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BIBLE ADVENTURES SCRIPT:

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Jesus Betrayed - Arrested - Forsaken.

Welcome to Bible Adventures. Help for today. Hope for tomorrow. Jesus is Lord of all.

In the Garden of Gethsemane, after Jesus had settled the matter with His Father about what was going to happen, He returned to His three sleeping disciples Peter, James and John. After the hours of agony Jesus experienced in the Garden, Jesus was left serene and calm. He took the tired men back to the other disciples. They all then saw that in the distance, a great crowd of Temple priests and guards, Roman soldiers as well as Judas were coming towards them. It was in the dead of night and some were carrying torches and clubs.

During the last year of Jesus' ministry, the hostility of the Jewish leaders towards Him had increased greatly. They were determined to get rid of Jesus by having Him killed. For some time, the leaders had been trying many ways to get Jesus to do or say something worthy of the death penalty. At the Feast of Tabernacles six months earlier, they'd sent some of the Temple guard to arrest Jesus while He was teaching in the Temple. The guards returned without Him, saying to the chief priests that no one spoke as Jesus did.

This final attempt to capture Jesus through Judas' betrayal was not to go wrong. The chief priests and rulers couldn't count on their own countrymen not cave in again. To prevent this and at the same time, deal with any resistance by Jesus' followers, the Jewish leaders had prevailed on Pilate to provide more than 100 soldiers under a chief captain to follow the Temple guards as reserves.

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Throughout the Old Testament, the promise of a Messiah was clearly given. This prophecy was made hundreds and sometimes thousands of years before Jesus Christ was born; He had been the only person to walk this earth and fulfil them. From Genesis to Malachi in the Old Testament of the Bible, there are over 300 prophecies detailing the coming of the Anointed One. Prophecies of where the Messiah would be born and who would be His ancestors are detailed, yet also the terrible things that would happen to Him regarding His betrayal, arrest and illegal trial.

Although King David wrote Psalm 22, a 1,000 years before Jesus' birth, some of the verses are very clear about Jesus' crucifixion. Isaiah, Chapter 53, is the messianic prophecy known as 'The Suffering Servant' and it tells of the death of the Messiah for the sins of His people.

Judas Iscariot, Jesus' betrayer, had followed Jesus for three years as a disciple. He had finally decided that if Jesus wasn't going to declare Himself as King of the Jews and set up a kingdom, there was no point in following Him any longer. In Judas' thinking, Jesus didn't act like a king or gather people around Him to serve Him. So Judas decided to go to the chief priests and agree to betray his Master for money. In Psalm 41, it says: "Even my best friend, the one I trusted most, the one who shared my food, has turned against me." For Judas to identify Jesus by kissing Him in the semi-darkness of the Garden was the height of pretence. A kiss was a sign of affection, loyalty and love. Judas didn't love Jesus; his kiss was a sign that he mocked Him instead.

The Roman Empire comprised of many nations that they had conquered. For the most part, the Romans let each nation continue to manage their own internal affairs unless they proved themselves to be incapable of doing so. The Jewish rulers and leaders claimed that they would be considered by the Romans to have lost control of the Jews if they didn't stop the crowds of people flocking to hear Jesus. Not once is it recorded that the Roman soldiers questioned Jesus as to His peaceful mass rallies or check to see that He was speaking against Rome. The soldiers were free to stand and listen to what Jesus said and decide for themselves if He was trying to create a kingdom for Himself.

Just before the Lord Jesus and His 11 disciples left the upper room after The Lord's Supper, Jesus told them that they would need a sword – meaning a spiritual sword for all the spiritual battles that they soon would be fighting. But the disciples failed to understand what Jesus meant and thought instead that He was going to overcome His enemies using ordinary weapons. They showed Jesus the two swords they had with them. Jesus was disappointed that the meaning He intended had been lost and so closed the subject.

As the arrest warrant for Jesus was a Jewish one, the temple officers were probably in front of the crowd while the soldiers who supported them as reserves be further back in the procession. On Jesus announcing to the Jewish leaders that yes indeed, He was the one they were looking for, what the chief priests had feared actually happened. There was something in the words or bearing of Jesus that awed the temple officers. They were panic-stricken and fell backward onto the ground. On their rallying, impetuous Peter drew his sword and cut off the ear of Malchus, the servant of the high priest.

