

# Exposition of the Gospel of John CHAPTER 61 CHRIST IN THE GARDEN

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## Transcript

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CHAPTER 61

CHRIST IN THE GARDEN

John 18:1-11

Below is an Analysis of the passage which is to be before us: — 1. Jesus and His disciples cross the Cedron, verse 1. 2. Judas' knowledge of this place of retirement, verse 2. 3. Judas conducting the Lord's enemies there, verse 3. 4. Christ's challenge and their response, verses 4, 5. 5. Christ's power and their lack of discernment evidenced, verses 6, 7. 6. Christ protecting His own, verses 8, 9. 7. Peter's rashness and Christ's rebuke, verses 10, 11. The eighteenth chapter begins a new section of our Gospel. Chapter 1 is introductory in its character; 2 to 12 record our Lord's ministry in the world; 13 to 17 show Him alone with His disciples, preparing them for His departure; 18 to 21 is the closing division, giving us that which attended His death and resurrection. Here, too, everything is in perfect accord with the distinctive character of John's delineation of Christ. The note struck here is in quite a different key from the one heard at the end of the Synoptics. That which is prominent in the closing scenes of the fourth Gospel is not the sufferings of the Savior, but the lofty dignity and Divine glory of the God-man. "As the last section (13 to 17) involved His death, it must take place. He has given in His record to Him who sent Him, whose counsels had determined before what was to be done, and whose prophets showed before that Christ should suffer (Acts 2:23; Acts 3:18; Acts 4:28); and now that must be which makes all these assertions true. Without these two chapters (18, 19), therefore, none of the precious things which have thrilled the heart in the previous chapters could be possible; nay, more, none of His own assertions as to what He would be and do, of giving eternal life, of having any of the world, of coming again for them, of sending the Holy Spirit, of preparing a place for them, of having them in the glory with Him, or of having that glory at all; there would be no assembly of God, no restoration of Israel, no gathering of the nations, no millennium, no new heavens and new earth, no adjustment in righteousness of the 'creation of God' of which He is the beginning, no display of grace, no salvation, no revelation of the Father—all these and much more were contingent on His death and resurrection. Without these all things in this book drop out and leave a blank, the blackness of darkness" (Mr. M. Taylor). John 18 opens with an account of the Savior and His disciples entering the Garden, but in recording what took place there nowhere is the presiding hand of the Holy

