

Betrayal

*For it was not an enemy that reproached me; then I could have borne it: neither was it he that hated me that did magnify himself against me; then I would have hid myself from him: But it was thou, a man mine equal, my guide, and mine acquaintance.
Psalm 55:12-13*

Here is one of those places that we come to as we read the Old Testament where our mind will suddenly shift out of the immediate context into the larger context of the whole Bible, as we recognize how this passage prophetically points to the betrayal of Jesus by Judas Iscariot. The next verse continues to describe the sweet counsel of the two men as they walked together “unto the house of God in company.” And yet, as fulfilled, the greater part of this psalm describes the betrayers’ inward hatred, as well as their miserable end, brought upon them by the justice of Almighty God. David’s betrayal, by whomever was the subject of this psalm, would have come as a complete surprise, as described here, and brought about his cries unto God for justice against them. As we contemplate the pain of our Lord, as He not only encountered the betrayal of Judas at that moment in the garden, but also knew and testified beforehand of its reality, we can realize the gap between the context of David’s experience and that of Jesus in the prophetic fulfillment. The apostle John reminds us of His omniscient understanding of the character of Judas throughout his gospel account. It is possible that Jesus’ inward suffering of this event was magnified by that knowledge, especially in light of the many warnings He gave in His teachings that seemed to be intended for Judas, as well as for other pretenders in the crowd. While David’s reactionary imprecations would be typical for most men faced with betrayal, and prophetically represent the justice of God that would come to Judas in the end, the reaction of Jesus in the garden was still providing an opportunity for Judas to repent, which of course he did not heed. Yet, while David was surprised, Jesus had realistic expectations of mankind rooted in sin. Many of us have probably felt the disappointment, or worse, brought about by betrayal. However, let us not be surprised with David, but understand with our Lord that man without the enlightenment and empowerment of the Holy Spirit of God can be expected to do no better. In that time, let us remember David’s exhortation in verse 22 of this psalm: “Cast thy burden upon the LORD, and he shall sustain thee: he shall never suffer the righteous to be moved.”