

Mark 14:44

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And he that betrayed him had given them a token, saying,
Whomsoever I shall kiss, that same is he; take him, and lead
him away safely.

Analysis

And he that betrayed him had given them a token (σύσσημον, syssēmon)—a prearranged signal, military term suggesting coordination. **Saying, Whomsoever I shall kiss, that same is he**—the kiss (φιλήσω, philēsō) was the customary disciple-to-rabbi greeting, making Judas's betrayal use of it especially heinous. He weaponizes affection's gesture for arrest's purpose.

Take him, and lead him away safely (ἀσφαλῶς, asphalōs, "securely")—Judas ensures effective capture, perhaps fearing supernatural escape or crowd rescue. The adverb suggests both "safely" (protecting the guards) and "securely" (preventing escape). Judas's thoroughness in betrayal—identifying, securing, ensuring capture—reveals how completely he'd turned from discipleship to treachery. Yet even this betrayal serves God's redemptive purpose, fulfilling Psalm 41:9: "Mine own familiar friend, in whom I trusted, which did eat of my bread, hath lifted up his heel against me."

Historical Context

The kiss greeting (Hebrew נֶשִׁיָּקָה, neshiqah; Greek φίλημα, philēma) expressed respect and affection in ancient Near Eastern culture. Rabbis were customarily greeted thus by disciples. Judas's perversion of this sacred gesture parallels Joab's kiss-and-murder of Amasa (2 Samuel 20:9-10). First-century readers would recognize the cultural horror of betrayal hidden in affection's guise.

Related Passages

Romans 2:1 — Judging others

Matthew 25:31 — Final judgment

Study Questions

1. How does Judas's use of the kiss warn against religious gestures divorced from genuine heart-loyalty to Christ?
2. What does Judas's careful planning ("token," "securely") teach about how sin progresses from initial compromise to calculated evil?
3. In what ways might you be tempted to display external devotion ("kissing Jesus") while betraying Him through compromise or disobedience?

Interlinear Text

δεδώκει	δὲ	ὁ	παραδιδούς	αὐτὸν	σύσσημον	αὐτὸν
had given	And	G3588	he that betrayed	him	a token	him
G1325	G1161		G3860	G846	G4953	G846
λέγων,	Ὅν	ἂν	φιλήσω	αὐτὸν	ἐστὶν	κρατήσατε
saying	Whomsoever	G302	I shall kiss	him	is he	take
G3004	G3739		G5368	G846	G2076	G2902
αὐτὸν	καὶ	ἀπαγάγετε	ἀσφαλῶς			
him	and	lead him away	safely			
G846	G2532	G520	G806			

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