

Matthew 26:48

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Now he that betrayed him gave them a sign, saying,
Whomsoever I shall kiss, that same is he: hold him fast.

Analysis

Now he that betrayed him gave them a sign, saying, Whomsoever I shall kiss, that same is he: hold him fast (ό δὲ παραδιδοὺς αὐτὸν ἔδωκεν αὐτοῖς σημεῖον λέγων, Ὁν ἀν φιλήσω αὐτός ἐστιν· κρατήσατε αὐτόν)—The participle παραδιδούς ('the one betraying') identifies Judas by his deed. He gave a σημεῖον (sign, signal) to identify Jesus—ironic, since σημεῖον usually means miraculous sign, but this 'sign' is treachery. The kiss (φιλέω, phileō, kiss of affection/friendship) as betrayal signal perverts intimacy into weapon. The imperative κρατέω ('seize, hold fast') shows Judas leading the operation.

The kiss-betrayal is supremely ironic: greeting of honor becomes mark of death; gesture of love becomes signal for arrest; sign of fellowship identifies the victim. Judas weaponized intimacy. This fulfills Jesus's prophecy (26:25) and demonstrates hell's depravity—sin corrupts even sacred gestures. Peter later wrote, 'Greet one another with a kiss of love' (1 Peter 5:14)—reclaiming what Judas perverted. Christian affection must be genuine, not manipulative.

Historical Context

Kissing was customary Near Eastern greeting between friends, family, and disciples toward teachers (rabbis). The kiss signaled respect and affection. In darkness (despite full moon), the arresting party needed positive identification—Jesus wasn't famous enough for instant recognition by all present. Judas's intimate knowledge (frequent kisses as greeting) made his betrayal more heinous. The 'hold

him fast' suggests they feared He might escape supernaturally (they knew of His miracles), showing even His enemies recognized His power.

Related Passages

Colossians 1:16 — All things created through Christ

Genesis 1:1 — Creation of heavens and earth

Study Questions

1. How does Judas's weaponizing of intimacy warn against using religious gestures (prayer, fellowship, worship) for manipulative purposes?
2. In what ways do you kiss Christ with your lips while betraying Him with your life (Matthew 15:8)?

Interlinear Text

ο	δὲ	παραδιδοὺς	αὐτόν	ἔδωκεν	αὐτόν	σημεῖον	λέγων,
G3588	Now	he that betrayed	he	gave	he	a sign	saying
G1161		G3860	G846	G1325	G846	G4592	G3004
὾ν	ἄν	φιλήσω	αὐτόν	ἐστιν	κρατήσατε	αὐτόν	
Whomsoever	G302	I shall kiss	he	is	fast	he	
G3739		G5368	G846	G2076	G2902	G846	

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