

LET THE BIBLE SPEAK SERIES

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Judas Iscariot

It was already in the foreknowledge of God that Jesus would be delivered into the hands of the enemy. Acts 2:22-23 "delivered by the determined purpose or foreknowledge of God." "...it was in accordance with God's preordained purpose that he was to be delivered into their power..." (J.W. McGarvey)

Jesus was delivered, surrendered, or given over to his enemies. This had been "Foreordained before the foundation of the world" 1Pet. 1:20

In fact it had already been prophesied that Jesus would be betrayed for thirty pieces of silver in Zech. 11:10-13 "And I said unto them, If ye think good, give me my price, and if not, forbear. So they weighed for my price thirty pieces of silver. And the Lord said unto me, Cast it unto the potter: a goodly price that I was prised at of them. And I took the thirty pieces of silver, and cast them to the potter in the house of the Lord. This is far more than a prophecy; it is a whole constellation of prophecies: (1) There will be haggling over the price (if not, forbear); (2) The sum agreed upon will be 30 pieces of silver; (3) It will be weighed out; (4) It will be cast unto the potter, (5) "Cast" indicates it will be thrown; (6) The potter will eventually receive it; (7) The recipient will do the casting; (8) The whole transaction will occur in the temple (the house of the Lord).

Note: Matthew 26:5 "And said, What are ye willing to give me, and I will deliver him unto you? And they weighed unto him thirty pieces of silver." Luke 22:5 "they covenanted" that is they bargained with him.

I. The Character of Judas.

A. The name, Judas is often used synonymously with "traitor. Just what kind of person was the one who willingly became a part of the plot to betray the Son of God? It soon becomes evident that his heart was vile and evil. God often uses vile, corrupt people to carry out his divine plans:

Pharaoh is an example. We read in Romans 9:17 "For the scripture says to the Pharaoh, For this very purpose I have raised you up, that I may show My power in you, and that My name may be declared in all the earth." In the Old Testament God often worked through idolatrous, evil nations to punish His people. God did not make Pharaoh or these nations do the evil, nor did God restrain them from such activities. They were already evil and bent on wrong doing. God merely used them to carry out various plans and designs of His working. These people could have refused, but they did not. Some ask "if this was the plan of God, did God arbitrarily make Judas commit this act? The answer is no. Judas acted of his own accord, driven by his own lust. Note what is said in John 13:21-27: Jesus merely foretold, or predicted what Judas would do. He allowed Judas to

carry out his evil desires. Jesus used no power, force or influence to cause him to perform this evil. Satan entered into him. It was the devil who prompted him to sin. Judas had the same opportunities as the other disciples. He squandered his. He allowed his heart to become evil and his heart affected his life. Proverbs. 4:23 "As a man thinketh in his heart..." People who think evil in their heart are led to do evil things. This event was also foretold by prophecy: Psalms 41:9 "Yea mine own familiar friend, in whom I trusted, which did eat my bread, hath lifted up his heel against me."

But it is also very important to notice that neither did Jesus prevent him from doing wrong. It was a choice made by Judas. He was a free moral agent, to do as he pleased. In v.27 Jesus told him "that thou doest do quickly." The Lord gave him no occasion to stumble. Judas had opportunity to profit from Jesus teaching, like everyone else, but failed to do so. It is also noteworthy that the Lord did not beg, plead, or compromise in any way to refrain him from doing evil. It was Judas' choice to make and he made it.

B. He was selfish, greedy, and covetous.

Read carefully John 12:3-6. We learn from these verses that Judas cared not for the poor. Even though he gave a pretense of good he did so to hide his evil character in order to gain his own selfish, greedy desires. Paul in 1Timothy 6:10 warns us of that pitfall "for the love of money is the root of all kinds of evil..." Our generation is full of people who will exploit the poor and unfortunate for their own profit. Judas was not concerned about the poor. He was a thief, an embezzler. He wanted the funds for his own use. When he went to the chief priests he asked "what are you willing to give me" GIVE ME there was the fatal cleft in the heart of Judas. The prodigal son said "Father give me..." Such an attitude says, "I'll take the cash; let the credit go; A bird in the hand's worth two in the bush; Get yours while the getting's good. You've got to look out for number one. Such an attitude betrayed the Son of God, and is still doing so today.