On this evidence of resistance, the Roman captain and soldiers came forward and with the assistance of the Jewish officers, bound Jesus. Jesus had no word of blame or censure for the Roman officers or soldiers who followed their sworn duty to support the civil authorities. His sharp words of reproach, however, were spoken to the chief priests, elders and captains of the temple for not having attempted His arrest while He was teaching openly in the temple. The plan of these chief priests of having Jesus arrested at night was to avoid any supporters of Jesus from being there. Under Jewish law, it was illegal and improper for the judges on a case to accompany the officers of law and take part themselves in an arrest.

Even in this trying hour, the concern of Jesus was more for others than for Himself. He healed the ear of Malchus and He requested that His disciples might be allowed to leave. The disciples were panic-stricken, probably on account of the vigorous action by the officers and soldiers after Peter's assault with his sword. The disciples all left Jesus and fled. In Matthew, Chapter 26, Jesus had predicted to His disciples they would all desert Him and just 25 verses later, it's recorded that they did.

After all the wonderful miracles Jesus had done for people in need, it was sad that Jesus now suffered the worst time of His earthly life alone, apart from His Father. Yet such was one of the greatest proofs that Jesus rose from the dead. If Jesus hadn't risen from the dead, no one would have ever heard from these disciples again. Christianity would have ended right there.

In the following 8 to 9 hours after His arrest, Jesus went through six illegal trials – three religious and three civil. Each one was illegal because they all broke different sections of Jewish law. Jesus was first taken to the house of Annas the High Priest. Annas had been the high priest from AD6 to AD15 and yet was so called 'high priest' for the rest of his life. He was removed by the Romans but he still controlled everything behind the scenes. Five of his sons succeeded him as high priest. He was father-in-law of Caiaphas - the ruling high priest who was in office at the time of Jesus' ministry. So it wasn't surprising that the Temple guards took Jesus to Annas' house first. He really was the boss!

Annas had a particular grudge against Jesus. Twice Jesus had cleansed the Temple of the money changers and sellers of animals for sacrifice. This meant a loss of revenue for Annas. Jesus said that the Temple priests were thieves because they charged excessively large profits on items for sale in the Temple. Annas and Caiaphas had held many meetings involving the ruling Jewish council called the Sanhedrin. They'd already predetermined that Jesus should die. They just didn't have any charges against Him.

Most of the judges from the Sanhedrin were legally disqualified to try Jesus. They were known enemies of Jesus. Jewish law required that they disqualify themselves so that He could be tried by impartial judges.

At the first trial before Annas, Annas wanted to know Jesus' intentions. This first trial was illegal because Jesus was interrogated without being charged with anything and Annas had no right to interrogate Him anyway. It was against the law to question someone at night, and it was also unlawful to strike the prisoner while he was being interrogated.

The next trial was before Caiaphas at his palace. He was the current High Priest and Annas' son-in-law. Caiaphas sought to find some kind of charge that they could bring against Jesus. In other words, "What can we find wrong with Him?" No one had brought a formal charge of any crime prior to His arrest.

This trial was illegal for a variety of reasons. It was also against the law to have false witnesses, plus it too was held at night. The law also stated that no trial could be held in any place other than the Council Chamber in the temple, and the High Priest was like a judge; they were **not** to accuse the one on trial. The judge was 'supposed'" to be fair, and we know that Caiaphas was anything but! There was no justice for Jesus from the rulers of Israel. Yet He suffered all these humiliations, insults and beatings for our sake.

In Isaiah, Chapter 53, Verse 5, it says of the Lord Jesus Christ: “He was wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised for our iniquities (or sin); the chastisement for our peace was upon Him, and by His stripes we are healed.”

God our Heavenly Father loved us so very much that He sent His one and only Son from heaven, the Lord Jesus Christ, to pay the penalty for our sins that we could never pay for ourselves. Are we thankful for this? We certainly should be! If you’ve never asked the Lord Jesus to forgive your sin or have honoured Him as the greatest man who ever lived, now’s the time to do so. Jesus truly showed His love, and how great it is, for each one of us.

The drama is from The Bible In Living Sound.

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