

© Into Thy Word Ministries Bible Study, www.intothyword.org

Betrayal

"Then one of the Twelve—the one called Judas Iscariot—went to the chief priests and asked, "What are you willing to give me if I deliver him over to you?". So they counted out for him thirty pieces of silver. From then on Judas watched for an opportunity to hand him over." Matthew 26:14-16

Key verses: Matthew 26; John 18

Key personalities: Jesus, and the Disciples.

Timeline: The God of Eternity; He enters as a Man, being fully God and fully Man, walks this earth as our Lead, 28-29 A.D.

After the Triumphal Entry where Jesus is publicly identified as the Messiah, the great moment of His life and ministry, He is unjustly betrayed. The Sovereign, Creator and LORD of the universe, was innocent, yet arrested and handed over for torture and ruthless execution. This betrayal sets it all in motion and continues into the Passion of Jesus. The Disciples were confused to what these events were and meant; thus, they had a very long and tiring night and day while the drama of redemption was just beginning. All they needed to do was remain focused and committed as this time was, perhaps, the ultimate test of life, death, and meekness as well as frustration that Jesus undertook (Zech. 9:8; Matt. 21-25; John 12-17)!

Key Happenings: The Passion of Christ commences!

During the Last Supper, these were Jesus' final hours as being fully human; His life here on this earth is nearly at a close. He knows some of His Disciples will betray Him. One will manipulate Him for selfish, greedy reasons, and ultimately forsake Him; another will betray Him out of confusion and desperation, and then deny Him. Yet, Jesus seeks to be intimate with the Disciples--even the ones who will betray Him--one more time before His Passion commences. All this time, the religious leaders were seeking to kill Him. I do not believe we can ever fully appreciate or understand what Jesus has done on our behalf. Betrayal is perhaps the one most heinous emotion in human experience. To have remained focused and committed at this time was perhaps the ultimate test and frustration Jesus undertook!

- Jesus has two suppers with them; one was a meal and the other was to commence a lasting ordinance, a sacrament to remember and honor Him. We see the bread and the cup. To some, this Sacrament, this Holy Communion has become a ritual or point of contention amongst denominations. This holiest of meals has real meaning far more profound, and it is an honor that we might receive Holy Communion. We have a Savior who not only save us, but demonstrated complete victory and unblemished--PURE--character *for eternity*. Jesus models THE commitment that shows the works of the Spirit even in the midst of extreme and dire circumstances and His pending, agonizing death. Jesus' character was in contrast to the pious frauds who called themselves "religious leaders," who sought their own will and used their innate wickedness to destroy Him. Jesus submitted to the will of the Father, modeling submission, surrender, and poured-out obedience for us (Luke 22:17-20).
- **Garden of Gethsemane**, means "olive oil press." Ironically and prophetically, this is where David was betrayed by his close friend, Ahithophel. It was a garden valley where olive oil was made from the olives of nearby groves, between north of Jerusalem and the Mount of Olives--a 15-minute walk from the "upper room," where they had the Last Supper and Jesus delivered His final discourse. This pristine prayer spot, which was either walled off or sectioned off for specific use at that time, and where He often meets in a "bivouac" (temporary shelter like for the Feast of Booths) to pray with His Disciples, becomes the spot where Jesus is to be betrayed. They probably arrived around 10:00 to 11:00 p.m. (2 Sam. 15:23; 1 Kings 2:37; 15:13; 2 Kings 23:4-12; Matt. 26:36; Mark 14:32; Luke 13:19; 21:37; John 19:41).

After His Last Supper and prayer walk, Jesus faces His betrayers, the misguided Disciple, the jealous, pious, fraudulent, religious leaders, and hostile soldiers. The drama for our redemption begins!

Jesus crossed the Kidron Valley into the grove of olives, while Judas, one of His most trusted Disciples, betrayed Him to the leading priests and soldiers along with the Temple guards. They all converged upon Jesus and His Disciples with weapons drawn and with the intimidation of the lanterns burning. A kiss is given, a sword is drawn, and an innocent man is given up into the hands of reprobates. Jesus comes face-to-face with His accusers, those who have conspired to destroy their very own Messiah because He got in their way and messed up their plans. They tried their best to bring many who would bear false witness--liars--to dishonor and entrap Jesus, but to no avail. Finally, the last witness comes and blatantly lies; but, truth to those religious leaders was irrelevant. In their hearts, only their desires and plans were supreme.

- Jesus, of course, knew this would happen and could have stopped it, but He submits to the Father on our behalf and met them with these words: *Whom do you seek?* They replied, *Jesus of Nazareth. I am He*, Jesus said. As they fell backwards to the ground without even a hint of His power, Jesus asked for the others to go. As previously foretold, *Not any of His are harmed*.
- Peter, acting impulsively, drew his sword and attacked, slicing off the ear of the high priest's servant; Jesus responded by healing it back. He then asked Peter to stand down and put his sword in its sheath, because He still had to drink the cup that the Father had for Him. After Jesus was arrested, bound, and taken, first to Annanias, the father-in-law of Caiaphas the high priest who disrespected Jesus with the statement, *Better that one died for all*. Yet, how powerful those words will be as One will indeed die for all to pay for sins He did not commit, but that we did, so that we can be forgiven!

Judas Iscariot. Perhaps no name in all of the ages signifies betrayal and disloyalty more than his! Judas, secretly using treachery and unfaithfulness, commits the ultimate treason against the Holy One of the universe! Judas completed this betrayal to get his way and enable his plan to go through to tip Jesus' hand to become a warrior messiah as the Zealots wanted. This man, who was with Jesus from the beginning and close in his relationship with Him--perhaps the one closest to Jesus--would be the one to betray Him! He was an Apostle. He would later hang himself and his body then fell on the rocks below (Matt. 26:14-16, 47-50; 27:3-10; John 13:29)!

