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Sabbath School.

BIBLE LESSONS.

STUDIES IN MARK.

Second Quarter.

Lesson VIII. May 26. Mark 14: 43-54.

JESUS BETRAYED.

GOLDEN TEXT.

Betrayest thou the Son of man with a kiss?—Luke 22: 48.

EXPLANATORY.

I. JESUS BETRAYED BY JUDAS. Mount of Olives, near Gethsemane. About 1 o'clock Friday morning. 43. And immediately After Jesus' return to His disciples from His third season of prayer. Judas knew the place, for it was a frequent resort of Jesus with His disciples (John 18: 2). Cornelius Judas, Son of Simon. He is called Iscariot, probably because he belonged in Kericho, a town in Southern Judea. If so, he was the only Judean among the disciples, all the others being Galileans. One of the twelve. The evangelists do not conceal the fact that the traitor was one of their own number.

II. WHY WAS SUCH A GROOMING? (1) It is doubtless included in God's plan that there should be thus a standing argument for the truth and honesty of the Gospel; for, if any wrong or trickery had been concealed, it would have been revealed by the traitor in self-defence. (2) It is a relief to modern churches to know that God can bless them and the Gospel can succeed, even though some bad men may creep into the fold. And with him a great multitude. This consisted, (1) of the band (John 18: 3, 12), or Roman cohort, which consisted of 300 to 600 men, was quartered in the tower of Antonia, overlooking the temple, and ever ready to put down any tumult or arrest any disturber. Probably so much of the band as could be spared was present. (2) They were the captains of the guard (Luke 22: 52), with their men, who guarded the temple and kept order. (3) Some of the chief priests and elders (Luke 22: 52). (4) Their servants, such as Malchus (John 18: 10), and others who had been commissioned by the Jewish authorities. (5) Besides these a crowd would naturally collect around such a procession. With swords and staves. The soldiers were armed with swords; the officers of the chief priests with staves or clubs.

14. And he... had given them a token: or sign, by which the soldiers could distinguish Jesus. This was necessary because the soldiers would not know Jesus, especially in the night. Whosoever I shall kiss. It appears to have been the custom for disciples to give the kiss of salutation to their Master whenever they returned from absence. The depths of the traitor's depravity are shown by his using the sign of friendship as a token of treason.

15. And as soon as he was come. As soon as Judas had met Jesus, who came forth (John 18: 4) from the garden, and from the shade of the trees into the open ground to meet them. He goes straight way to Him. He is in haste, lest his courage fail, or lest Jesus should attempt to escape. And saith, Master. Rev. Ver., Rabbi. And kissed Him. The Greek word here is more forcible than one signifying kiss in the previous verse, it signified Him with fervor and frequently. Jesus' only reply was, "Friend, wherefore art thou come?" (Matt. 26: 50). "Betrayest thou the Son of man with a kiss?" (Luke 22: 48). "These words were enough, for they simply revealed the man to himself, by stating his hideous act in all its simplicity.

JUDAS' MOTIVE IN BETRAYING CHRIST (1) Anger at the public rebuke given him by Christ at the supper in the house of Simon the leper (Matt. 26: 14). (2) Avarice, covetousness, the thirty pieces of silver (John 12: 6). (3) Perhaps, also, Judas "abandoned what seemed to him a failing cause, and hoped by his treachery to gain a position of honor and influence in the Pharisaic party." (4) Anger and spite at the goodness which continually condemned him; awakened his conscience, and called him to a life he was determined not to live.

THE JERUSALYMITE. What did Judas gain? Thirty pieces of silver. Nothing but the by-stander and remorse and awful anguish. Even in this world the gains of sin are very small; even in this world the losses of sin are very great.

II. PETER'S ATTEMPT AT DEFENCE. 47. Between one and two o'clock Friday morning. And one of them that stood by. This one was Simon Peter (John 18: 10), loyal and courageous. Drew a sword. First the disciples asked Jesus if they should defend Him with the sword (Luke 22: 49). But Peter, without waiting for an answer, begins the defence.

