

e  
Acts 7:19  
a  
6:20;  
Nm 26:59  
b  
Acts 7:20;  
Heb 11:23



### What is Real Courage?

Who can believe the bravery and creativity of the **midwives** to the Hebrews? They not only defy the orders of the king but they outwit him as well. Surely they were aware that a man of the time and of his rank would never have witnessed a birth and could not possibly dispute their description of robust (and speedy) births. They make their own courage seem almost beyond their control.

What's the reason for their disobedience to the king? They "feared God" (1:17, 21). And in spite of the possibility that they were not themselves Hebrew, their allegiance was foremost to God and to the ways of God, not to Pharaoh and his ways. Their courage was a natural consequence of knowing God. Their obedience to God, the author of life, prevented them from participating in bringing about death.

Shiprah and Puah, appearing here before the Mosaic covenant has been made, nonetheless live the covenant values of mercy, steadfast love, and justice. They embody and prefigure covenant living whether they know it or not. And they remind even modern readers that a basic reverence for God results in good fruit.



There is a midwife in each of us. She has been sent to us so that we might assist in giving birth. We are called to speak out against any injustice that endangers or desires to destroy the life that is meant to emerge. Are you willing to accept your role as a midwife?

birthstool:\* if it is a boy, kill him; but if it is a girl, she may live." <sup>17</sup>The midwives, however, feared God; they did not do as the king of Egypt had ordered them, but let the boys live. <sup>18</sup>So the king of Egypt summoned the midwives and asked them, "Why have you done this, allowing the boys to live?" <sup>19</sup>The midwives answered Pharaoh, "The Hebrew women are not like the Egyptian women. They are robust and give birth before the midwife arrives." <sup>20</sup>Therefore God dealt well with the midwives; and the people multiplied and grew very numerous. <sup>21</sup>And because the midwives feared God, God built up families for them. <sup>22</sup>Pharaoh then commanded all his people, "Throw into the Nile every boy that is born,<sup>e</sup> but you may let all the girls live."

### Birth and Adoption of Moses

**2**<sup>1</sup>Now a man\* of the house of Levi married a Levite woman,<sup>a</sup> and the woman conceived and bore a son. Seeing what a fine child he was, she hid him for three months.<sup>b</sup> <sup>3</sup>But when she could no longer hide him, she took a papyrus basket,<sup>c</sup> daubed it with bitumen and pitch, and putting the child in it, placed it among the reeds on the bank of the Nile. <sup>4</sup>His sister stationed herself at a distance to find out what would happen to him.

<sup>5</sup>Then Pharaoh's daughter came down to bathe at the Nile, while her attendants walked along the bank of the Nile. Noticing the basket among the reeds, she sent her handmaid to fetch it. <sup>6</sup>On opening it, she looked, and there was a baby boy crying! She

**2:1 Now a man:** the chapter begins abruptly, without names for the man or woman (in contrast to the midwives of Exodus 1:15), who in Exodus 6:20 are identified as Amram and Jochebed.

**2:3 Basket:** the same Hebrew word is used in Genesis 6:14 and throughout the flood narrative for Noah's ark, but nowhere else in the Bible. Here, however, the "ark" or "chest" was made of papyrus

stalks. Presumably the allusion to Genesis is intentional. Just as Noah and his family were preserved safe from the threatening waters of the flood in the ark he built, so now Moses is preserved from the threatening waters of the Nile in the ark prepared by his mother.

**Among the reeds:** the Hebrew noun for "reed" is overwhelmingly used in the phrase "Reed Sea," traditionally translated "Red Sea."

was moved with pity for him and said, "It is one of the Hebrews' children." <sup>7</sup>Then his sister asked Pharaoh's daughter, "Shall I go and summon a Hebrew woman to nurse the child for you?" <sup>8</sup>Pharaoh's daughter answered her, "Go." So the young woman went and called the child's own mother. <sup>9</sup>Pharaoh's daughter said to her, "Take this child and nurse him for me, and I will pay your wages."<sup>\*</sup> So the woman took the child and nursed him. <sup>10</sup>When the child grew,<sup>\*</sup> she brought him to Pharaoh's daughter, and he became her son.<sup>c</sup> She named him Moses; for she said, "I drew him out of the water."

