

The Final Days of Jesus  
**THE CUP & THE SWORD**

Thursday, March 26  
Reading: John 18:1-14

**John 18:10** *Then Simon Peter, who had a sword, drew it and struck the high priest's servant, cutting off his right ear. (The servant's name was Malchus.)* **11** *Jesus commanded Peter, "Put your sword away! Shall I not drink the cup the Father has given Me?"* **12** *Then the detachment of soldiers with its commander and the Jewish officials arrested Jesus.*

The walk from the Upper Room to the garden is finished. Jesus and His disciples cross the brook Kidron which was red with the blood of all the lambs sacrificed at the Temple for Passover.<sup>1</sup> A vivid reminder of what the Lamb of God was about to do – shed His blood for us. The other gospels give the details of Jesus' agonizing night of prayer while His disciples slept. John jumps right to the arrival of Judas and the soldiers.

This group came prepared for a fight. A cohort ('detachment') of soldiers usually numbered between 600 to 1000 men. It is likely that only a portion of this number were in Judas' party, but there were enough to require the presence of their commander. The "officials" probably refer to the Temple police supervised by a group of chief priests and Pharisees. This large group armed with torches and weapons show that they did not expect Jesus to be captured easily.

But Jesus had no intention of fleeing. He goes out and meets His enemies. Instead of hiding, He asks who they are looking for. When Jesus responds "I am He" the attackers are stunned by His authority and bold approach. They expected Jesus to fight or flee, not give Himself up. After they have collected themselves, Jesus again identifies Himself and commands them to let the disciples go.

Peter, however, almost ruins the protection Jesus has just requested. He draws his sword to defend his Master. In my opinion, He was aiming at Judas and missed. Instead, he cuts off the ear of one of the men arresting Jesus. This could have ended in the slaughter of the disciples if Jesus had not stepped in. He heals the man's ear (Luke 22:51) and then rebukes Peter. He would willingly drink "the cup the Father had given" Him.

LESSON ONE: "Knowing All That Was Going to Happen to Him." This is an amazing statement! Jesus knew all about the pain, torture, and death that lay ahead. He knew about the agony of bearing the sins of the world on Himself. And yet He boldly went out to meet His enemies. He had already determined to submit to the Father's will – "Not My will but Yours be done!" How often do we reject God's will for our life because it seems too hard? In what areas of your life do you need to pray, "Not my will but Yours be done"?

LESSON TWO: "Put Your Sword Away." Peter's emotions ran away with him. He is ready to attack this large body of armed soldiers to protect Jesus. However, his thinking was based on human reason, not the will of God. Jesus had warned them several times that this would happen. Peter just wasn't listening. Do we ever miss the will of God because we are relying on our own human wisdom? Where can we go to find guidance when we face difficult situations and choices? How do we listen to God's voice today?

<sup>1</sup> A grate at the base of the altar of sacrifice in the Temple took the lambs' blood beneath the Temple, out to the brook Kidron, and ultimately to the Dead Sea.