THE REASONING OF THE ACT. This was a very rash act, for (1) compromised Jesus in His teaching that His kingdom was not of this world, but a spiritual kingdom. (2) It would place Him in the attitude of a rebel against the Roman government, and Pilate could not have pronounced Him innocent. (3) Peter might have been arrested for rebellion, and perhaps the other disciples with him, and their work of founding the kingdom had been greatly hindered. And smote a servant (a slave named Malchus (John 18: 11)) of the high priest; i. e., Caiaphas. He was probably one of the foremost of the arresting party. And cut off his ear. Peter was not likely to strike with any other but a right good will; and no doubt the blow was intended to cleave down the aggressor, though by God's good providence the stroke was turned aside, and grazing the head at which it was aimed. Nothing more is told us by Mark, but from the other evangelists we learn that Jesus did all He could to repair the injury done by Peter's rash act; He healed the wounded man.

III. JESUS PROTESTS AGAINST THE VIOLENCE OF HIS CAPTORS. 48. And Jesus answered and said unto them. Because they bound Him (John 18: 12), and probably with some violence, for Judas urged them to lead Him away securely. Are ye come out, or against a thief? The word is the same as that used in John 18: 40, of Barabbas, and points to the brigand chieftain of a lawless band, as distinct from the petty thief of towns or villages.

49. I was daily in the temple with you teaching; the greatest contrast with you brigand chief. But the Scriptures must be fulfilled. As, for instance, relative to Judas (Ps. 41: 9), relative to Christ being treated as a transgressor (Isa. 53: 12), relative to the desertion of the disciples (Zech. 13: 7).

IV. THE DISCIPLES ALL FORSAKE THEIR TEACHER. 50. And they all forsook Him, and fled. Peter and all, though they had promised to stand by Him, even to the death. But Jesus had forbidden them to defend Him with the sword, as Peter wanted to do. There seemed nothing left for them but to escape.

51. And there followed him (though the rest fled) a certain young man. Some think it was Lazarus; many others that it was Mark himself, because (1) he alone mentions the incident, and yet (2) the story bears the impress of an eye witness. Having a linen cloth; a sash, or light loose wrapper, used by the wealthier classes for a night robe. Laid hold on him: as a disciple and friend of Jesus. And he left the linen cloth. In the East the natives can suddenly disengage themselves from their loose clothing.

V. PRELIMINARY EXAMINATION BEFORE ANNAS. Palace of the high priest Caiaphas. Between one and two o'clock Friday morning. And they led Jesus away to the high priest. Jesus was led first to ANNAS (John 18: 13), because this old man had formerly been high priest, and, though deposed by the Roman power that ruled Judea, was still the legitimate high priest according to the law of Moses, the office being for life (Num. 30: 28); 35: 25, and may have been so regarded by the Jews. ANNAS appears to have possessed vast influence, and as father-in-law to Caiaphas doubtless exerted a very controlling influence over him.

VI. THE PRELIMINARY EXAMINATION BEFORE CAIAPHAS. Another part of the same palace. Between one and two o'clock Friday morning. Two to three o'clock sends Jesus to Caiaphas, the high priest (ver. 24), and he, while waiting for the council to assemble, asks Jesus some questions about his teaching and his disciples. Jesus replies that it was easy for him to do all that about these, for everything had been done in public. Whereupon, an officious officer who stood near, struck Jesus with the palm of his hand.

VII. THE EXAMINATION BEFORE AN IRREGULAR MEETING OF THE SANHEDRIM. The palace of Caiaphas. Two to three o'clock Friday morning. Were assembled all the chief priests and the elders and the scribes. It was against the rules of the Sanhedrim or Council for the trial of capital offences by night. The present gathering was therefore an informal one, probably a packed meeting of those who were parties to the plot; Nicodemus and Joseph of Arimathea, and probably not a few others, like the young "ruler" of Luke 18: 18, not being summoned.

54. And Peter... warmed himself at the fire. A portion of the palace, from which opened the judgment hall where Jesus was being tried. John was with him (John 18: 15).

A Purpose.