### Moses' Flight to Midian

<sup>11d</sup>On one occasion, after Moses had grown up,<sup>\*</sup> when he had gone out to his kinsmen and witnessed their forced labor, he saw an Egyptian striking a Hebrew, one of his own kinsmen. <sup>12</sup>Looking about and seeing no one, he struck down the Egyptian and hid him in the sand. <sup>13</sup>The next day he went out again, and now two Hebrews were fighting! So he asked the culprit, "Why are you striking your companion?" <sup>14</sup>But he replied, "Who has appointed you ruler and judge over us? Are you thinking of killing me as you killed the Egyptian?" Then Moses became afraid and thought, "The affair must certainly be known." <sup>15</sup>When Pharaoh heard of the affair, he sought to kill Moses. But Moses fled from Pharaoh and went to the land of Midian.<sup>\*</sup> There he sat down by a well.

### Who Are These People?

Hebrews	A name for the Israelite people most often used by strangers or foreigners (see Ex 1:16, 19; 2:6); "Hebrew" also refers to the language of most of the OT
Israelites	Descendants of Jacob, whose other name is Israel (Gn 32:29); the common term for God's people until the Babylonian exile in the sixth century B.C.
Jews	People of Judah; the common term for the descendants of Jacob during and after the Babylonian exile. The tribe and territory of Judah were all that remained of ancient Israel after the Assyrian deportation of the northern tribes in 722 B.C.
Israelis	Citizens of modern Israel

**2:9 And I will pay your wages:** the idea that the child's mother will be paid for nursing her child—and by Pharaoh's own daughter—heightens the narrative's irony.

**2:10 When the child grew:** while v. 9 implies that the boy's mother actually has nothing to do with that Hebrew verb, but is probably derived from Egyptian "beloved" or "has been born," preserved in such Pharaonic names as Thutmose (meaning approximately "Beloved of the god Thoth" or "The god Thoth is born, has given birth to [the child]"). The original meaning of Moses' name

was no longer remembered (if it was Egyptian, it may have contained an Egyptian divine element as well, perhaps the name of the Nile god Hapi), and a secondary explanation was derived from this story (or gave rise to it, if the drawing from the water of the Nile was intended to foreshadow the Israelites' escape from Egypt through the Red Sea).

**2:11 After Moses had grown up:** cf. Exodus 7:7, where Moses is said to be eighty years old at the time of his mission to Pharaoh. **Striking:** probably in the sense of "flogging"; in v. 12, however, the same verb is used in the sense of "killing."

**2:15 Land of Midian:** the territory under the control of a confederation made up, according to Numbers 31:8, of five Midianite tribes. According to Genesis 25:1-2, Midian was a son of Abraham by Keturah. In view of the extreme hostility in later periods between Israel and Midian (cf. Nm 31; Jgs 6-8), the relationship is striking, as is the account here in Exodus of good relations between Moses and no less than a Midianite priest.

c  
Acts 7:21;  
Heb 11:24  
d  
Acts 7:23-28  
e  
Acts 7:29;  
Heb 11:27

a  
3:2, 12; Mt 1:5  
b  
1:22



### Boaz, Compassionate Redeemer

On the surface of things, Boaz appears on the scene as a just and fair landowner. He upholds the gleaning laws, making sure that there is plenty left in the fields for those who have nothing, and he goes the extra step to assure that Ruth the foreigner has access to water throughout the day and access to his own meal. He even blesses her and asks the LORD to reward her for her fidelity and care of Naomi.

Beneath the surface of the story line, Boaz is much more. He is clearly painted as one like God—filled with compassion for the poor, even acting as redeemer (*go'el*). Technically, one who is next of kin (2:20) can redeem or recover what belonged to a deceased male relative.

