

## BIBLICAL STUDIES

Series: *“Men From The Past With A Message For The Present”*

Message: **“JUDAS: THE BETRAYER OF JESUS CHRIST”**

Scripture: **John 13:2-4; 18-27**

Text: ***“The evening meal was being served, and the devil had already prompted Judas Iscariot, son of Simon, to betray Jesus.”*** (John 13:2)

What do Benedict Arnold and Judas Iscariot have in common? Both were traitors. Benedict was a general during the American Revolutionary War who commanded the fort at West Point, NY and plotted unsuccessfully to surrender it to the British forces. After the plot failed, he served in the British military. Judas was a member of Jesus' inner circle and plotted to surrender Him to the Jewish forces. After the plot succeeded he committed suicide. Benedict betrayed his country – Judas betrayed his Christ.

The dark story of Judas is one of the most tragic and mysterious in history. All down through the centuries the name “Judas” has been a by-word for treachery and betrayal. His was the foulest deed ever committed.

Early in my ministry I was the guest of a fine Christian farmer. He had many animals on his farm. When I arrived in his driveway he met me at my car and said, “Watch that goat over there, he is dangerous. When your back is turned he will run and butt you, knocking you down. That is why I named him Judas.”

There is a type of goat called the “Judas Goat.” It is a trained goat used at a slaughterhouse that is trained to lead sheep into the place of slaughter. The Lamb of God was led to the place of slaughter by the original Judas Goat. We name our animals Judas but no good mother would name her son Judas.

## **WHO WAS JUDAS?**

The name “Judas” is well known. However, the general public knows very little about the man behind the name. Many fictitious and speculative stories have been written about him and even a book claiming to be “The Gospel Of Judas” has been published. Although a somewhat mysterious character, there is a volume of information scattered throughout the Four Gospels about him. Let us collate the facts about him as revealed in scripture, the only true and reliable source of information.

### ***Who He Was Originally.***

The background of Judas is very sketchy. We would like to know more about his roots and thereby, perhaps, find some flaw in his family or upbringing that impacted him negatively in such a manner as to result in his twisted personality. However, we are not privileged to have such information.

### *His Father.*

Judas Iscariot was the son of Simon - "*Judas Iscariot, the son of Simon.*" (John 6:71 and 13:26) His mother is not mentioned. He is unknown and unheard of until Jesus named him as one of His twelve trusted men.

### *His Name.*

Judas was a very common name. There are ten persons named Judas mentioned in the New Testament. One of the brothers of our Lord Jesus was named Judas. (Matt.13:55) The name of the person who is the subject of our interests appears 22 times in the Gospels and the book of Acts.

Iscariot means, simply, man from Kerioth. Kerioth was a city in Judea twelve miles south of Hebron, which means Judas Iscariot was the only apostle not from Galilee. He was from Judea.

### ***Who He Became Outwardly.***

#### *Outwardly, He Was A Follower Of Jesus.*

Judas' name appears in each of the three lists of the twelve apostles in Matthew, Mark and Luke's Gospels. It is interesting that Judas' name appears last in each of the three lists. Eight times in the Four Gospels, Judas is identified as "*one of the twelve*" in those very words. There is no doubt that he was numbered with the original twelve disciples and companied with them.

In the New Testament there are two categories of disciples mentioned: there was the outer circle of disciples, that is, the larger company of Jesus-believers and followers and then there was the inner circle, the original twelve disciples. These latter companied with Christ continuously. When the early church met in the Upper Room to select a replacement for the dead Judas, Peter said of him, "*He was numbered with us and obtained a part in this ministry.*" (Acts 1:17)

From the accounts in the four Gospels we are compelled to conclude that Judas looked and acted outwardly like the other eleven disciples. He was The Financial Secretary of the disciples. This is proof that he was trusted by the other eleven. He had all the outward appearances that he was genuine. What does the Lord say? "*The LORD does not see as man sees; for man looks at the outward appearance, but the LORD looks at the heart.*" (1 Sam. 16:7)

#### *Inwardly, He Was a Son of Perdition.*

He was not a saved man. "Though he was given to Christ as an apostle, yet not in eternal election, to be saved by him." (John Gill) He was a master of deceit and disguise. If he was a saved man and afterward lost his salvation, then the salvation of us all is in jeopardy.

