
“Shall I Not Drink the Cup?”

*“So Jesus said to Peter, ‘. . . the cup which the Father has given Me, shall I not drink it?’”
(John 18:11).*

In harmony with God’s plan that was put into place before the foundation of the world (Revelation 13:8), Jesus chose the time and place of His death. He was not forced by wicked hands or maneuvered by the whims of religious tyrants. The Scriptures reveal that Jesus was orchestrating the circumstances of His death, especially in the scene of His arrest in the Garden of Gethsemane. His demeanor and His attitude toward being arrested convey that Jesus, not the soldiers and priests who confronted Him, was in charge of what was taking place.

His control is reflected in His going to meet the armed multitude led by Judas. When Jesus saw Judas, the Roman cohort, the commander, the chief priests, and the Pharisees coming to take Him into custody, He went to meet them and offered Himself to them. John wrote, “So Jesus, knowing all the things that were coming upon Him, went forth and said to them, ‘Whom do you seek?’” (John 18:4). The multitude was startled by His behavior and His words. Later, after they had regrouped, Jesus said to them, “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” (Matthew 26:55). Jesus could easily have slipped away from them into the night, but He regarded this moment as His hour and went forward with resolute calmness.

In addition, Jesus’ command of this historic moment is seen in His reception of Judas. He made it unnecessary for Judas to identify Him. Even

after Jesus told the multitude that He was the One they sought, Judas stepped forward to do his unimaginable deed. Jesus asked him, “Judas are you betraying the Son of Man with a kiss?” (Luke 22:48). Ignoring His remark, Judas said, “Hail, Rabbi!” and kissed Him (Matthew 26:49). Jesus told him, “‘Friend, do what you have come for.’ Then they came and laid hands on Jesus and seized Him” (Matthew 26:50). It is obvious from the divine record that Jesus allowed Judas to betray Him. He could have prevented him from committing such a tragedy, but He gave Judas the freedom to do what he had desired and decided to do.

Jesus’ mastery of the occasion is also seen in His restoring Malchus’ ear. The text says, “Simon Peter then, having a sword, drew it and struck the high priest’s slave, and cut off his right ear; and the slave’s name was Malchus” (John 18:10). Impulsive Peter pulled out one of the two swords possessed by Jesus’ little band (Luke 22:38) and swung it. Perhaps Malchus ducked and thus only his ear was severed. Jesus quickly rebuked His disciples, commanding, “Stop! No more of this” (Luke 22:51a). Then He touched Malchus’ ear and restored it (Luke 22:51b). No doubt, His compassionate healing of Malchus defused an explosive situation. Had the Roman soldiers and temple guards attacked the disciples, some of them surely would have been slain. With His last miracle, Jesus was saying, “Everyone remain calm. I will go peaceably with this arresting party. I am intentionally putting Myself into their hands.”

Furthermore, Jesus' words to Peter reveal that He was entering by choice into this storm of violence to fulfill His Father's will. He told Peter, "Put the sword into the sheath; the cup which the Father has given Me, shall I not drink it?" (John 18:11). Jesus also said, "But all this has taken place to fulfill the Scriptures of the prophets" (Matthew 26:56a). In His reply to Peter, He was not making an argument for pacifism, but He was declaring His resolve to carry out God's plan. He was yielding to His captors to fulfill the Scriptures and to drink the cup that had been given to Him by His Father. His moment had come—not to fight, but to put Himself, by an act of righteous submission, on the cross for the atonement of sin. He was not coerced into dying; He chose it.

The ultimate proof that Jesus was in charge of what was happening is His affirmation that angels were available to Him. He said to Peter, "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?" (Matthew 26:53). At His call, divine servants could have overcome any force that came against Him. It took only one angel to strike 185,000 of Sennacherib's soldiers who were encamped near Jerusalem (Isaiah 37:36). Think of what 72,000 angels could have done! Our Lord's declaration expresses that He was doing what He had resolved to do. Nothing, not even all the forces of evil, could overcome Him if He chose to resist them. Jesus moved toward His preordained goal. The soldiers and priests were unaware that they were being used

by God to fulfill His eternal purpose.

What can we learn from Jesus' conduct during His arrest? First, we cannot miss His determination and divine resolve to provide salvation for those who trust in Him. He had set His face toward the cross and was moving relentlessly toward that hour.

Second, we see Him giving us one more miraculous piece of evidence of His deity. The One being arrested was not just a good man; He was the Son of God. Malchus' restored ear proves it. Until the end, Jesus was giving evidence that He was God in the flesh.

Third, we see the blinding effect of prejudice and wickedness. Even a miracle performed a few feet away could not push back the cover of unbelief in those who had chosen to cling to it. After this act of healing, did Malchus participate in the arrest of Jesus? Was he blinded by something other than the darkness of the night? Jesus loves everyone, but He does not break down the barriers in our minds against our will. He only teaches, places evidence before us, invites, warns, and waits for us to decide.

Eddie Cloer



Man did not choose to crucify Jesus; Jesus chose to be crucified. The hearts and hands of cruel men did not overtake Him; He submitted to wicked and lawless men so that He might offer Himself for the salvation of the world.