More symbolically, Boaz enters the picture in much the same way as God entered the scene in Egypt on behalf of the slaves. Just as God witnessed their affliction, heard their cry, and came down to rescue Israel (Ex 3:7-8), Boaz witnesses, hears, and rescues Ruth (and Naomi).

### The Meeting

**2**<sup>1</sup>Naomi had a powerful relative named Boaz,<sup>a</sup> through the clan of her husband Elimelech. <sup>2</sup>Ruth the Moabite said to Naomi, “I would like to go and glean grain in the field of anyone who will allow me.” Naomi said to her, “Go ahead, my daughter.” <sup>3</sup>So she went. The field she entered to glean after the harvesters happened to be the section belonging to Boaz, of the clan of Elimelech. <sup>4</sup>Soon, along came Boaz from Bethlehem and said to the harvesters, “The LORD be with you,” and they replied, “The LORD bless you.” <sup>5</sup>Boaz asked the young man overseeing his harvesters, “Whose young woman is this?” <sup>6</sup>The young man overseeing the harvesters answered, “She is the young Moabite who came back with Naomi from the plateau of Moab.” <sup>7</sup>She said, “I would like to gather the gleanings into sheaves after the harvesters.” Ever since she came this morning she has remained here until now, with scarcely a moment’s rest.”



Gleaning is a form of distributive justice, that is, the distribution of social and economic resources for the common good of all. *Quadragesimo Anno* discusses the challenges of distributive justice within an industrial context: “But not every distribution among human beings of property and wealth is of a character to attain either completely or to a satisfactory degree of perfection the end which God intends. Therefore, the riches that economic social developments constantly increase ought to be so distributed among individual persons and classes that the common advantage of all, which Leo XIII had praised, will be safeguarded; in other words, that the common good of all society will be kept inviolate. By this law of social justice, one class is forbidden to exclude the other from sharing in the benefits” (57). The social nature of the human person, the common good, and access to what meets basic human needs makes a just distribution of economic, social, and agricultural goods a fundamental challenge in today’s world.

**2:1** Kinship ties and responsibilities now become very important. Boaz is introduced as one of a group surrounding Naomi through her husband’s kin who are expected to extend care. The particular term used here (*moda*; “relative”) is picked up in Ruth 3:2; otherwise, most of the terminology about this responsibility to care will use the vocabulary of redeeming (*go'el*, “redeemer”).

**2:2** Israelite custom made provision for the poor, the widow, the stranger and the orphan to gather what was left behind by the harvesters, and instructed farmers not to cut to the edges of their fields, for the sake of these marginalized; Leviticus 19:9-10; 23:22; Deuteronomy 24:19-22.

**2:4** The story brings Boaz upon the scene quickly, but he moves among his workers with the grace of a man of prominence, greeting them and being received with courtesy. The Hebrew blessing formulas used are frequent in Jewish and Christian liturgies.

**2:7** The verse is somewhat garbled, but the points are clear that Ruth has been appropriately deferential in seeking permission to glean, and has worked steadily since arriving. Or perhaps she has waited patiently until Boaz arrives to gain permission.

<sup>8</sup>Boaz then spoke to Ruth, “Listen, my daughter. Do not go to glean in anyone else’s field; you are not to leave here. Stay here with my young women. <sup>9</sup>Watch to see which field is to be harvested, and follow them. Have I not commanded the young men to do you no harm? When you are thirsty, go and drink from the vessels the young people have filled.” <sup>10</sup>Casting herself prostrate upon the ground, she said to him, “Why should I, a foreigner, be favored with your attention?” <sup>11</sup>Boaz answered her: “I have had a complete account of what you have done for your mother-in-law after your husband’s death; you have left your father and your mother and the land of your birth, and have come to a people whom previously you did not know.