Spirit more evident. Nothing is said of His taking Peter and James and John into its deeper recesses, that they might "watch with him." Nothing is said of His there praying to the Father. Nothing is said of His falling upon His face, Of His awful agony, of the bloody sweat, of the angel appearing to strengthen Him. Perfectly in place in the other Gospels, they are passed over here as unsuited to the picture which John was inspired to paint. In their place other details are supplied—most appropriate and striking—which are not found in the Synoptics. "Into that Garden, hallowed by so many associations, the Lord entered, with the Eleven; and there took place the Agony related in the Synoptics, but wholly passed over by John. Yet he was very near the Lord, being one of the three taken apart from the rest by Christ, and asked to watch with Him. The rest were told to sit down a little way off from the Master. If any of the Evangelists then could have written with authority of that solemn time John was the one best fitted to do it. Yet he is the one who omits all reference to it! It might be thought that what the others had written was sufficient. Why, then, did he describe so minutely circumstances connected with the Lord's apprehension! The special line of his Gospel, presenting the Lord as a Divine Person, will alone explain this. As Son of God incarnate he presents Him, and not as the suffering Son of man. We shall learn, then, from him that which none of the others mention, though Matthew was present with Him, how the Lord's personal presence at first over-awed Judas and the company with that traitor" (Mr. C. E. Smart). In each of the Synoptics, as the end of His path drew near, we find the Savior speaking, again and again, of what He was to suffer at the hands of men; how that He would be scourged and spat upon, be shamefully treated by Jew and Gentile alike, ending with His crucifixion, burial and resurrection. But here in John, that which is seen engaging His thoughts in the closing hours was His return to the Father (see John 13:1; 14:2; 16:5; 17:5). And everything is in perfect accord with this. Here in the Garden, instead of Christ falling to the ground before the Father, we behold those who came to arrest the Savior falling to the ground before Him! Nowhere does the perfect supremacy of the Lord Jesus shine forth more gloriously: even to the band of soldiers He utters a command, and the disciples are allowed to go unmolested. "When Jesus had spoken these words, he went forth with his disciples over the brook Cedron" (John 18:1). The "these words" refer to the paschal Discourse and the High Priestly prayer which have engaged our attention in the previous chapters. Having delivered His prophetic message, He now prepares to go forth to His priestly work. The "Garden" is the same one mentioned in the other Gospels, though here the Holy Spirit significantly omits its name—Gethsemane. In its place, He mentions the "brook Cedron," identical with "Kidron," its Hebrew name, which means "dark waters"—emblematic of that black stream through which He was about to pass. The Cedron was on the east side of the city, dividing Jerusalem from the Mount of Olives (Josephus). It was on the west side of the city that He was crucified: thus did the Son of Righteousness complete His atoning circuit! What, we may ask, was our Lord's design and purpose in entering the "Garden" at this time? First, in accord with the typical teaching of the Day of Atonement. The victim for the sin-offering (unlike the burnt offering) was destroyed "without (outside) the camp" (see Leviticus 4:12, 21; Leviticus 16:27); so the Lord Jesus offered Himself as a sacrifice for sin outside of Jerusalem: "Wherefore Jesus also that he might sanctify the people with his own blood, suffered without the gate" (Heb. 13:12). Therefore, as His atoning sufferings began here, He sought the Garden, rather than remain in Jerusalem. Second, in crossing the brook Cedron, accompanied by His disciples, another Old Testament type was most strikingly fulfilled. In 2 Samuel 15 (note particularly verses 23, 30, 31) we read of David, at the time of his shameful betrayal by his familiar friend Ahithophel, crossing the same brook; crossing it in tears, accompanied by his faithful followers. So David's Son and Lord, crossed the Cedron while Judas was betraying Him to His foes. Third, His object was to afford His enemies the more free scope to take Him. The leaders of Israel had designed to lay hands on Him for some time past, but they feared the common people; therefore, that this impediment might be removed, the Savior chose to go out of the city to the

