

## Judas Iscariot

Judas may be one of the most famous disciples of Jesus. Of the disciples that we have talked about I am sure Judas is one that you all know something about.

I am greatly indebted to John MacArthur's book, "12 Ordinary Men" in this lesson.

One source shares:

*THE MOST NOTORIOUS AND UNIVERSALLY SCORNE*d of all the disciples is Judas Iscariot, the betrayer. His name appears last in every biblical list of apostles, except for the list in Acts 1, where it doesn't appear at all. Every time Judas is mentioned in Scripture, we also find a notation about his being a traitor. He is the most colossal failure in all of human history. He committed the most horrible, heinous act of any individual, ever. He betrayed the perfect, sinless, holy Son of God for a handful of money. His dark story is a poignant example of the depths to which the human heart is capable of sinking. He spent three years with Jesus Christ, but for all that time his heart was only growing hard and hateful.<sup>1</sup>

There are a few applications to remember:

*The New Testament tells us plenty about Judas—enough to accomplish two things: First, the life of Judas reminds us that it is possible to be near Christ and associate with Him closely (but superficially) and yet become utterly hardened in sin. Second, Judas reminds us that no matter how sinful a person may be, no matter what treachery he or she may attempt against God, the purpose of God cannot be thwarted. Even the worst act of treachery works toward the fulfillment of the divine plan. God's sovereign plan cannot be overthrown even by the most cunning schemes of those who hate Him.<sup>2</sup>*

- I. His name and background.
  - a. Judas means "Jehovah leads."
  - b. This likely means that his parents had great hopes for him.
  - c. The irony is that no one was more led by satan than Judas.
  - d. Iscariot: *His surname, Iscariot, signifies the region he came from. It is derived from the Hebrew term ish ("man") and the name of a town, Kerioth—"man of Kerioth." Judas probably came from Kerioth-hezron (cf. Joshua 15:25), a humble town in the south of Judea. He was apparently the only one of the apostles who did not come from Galilee. As we know, many of the others were brothers, friends, and working companions even before meeting Christ. Judas was a solitary figure who entered their midst from afar. Although there is no evidence that he was ever excluded or looked down upon by the rest of the group, he may have thought of himself as an outsider, which would have helped him justify his own treachery.<sup>3</sup>*

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<sup>1</sup> MacArthur, John F.. Twelve Ordinary Men (p. 181). Thomas Nelson. Kindle Edition.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid, 182.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid, 182-183.

- e. MacArthur makes the point that the others likely knew little about his family background which made it easier for him to pilfer funds. Look at John 12:6 about Judas: *Now he said this, not because he was concerned about the poor, but because he was a thief, and as he had the money box, he used to pilfer what was put into it.*
  - f. John 6:71 says that his father was Simon. We do not know anything else about Simon.
  - g. Simon was a popular name.
  - h. Judas was ordinary.
  - i. None of them guessed that he would betray Jesus. In Matthew 26:22-23 when Jesus predicted that one of them would betray Him no one pointed their finger at Judas. However, look at John 6:64: *“But there are some of you who do not believe.” For Jesus knew from the beginning who they were who did not believe, and who it was that would betray Him.*
  - j. Jesus knew from the beginning who would betray Him.
- II. Judas’ call:
- a. The call of Judas is not recorded in Scripture.
  - b. We do know that he stayed with Jesus when others left (John 6:66-71).
  - c. He was likely a young, zealous, patriotic Jew who did not want Roman rule and wanted Jesus to overthrow the Romans.
  - d. Jesus chose Judas just like the other disciples: John 15:16: *“You did not choose Me but I chose you, and appointed you that you would go and bear fruit, and that your fruit would remain, so that whatever you ask of the Father in My name He may give to you.*
- III. His role as a betrayer was ordained before the foundation of the world.
- a. Psalm 41:9: *Even my close friend in whom I trusted, Who ate my bread, Has lifted up his heel against me.*
  - b. This passage is said fulfilled by Judas in John 13:18: *“I do not speak of all of you. I know the ones I have chosen; but it is that the Scripture may be fulfilled, ‘He who eats My bread has lifted up his heel against Me.’*
  - c. Psalm 55:12-14: *For it is not an enemy who reproaches me, Then I could bear it; Nor is it one who hates me who has exalted himself against me, Then I could hide myself from him. But it is you, a man my equal, My companion and my familiar friend; We who had sweet fellowship together Walked in the house of God in the throng.*
  - d. That passage foretold the betrayal by Judas.
  - e. Zechariah 11:12-13: *I said to them, “If it is good in your sight, give me my wages; but if not, never mind!” So they weighed out thirty shekels of silver as my wages. Then the Lord said to me, “Throw it to the potter, that magnificent price at which I was valued by them.” So I took the thirty shekels of silver and threw them to the potter in the house of the Lord.*
  - f. Matthew 27:9-10 identifies that fulfilled by Judas.
  - g. We must remember that Judas was accountable. MacArthur shares: *And yet Judas was in no sense coerced into doing what he did. No invisible hand forced him to betray Christ. He acted freely and without external compulsion. He was responsible for his own actions. Jesus said he would bear the guilt of his deed throughout*