<sup>12</sup>May the LORD reward what you have done! May you receive a full reward from the LORD, the God of Israel, under whose wings you have come for refuge.” <sup>13</sup>She said, “May I prove worthy of your favor, my lord. You have comforted me. You have spoken to the heart of your servant\*—and I am not even one of your servants!” <sup>14</sup>At mealtime Boaz said to her, “Come here and have something to eat; dip your bread in the sauce.” Then as she sat near the harvesters, he handed her some roasted grain and she ate her fill and had some left over. <sup>15</sup>As she rose to glean, Boaz instructed his young people: “Let her glean among the sheaves themselves without scolding her, <sup>16</sup>and even drop some handfuls and leave them for her to glean; do not rebuke her.”

<sup>17</sup>She gleaned in the field until evening, and when she beat out what she had gleaned it came to about an ephah\* of barley, <sup>18</sup>which she took into the town and showed to her mother-in-law. Next she brought out what she had left over from the meal and gave it to her. <sup>19</sup>So her mother-in-law said to her, “Where did you glean today? Where did you go to work? May the one who took notice of you be blessed!” Then she told her mother-in-law with whom she had worked. “The man at whose place I worked today is named Boaz,” she said. <sup>20</sup>“May he be blessed by the LORD, who never fails to show kindness to the living and to the dead,” Naomi exclaimed to her daughter-in-law. She continued, “This man is a near relative of ours, one of our redeemers.” <sup>21</sup>“He even told me,” added Ruth the Moabite, “Stay with my young people until they complete my entire harvest.” <sup>22</sup>“You would do well, my daughter,” Naomi rejoined, “to work with his young women; in someone else’s field you might be insulted.” <sup>23</sup>So she stayed gleaning with Boaz’s young women until the end of the barley and wheat harvests.

### Ruth Again Presents Herself

**3** When Ruth was back with her mother-in-law, <sup>1</sup>Naomi said to her, “My daughter, should I not be seeking a pleasing home for you?<sup>a</sup> <sup>2</sup>Now! Is not Boaz,<sup>b</sup> whose young women you were working with, a relative of ours? This very night he will be

**2:13 Servant:** only here is the language of servanthood used. Ruth has spoken with very deferential words to Boaz, but then seems to think that she has assumed too much.

**2:17 Ephah:** see note on Isaiah 5:10.

**2:20** For the first time, the story uses the Hebrew word *go'el*, “redeemer,” for the responsibilities of the circle of kinship surrounding Naomi and Ruth and their deceased relatives. Involved are the recovery or retention of family land (Lv 25:25; 27:9-33; Jer 32:6-25), release

of a relative from voluntary servitude to pay debts (Lv 25:47-55), and “redeeming blood” or vengeance, attested in passages which regulate such vengeance. No explicit connection is made elsewhere in the Bible between marriage responsibilities and redeeming.

**3:2** Ruth’s determined action to bring relief to Naomi’s and her own circumstances now impels Naomi to move, using means available in Israelite custom which no one in the story has up to this point brought into play.



Women harvesting

c  
1:14-17  
d  
3:9; Dt 32:37;  
Ps 91:4  
e  
Gn 24:27;  
Lv 25:25;  
27:9-33  
a  
1:9  
b  
2:1

**d** Rom 8:23, 25  
**e** 3:28; 6:15; 1 Cor 7:19  
**f** 1:6  
**g** 1 Cor 5:6  
**h** 1:7  
**i** 6:12, 14; 1 Cor 1:23  
**j** 5:1 / Rom 6:18; 1 Cor 8:9; 1 Pt 2:16  
**k** Lv 19:18; Mt 22:39; Rom 13:8-10

that he is bound to observe the entire law.\* <sup>4</sup>You are separated from Christ, you who are trying to be justified by law; you have fallen from grace. <sup>5d</sup>For through the Spirit, by faith, we await the hope of righteousness. <sup>6e</sup>For in Christ Jesus, neither circumcision nor uncircumcision counts for anything, but only faith working through love.\*

### Be Not Misled\*

<sup>7</sup>You were running well;\* who hindered you from following [the] truth? <sup>8f</sup>That enticement does not come from the one who called you. <sup>9</sup>A little yeast leavens the whole batch of dough.<sup>8</sup> <sup>10</sup>I am confident of you in the Lord that you will not take a different view, and that the one who is troubling you will bear the condemnation, whoever he may be.<sup>h</sup> <sup>11</sup>As for me, brothers, if I am still preaching circumcision,\* why am I still being persecuted? In that case, the stumbling block of the cross has been abolished.<sup>i</sup> <sup>12</sup>Would that those who are upsetting you might also castrate themselves!