Garden, where they might have full opportunity to apprehend Him, and carry Him away in the night, quietly and secretly. In addition to these reasons, we may add, His arrest in the solitude of the Garden made it the easier for His disciples to escape. The entrance of Christ into the Garden at once reminds us of Eden. The contrasts between them are indeed most striking. In Eden, all was delightful; in Gethsemane, all was terrible. In Eden, Adam and Eve parleyed with Satan; in Gethsemane, the last Adam sought the face of His Father. In Eden, Adam sinned; in Gethsemane, the Savior suffered. In Eden, Adam fell; in Gethsemane, the Redeemer conquered. The conflict in Eden took place by day; the conflict in Gethsemane was waged at night. In the one Adam fell before Satan; in the other, the soldiers fell before Christ. In Eden the race was lost; in Gethsemane Christ announced, "Of them which thou gavest me have I lost none" (John 18:9). In Eden, Adam took the fruit from Eve's hand; in Gethsemane, Christ received the cup from His Father's hand. In Eden, Adam hid himself; in Gethsemane, Christ boldly showed Himself. In Eden, God sought Adam; in Gethsemane, the last Adam sought God! From Eden Adam was "driven"; from Gethsemane Christ was "led." In Eden the "sword" was drawn (Gen. 3:24); in Gethsemane the "sword" was sheathed (John 18:11). "Where was a garden, into which he entered and his disciples" (John 18:1). Christ did not dismiss the apostles as they left the upper-room in Jerusalem, but took them along with Him to Gethsemane. He would have them witness the fact that He was not seized there as a helpless victim, but that He voluntarily delivered Himself up into the hands of His foes. He would thereby teach them, from His example, that it is a Christian duty to offer no resistance to our enemies, but meekly bow to the will of God. He would also show them His power to protect His own under circumstances of greatest danger. "And Judas also, which betrayed him, knew the place" (John 18:2). "Our Lord and Savior knew that He should be taken by Judas, and that this was the place appointed by His Father wherein He should be taken; for the 4th verse tells us 'Jesus therefore, knowing all things that should come upon him,' etc. He knew that Judas would be there that night, and, therefore, like a valiant champion, He cometh into the field first, afore His enemy. He goeth thither to choose, and singles out this place on purpose" (Mr. Thomas Goodwin). "For Jesus oftentimes resorted thither with his disciples" (John 18:2). This was the Savior's place of prayer during the last week—a quiet spot to which He frequently retired with His apostles. In Luke 21:37 we read, "And in the daytime he was teaching in the temple; and at night he went out, and abode in the mount that is called the mount of olives." In Luke 22:39 we read, "And he came out, and went, as he was wont to the mount of olives; and his disciples also followed him." This was Christ's place of devotion, and the place, no doubt, where many precious communications had passed between Him and the disciples; it is mentioned here to show the obduracy of the traitor's heart—it also aggravated his sin. The Savior knew full well that the treacherous apostate was well acquainted with this spot of holy associations, yet did He, nevertheless go there. On previous occasions He had avoided His enemies. "Then took they up stones to cast at him; but Jesus hid himself, and went out of the temple" John (John 8:59). These things spoke Jesus, and departed, and did hide himself from them (John 12:36). But now the hour was come; therefore did He make for that very place to which He knew Judas would lead His enemies. "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 18:3). The "band" which Judas "received" evidently signifies a detachment of Roman soldiers, which Pilate had granted for the occasion; the Greek word means the tenth part of a legion, and therefore consisted of four or five hundred men. Some have questioned this, but the words of Matthew 26:47, "a great multitude with him"—strongly confirms it. The "officers from the chief priests and Pharisees" refer to the servants of Israel's leaders. Luke 22:52 shows that the heads of the Nation themselves also swelled the mob" Then Jesus said unto the chief priests, and captains of the temple, and the elders, which were come to him, Be ye come out, as against a thief, with swords and staves?" As Christ was to die for sinners both of the Jews and Gentiles, so God ordered it that Gentiles (Roman

