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Today's miracle covers a broad spectrum of issues – both inspirational and practical. We may wonder at the treachery in the heart of Judas, yet, we may harbor the same in our own hearts and dismiss it as logic. We note, as well, that the disciples (especially Peter) had at least one sword. It may surprise some of us that Christ had counselled them to acquire a sword for protection against the rabid persecution that would envelope Jerusalem that night and the next day. ***“Then said he unto them, But now, he that hath a purse, let him take it, and likewise his scrip: and he that hath no sword, let him sell his garment, and buy one.”*** (Luke 22:36) God certainly justifies self-defense. The purpose of a sword is to inflict grievous injury on an enemy, and Christ has sanctioned its use as a defense. The same is true of the Constitutional guarantee of gun ownership. ***“And they said, Lord, behold, here are two swords. And he said unto them, It is enough.”*** (Luke 22:38)

The disciple who used the sword to defend Christ acted out of a righteous motive, but also out of a lack of understanding. It must happen that Jesus would suffer on the cross if He would satisfy His purpose of redemption of those who would believe. Sometimes, our motives may be pure but unwise, or based on an incomplete understanding of the Word of God. Solution? Search the Scriptures diligently day and night. Jesus knew that the servant of the High Priest actually did not know better than to obey the High Priest's orders. Jesus took pity even on those who were used as pawns against Him.

Jesus exposes the Jewish rulers for what they are – craven cowards who come under cover of darkness. I wrote a poem some years back to depict the scene:

Night in the Garden
By Bishop Jerry Ogles

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)

Out of the darkest Halls of Hell
Came the marchers with torches raised.
Into the Garden quiet and still
They wandered forlorn and crazed.

Up to the Sovereign Lord of Love
Their spears shining bright in the mist
With arrogant air and a hateful shove
They took Him who wouldn't resist.

Now to the head of Scribe and Priest
Was the Savior led that night,
And to Herod's Court and Pilate's Seat
Where Right gave way to the Night.

To the craggy heights of the Lonely Skull
They took Him and laid Him down
And into His Hands of Love they drove
Iron spikes with a terrible Sound!

On His Brow a thorny Crown He wore
And His flesh was torn and bruised.
His Heart of Grace grew cold and sore
As the Spirit of Life was loosed.

The world of woe a Hope has found
In the Promise made sure by His Death
And the Saints of God with Faith abound
In the Fields that their Lord has blessed!

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“And while he yet spake, behold a multitude, and he that was called Judas, one of the twelve, went before them, and drew near unto Jesus to kiss him.” The very one whom many considered the bosom friend of Jesus was the very one to lead the multitude that was bound, in their hearts, to destroy the Lord Jesus Christ. Such betrayal of a friend on a matter of such enormous importance must have grieved our Lord to His very soul even though He knew it would occur. Make no mistake – Judas was not forced to do evil. Evil came naturally to the man whom Christ had already labelled a devil early in His ministry: *“Have not I chosen you twelve, and one of you is a devil?”* (John 6:70) and near the end of His ministry Jesus said of Judas: *“The Son of man goeth as it is written of him: but woe unto that man by whom the Son of man is betrayed! it had been good for that man if he had not been born.”* (Matt 26:24) So ends the argument that Judas was an innocent victim of God’s predestinate will. It is not at all uncharacteristic of a traitor to betray with a kiss – it is part and parcel of his character. How many today draw near to Christ, not to follow and obey, but to betray through their luke-warm worship and irreverent singing.

*“But Jesus said unto him, **Judas, betrayest thou the Son of man with a kiss?**”*
How cheaply does the world sell its soul! Judas could have enjoyed all the benefits of a child of God had his heart not been filled with demons. But it was, and he didn't attain that son ship or those benefits. I think it of benefit to include the perfect description of the situation from God's Word: *“**Verily, verily, I say unto you, that one of you shall betray me.** 22 **Then the disciples looked one on another, doubting of whom he spake.** 23 **Now there was leaning on Jesus' bosom one of his disciples, whom Jesus loved.** 24 **Simon Peter therefore beckoned to him, that he should ask who it should be of whom he spake.** 25 **He then lying on Jesus' breast saith unto him, Lord, who is it?** 26 **Jesus answered, He it is, to whom I shall give a sop, when I have dipped it. And when he had dipped the sop, he gave it to Judas Iscariot, the son of Simon.** 27 **And after the sop Satan entered into him.** Then said Jesus unto him, **That thou doest, do quickly.** 28 **Now no man at the table knew for what intent he spake this unto him.** 29 **For some of them thought, because Judas had the bag, that Jesus had said unto him, Buy those things that we have need of against the feast; or, that he should give something to the poor.** 30 **He then having received the sop went immediately out: and it was night.”** (John 13:21-30 (KJV) To those who desire to justify the treachery of Judas, beware of ever attributing the works of Satan to God. Judas left the Upper Room into an eternal night. He never again witnessed a brilliant sunrise, and never shall.*

“When they which were about him saw what would follow, they said unto him, Lord, shall we smite with the sword? And one of them smote the servant of the high priest, and cut off his right ear.” Though Jesus had explained many times, the disciples did not comprehend the enormity of what was about to happen, and MUST happen, for our Salvation. They believed themselves in the right while they were, at the same time, opposing the Will of God. We often do that in our zeal to serve God. We start with the best of intentions in building a church fellowship. Then, we wish to gain credibility by building a respectable church building. But the “other denomination down the road” has built a larger building that puts ours to shame. We undertake to build an even more imposing structure. Laden with debt and the concerns of maintaining such an edifice, our hearts forget the Lord for whom we first began our labors. We become debtors to the ‘church building’ built – not by God – but by hands.

*“And Jesus answered and said, **Suffer ye thus far. And he touched his ear, and healed him.**”* “Allow this to happen, Peter. It is necessary that I be lifted up just as was the brazen serpent in the Wilderness.” *“Then said Jesus unto Peter, **Put up thy sword into the sheath: the cup which my Father hath given me, shall I not drink it?**”* (John 18:11)

It must be pointed out here that Jesus was born in an enclave for the feeding of beasts of the field – poor and lowly. He was ALONE in the Wilderness into which the Spirit had driven Him at the early start of His ministry. He was often ALONE on the mountain where He resorted for prayer and fellowship with the Father. He had now been ALONE in the Garden at prayer while His most trusted disciples slept on. He would now suffer the humiliation of Rome and Judea ALONE, and would die on the cross ALONE!

It is a horror to contemplate that DARK NIGHT into which Judas had walked, and the smothering darkness in the Garden where the traitor and his cohorts had wandered with such ill intent: *“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? When I was daily with you in the temple, ye stretched forth no hands against me: but this is your hour, and the power of darkness.**”* Jesus had done

all labors in the brightness of the sun, yet these 'recalcitrants' come under cover of the midnight darkness. Truly, darkness is the hour and nature of all evil doers. Jesus is the Light of the World, and Light is a force that requires generation. But darkness is no force at all. It is only the abject absence of Light. The Light of the Sun of Righteousness can dispel darkness from all quarters, but even the candlelight of a single Christian can dispel darkness that crowds in on their darkened room. The One who breathed the breath of life into us can heal our sinful hearts, restore the Light and vision of our souls, and can even restores ears that have overgrown with the sounds and lies of the world.

Do you know Him?