### Freedom for Service\*

<sup>13</sup>For you were called for freedom, brothers.<sup>j</sup> But do not use this freedom as an opportunity for the flesh; rather, serve\* one another through love. <sup>14</sup>For the whole law<sup>k</sup>

In Galatians 4–5 Paul contrasts the notions of **slavery** and **freedom** as a natural consequence of the salvific actions of Jesus Christ. Paradoxically, those who voluntarily make themselves “slaves” of Christ experience the greatest freedom of all (1 Cor 7:22). Observe the contrast outlined below:

Slavery	Freedom
To the Law (Torah)	To live for Jesus Christ
To circumcision, the mark of identity	To live the law of love, a new identity
Symbolized by Hagar, the slave woman and Ishmael, her offspring, a “child of the flesh”	Symbolized by Sarah, the free woman, and Isaac, her offspring, a “child of the spirit”
Natural “heir”	Adopted “heirs”
Tied to the earthly Jerusalem	Tied to the Jerusalem “above”
Sealed in the covenant on Sinai	Sealed in the “new covenant” in Christ
Leads to sin	Leads to all the effects of salvation
Leads to death	Leads to eternal life

**5:6** Cf. Romans 2:25-26; 1 Corinthians 7:19; Galatians 6:15. The Greek for **faith working through love** or “faith expressing itself through love” can also be rendered as “faith energized by (God’s) love.”

**5:7-12** Paul addresses the Galatians directly: with questions (5:7, 11), a proverb (5:9), a statement (5:8), and biting sarcasm (5:12), seeking to persuade the Galatians to break with those trying to add law and circumcision to Christ as a basis for salvation.

**5:7 Running well:** as in an athletic contest; cf. Galatians 2:2; 1 Corinthians 9:24-26; Philippians 2:16; 3:14.

**5:8 The one who called you:** see note on Galatians 1:6.

**5:11 Preaching circumcision:** this could refer to Paul’s pre-Christian period (possibly as a missionary for Judaism); more probably it arose as a charge from opponents, based perhaps on the

story in Acts 16:1-3 that Paul had circumcised Timothy “on account of the Jews.” Unlike the Gentile Titus in Galatians 2:3 Timothy was the son of a Jewish mother. **The stumbling block of the cross:** cf. 1 Corinthians 1:23.

**5:12** A sarcastic half-wish that their knife would go beyond mere circumcision; cf. Philippians 3:2 and the note there.

**5:13-26** In light of another reminder of the freedom of the gospel (5:13; cf. 5:1), Paul elaborates on what believers are called to do and be: they fulfill the law by love of neighbor (5:14-15), walking in the Spirit (5:16-26), as is illustrated by concrete **fruit of the Spirit** in their lives.

**5:13 Serve . . . through love:** cf. Galatians 5:6.

**5:14** Leviticus 19:18, emphasized by Jesus (Mt 22:39; Lk 10:27); cf. Romans 13:8-10.



When we experience the kind of freedom that Christ has called us into, then we will understand the mystery of love. We are invited into this freedom to know the joy of loving and serving one another in Christ.

is fulfilled in one statement, namely, “You shall love your neighbor as yourself.”<sup>15</sup> But if you go on biting and devouring one another, beware that you are not consumed by one another.

