

## JUDAS, THE BETRAYER

Scripture: Selected readings from the four Gospels and the Acts.

Intro: In this second message on the Passion of Christ, we come to the most tragic story in the Bible--and yet no study of the Passion would be complete without it. I refer to the story of Judas Iscariot.

Matthew, Mark, and Luke all tell about his call to be an Apostle. Cf. Matt. 10:4; Mark 3:19; Luke 6:16. But we do not know when nor where he first came into contact with the Lord Jesus Christ. All of these writers mention him last. M & M call him the betrayer; L calls him the traitor.

His name is the Greek form of Judah, which means praise. Iscariot was probably a village in the southern part of Judea. Four times John refers to Judas as Simon's son (John 6:71; 12:4; 13:2, 26).

John is the only one who mentions Judas from the time of his call until the circumstances connected with the betrayal of the Lord; but the following includes all four Gospels.

- (1) John 6:70, 71. Evidently at this time the Lord was amazed that Judas did not leave, and probably held him responsible for some who did. This followed
- (2) the discourse on the Bread of Life. Judas is called diabolos, an adversary--a term usually used of the Devil, Satan.
- (2) John tells us next of Judas' objection when Mary of Bethany anointed the feet of Jesus (John 12:4-6). Matthew and Mark both mention this incident, but do not speak of Judas. Cf. Matt. 26:6-13; Mark 14:3-9. John refers to Judas as "a thief."
- (3) Following this Matthew, Mark, and Luke tell us how Judas went out to bargain with the Jews of "thirty pieces of silver" (Matt. 26:14-16; Mark 14:10, 11; Luke 22:3-6), but Matthew is the only one who mentions the amount. But the bargain coincides with the character of a thief.
- (4) Afterwards, Judas is in the upper room with the Lord and the other Apostles. All of the Gospel writers refer to this event. Cf. Matt. 26:20-25; Mark 14:17-21; Luke 22:14, 21-23; John 13:2, 10, 11, 18-30. The first three records those ominous words of the Saviour, "It had been good for that man if he had not been born."
- (5) Only John records the prayer in John 17, and therefore is the only one to give us the words of our Lord, "None of them is lost, but the son of perdition, that the scripture might be fulfilled."

- (6) Then we have the actual account of the betrayal, recorded in all four Gospels (Matt. 26:47-50; Mark 14:43-45; Luke 22:47, 48; John 8:2-9).  
 It is worth noting that in Matthew we have the Lord's words, "Friend, why art thou come?" Luke tells of the amazement of the Lord when He said, "Judas betrayest thou the Son of man with a kiss?"
- (7) Our Lord's words to Pilate in John 19:11 appear to be a reference to Judas.
- (8) His remorse and death. His repentance was too late. It is mentioned only by Matthew and Luke (in Acts). Cf. Matt. 27:3-10; Acts 1:15-26.

What are at least some of the outstanding lessons in this solemn record? I would like to mention four.

I. A MESSAGE TO ALL CHILDREN--which includes all of us.

Judas had a good name. He was named after the royal tribe of Israel. It meant praise. It probably reflected the praise that his parents felt when he was born, the anticipation of what he might mean to his nation.

And three times John calls him, "Simon's son," as though this meant something--probably that you would never think that Simon's son would ever come to this.

I believe we can say from all of this that Judas had every opportunity that any child could have. "A good name is rather to be chosen than great riches" (Prov. 22:1), and "a good name is better than precious ointment" (Ecc. 7:1). Judas had all of this. He had a good family, good training, an excellent background. It is ~~XXXXXXXXXXXX~~ doubtful that he would have been called to be an Apostle if this had not been the case.

Then, he had an opportunity to be with good people, to be with the best. Think of the privilege of having been an intimate acquaintance of the Son of God. Surely such a person, regardless of his background, would be without any excuse.

And also we must note that he was given the ability to do works that very few men have ever been able to do. Judas surely was included in Matt. 10:1-8 ff. Do you suppose that the Lord had Judas in mind for one when He spoke the words that are recorded in Matt. 7:21-23?

It seems that no one could possibly have had a greater opportunity than Judas had, but it was all to no avail because none of this was able to change him from the person he was. And nothing will ever change us but a

personal faith in Jesus Christ. Surely his story has become a part of the divine record to serve as a solemn warning to all of us.

But this is not all.

- II. This manner of God's dealings with Judas must have been given to us in the Word of God to show us THE INDESCRIBABLE WICKEDNESS OF THE HUMAN HEART.

Could you make up a story that would be any worse if you were making it up yourself?

Nothing was sacred to Judas.

- (1) He objected when Mary wanted to worship the Lord. He knew nothing of what Mary felt in her heart toward the Lord Jesus.
- (2) He would even go to observe the Passover after he had made arrangements to betray the Lord into the hands of His enemies. The worst deed ever committed was done with religion as a cloak.
- (3) Places were not sacred to Judas. He had been in Gethsemane many times with the Lord. John relates that "Judas also, who betrayed him, knew the place (Gethsemane), for Jesus often resorted there with his disciples" (John 13:2).
- (4) Even the kiss of friendship was something which he would not hesitate to use. Luke tells us that the Lord said, "Judas, betrayest thou the Son of man with a kiss?" (Luke 22:48).

There are many places in the Scriptures where the evil in man is clearly seen, but nothing goes to the limits of what we have here. With all that Judas had in his favor, this was still what he did.

What a warning to us!

- III. But we cannot fail to see in these passages of Scripture THE CHARACTER OF GOD AS SEEN IN THE LORD JESUS CHRIST.

Do you not marvel at the sovereignty of God in choosing Judas when He knew the heart of Judas and the destiny of Judas? And can you not see the grace of God when as Judas came with the soldiers our Lord turned to him and said, "Friend, why art thou come?" (Matt. 26:50).

No one can ever charge the Lord with the downfall of Judas! In spite of everything that his parents had done for him, and in spite of everything that the Lord did for him, he did not realize what he was doing until

it was too late! The responsibility was his, and his alone.

This brings me to my last point.

- IV. The story of Judas warns us that there is A POINT OF NO RETURN--as was the case with Esau (cf. Heb. 12:16, 17).

Let me ask you solemnly tonight--those of you who have never taken Christ as your Saviour. DO YOU THINK THAT YOU CAN DECIDE WHEN AND WHERE YOU ARE GOING TO RECEIVE CHRIST AS YOUR SAVIOUR?

Judas could not get the Jews to take the money back. He certainly could not undo what he had done. Most tragic of all, he could not even now turn to the Lord.

I believe that God is a God of love, and a God of grace, but I also know that you and I had better pay attention when we know that God is dealing with us or we may regret it through all eternity!

All Judas could say was, "I have sinned in that I have betrayed innocent blood." Cf. Matt. 27:4.

— So he took his own life in a most ignominious way. And what is his memorial? A cemetery!

Concl: When I read this story how thankful I am that I know the Lord Jesus Christ as my Saviour!

But it also makes me realize that the Spirit of God has given us this story because there are many, many people who are going this same route. They have not discovered that their problem is sin, and that there is no limit to the sin that we are able to commit. Judas probably never realized that the greed in his heart would one day lead him to deliver the Son of God into the hands of wicked men--but it did!

But when he did discover it, terror filled his heart, but it was too late.

— Is it possible that there are those here tonight who have attended Central Bible for years, but you have never come to know the Lord as your Saviour in spite of the family you have, the training you have received, the associations you have been able to establish. Nothing will meet your need but Christ. If you have never trusted Him, Oh, come to Him now.