

Matthew 26:49

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And forthwith he came to Jesus, and said, Hail, master; and kissed him.

Analysis

And forthwith he came to Jesus, and said, Hail, master; and kissed him (καὶ εὐθέως προσελθὼν τῷ Ἰησοῦ εἶπεν, Χαῖρε, ῥαββί, καὶ κατεφίλησεν αὐτόν)—The adverb εὐθέως (immediately, straightway) shows no hesitation—Judas executed his treachery without pause. The greeting χαῖρε (hail, rejoice) and title ῥαββί (rabbi, my teacher) sound respectful, but the context exposes them as mockery. The verb καταφιλέω (kataphileō, intensive form of φιλέω) means 'to kiss fervently, to kiss repeatedly'—Judas's kiss was effusive, perhaps to ensure unmistakable identification or to mask his guilt with excessive display.

The contrast is stark: Judas called Jesus 'Rabbi' while engineering His death; kissed Him warmly while selling Him to murderers. This is ultimate hypocrisy—religious language and gestures masking betrayal. Jesus's response (v. 50) addresses him as 'friend' (ἐταῖρε), exposing the sham. Judas represents all who profess Christ while serving mammon (6:24), who cry 'Lord, Lord' while practicing lawlessness (7:21-23). External piety without internal loyalty damns.

Historical Context

The intensive κατεφίλησεν suggests Judas kissed Jesus multiple times or fervently—possibly over-acting to convince the arresting party or to quiet his conscience. The term 'Rabbi' was honorific title for teachers, showing apparent respect. Some suggest Judas was giving Jesus one last chance to establish an earthly kingdom by forcing confrontation. More likely, he simply loved money (John 12:6) and resented

Jesus's path toward suffering rather than earthly glory. The thirty pieces of silver (26:15) was blood money that bought eternal infamy.

Related Passages

Ephesians 2:8 — Salvation by grace through faith

Romans 10:9 — Confession and belief for salvation

Revelation 20:12 — Judgment according to deeds

Matthew 25:31 — Final judgment

Study Questions

1. How does Judas's fervent kiss while betraying warn against mistaking emotional religious experiences for genuine devotion?
2. In what areas of your life do you call Jesus 'Master' with your mouth while serving other gods with your heart?

Interlinear Text

καὶ	εὐθέως	προσελθὼν	τῷ	Ἰησοῦ	εἶπεν	Χαῖρε	ῥαββί
And	forthwith	he came	G3588	to Jesus	and said	Hail	master
G2532	G2112	G4334		G2424	G2036	G5463	G4461

καὶ	κατεφίλησεν	αὐτόν
And	kissed	him
G2532	G2705	G846

Additional Cross-References

Matthew 26:25 (Parallel theme): Then Judas, which betrayed him, answered and said, Master, is it I? He said unto him, Thou hast said.