<sup>16</sup>I say, then: live by the Spirit and you will certainly not gratify the desire of the flesh.\* <sup>17</sup>For the flesh has desires against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh; these

are opposed to each other, so that you may not do what you want.<sup>m</sup> <sup>18</sup>But if you are guided by the Spirit, you are not under the law.<sup>n</sup> <sup>19</sup>\*Now the works of the flesh are obvious: immorality, impurity, licentiousness,<sup>o</sup> <sup>20</sup>idolatry, sorcery, hatreds, rivalry, jealousy, outbursts of fury, acts of selfishness, dissensions, factions,<sup>p</sup> <sup>21</sup>occasions of envy,\* drinking



John Paul II links **love** with **justice**: “Love for others, and in the first place love for the poor, in whom the Church sees Christ himself, is made concrete in the promotion of justice. Justice will never be fully attained unless people see in the poor person, who is asking for help in order to survive, not an annoyance or a burden, but an opportunity for showing kindness and a chance for greater enrichment” (CA 58).

bouts, orgies, and the like. I warn you, as I warned you before, that those who do such things will not inherit the kingdom of God. <sup>22</sup>In contrast, the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, generosity, faithfulness,<sup>q</sup> <sup>23</sup>gentleness, self-control. Against such there is no law.<sup>r</sup> <sup>24</sup>Now those who belong to Christ [Jesus] have crucified their flesh with its passions and desires.<sup>s</sup> <sup>25</sup>If we live in the Spirit, let us also follow the Spirit.<sup>t</sup> <sup>26</sup>Let us not be conceited, provoking one another, envious of one another.<sup>u</sup>

### Life in the Community of Christ\*

**6**<sup>1</sup>Brothers, even if a person is caught in some transgression, you who are spiritual should correct that one in a gentle spirit, looking to yourself, so that you also may not be tempted.<sup>a</sup> <sup>2</sup>Bear one another’s burdens,<sup>b</sup> and so you will fulfill the law of Christ.\* <sup>3c</sup>For if anyone thinks he is something when he is nothing, he is deluding himself. <sup>4</sup>\*Each one must examine his own work, and then he will have reason to boast with

**5:16-25 Spirit . . . flesh:** cf. Galatians 3:3 and the note on Romans 8:1-13.

**5:19-23** Such lists of vices and virtues (cf. Rom 1:29-31; 1 Cor 6:9-10) were common in the ancient world. Paul contrasts **works of the flesh** (5:19) with **fruit (not “works”) of the Spirit** (5:22). Not law, but the Spirit, leads to such traits.

**5:21 Occasions of envy:** after the Greek word *phthonoi*, “envious.” Some manuscripts add a similar sounding one, *phono*, “murders.”

**6:1-10** The ethical exhortations begun at Galatians 5:1 continue with a variety of admonitions to the community (**brothers**: see the note on 1:2). Nearly every sentence contains a separate item of

practical advice; the faith and freedom of the gospel underlie each maxim. Tensions and temptation within communal life have previously been addressed in Galatians 5:15, 26 and Galatians 6:1 continues with a case in which a **person is caught in some transgression** such as those in Galatians 5:19-21; cf. Galatians 2:17.

**6:2 The law of Christ:** cf. Romans 8:2; 1 Corinthians 9:21; Galatians 5:14. The principle of love for others is meant. **To bear one another’s burdens** is to “serve one another through love” (5:13).

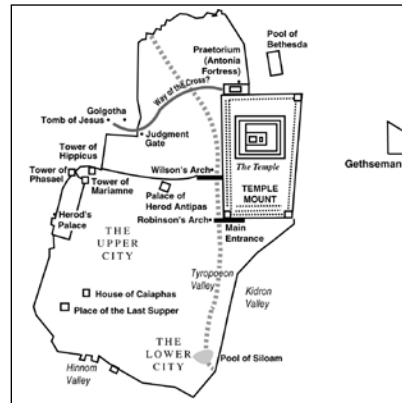
**6:4-5** Self-examination is the cure for self-deception. Compare what you are with what you were before, and give the glory to God; cf. Romans 6:19-22. **Load:** used elsewhere of a soldier’s pack. Correcting one’s own conduct avoids burdening others with it.

