

Malchus, Servant
Luke 22:47-53

My name is Malchus. My name if you are wondering means 'King.' But I am not a king. Actually I serve the High Priest, Caiaphas. The gospels refer to me as “salve of the High Priest.” So you probably get the image that I had been bound in chains, brought in to do menial work. That was not the case for me. I was a slave meaning I was bound to my master serving him and carrying duties and always at his beckon call as his personal attendant. I was not free to just walk away anytime I felt. But I was always near to him, living in the same house, carrying out his orders. As Caiaphas' personal attendant, he had my ear. He could confide in me and I would listen. Sometimes I was sent out to get the pulse of Jerusalem. What were the people saying about their High Priest? I would listen for those type of things and report back. So life was really pretty comfortable.

Being a slave to Caiaphas was how I came to encounter Jesus. Being close to the High Priest I had heard all about Jesus and the stir he was causing. My master was really concerned even to the point of being tormented over Jesus. As I understand it Jesus had quite a following. Jesus was challenging our beliefs and understanding about Yahweh, and what it meant to live as His people. He reinterpreted our Law. He caused havoc in our Temple. He was performing miracles, and many were wondering if Jesus was truly the long, hoped for, and promised Messiah who would redeem Israel. And according to my master Jesus was a force to be reckoned with. I must say I agreed with Caiaphas, after all I was subject to him.

Yes, my master and the other Jewish leaders were horrified and considered Jesus a threat to their existence. Jesus would ruin everything that they had set up and He put us at serious odds with the Romans who were in charge. It is easy to see why my master wanted Jesus eliminated. During the time of Passover Jesus came to the Holy city of Jerusalem. The people welcomed Him as a conquering king. They laid palm branches in His path and shouting Hosanna! It was frightening to see the power He was gaining. That week Jesus was even teaching in our temple, arguing with our leaders and our teachers.

Jesus had to be stopped, but how? When would a good time be to arrest Him? In the Temple? No, that would cause a riot because Jesus was popular with the common people. But as luck would have it, one of Jesus' followers came to our leaders and offered to betray Him. The betrayer's name was Judas. Judas asked what we could give him if he made it possible to have Jesus arrested. The price was agreed upon and Judas said Thursday night late in the Garden of Gethsemane. The one I kiss is your man.

So a contingent of soldiers and officers we called up and Caiaphas sent to go along as His representative. It was unworthy of the High Priest to be directly part of the coming scene. So that is how I was there and would later come face to face with Jesus.

I remember that Thursday night. Jerusalem was jammed packed with visitors and pilgrims for the great Passover Festival. Many had heard Jesus teach and there was quite a buzz about Him. Thursday night arrived and it was time to act.

Late that night the contingent was assembled. And it no small contingent either. John's gospel tells us it was battalion of 600 men armed with torches to light the way, swords, and clubs. That was quite a force. You would thought we are going out to oppose another army. I wonder who we were going to fight. I went with them as Caiaphas' representative since this kind of task was beneath a High Priest.

When we arrived at the Garden of Gethsemane, we found a small group of men in olive grove. Right

then there I know we do not have a problem taking Jesus in. What is this small band of Jesus' followers against the army that surround them? But we could make out which one was Jesus. Judas would point Him out in fact Jesus went straight to Jesus and kissed him. Jesus seemed like he knew what was going to happen next, yet He looked so calm. I heard Jesus speak to Judas, "You betray me with a kiss."

Then things began to get a little confusing. One of Jesus's followers pulled out a sword and began to swing it and it was coming toward me. I moved out of the way, but it caught my ear slicing it off. Oh the pain and blood. As I held my ear Jesus spoke, "Enough of this! At that moment Jesus reached out to me and touched my right ear and all the blood stopped and the pain went away immediately.

Then Jesus said, "Put your weapons away. Then he looked at his cohort and our leaders He said, "You have come after me like I am robber with swords and clubs. When I was with you during day after day in the temple you never laid a hand on me. But this is your hour. And the power of darkness." At that moment Jesus went with us without any further incident.

But I have to wonder what had just happened. I was the servant of the High Priest, and was an enemy of Jesus. Still this Jesus reached out to me and healed me. Oh, I had heard of all the miracles He was doing with the people and right here as one of His enemies I had experienced a miracle on myself. Who is this Jesus?

One more thing. When we entered the olive grove where Jesus with our band of soldiers and religious leaders, after the kiss of betrayal, Jesus turned and asked, "Who are you looking for?" One from our group said, "Jesus of Nazareth." Jesus replied, "I AM he." We all fell back with went to the ground. When Jesus said identified himself, he used the name that the Lord God had given Moses at the burning bush. And our reaction of falling back and lowering ourselves to the ground in reverent adoration as if we were in God's presence? Then Jesus reaching out to me, an enemy and restoring my ear. Who is He? One who can control a whole battalion of soldiers. One who allowed Himself to be arrested. One who reached out to me, an enemy to heal me.

Could He really be our long hoped for and Promised Messiah? I servant Caiaphas, the High Priest, but could this Jesus the true and great High Priest sent from God? Have I been serving the wrong High Priest? Could this Jesus be one worth following and serving through the rest of my life.