

The Master's men - Part 8

Judas Iscariot

Mathew 10:1 to 4



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"If a man therefore purge himself from these, he shall be a vessel unto honour, sanctified, and meet for the master's use, and prepared unto every good work." - 2 Timothy 2:21

UP CLOSE AND PERSONAL: JUDAS

Among the twelve apostles, stands out one lonely, misfit considered as the vilest most wicked man in the Bible. In the list of apostles, he is always named last (except in Acts) and is identified as a betrayer. There are 40 verses in the New Testament mentioning Judas betrayal and for 2,000 years the name "Judas" has become another word for treachery.



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I - HIS NAME

“Judas” was a common Jewish name and very common during New Testament times. It was a second name for another apostle. (Thaddeus) . It is a personalized form of “Judah” one of the Twelve tribes and the Southern Kingdom during the time of King David and the Roman province “Judea” during the time of Christ. Jewish scholars believe the name means “Yahweh leads” Sadly it is a name that did not fit the person of Judas Iscariot.

“Iscariot” means “man of Kerioth” a small town in Judea about 23 miles south of Jerusalem and some 7 miles from Hebron. The Gospel of John indicates his father was a man by the name of Simon Iscariot. Judas is the only apostle whose name includes a geographical identification, possibly because he was the only Judean among the twelve. All the others including Jesus, were from Galilee in the North. Judean Jews generally felt superior to the Jews of Galilee and although Judas himself was from a rural village, he most likely did not fit well with the rest of the apostles.



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II – HIS CALL

Judas specific call is not recorded in the Gospels. Obviously he was attracted to Jesus and stayed with Him until the end of his ministry however there is no spiritual evidence that Judas ever had a spiritual interest in Jesus. It is likely that from the begging just like some of the apostles he attached himself with Jesus for selfish reasons, however unlike the 11, Judas never got to follow the Lord whole heartedly until it came to a point that he was finally convinced that Jesus plan's for the Kingdom fell short of what he expected.

Jesus chose Judas intentionally and specifically (John 6:46, 70, 71, John 17:12, Luke 22:21-22) He choose Judas in order to fulfill the prophecies in the Old Testament (Zech 11:12-13, Psalms 41:9. 55:12-15. 20-21) Our infinite mind cannot understand it, God had predetermined Judas betrayal (Acts 2:22-23), though at the same time, Judas was held fully responsible for it because it was of his own choice.



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III – HIS CHARACTER

Judas character must be at least acceptable because before the betrayal, nobody accused him of any wrong doing. When Jesus mentioned that one of them will betray him, nobody had any idea who it was going to be. (Mathew 26:22) Even at the last supper, nobody still had an idea despite the Lord's statements in John 13:25-26.

_____The fact that he was never suspected by other disciples, Judas must been a very remarkable hypocrite. He was even very trusted as he was the treasurer of the group. (John 13:29) No mention is ever made if he ever had a questionable background such as Mathew or Simon the Zealot's

Judas only spoken words is found in John 12:5 where he objected to Mary's anointing of Jesus feet with expensive ointment. (John 12:5) We are given an insight into his character when the Apostle John through the direction of the Holy Spirit recorded Judas ulterior motive during that incident which reflect his ultimate character.



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IV – HIS PROGRESSIVE REJECTION

It is obvious that Judas did not begin his discipleship intending to betray Jesus. Just like the rest of the disciples who had a misconception with regards to the Kingdom that Jesus was referring to, Judas also had this misconception. However unlike the other disciples, Judas fondness for our Lord turned into hatred and then rejection when his expectations were not met as Jesus talked more about his death.

Jesus knew that Judas is going to betray him, yet despite that he has given him every opportunity not to fulfill the prophecy of his rejection. Judas heard the teachings of Jesus but nevertheless decided to reject it. Jesus loved Judas that he grieved for him. (John 13:21)



