it. Matthew's readers might hear this possibly familiar saying (cf. the Sentences of the Syriac Menander 15-19) ironically: the temple authorities' behavior, perhaps partly motivated by the desire to keep peace for the Romans (Mt 26.1-5), invited the sword of judgment at the hands of the Romans in AD 66–70.<sup>42</sup>

**14. Jesus arrested, the disciples run away (Matt. 26.56-57; Mark 14.46-52; Luke 22.52-54; John 18.12).**

**And there followed him a certain young man, having a linen cloth cast about his naked body; and the young men laid hold on him: And he left the linen cloth, and fled from them naked (Mark 14.51-52)**

**Julie Smith notes, "If the young man has a cloth over his body, he is not naked. The reference to his nakedness is thus somewhat forced and suggests a symbolic meaning."<sup>43</sup>**

**The identity of this young man is unknown**, and the Bible does not provide any further information about him. Some have suggested that this young man may have been a disciple or a follower of Jesus who had come to Gethsemane with the other disciples, specifically, some have identified this individual as James, the Lord's half-brother.<sup>44</sup> Others have proposed that he may have been a young man that was raised from the dead but not mentioned by the gospel writers,<sup>45</sup> or a servant or a guard who was caught up in the events of the night. It has also been suggested that this naked young man fleeing the scene was Mark himself, the author of this detail in this particular gospel.<sup>46</sup> The mention of the young man fleeing

<sup>41</sup> [The Words of Joseph Smith](#), compiled and edited by Andrew F. Ehat and Lyndon W. Cook, Bookcraft, 1980, p. 365-369.

<sup>42</sup> Keener, *Background*, p. 116.

<sup>43</sup> Julie Smith, [The Gospel According to Mark](#), BYU New Testament Commentary, 2018, p. 760.

<sup>44</sup> In [The Great Biblical Commentary](#), the eminent Jesuit exegete Cornelius à Lapide explores the various opinions held by several Church Fathers: "You will ask who this young man was: Saint Epiphanius and Saint Jerome think that he was James the Lord's brother." Eusebius of Caesarea (the Father of Church History) writes that James wore a linen garment all his life, purportedly the one he abandoned in Mark 14.

<sup>45</sup> Since the publication in 1973 of a fragment of a letter ostensibly written by Clement of Alexandria that contains quotations from a work described by Clement as a secret Gospel of Mark, scholars have made use of that fragment to make sense of vv. 51- 52.194 The author of the letter says that this Gospel (το μυστικον ευαγγελιον "the secret gospel") contains a passage following Mark 10:34 that tells how Jesus raised a young man (νεανισκος) from the dead. The text goes on to say that "after six days, Jesus told him what to do and in the evening the youth comes to him, wearing a linen cloth over his naked body (περιβεβλημενος σινδωνα επι γυμνου). And he remained with him that night, for Jesus taught him the mystery of the kingdom of God." Collins, p. 692. Text and trans. from Smith, Clement of Alexandria, 447, 452.

<sup>46</sup> See: Molina, [Person of Interest: Who Is the Naked Man in Mark's Gospel? Catholic Answers](#), accessed 2.28.23. Molina cites Lapide, who argues that Mark is the young man in this story. Julie Smith disagrees with this identification of the young man as Mark. She writes, "This theory was popular with older scholarship... but it doesn't fit well with the idea of the Gospel as an oral text (since the story would not have first been told by the author), and it is difficult to imagine how audiences were supposed to figure out that it was a reference to the author." See: Julie Smith, *The Gospel According to Mark*, p. 761.



naked has been interpreted in various ways. Some suggest that it may have been a symbol of shame<sup>47</sup> or humiliation,<sup>48</sup> an oblique reference to early Christian baptismal rites,<sup>49</sup> or he can also be seen as representing us, the readers of Mark's account,<sup>50</sup> while others propose that it was simply a detail included to add realism to the story.

Ultimately, the identity and significance of the young man in Mark 14:52 remains a mystery, and scholars continue to debate the possible explanations for this enigmatic figure in the Gospel account.

**“Then all the disciples forsook him, and fled” (Matt. 26.56).**

**“And they all forsook him and fled” (Mark 14.50).**

Donahue and Harrington concluded that the young man “represents concretely the group of disciples whose flight was described in Mark 14.50. Rather than symbolizing Jesus or the Christian, he stands for those who desert Jesus in time of trouble.” The fact that he fled naked indicates “the shame that the young man will experience.” He chose “shame over fidelity to Jesus.”<sup>51</sup>

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<sup>47</sup> Julie Smith explains, “Normally in the Hebrew Bible, nakedness symbolizes shame (Gen. 3.7; 2 Chr. 28.15; Hosea 2.3; Amos 2.16). Here, the young man’s nakedness might indicate the shame he should feel at fleeing instead of following Jesus.” *The Gospel of Mark*, p. 761.

<sup>48</sup> According to this interpretation, the young man's nakedness may represent the spiritual nakedness of the disciples who were exposed in their lack of faith and courage. In this view, the young man's flight from the scene may be seen as a metaphor for the disciples' abandonment of Jesus in his hour of need.

<sup>49</sup> Smith, p. 761. Smith cites this as early Christians were baptized after they removed their clothing. But this reading is disputed. See: Adela Yarbro Collins, *Mark: A Commentary*, Fortress Press, 2007, p. 690. Collins explains, “The rite of Christian baptism, however, is not explicitly mentioned in Mark. One could argue that the baptism of Jesus in 1:9-11 serves as a model for the Christian rite and that John’s saying in 1:8 alludes to Christian baptism “in Holy Spirit,” but the notion of dying and rising in baptism does not occur in chapter 1. In 10:38-39, the terms βαπτίζειν (“to immerse” or “to baptize”) and βαπτισμα (“immersion” or “baptism”) are associated with the death of Jesus, but these terms are used metaphorically in that context and do not refer to the ritual of baptism. The passion predictions speak about the death and resurrection of Jesus, and the disciple is expected to follow Jesus in suffering (8:34—9:1), but the idea of the disciple dying and rising with Jesus is not explicitly present. Further, as the authors recognize, there is no early evidence for the practice of “the actual stripping off of the clothes of the candidate before immersion and the robing in a white garment after he had emerged from the water.” Didache 7 says nothing about such a ritual act in its discussion of baptism. The Apostolic Tradition attributed to Hippolytus seems to imply that those who are baptized put the same clothes on again after the rite.”

<sup>50</sup> Perhaps this person represents a type of everyman, the portrait of a character who is representative of all humanity. According to this view, the young man's nakedness represents the vulnerability and exposure of all people before God, and his flight from the scene may symbolize the human tendency to flee from God or from the truth when confronted with it.

<sup>51</sup> Collins, p. 691. See also: John R. Donahue and Daniel J. Harrington, *Sacra Pagina The Gospel of Mark*, Liturgical Press, 2005, p. 417.