soldiers) and Jews should have a hand alike in His arrest and in His crucifixion! "Cometh thither with lanterns and torches and weapons" (John 18:3). What an anomaly! Seeking out the Light of the world with torches and lanterns! Approaching the Good Shepherd with "weapons!" As though He would seek to hide Himself; as though He could be taken with swords and staves! Little did they know of His readiness to be led as a lamb to the slaughter. Significant too is the general principle here symbolically illustrated: attacks upon the Truth were made by artificial lights and carnal weapons! It has been thus ever since. The "light of reason" is what men depend upon; and where that has failed, resort has been had to brute force, of which the "weapons" speak. How vain these are, when employed against the Son of God, He plainly demonstrated in the sequel. "Jesus therefore, knowing all things that should come upon him" (John 18:4). With this should be compared John 13:3, which presents a most striking comparison and contrast: "Jesus knowing that the Father had given all things into his hands"; the comparison is between our Lord's omniscience in either reference; the contrast between the subjects of His knowledge there and here. In John 13:3 Christ spoke of "all things" being given into His hands; here in John 18:4 He anticipates the moment when "all things" were to be taken from Him, when He was to be "cut off" and "have nothing" (Dan. 9:26). His foreknowledge was perfect: for Him there were no surprises. The receiving of "all things" from the Father's hands was not more present to His spirit than the loss of "all things" by His being cut off. In John 13 He contemplates the glory; here the sufferings, and He passed from the one to the other in the unchanging blessedness of absolute perfection. "Jesus therefore, knowing all things that should come upon him." These were the "all things" decreed by God, agreed upon by the Son in the eternal covenant of grace, predicted in the Old Testament Scriptures, and foretold, again and again, by Himself; namely, all the attendant circumstances of His sufferings and death. "Jesus therefore, knowing all things that should come upon him, went forth"—not out of the Garden as John 18:26 plainly shows, but from its inner recesses, where He had prayed alone. "Went forth," first to awaken the sleeping three (Matthew 26:46), then to rejoin the eight whom He had left on the outskirts of the Garden (Matthew 26:36), and now to meet Judas and his company. This "went forth" shows the perfect harmony between John and the Synoptics. "And said unto them, Whom seek ye?" (John 18:4). Our Lord was the first to speak: He did not wait to be challenged. His reason for asking this question is indicated in the "therefore" of the previous clause—"Jesus therefore, knowing all things that should come upon him, went forth, and said unto them, Whom seek ye?" That which the Holy Spirit has here emphasized is the willingness of Christ to suffer, His readiness to go forth to the Cross. He knew full well for what fell purpose these men were there, but He asks the question so that He might solemnly and formally surrender Himself to them. Once, when they wanted to take Him by force and make Him a king, He departed from them (John 6:15); but now that He was to be scourged and crucified, He boldly advanced to meet them. This was in sharp contrast from the first Adam in Eden, who, after his sin, hid himself among the trees of the garden. So, too, Christ's act and question here bore witness to the futility and folly of their "lanterns and torches and weapons." "They answered him, Jesus of Nazareth. Jesus said unto them, I am" (John 18:5). Why did they not answer, "Thee!"? Jesus of Nazareth stood before them, yet they did not say, "Thou art the one we have come to arrest." It is plain from this circumstance that they did not recognize Him, nor did Judas, who is here expressly said to have "stood with them." Despite their "lanterns and torches" their eyes were holden! Does not this go far to confirm our thought on the closing words of John 18:3—the Holy Spirit designedly intimated that something more than the light which nature supplies is needed to discover and discern the person of the God-man! And how this is emphasized by the presence of Judas, who had been in closest contact with the Savior for three years! How solemn the lesson! How forcibly this illustrates 2 Corinthians 4:3, 4: "But if our gospel be hid, it is hid to them that are lost: in whom the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not." Even the traitor failed now to recognize the Lord: he too was