- eternity. His own greed, his own ambition, and his own wicked desires were the only forces that constrained him to betray Christ.*<sup>4</sup>
- h. How do we reconcile these two truths? We do not have to.
  - i. Eph 1:11: *according to His purpose who works all things after the counsel of His will...*
  - j. Luke 22:22: *“For indeed, the Son of Man is going as it has been determined; but woe to that man by whom He is betrayed!”*
  - k. Spurgeon: *If... I find taught in one part of the Bible that everything is foreordained, that is true; and if I find, in another Scripture, that man is responsible for all his actions, that is true; and it is only my folly that leads me to imagine that these two truths can ever contradict each other. I do not believe they can ever be welded into one upon any earthly anvil, but they certainly shall be one in eternity. They are two lines that are so nearly parallel, that the human mind which pursues them farthest will never discover that they converge, but they do converge, and they will meet somewhere in eternity, close to the throne of God, whence all truth doth spring.*<sup>5</sup>
  - l. Genesis 50:20: *“As for you, you meant evil against me, but God meant it for good in order to bring about this present result, to preserve many people alive.*
  - m. Again, MacArthur: *Judas had every opportunity to turn from his sin—as much opportunity as was ever afforded anyone. He heard numerous appeals from Christ urging him not to do the deed he was planning to do. He heard every lesson Jesus taught during His ministry. Many of those lessons applied directly to him: the parable of the unjust steward (Luke 16:1-13); the message of the wedding garment (Matthew 22:11-14); and Jesus' preaching against the love of money (Matthew 6:19-34), against greed (Luke 13:13-21), and against pride (Matthew 23:1-12). Jesus had even candidly told the Twelve, "One of you is a devil" (John 6:70). He cautioned them about the woe that would come to the person who betrayed him (Matthew 26:24). Judas listened to all of that unmoved. He never applied the lessons. He just kept up his deceit.*<sup>6</sup>
- IV. Judas' disillusionment.
- a. It seems that his disillusionment was building but we see it in John 12:2-6: *So they made Him a supper there, and Martha was serving; but Lazarus was one of those reclining at the table with Him. Mary then took a pound of very costly perfume of pure nard, and anointed the feet of Jesus and wiped His feet with her hair; and the house was filled with the fragrance of the perfume. But Judas Iscariot, one of His disciples, who was intending to betray Him, said, “Why was this perfume not sold for three hundred denarii and given to poor people?” Now he said this, not because he was concerned about the poor, but because he was a thief, and as he had the money box, he used to pilfer what was put into it.*
  - b. Matthew 26:6-8 records the same event and the other disciples also were indignant.

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<sup>4</sup> Ibid, 185.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid 185. Quoted from: Charles H. Spurgeon, "A Defense of Calvinism" in Susannah Spurgeon and Joseph Harrald, eds., *The Autobiography of Charles H. Spurgeon*, 4 vols. (Philadelphia: American Baptist Publication Society, 1895), 1:177.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid, 186.

- c. Judas did not repent.
- d. The betrayal may have been soon after that event, as it is in Matthew.