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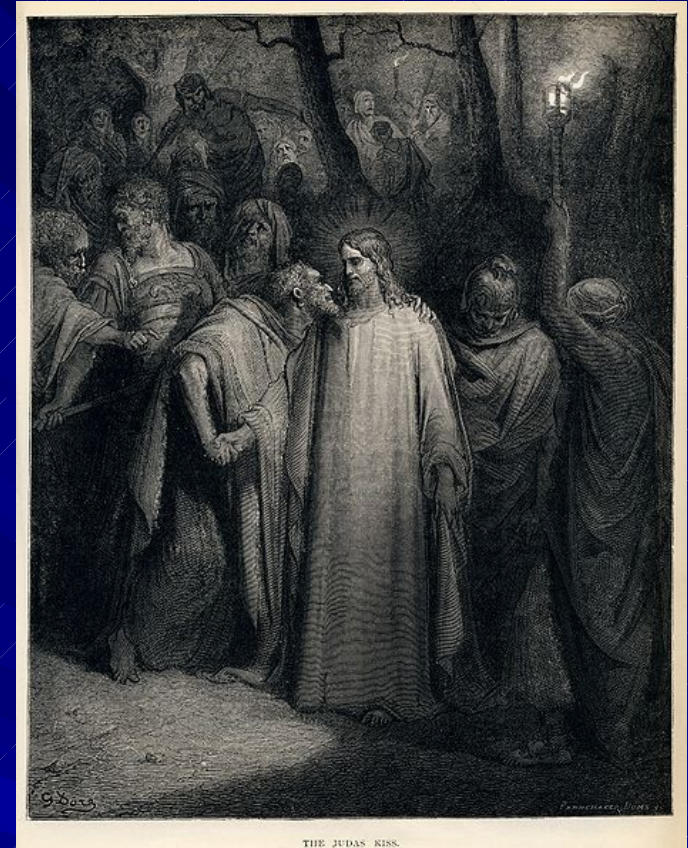
V – HIS BETRAYAL

We are not told when the idea of betraying Jesus came to Jesus, but it seems like after the incident of Mary's anointing of Jesus with perfume prompted him to pursue it.

Judas then went to the chief priest and asked how much they are willing to give them for him to betray Jesus (Matthew 26:14-16)

Judas sold Jesus for a measly sum of only 30 pieces of silver (30 denari, estimated as around a month's wages as the standard rate for a day's wages was 1 silver coin.) The small sum suggest that in his hatred and greed he was willing to sell Jesus for any price. It also suggest the hatred of the religious leader of Jesus.

To recognize Jesus in the darkness of Gethsemane, Judas used a mark of love and friendship which is a kiss as his sign of betrayal. (Mark 14:44) Even if Jesus has identified himself, Judas still kissed Jesus (John 18:4,5) showing his supreme act of hypocrisy.



IV – HIS DEATH



When Jesus was found guilty by the mock trial of the Jewish Supreme Court (Sanhedrin). Judas felt remorse and returned the 30 pieces of silver. (Repent here means remorse or metamelomai or “to regret” as opposed to “metanoia” = godly repentance) Judas had knowledge of his sin, felt grieved over his sin, but did not turn away from his sin and ask God to change his heart. (Mathew 27:4)

Instead of turning to God, because he was very materialistic and physical in his thinking he somehow thought that he could resolve the problem by the physical that is through returning the money and hanging himself. Apparently Judas attempt at hanging failed as it might have been that the branch to which the rope was tied broke that he fell over. (Acts 1:18)

The religious leaders hypocritically refused to return the money to the temple treasury because it was blood money, so they bought a field with it. (Matthew 27:7-8) fulfilling the prophecy in Zech. 11:12-13)

VI – LESSONS LEARNED FROM THE LIFE OF JUDAS

Even in great wickedness and great tragedy there can be lessons that can be learned from the life of Judas (Romans 15:4)

1.) He was the world's greatest example of lost opportunity. – Judas was among the original 12 men Jesus called to be his apostles. He had this unique opportunity to see the miracles of Jesus and learn from him, yet Judas turned his back on this opportunity. Today many people hear the Gospel clearly and yet they too like Judas choose the way that leads to destruction.

2.) Judas' life provides the world's greatest example of wasted privilege – He lusted for temporary material possessions and riches where he could have chosen eternity with the King of Kings and the Lord of Lords. He exchanged the riches of God's kingdom for the small amount of material wealth the world has to offer.



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3.) Judas life serve as the clearest illustration of love of money being the root of all evil (1 Timothy 6:10) Unbelievably he loved money so much that he sold the Son of God for such a small amount.

4.) Judas life is the supreme object in history of a patient love of God. Only God could have known the evil of Judas heart from the beginning and yet He never withdraw His offer of grace, giving him every opportunity to repent. At the last supper Christ presented Judas the dipped morsel as a gesture of love and honor and even as he was betrayed by the kiss, he called Judas "friend."

Judas was the hypocrite of all times, the supreme illustration of a ungodly life that hides behind Christ while he serves Satan.



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