stricken with dimness of vision. The natural man is spiritually blind: the Light shone in the darkness, and the darkness comprehended it not (John 1:5)! It is only as the light of God shines in our hearts that knowledge is given us to behold the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ (2 Cor. 4:6)! "And Judas, also, which betrayed him, stood with them" (John 18:5). Only a few hours previous he had been seated with Christ and the Eleven, now he is found with the Lord's enemies, acting as their guide. Some have argued that there is a discrepancy here between John's account and what we read of in the Synoptics. In the latter we are told Judas had arranged with the soldiers that he would give them a sign, identifying the One they should arrest by kissing Him. This he did, and they laid hands on Him. But here in John 18 he is viewed as failing to recognize the Savior, yet there is no discrepancy at all. John does not relate what Matthew and the others give us, but instead, supplies details which they were guided to omit. John tells us what took place in the Garden before the traitor gave his vile sign. If the reader will compare Luke's account he will see that the kiss was given by Judas at a point between what we read of in John 18, verses 9, 10. "As soon then as he had said unto them, I am, they went backward, and fell to the ground" (John 18:6). Another reason why notice is taken of Judas at the dose of the preceding verse is to inform us that he, too, fell to the ground. Observe the words "they went backward." They were there to arrest Him, but instead of advancing to lay hands on Him, they retreated! Among them were five hundred Roman soldiers, yet they retired before His single "I am." They fell back in consternation, not forward in worship! All He said was "I am"; but it was fully sufficient to overawe and overpower them. It was the enunciation of the ineffable Name of God, by which He was revealed to Moses at the burning bush (Ex. 3:14). It was a display of His Divine majesty. It was a quiet exhibition of His Divine power. It was a signal demonstration that He was "the word" (John 1:1)! He did not strike them with His hand—there was no need to; He simply spoke two monosyllables and they were completely overcome. But why, we may ask, should our Lord have acted in such a manner on this occasion? First, that it might be clearly shown He was more than "Jesus of Nazareth": He was "God manifest in flesh," and never was this more unmistakably evidenced. Second, that it might appear with absolute dearness that He voluntarily delivered Himself up into their hands—that it was not they who apprehended Him, but He who submitted to them. He was not captured, for He was not to (passively) suffer merely, but to (actively) offer Himself as a sacrifice to God. Here is the ultimate reason why it is reCorded that "Judas also, which betrayed him, stood with them": the traitor's perfidy was needless and the captor's weapons useless against One who is giving up Himself unto death and was soon to give Himself in death. If none had power to take His life from Him (John 10:18, 19), none had power to arrest Him. He here showed them, and us, that they were completely at His mercy—helpless on the ground—and not He at theirs. How easy for Him then to have walked quietly away, unmolested! First, they failed to recognize Him; now they were prostrate before Him. What was to hinder Him from leaving them thus? Nothing but His Father's will, and to it He submissively bowed. Thus did the Savior give proof of His willingness to offer Himself as a sacrifice for sin. In the third place, it left these men without excuse. Every detail in connection with our Lord's passion had been determined by the Divine counsels, yet God did not treat those who had a hand in it as mere machines, but as responsible moral agents. Before Pilate sentenced Christ to death, God first gave him a plain intimation that it was an innocent Man who stood before him, by warning his wife in a dream (Matthew 27:19). So here with these Roman soldiers, who may never have seen Christ before. They cannot plead in the Day of judgment that they were ignorant of the glory of His person: they cannot say that they never witnessed His miraculous power, and had no opportunity given them to believe on Him. This exhibition of His majesty, and their laying hands on Him afterwards, makes their condemnation just! It is very striking to observe that the Lord Jesus had uttered the same words on previous occasions, but with very different effects. To the woman at the well He had said "I am" (John 4:26), and she at once recognized Him as the Christ (John 4:29). To the