"By no stretch of the imagination could Judas Iscariot have been at any time considered truly born again, no matter how convincing a performance he may have put on before his fellow disciples." (Gleason L. Archer, Jr., Professor of Old Testament and Semitic Studies, Trinity Evangelical Divinity School, Deerfield, IL.)

In this regard, the statement of Jesus in John 17:12 sheds light upon the state of Judas' soul: *"While I was with them in the world, I kept them in Your name. Those whom You gave Me I have kept; and none of them is lost except the son of perdition, that the Scripture might be fulfilled."*

The word "perdition," in the Greek, is "apōleia" and means "ruin, loss, waste; to cause ruin or loss" and is from a root word which means "to destroy, punishment." It is akin to the word "apostasia" which means, "a falling away, defection." From that word comes the word "apostate." We would not be amiss to state that Judas was ruinous and an apostate.

The arch "son of perdition" is the antichrist of whom Paul writes in II Thessalonians 2 – *"Let no one deceive you by any means; for that Day will not come unless the falling away comes first, and the man of sin is revealed, the son of perdition, who opposes and exalts himself above all that is called God or that is worshiped, so that he sits as God in the temple of God, showing himself that he is God."* (II Thess. 2:3-4) Judas was not *the* antichrist, but surely he was *an* antichrist! "Judas is called a son of perdition because he had the character of a destroyer." (Barnes)

## WHAT DID HE DO?

*"Then one of the twelve, called Judas Iscariot, went to the chief priests and said, "What are you willing to give me if I deliver Him to you?" And they counted out to him thirty pieces of silver. So from that time he sought opportunity to betray Him."* (Matt. 26:14-16)

### **He Conspired With The Enemy.**

Judas was a traitor who secretly fraternized with the enemy. His collaborationism was not a spur-of-the-moment urge. He had been clandestinely, covertly collaberating with the Jewish leaders for a period of time. Jesus knew about his duplicity for we read, *"You are clean, but not all of you."* *For He knew who would betray Him; therefore He said, "You are not all clean"* (John 13:10,11) and *"I know whom I have chosen; but that the Scripture may be fulfilled, 'He who eats bread with Me has lifted up his heel against Me."* (John 11:18) The other eleven did not know that Jesus was referring to Judas there in the Upper Room. They began to ask, "Is it I?"

Judas had long planned to deliver Jesus to the authorities. He had ample time to repent of his dark and dastardly intentions, but he did not. Judas learned too late that when you yield to the devil's sinister suggestions, you lose!

### **He Betrayed The Innocent Savior.**

The Random House Dictionary defines "A Judas" as: "a person treacherous enough to betray a friend; traitor." A "Judas kiss" is an act of seeming friendship that conceals treachery. When soldiers came to arrest Jesus, Judas identified Him by kissing Him.

Eleven times in the Gospels the words "betray" or "betrayed" are used in conjunction with the name Judas, as in "*Judas the betrayer*," etc. It appears that the writers wanted to make certain that he was identified as the Judas, distinct from all others named Judas, who was the

betrayed the Lord Jesus. In addition Luke refers to him as “*traitor*” in Luke 6:16 and in Acts 1:16 he is referred to as “*guide to them that took Jesus.*”

### **WHY DID HE DO IT?**

There have been many reasons postulated as to why Judas did what he did. I believe there was a combination of reasons.