C. He was a hypocrite of the worst type.

He used a sign of friendship and trust to carry out his shameful, deceitful act of betrayal. Mark 14:43-46. A kiss became the token of betrayal. The kiss was an expression of love, respect and friendship. In 1Pet. 5:14 we are told to "Greet ye one another with a kiss of Charity." And in 1Cor. 16:20 "Greet ye one another with a holy kiss." Jesus asked "Friend why have you come?" Jesus knew with what intention Judas had kissed him. He merely wanted to make him fully aware of the abominable, deplorable act of treachery he had just committed. Instead of coming as an open enemy, but disguised his enmity under the cloak of friendship. It is hard to imagine any one more vicious and wicked than one who would betray a friend for personal gain or profit. And yet today, some betray the Lord and His Church for similar reasons in many of the same ways. They forsake the assembly to make money, sacrifice the truth for fame or fortune, a little popularity, reject morality for a good time, a little self-satisfaction. Often, for 30 pieces of silver, the common price of a slave, or less we betray and forsake the Son of God.

D. He was a coward. Matthew. 27:1-5

"When he saw that he was condemned." He was not concerned about the crime against Christ and heaven or the suffering to which Christ was subjected because of it. Neither did he repent of his sin, but merely had an "after-care" or regret for what he had done. There are two words translated "repentance" (1) "to care after" used only 5 times in N.T. and means a sorrow for the past. (2) "to know after" refers to a change of mind or purpose". This is the word used in the gospel sense. Judas was possessed with an "after care" or regret, not a sorrow for his sins. If things would be done twice, all of us would be better. But being sorry for what we have done and true repentance are two different things. Judas experienced a change from selfish satisfaction for personal profit to fear of its consequences. He hanged himself--a weak cowardly deed. He did not have the courage to correct his life and truly repent. Even the ones with whom he conspired had no respect for him. Mt.27:4 "saying, "I have sinned by betraying innocent blood." And they said, "What is that to us? You see to it." People with evil hearts cannot trust anyone, any more than they can be trusted themselves. They band together for the evil act, by which they are drawn together. They have no loyalty. Judas went to "his own place" Acts 1:25 i.e. the place of betrayers and other sinners.

II. Lessons We Learn From Judas.

1. We learn that there is something in a name.

a. We name our sons James, Paul, John, but not Judas. Our daughters, Ruth, Mary, Elizabeth etc. but not Jezebel. To argue that it doesn't matter what name God's people wear is to deny the obvious teaching of the scripture. God places importance on names. He always has. He changed Abram's name to Abraham in Genesis 17:5. The name, Christian, is important. No human name has been given or is allowed. Notice:

Acts 4:12 Christ a name above all others. Salvation in no other name.

Acts 11:26 Disciples called "Christians" could have been called anything but they were called Christians by divine choice.

1Pet. 4:16 If any man suffer as a Christian..."

Acts 26:28 "almost thou persuadest me to be a Christian..."

2. We learn that a disciple of Christ can fall from grace.

Judas was close to Christ, he was an apostle, yet he fell. Acts 1:25 "Judas by transgression fell" Jesus said "one of you has a devil" John. 6:70. The devil was not there from the beginning. If so, how did he fall? He would have been bad from the start. The devil entered him by his own permissive weakness, thus causing his downfall. Notice Luke 22:3 "Then satan entered Judas, surnamed Iscariot, who was numbered among the twelve. The devil enters us the very same way. Always by invitation, created at times by carelessness, resulting in our downfall.

Paul wrote in 1Cor.10:12 "Let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall." Galatians 5:4 tells us that those who sought justification by Law were "fallen from Grace". In John 15:6 we are told "If anyone does not abide in me, he is cast out as a

branch and is withered; and they gather them and throw them into the fire, and they are burned."

3. We learn the vice of wrong motives.

We have already learned that Judas had no real concern for the poor. John 12:3-8.

This is also evidenced by the fact that he fermented discontent among the disciples over Mary's anointing of Jesus Mark. 14:5-6 (a number of the disciples were indignant, but Judas became the spokesman) John 12:5 "Why was this fragrant oil not sold for three hundred denarii and given to the poor? This he said, not that he cared for the poor, but because he was a thief, and had the money box and he used to take what was put in it." It is evident that one person with wrong motives can create dissatisfaction and backbiting. He kissed Jesus, a sign of friendship and love, when the real motive was to betray him. We learn valuable lessons from this traitor and deceiver. May God help us never to become a Judas.