disciples on the storm-lashed sea He had said, "I am" (John 6:20—see Greek), and we are told "they willingly received him into the ship." But here there was no conviction wrought of His Messiahship, and no willing reception of Him. Instead, they were terrified, and fell to the ground. What a marvelous demonstration that the same Word is to some "a savor of life unto life," while to others it is "a savor of death unto death"! Observe, too, that His Divine "I am" to the disciples in the ship was accompanied by "Be not afraid" (John 6:20); how solemn to mark its omission here! Vividly does this forewarn sinners of how utterly helpless they will be before the Christ of God in a coming Day! "What shall He do when He comes to judge, who did this when about to be judged? What shall be His might when He comes to reign, who had this might when He was at the point to die?" (Augustine.) What, indeed, will be the effect of that Voice when He speaks in judgment upon the wicked! "As soon then as he had said unto them, I am, they went backward, and fell to the ground." This was a remarkable fulfillment of an Old Testament prophecy given a thousand years before. It is recorded in the 27th Psalm, the whole of which, most probably, was silently uttered by the Savior as He journeyed from the upper-room in Jerusalem, across the brook Cedron, into the Garden. "The Lord is my light and my salvation; whom shall I fear? The Lord is the strength of my life; of whom shall I be afraid? When the wicked, even my enemies and my foes, came upon me to eat up my flesh, they stumbled and fell" (verses 1, 2). Let the reader pause and ponder the remainder of this Psalm: it is blessed to learn what comforted and strengthened the Savior's heart in that trying hour. Psalm 27 gives us the musings of Christ's heart at this time, Godwards. Psalm 35 recorded His prayers against His enemies, manwards: "Let them be confounded and put to shame that seek after my soul: let them be turned back and brought to confusion that devise my hurt" (verse 4). Still another Psalm should be read in this connection, the 40th. That this Psalm is a Messianic one we know positively from verses 7, 8. verses 11-17 were, we believe, a part of His prayer in Gethsemane, and in it He asked, "Let them be ashamed and confounded together that seek after my soul to destroy it; let them be driven backward and put to shame that wish me evil" (verse 14). Thus was both Messianic prophecy fulfilled and prayer answered in this overwhelming of His enemies. "Then asked he them again, Whom seek ye?" (John 18:7). "This second question carries a mighty conviction, a mighty triumph with it over their conscience as if He had said, I have told you I am; and I have told it you to purpose, have I not? Have you not learned by this who I am, when your hearts are so terrified that you all fell down before Me! They had been taught by woeful experience who He was, when He blew them over, flung them down with His breath; and it might have turned to a blessed experience had God struck their hearts, as He did their outward man" (Mr. Thomas Goodwin). "And they said, Jesus of Nazareth" (John 18:7). They would not own Him as the Christ, but continued to speak of Him according to the name of His humiliation—"Jesus of Nazareth." How striking and how solemn is this after what has been before us in John 18:6—such an exhibition of Divine majesty and power, yet their hard hearts unmoved! No outward means will soften those who are resolved on wickedness. No miracles, however awesome, will melt men's enmity: nothing will suffice except God works directly by His Word and Spirit. Another signal proof of the desperate hardness of men's hearts in the case of those who were appointed to guard the Savior's sepulcher. While keeping their watch, God sent an earthquake, and then an angel to roll away the stone from the grave's mouth, and so awful were these things to the keepers that they "became as dead men." And yet, when they reported to their masters and were offered a bribe to say His disciples stole the body of Christ while they slept, they were willing parties to such a lie. O the hardness of the human heart: how "desperately wicked"! Even Divine judgments do not subdue it. In a coming day God will pour out on this earth the vials of His wrath, and what will be the response of men? This: "They gnawed their tongues for pain, and blasphemed the God of heaven because of their pains and their sores, and repented not of their deeds" (Rev. 16:10, 11). Nothing but a miracle of sovereign grace, the putting forth of omnipotent power, can