#### ***The Inclination To Be Greedy.***

Judas' greed and covetousness is seen when Mary poured out expensive perfume upon Jesus. John records the event: “*Then Mary took a pound of very costly oil of spikenard, anointed the feet of Jesus, and wiped His feet with her hair. And the house was filled with the fragrance of the oil. But one of His disciples, Judas Iscariot, Simon's son, who would betray Him, said, “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.*” (John 12:3-6) Of course, John wrote his Gospel years after Judas' death.

He struck the worst bargain in history. He did it for the money. He loved the money, more than he loved The Master. Who would have thought at the time that stealing a few coins would lead to the most horrible deed of all time and to the act of suicide? We can never be too careful about shunning the so-called “little sins.” James writes: “*Each one is tempted when he is drawn away by his own desires and enticed. Then, when desire has conceived, it gives birth to sin; and sin, when it is full-grown, brings forth death.*” (James 1:14,15)

We must never entertain the thought of sin for a minute for thoughts issue in acts, acts become habits, habits form character and character influences destiny!

#### ***The Temptation From The Devil.***

The devil took advantage of this greed and propensity for material gain and fanned it into a flame in the heart of Judas. He put the temptation before Judas to betray Jesus for monetary gain.

“*And supper being ended, the devil having already put it into the heart of Judas Iscariot, Simon's son, to betray Him....*” (John 13:2) Literally, “*having cast it into the heart of Judas.*” The Greek word used here is “*ballō*” – “*to throw or thrust violently.*” Ephesians 6:16 speaks of “*The fiery darts of the wicked one.*”

Note that first Satan cast the wicked and devilish-deed-dart into Judas' mind and since Judas did not reject it but entertained the idea, leaving the door open, we then read that “*Satan entered him.*” “*And having dipped the bread, He gave it to Judas Iscariot, the son of Simon. Now after the piece of bread, Satan entered him.*” (John 13:26,27)

Albert Barnes comments as follows: “Satan could tempt no one unless there was some inclination of the mind, some natural or depraved propensity that he could make use of. He presents objects in alluring forms fitted to that propensity, and under the influence of a strong or a corrupt inclination the soul yields to sin. In the case of Judas it was the love of money.”

### ***The Apprehension of Ultimate Defeat.***

Judas was a coward. He had observed for sometime the Jewish leader's increasing antagonism toward Jesus and His followers and knew that it was only a matter of time before the authorities would apprehend Him and His followers would likewise suffer. Judas opted to "get out" while he had the opportunity.

Judas had seen the hand-writing on the wall, so to speak; he saw the storm-clouds gathering; he heard the daily reports of how the authorities were seeking to find some cause to arrest Jesus; the opposition was increasing, the noose was tightening and Judas did not want to be caught in it.

Although he had witnessed, for three years, the most marvelous miracles ever performed, in his warped mind he must have doubted that Jesus could continue to escape the wrath of His enemies. The party was over and Judas wanted out before the ax fell. So, "*Judas Iscariot, went to the chief priests and said, 'What are you willing to give me if I deliver Him to you?' And they counted out to him thirty pieces of silver. So from that time he sought opportunity to betray Him.*" (Matt. 26:14-16)

### ***The Prediction of Scripture.***

In the Upper Room Jesus said, "*I know whom I have chosen; but that the Scripture may be fulfilled, 'He who eats bread with Me has lifted up his heel against Me.'*" (John 13:18) What scripture is it that foretells the betrayal? It is Psalm 41:9 which reads: "*Even my own familiar friend in whom I trusted, Who ate my bread, has lifted up his heel against me.*"

There was a divine plan behind this sinful spy in Jesus' company. God did not make Judas who he was or make him do what he did. God knew who Judas was and allowed him to be affiliated with the band of disciples. Jesus knew who Judas was from the beginning. Each of the original twelve disciples was hand-picked by Jesus. He said, "*Did I not choose you, the twelve, and one of you is a devil?' He spoke of Judas Iscariot, the son of Simon, for it was he who would betray Him, being one of the twelve.*" (John 6:70)

Jesus said, "One of you is a devil" – He did not say, "One of you is *the* devil." The Greek is "*diabolos,*" meaning "*slanderer, accuser.*" Strong also uses the word "*traducer,*" meaning: "*To say untrue or malicious things about; to betray.*" Judas was not the devil but was willingly a tool of the devil.