**I** 5:24-25; Rom 8:5  
**m** Rom 7:15, 23; 8:6  
**n** Rom 6:14; 8:14  
**o** Rom 1:29-31; 1 Cor 6:9-10; Col 3:5-6, 8  
**p** Rev 22:15  
**q** Eph 5:9 / 1 Cor 13:4-7; 2 Cor 6:6; 1 Tm 4:12; 2 Pt 1:6  
**r** 1 Tm 1:9  
**s** 2:19; Rom 6:6; 8:13  
**t** 5:16  
**u** Phil 2:3  
**a** Mt 18:15; Jas 5:19 / 1 Cor 10:12-13  
**b** Col 3:13 / 1 Cor 9:21  
**c** 1 Cor 3:18; 8:2; 2 Cor 12:11

i  
Mt 26:36-46;  
Lk 22:40-46  
j  
Jn 18:1  
k  
Rom 7:5  
l  
Mt 26:47-56;  
Lk 22:47-53;  
Jn 18:3-11

**The Agony in the Garden**

<sup>32</sup>\*Then they came to a place named Gethsemane,<sup>i</sup> and he said to his disciples, “Sit here while I pray.”<sup>j</sup> <sup>33</sup>He took with him Peter, James, and John, and began to be troubled and distressed. <sup>34</sup>Then he said to them, “My soul is sorrowful even to death. Remain here and keep watch.”<sup>k</sup> He advanced a little and fell to the ground and prayed that if it were possible the hour might pass by him; <sup>36</sup>he said, “Abba, Father,<sup>l</sup> all things are possible to you. Take this cup away from me, but not what I will but what you will.”<sup>m</sup> <sup>37</sup>When he returned he found them asleep. He said to Peter, “Simon, are you asleep? Could you not keep watch for one hour?” <sup>38</sup>\*Watch and pray that you may not undergo the test.<sup>k</sup> The spirit is willing but the flesh is weak.” <sup>39</sup>Withdrawing again, he prayed, saying the same thing. <sup>40</sup>Then he returned once more and found them asleep, for they could not keep their eyes open and did not know what to answer him. <sup>41</sup>He returned a third time and said to them, “Are you still sleeping and taking your rest? It is enough. The hour has come. Behold, the Son of Man is to be handed over to sinners. <sup>42</sup>Get up, let us go. See, my betrayer is at hand.”



Gethsemane in relation to the Old City of Jerusalem

**The Betrayal and Arrest of Jesus**

<sup>43</sup>Then, while he was still speaking, Judas, one of the Twelve, arrived, accompanied by a crowd with swords and clubs who had come from the chief priests, the scribes, and the elders. <sup>44</sup>His betrayer had arranged a signal with them, saying, “The man I shall kiss is the one; arrest him and lead him away securely.” <sup>45</sup>He came and immediately went over to him and said, “Rabbi.” And he kissed him. <sup>46</sup>At this they laid hands on him and arrested him. <sup>47</sup>One of the bystanders drew his sword, struck the high priest’s servant, and cut off his ear. <sup>48</sup>Jesus said to them in reply, “Have you come out as against a robber, with swords and clubs, to seize me?” <sup>49</sup>Day after day I was with you teaching in the temple area, yet you did not arrest me; but that the scriptures may be fulfilled.” <sup>50</sup>And they all left him and fled. <sup>51</sup>Now a young man followed him wearing nothing but a linen cloth about his body. They seized him, <sup>52</sup>but he left the cloth behind and ran off naked.