bring a blaspheming rebel out of darkness into God's marvelous light. Many a soul has been terrified, as were these men in the Garden, and yet continued in their course of alienation from God. "Jesus answered, I have told you that I am" (John 18:8). The dignity and calmness of our Lord are very noticeable here. Knowing full well all the insults and indignities He was about to suffer, He repeats His former declaration, "I am"; then He added, "if therefore ye seek me, let these go their way." "Christ was about to suffer for them, and therefore it was not just that they should suffer too; nor was it proper that they should suffer with Him, lest their sufferings should be thought to be a part of the price of redemption. These words then may be considered as an emblem and pledge of the acquittal and discharge of God's elect, through the surety-engagements and performances of Christ who drew near to God on their behalf, substituting Himself in their room, and undertaking for them in the counsel and covenant of peace, and laid Himself under obligation to pay their debts. Now, as there was a discharge of them from eternity, a non-imputation of sin to them, and a secret letting of them go upon the surety-engagements of Christ; so there was now an open discharge of them all upon the apprehension, sufferings, death and resurrection of Him" (Mr. John Gill). "If therefore ye seek me, let these go their way" (John 18:8). In John 13:1 we are told of Christ that "having loved his own which were in the world, he loved them unto the end." How blessedly this is seen here. Christ's first thought is not of Himself and what He was about to suffer, but of His disciples. It was the Shepherd protecting His sheep. "The tender sympathy and consideration of our great High Priest for His people came out very beautifully in this place, and would doubtless be remembered by the Eleven long afterwards. They would remember that the very last thought of their Master, before He was made a prisoner, was for them and their safety" (Bishop Ryle). And how the Savior's majesty here shines forth again! He was about to be taken prisoner, but He acts as no helpless captive, but rather like a king. "Let these go their way" was a command. Here am I, take Me; but I charge you not to meddle with them—touch not Mine anointed! He speaks as Conqueror, and such He was; for He had thrown them to the ground by a word from His lips. They were about to tie His hands, but before doing so He first tied theirs! "If therefore ye seek me, let these go their way." There is much for us to learn here. First, it supplied another proof of how easily He could have saved Himself had He so pleased: He that saved others could have saved Himself; He who had authority to command them to let these go, had authority to command them to let Himself go. Second, Christ only was to suffer: in the great work before Him none could follow—"And there shall be no man in the tabernacle of the congregation when he goeth in to make an atonement" (Lev. 16:17). He was to tread the winepress alone. Third, Christ had other work for them yet to do, and until that work was done their enemies should and must leave them alone. So long as God has something for His servants to do the Devil himself cannot seize them. "Go," said Christ, when warned that Herod would kill Him, "and tell that fox, Behold, I cast out demons, and I do cures today and tomorrow" (Luke 13:32). I will do those things in spite of him; he cannot prevent Me. Fourth, here we see grace, as in the previous verse Divine power, exercised by this One who so perfectly "declared the Father" (verse 18). Fifth, Christ would thus show His disciples how fully competent He was to preserve them amid the greatest dangers. We have no doubt but that these Roman soldiers and Jewish officers intended to seize the apostles as well—Mark 14:51, 52, strongly indicates this—but the Word of power went forth, "let these go their way," and they were safe. We doubt not that the coming day will make it manifest that this same word of power went forth many times, though we knew it not, when we were in the place of danger. "That the saying might be fulfilled, which he spake, Of them which thou gavest me have I lost none" (John 18:9). This "saying" refers not to an Old Testament prophecy but to that part of His prayer recorded in John 17:12—"While I was with them in the world, I kept them in thy name: those that thou gavest me I have kept, and none of them is lost." Though this has a peculiar respect unto the apostles, it is true of all God's elect, who are given to Christ, and none of them shall be lost, neither their souls nor their bodies; for

Christ's charge of them reaches to both: both were given to Him, both are redeemed by Him, and both shall be saved by Him with an everlasting salvation; He saves their souls from eternal death, and will raise their bodies from corporeal death; therefore, that His care of His disciples, with respect to their temporal lives as well as eternal happiness, might be seen, He made this agreement with those who came to take Him, or rather laid this injunction upon them, to dismiss them and which it is very remarkable they did, for they laid hands on none of them, even though Peter drew his sword and struck off the ear of one of them. Thus did Christ give another signal proof of His power over the spirits of men to restrain them; and thus did He again make manifest His Deity. "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). Peter exercised a zeal which was not regulated by knowledge: it was the self-confident energy of the flesh acting in unconsidered haste. It was the inevitable outcome of his failure to heed Christ's word, "Watch and pray, lest ye enter into temptation"—it is failure to pray which so often brings us into temptation! Had Peter observed the ways of his Master and heeded His words, he would have learned that carnal weapons had no place in the fight to which He has called him and us. Had he marked the wonderful grace which He had just displayed in providing for the safety of His own, he would have seen that this was no time for smiting with the sword. What a fearful warning is this to every Christian for the need of walking in the Spirit, that we fulfill not the lusts of the flesh! The flesh is still in the believer, and a lasting object-lesson of this is the humbling history of Peter—rash yet courageous when he should have been still; a few hours later, cowardly and base when he ought to have witnessed a good confession for Christ. But though Peter failed to act according to grace, the grace of God was signally manifested towards him. No doubt Peter struck with the intention of slaying Malchus—probably the first to lay hands on the Savior—but an unseen Power deflected the blow, and instead of the priest's servant being beheaded he lost only an ear, and that was permitted so that a further opportunity might be afforded the Lord Jesus of manifesting both His tender mercy and all-mighty power. We may add that the life of Malchus was safe while Christ was there, for none ever died in His presence! "Then Simon Peter having a sword drew it, and smote the high priest's servant, and cut off his right ear." The sequel to this is supplied by Luke: "and he touched his ear, and healed him" (Luke 22:51)! Very striking indeed is this; it rendered the more excuseless the act of those who arrested Him, aggravating their sin and deepening their guilt. Christ manifested both His power and His grace before they laid hands on Him. This act of healing Malchus' ear was the last miracle of the Savior before He laid down His life. First, He appealed to their consciences, now to their hearts; but once they had seized their prey He left them to their own evil lusts. "Then said Jesus unto Peter, Put up thy sword into the sheath" (John 18:11). This was a rebuke, though mildly administered. Peter had done his best to nullify his Master's orders, "Let these go their way." He had given great provocation to this company armed with swords and staves: he had acted wrongly in resisting authority, in having recourse to force, in imagining that the Son of God needed any assistance from him. "Put up thy sword into the sheath": the only "sword" which the Christian is ever justified in using is the Sword of the Spirit, the Word of God. "The cup which my Father hath given me, shall I not drink it?" (John 18:11). How blessedly this entire incident brings out the varied glories of Christ: perfect supremacy and perfect subjection. He declared Himself the great "I am," and His enemies fall to the ground; He gives the word of command, and His disciples depart unmolested. Now He bows before the will of the Father, and receives the awful cup of suffering and woe from His hand without a murmur. Never did such Perfections meet in any other; Sovereign, yet Servant; the Lion-Lamb! God's dispensations are frequently expressed as a cup poured out and given to men to drink. There are three "cups" spoken of in Scripture. First, there is the cup of salvation: "I will take the cup of salvation, and call upon the name of the Lord" (Ps. 116:13). Second, there is the cup of consolation: "Neither shall men tear themselves for them in mourning, to comfort them for the dead; neither shall men give them the cup of