John Gill wrote: "This was an affair determined by God, known by Christ, and which he foretold to his disciples; yet all this did not in the least excuse the malice of Satan, and the wickedness of Judas."

### **WHO DID JUDAS BETRAY?**

- ***He betrayed his friend.*** "*But Jesus said to him, 'Friend, why have you come?'*" (Matt. 26:50)
- ***He betrayed his Teacher.*** "*Then Judas, who was betraying Him, answered and said, 'Teacher, is it I?'*" He said to him, "*You have said it.*" (Matt. 26:25)

- **He betrayed his Lord.** *“You call Me Teacher and Lord, and you say well, for so I am.”* (John 13:13)
- **He betrayed his Savior.** The Samaritans said, in the presence of the disciples, *“We know that this is indeed the Christ, the Savior of the world.”* (John 4:42) Jesus, in the presence of the disciples, said, *“the Son of Man has come to seek and to save that which was lost.”* (Luke 19:10)

Judas, at the final judgment, cannot plead ignorance as to who Jesus was and is. He knowingly, willingly and purposefully committed the horrible deed for which he will forever be known.

### CONCLUSION

Let us go back one more time to the Upper Room scene before Judas leaves the company of the Christ to commit his crime. What do we see? We see Jesus on His hands and knees crawling along the floor at the feet of the disciples, with a pan of water and a towel. He now approaches Judas. Yes, He knew the dirt in Judas’ heart – but He pauses to wash his feet just the same!

As Jesus knelt at Judas’ feet to wash them, what thoughts were going through Judas’ mind as he looked down upon that holy head which only had thoughts of others? As Judas watched those holy hands washing and wiping his feet, did he remember those hands breaking the bread to feed the hungry? Did he reflect upon those hands laid upon the sick and blind for healing? Upon the children for blessing?

How could he endure the Master’s touch without unendurable pangs of conscience? How could he sit there permitting Jesus to wash his feet when his heart was so vile? How could Judas go through with the dastardly deed that had formulated in his dark heart? Even though Jesus washed the disciple’s feet, Judas’ among them, Judas remained unclean. Judas now had clean feet but water could not wash away the stain upon his soul.

Now let us fast-forward to the present. We are far removed in time and distance from the historical events surrounding Judas’ actions and the subsequent developments. However, we are not outside the realm of the possibility of betraying Jesus.

We, too, enjoy the privileges that Judas enjoyed. We who are disciples of Jesus Christ walk with Him, talk with Him and experience His presence and power in our lives. But we must be on guard against defecting, in the least degree, from faithfulness to our Friend, Teacher, Lord and Savior.

Being a disciple isn’t immunity from corruption. Proximity to Jesus, will not necessarily shield us from the power of greed. Judas chose to love money more than he loved his Master. The love of the world, the lust of the flesh and the lure of the devil are yet very real. No place and company can prevent persons from being tempted by the devil. Temptation is not sin, it is the yielding to temptation that is sin. We must be continually aware of that danger and *“Guard your heart with all diligence, for out of it spring the issues of life.”* (Proverbs 4:23)

Judas lived three years in close contact with Christ, heard His words, saw His works, lived in an atmosphere of love and was unchanged. It is possible to be reckoned among Christians, go to church and yet have a heart hardened against God's love. It is possible to profess much and possess nothing. Judas made the worst bargain in history and in the end, filled with remorse, committed suicide and "went to his own place" – all persons do, saints and sinners alike. Where is your place – heaven or hell? Paradise or perdition? The choice is made this side of the grave.

**JdonJ**