From one end to the other of the great "boot-room" ran a ceaseless rustle of rapid work. Every man, stripped to the light gossamer wrapper, was doing his best. The company had taken a large contract. Hundreds of thousands of pairs of rubber boots would be turned off within the next few weeks, and thousands of dollars would go to the energetic "piece hands." The faster a man worked the more money he made. All false and useless motions were left out. Short cuts, however, the human machine handled the heavy "boot trees," doing the most intricate "sticking" and "rolling" with a single touch. At the same long table, in this eager race, worked two men. One was a Southwestern Yankee, scarred and weathered, lean and wiry, whose long arms and bony fingers finished the work with a noisy and dispatch that could only be equaled by the skilled "old hands." His mate was slender, smooth-faced, nervous, quick of motion, and clear of eye. There was no odor of liquor in his breath, no tobacco in his teeth. One of them knew him, but all respected him. His "sticker" for the last month had been the largest in the room, and there were men working with him who had spent a lifetime at boot-making.

The Westerner had noticed all of his companion's points carefully, and had tried in vain to keep up with him. At last, one day, during the ten minutes' lull that the "piece hands" allowed themselves, he said: "Stranger, might I ask what yer puppus in drivin' so, an' beatin' all the rest?" The young man smiled; a bright, pleasant smile that almost reflected itself on the grave face opposite. "You think that my rapid work shows a special purpose?" he asked.

"Sartin I do. The nighther a man's puppus the nighther he is. That's reason. An' if it ain't bein' too curious 'd just like to hev yer air yer puppus."

The young man grew grave, thought a moment, and then said: "I have indeed a mighty purpose, and that a life-time of the hardest work ever was laid out any yet I doubt if you would care to hear it." "I knowed it," said the other; "but co ahead, give it to us straight as yer please; I'm good for it." "Did you ever know a man to die for a friend?" asked the young man. "Wall, yes, I knowed a man in Arkansas that took up another man's fight and was killed."

"Not in that way—but in cool blood to take another's place, to be hated, to be sneered at, and at last to be killed, all for the sake of a friend?" "I can't say as I ever did," replied the Westerner; "I ain't exactly nat'r, that ain't."

"No, it isn't very nat'rual to man," was the reply, "yet a friend of mine, for years all the same, and in response of my deeds. He was hated, threatened, mobbed. His very name became a reproach. Without a home—with nothing but his innocence, he was at last put to death by those who so hated him." The other had said nothing, but the burning of his nose and his eyes showed that the story was not without its effect.

"One who was near him when he died," continued the boot-maker, "wrote me a letter, and in it was the dying wish of my friend. He said that he forgave me everything, and that he loved me more than any other could love me."

"He'd no need to say that, after dyin' for yer," was the husky comment. "One thing he wished me to do. There were others whom he loved, and who had wronged him. He wished me to go to them, and beg them to accept of his dying love and be reconciled to him. That is my purpose."

"Stranger," said the listener, "I don't wonder that yer beat us all. I don't know what yer done, that yer pardner should have died for yer, but I do know that yer a lucky man to hev had such a friend. Don't yer never go back on his memory, an'—if it ain't being too curious—might I ask his name?" "His name was Jesus Christ," was the reverent reply. "The letter is here in the Bible, and with His help I am working here to get money to fit myself more thoroughly to tell men His dying message, and beg them to become reconciled to Him."

There was no further time for talking, yet the young man felt that the other understood. The next day the Westerner was not in his place, and another came back who was off on a spree. He never came back. Three years after this of your boot-maker, having finished his studies, was preaching in a store in the far West, when he noticed a tall, weather-beaten man, who entered and seated himself on a box. There was something familiar in his make up, some suggestion of the past, which, however, did not explain itself until after the sermon, when he came forward, saying: "Yer not the only man in this district that's got a puppus. I've read that letter many times, an' in all sorts of places, since you brought it up to me. I've been down in the mines an' out among the Indians, tellin' the boys about it, an' now I'm bound for Lower California. Give us a grip of yer hand, pardner, an' don't forget yer puppus."—From "One Hundred Choice Selections."

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