consolation to drink for their father or for their mother" (Jer. 16:7). To this the Psalmist referred: "My cup runneth over" (Ps. 23:5). Our Lord Himself used the same figure, previously when He said, "Father, if it be possible let this cup pass from me" (Matthew 26:39). It was a dreadful cup which He was to drink of. Third is the cup of tribulation: Upon the wicked he shall rain snares, fire and brimstone, and an horrible tempest; this shall be the portion of their cup" (Ps. 11:6). So the prophet Jeremiah is bidden, "Take the wine cup of this fury at my hand, and cause all the nations, to whom I send thee, to drink it" (Jer. 25:15; cf. Psalm 75:8). "The cup which my Father hath given me, shall I not drink it?" "He doth not say, A necessity is laid upon Me to drink this cup. He doth not simply say, My Father hath commanded Me to drink it, but, 'shall I not drink it?' It is a speech that implies His spirit knew not how to do otherwise than obey His Father, such an instinct that He could not but choose to do it. Even just as Joseph said, 'how then can I do this great wickedness, and sin against God?' (Gen. 39:9), so Christ here, 'shall I not drink it?' It implies the highest willingness that can be" (Mr. Thomas Goodwin). "The cup which My Father hath given me, shall I not drink it?" What a lesson Christ here teaches us. The Serpent was about to bruise His heel; the Gentiles were about to mock and scourge Him; the Jews cry, Away with Him. But the Savior looks beyond all secondary causes direct to Him of whom and through whom and to whom were all things (Rom. 11:36). Peter's eyes were upon the human adversaries; but no, He saith to Peter, there is a higher Hand in it. Moreover, He did not say, "which the Judge of all the earth giveth me," but "my Father"—the One who dearly loveth Me! How this would sweeten our bitter cups if we would but receive them from the Father's hand! It is not until we see His hand in all things that the heart is made to rest in perfect peace. The following questions are to help the student prepare for our next lesson: — 1. What types and doctrinal truths are suggested by "bound," verse 12? 2. Why is verse 14 inserted here? 3. Why has the Holy Spirit given Peter so prominent a place? 4. Why of "His disciples and doctrine," verse 19? 5. Why did Christ say nothing about His disciples, verse 20? 6. Why did Christ say verse 21? 7. What is the meaning of verse 24?

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