**Jesus before the Sanhedrin**

<sup>53</sup>\*They led Jesus away to the high priest, and all the chief priests and the elders and the scribes came together. <sup>54</sup>Peter followed him at a distance into the high priest’s courtyard and was seated with the guards, warming himself at the fire. <sup>55</sup>The chief priests and the entire Sanhedrin kept trying to obtain testimony against Jesus in order to put him to death, but they found none. <sup>56</sup>Many gave false witness against him, but their testimony did not agree. <sup>57</sup>\*Some took the stand and testified falsely against him, alleging, <sup>58</sup>“We heard him say, ‘I will destroy this temple made with hands and within three days I will build another not made with hands.’”<sup>n</sup> <sup>59</sup>Even so their testimony did not agree. <sup>60</sup>The high priest rose before the assembly and questioned Jesus, saying, “Have you no answer? What are these men testifying against you?” <sup>61</sup>\*But he was silent and answered nothing. Again the high priest asked him and said to him, “Are you the Messiah, the son of the Blessed One?” <sup>62</sup>Then Jesus answered, “I am; and

‘you will see the Son of Man seated at the right hand of the Power and coming with the clouds of heaven.’”<sup>o</sup>

On the **chief priests and high priest**, see the chart on Jewish leaders in “Background to the Gospels,” p. •••.



**An Unnamed Follower**

The unnamed young follower of Jesus who appears in this climactic scene is not an accidental figure. In such a compact gospel as that of Mark, there is little room for incidentals. But what does he bring to the story? What does he represent to the reader? Those present at the arrest of Jesus included not only those followers we have come to know by name but also some whose identities are never known. Jesus touched many who apparently followed him without fanfare. It happened then and it happens now. What are we to make of the simple linen cloth worn by this man? Is this a literary technique included only to give drama to the story, or is it intended to prefigure the linen cloth that will wrap Jesus in death? Does he leave it behind in personal

terror or does he leave it behind in anticipation of Jesus’ eventual need for it? And what are we to make of the young man running off? The scene is somewhat reminiscent of the rich man who went away sad when told that to inherit eternal life he is to sell all his possessions (Mk 10:17-22). Is this young follower who literally left everything behind as he departed an intentional “counter-reminder” of that rich man whose fate we never know? Is the young man at least to be praised for staying on the scene longer than the named disciples of Jesus who fled immediately? Discipleship requires everything of us: following without recognition or fanfare, being present with Jesus and his followers even in the dark hours, simplicity of life, and the willingness to stay the course rather than flee the unexpected.

14:32-34 The disciples who had witnessed the raising to life of the daughter of Jairus (5:37) and the transfiguration of their Master (9:2) were now invited to witness his degradation and agony and to watch and pray with him.  
14:36 **Abba, Father:** an Aramaic term, here also translated by Mark, Jesus’ special way of addressing God with filial intimacy. The word ‘*abbā*’ seems not to have been used in earlier or contemporaneous Jewish sources to address God without some qualifier. Cf. Romans 8:15 and Galatians 4:6 for other occurrences of the Ara-

maic word in the Greek New Testament. **Not what I will but what you will:** note the complete obedient surrender of the human will of Jesus to the divine will of the Father; cf. John 4:34; 8:29; Romans 5:19; Philippians 2:8; Hebrews 5:8.  
14:38 **The spirit is willing but the flesh is weak:** the spirit is drawn to what is good yet found in conflict with the flesh, inclined to sin; cf. Psalm 51:7, 12. Everyone is faced with this struggle, the full force of which Jesus accepted on our behalf and, through his bitter passion and death, achieved the victory.

14:53 **They led Jesus away . . . came together:** Mark presents a formal assembly of the whole Sanhedrin (chief priests, elders, and scribes) at night, leading to the condemnation of Jesus (14:64), in contrast to Luke 22:66, 71 where Jesus is condemned in a daytime meeting of the council; see also John 18:13, 19-24.  
14:57-58 See the notes on Matthew 26:60-61 and John 2:19.  
14:61-62 **The Blessed One:** a surrogate for the divine name, which Jews did not pronounce. **I am:** indicates Jesus’ acknowledgment

that he is the Messiah and Son of God; cf. Mark 1:1. Contrast Matthew 26:64 and Luke 22:67-70, in which Jesus leaves his interrogators to answer their own question. **You will see the Son of Man . . . with the clouds of heaven:** an allusion to Daniel 7:13 and Psalm 110:1, portending the enthronement of Jesus as judge in the transcendent glory of God’s kingdom. **The Power:** another surrogate for the name of God.