V. Betrayal

- a. Matthew 16:14-16: *Then one of the twelve, named Judas Iscariot, went to the chief priests and said, "What are you willing to give me to betray Him to you?" And they weighed out thirty pieces of silver to him. From then on he began looking for a good opportunity to betray Jesus.*
- b. According to Exodus 21:32, 30 pieces of silver is the cost of a slave.
- c. John 13:2: *During supper, the devil having already put into the heart of Judas Iscariot, the son of Simon, to betray Him...*
- d. John 13:21-27: *When Jesus had said this, He became troubled in spirit, and testified and said, "Truly, truly, I say to you, that one of you will betray Me." The disciples began looking at one another, at a loss to know of which one He was speaking. There was reclining on Jesus' bosom one of His disciples, whom Jesus loved. So Simon Peter gestured to him, and said to him, "Tell us who it is of whom He is speaking." He, leaning back thus on Jesus' bosom, said to Him, "Lord, who is it?" Jesus then answered, "That is the one for whom I shall dip the morsel and give it to him." So when He had dipped the morsel, He took and gave it to Judas, the son of Simon Iscariot. After the morsel, Satan then entered into him. Therefore Jesus said to him, "What you do, do quickly."*
- e. Judas had been looking for an opportunity to betray Him apart from the crowd (Luke 22:6).
- f. Again, MacArthur: *So at the very moment when Jesus was instituting the Lord's Supper in the Upper Room, Judas was making arrangements for His capture. He knew Jesus regularly went to Gethsemane to pray with His disciples. Luke 22:39 says it was Jesus' custom to go there. John 18:2 says Judas "knew the place; for Jesus often met there with His disciples." So Judas knew exactly where to bring the authorities to capture Jesus.<sup>7</sup>*
- g. John 18:3: *Judas then, having received the Roman cohort and officers from the chief priests and the Pharisees, came there with lanterns and torches and weapons.*
- h. Again, MacArthur: *Judas had a prearranged signal to identify Jesus .-"Whomever I kiss, He is the One; seize Him" (Matthew 26:48)...What a diabolical way to point out Jesus! But his wretchedness was so profound and his hypocrisy so malicious that he seemingly had no conscience. Furthermore, since Jesus stepped forward and identified Himself, the signal would have been unnecessary, but Judas—cynic and scoundrel that he had become—kissed Him anyway (Mark 14:45). "Jesus said to him, 'Judas, are you betraying the Son of Man with a kiss?'" (Luke 22:48). Kissing is a mark of homage, love, affection, tenderness, respect, and intimacy. Judas's feigned feelings for Christ only made his deed that much darker. It was a devious hypocrisy, trying to keep up the veneer of respect even to the bitter end.<sup>8</sup>*

VI. His death

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<sup>7</sup> Ibid, 193-194.

<sup>8</sup> Ibid, 194-195.

- a. Matthew 27:3-4: *Then when Judas, who had betrayed Him, saw that He had been condemned, he felt remorse and returned the thirty pieces of silver to the chief priests and elders, saying, "I have sinned by betraying innocent blood." But they said, "What is that to us? See to that yourself!" And he threw the pieces of silver into the temple sanctuary and departed; and he went away and hanged himself.*
- b. MacArthur wraps this up: *Acts 1:18-19 adds a final note to the tragedy of Judas, with more detail about his death and the acquisition of the Field of Blood: "This man purchased a field with the wages of iniquity; and falling headlong, he burst open in the middle and all his entrails gushed out. And it became known to all those dwelling in Jerusalem; so that field is called in their own language, Akel Dama, that is, Field of Blood." Some have imagined a contradiction between Matthew and Acts, but all apparent discrepancies are easily reconciled. Matthew indicates that the priests purchased the field with Judas's blood money. Thus it is true that Judas acquired the field "with the wages of iniquity." It was purchased for him by the chief priests, but the purchase was made with his money. The field became his possession. His heirs—if he had any—would inherit the field. So it is correct to say that "purchased a field with the wages of iniquity," even though the field was purchased for him, by proxy.<sup>9</sup>*
- c. *Why this particular field? Because it was the very place where Judas hanged himself. Apparently he chose a tree on an overhang above some jagged rocks. (There is a place that precisely fits that description in the field in Jerusalem where tradition says Judas hanged himself.) Either the rope or the tree branch broke, and Judas fell headlong onto the rocks. The biblical description is graphic and ugly: "He burst open in the middle and all his entrails gushed out" (Acts 18:1). Judas was such a tragic figure that he couldn't even kill himself the way he wanted to. Nonetheless, he died. This is virtually the last word in Scripture about Judas: "His entrails gushed out." His life and his death were grotesque tragedies. He was a child of hell and a son of perdition, and he went to his own place where he belonged. Jesus said these chilling words: "It would have been good for that man if he had never been born" (Mark 14:21).<sup>10</sup>*

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<sup>9</sup> Ibid, 196.

<sup>10</sup> Ibid, 196-197.