

His Decision

We are told in Matthew of the dreadful day when our Lord was betrayed and arrested:

Now His betrayer had given them a sign, saying, "Whomever I kiss, He is the One; seize Him." Immediately he went up to Jesus and said, "Greetings, Rabbi!" and kissed Him.

But Jesus said to him, "Friend, why have you come?" Then they came and laid hands on Jesus and took Him. And suddenly, one of those who were with Jesus stretched out his hand and drew his sword, struck the servant of the high priest, and cut off his ear.

But Jesus said to him, "Put your sword in its place, for all who take the sword will perish by the sword. Or do you think that I cannot now pray to My Father, and He will provide Me with more than twelve legions of angels?" "How then could the Scriptures be fulfilled, that it must happen thus?" (Matthew 26:49-54)

This event prompted the "one" who was with Jesus to grab his sword in defense of Jesus, resulting in the removal of the High Priest servant's ear. All four gospel accounts indicate that Jesus was betrayed and arrested. All four gospels also indicate someone accompanying Jesus used a sword to cut off the ear of the high priest's servant. We find only in John that the one swinging the sword was Peter.

However, we find only in Matthew, by divine inspiration, a message for us as Christians today that should make us more grateful than any word could express. That strong message is Jesus did not have to go to the cross. It was his decision to die for us, he could have opted out. Jesus scolds Peter for his act, stating he could have called his Father and at once he would have more than 12 legions of angels. Jesus would not allow Peter to use physical force to prohibit the fulfillment of prophecy. This small passage, found only in Matthew's account, assures us that Jesus freely went to his death. He volunteered himself to fulfill the scriptures, to die in our behalf. This message emphasized to the disciples, to the ones who took Him by force, and to us today that Jesus was giving himself not contrary to his will.

For the elders,
Tony Williams