- Betrayal, especially by a close friend or follower, is perhaps the one most heartbreaking emotion in the human experience.
- Why did Judas do this? In all likelihood, his motivation stemmed from confusion; blinded by pride and rage, he sought to force Jesus' hand to overthrow the Romans, not understanding Jesus' true mission. Satan entered him and used him, seeking to destroy Jesus. Satan uses our pride and rage for his gain. Another prime motivation was greed for money that overtook his focus upon Christ as Lord.
- Was Judas saved? We have not the mind of God to know that information; however the fruit of his life would seem to say no. He seemed not to believe or trust in Christ, but sought only money and power and position and is a startling example of what happens to many people who seek money, power, and prestige and not the faith of trusting in Christ (Psalm 23:6; Luke 22:24-30; John 6:6-71; 13:11-18; 17:12; Phil. 2:1-11).

Those who seek their will while pretending to be in the Kingdom never live in and for Christ and, instead, become lost in the shadow of being found and saved.

Peter blatantly denied Jesus publicly, while Judas did it in secret--both are bad, and Peter's was worse! The difference between the two is that Peter repented and Judas did not. Meanwhile, Jesus is hostilely questioned by the high priest. He is questioned about His teachings and ordered to reveal information about His Disciples, which Jesus refused to do. People will betray Him, but He will never betray us. Jesus said, *What I teach is widely known; Go ask anyone who has heard me; I do not teach in secret*.

- Jesus was not surprised by any of this. His being fully God and having absolute knowledge, control, and power, humbled and submitted Himself to the plan of redemption. Even though at any time He could easily have escaped His pain, He did not, which was for our gain (John 10:14-18).
- *Drink the cup*. This refers to Jesus' suffering, death, and martyrdom (Psalm 75:8; Ezek. 23:31-34; Matt. 26:27-28; 39; Mark 14:23-24; 36; Luke 22:42). It does not refer to the actual communal cup from the Last Supper, referred to as the "Holy Grail." This is the legend of the cup of Jesus and the quest in the

Crusades to find it. This distracted people from Christ and put the emphasis on works. Normally, *cup* refers to Judgment and God's just wrath and/or the consequences of one's action. Here, it is the cross--the consequences of our sin that He bears. Jesus suffered the wrath of God in our place for the payment of our sins (Isa. 51:17-22; Jer. 25:15-17, 28-29; Matt. 20:22; 27:48; Mark 10:39; Luke 9:22; 24:25; John 3:14; 8:28; 12:32-33; 14:23-36; Rom. 3:23-25; Heb. 2:17; 1 John 2:2; 4:10; Rev 14:10; 16:19).

- *I am.* Meaning *I am the one you seek.* This also alludes to the prime name of God, meaning "I am GOD," hence why they *fell to the ground* (Ex. 3:14; Ezek. 1:28; 44:4; Dan. 2:46; 8:18; 10:9; Hos. 13:4; Joel 2:27; Matt. 14:27; John 6:35; 7:45-46; 8:58; 9:9; Rev. 1:17).

Peter follows at a distance, watching as all these events unfold. Three times he is confronted with being a follower of Jesus, and at least three times, he adamantly denies it. Finally, a rooster crows, and he realizes that the strength he claimed would last was no longer there. His loyalty, which he had passionately articulated, left him; all he had now was a betrayal (Matt. 26: 47- 75).

- *I am not.* Foretold by the Prophet Zechariah, this is a direct denial--a betrayal to renounce what you think and believe to be true. There were at least three times that Peter verbally disowns Jesus in public. Back then, to a Jew, this was more heinous than the backroom betrayal that Judas did. Peter's betrayal was more spontaneous due to emotional disturbance while Judas' was planned and calculated. As Peter warms himself and speaks out of hurt or frustration or by Satan's lead, Jesus endures, just as He does in our lives. Mark records that Peter curses too, perhaps not vulgar, but rather a vow, saying he does not know Jesus. This, of course, is a lie; this betrayal was unjust and unnecessary! Matthew adds, *I do not know what you are saying.* Peter is denying Jesus outright several times (Matt. 26: 47- 75; Mark 14:66-72; Luke 22:54-62)!
- This testifies not just to Peter's disloyalty, but rather, our sinful nature that seeks its own and not God. Later on, we will see how God's great mercy and grace covers our inadequacies and weaknesses (Zach. 13:6-7; Matt. 5:33-37)!
- *Rooster began to crow.* A rooster crowing marked daybreak and showed Peter his disloyalty as well as the truth of Jesus' prediction. Luke records that Jesus looked at him during this! Imagine his remorse as he remembered what he told Jesus, and what Jesus' words told him. Peter is then overwhelmed with guilt and repents; Jesus will later restore him. Judas did not repent. Peter had a renewable faith while Judas was hardened and bitter. (Matt. 27:3-5; Mark 14:68-72; 16:7; Luke 22:61; John 13:37-38; 21:15-19)!

The point of this passage is the point of the Gospel. If we live out our Christian lives with the great commitment of love and faith with diligence, then we can succeed in life, ministry, and service to our Lord.

Peter, and the rest of the Disciples, missed an opportunity to be strong and loyal as they said they would be. Peter's boasting became empty words backed up with confusion, as he slept when he should have been awake, fought when he should have prayed, and forsook Jesus when he should have stood by Him. We have to realize that our promises are of no value unless there is a power to back them up; only Christ, working in us, can be that powerful. This means we need to see Him and not ourselves in our promises so they are based on reality and faith, and we must remain committed (John 13:36; 20:22-29; 21:18-19, 28).

The great, principle comfort in our distress is that Jesus shows up; He is with us and for us because of His love. The principle of love, which is the essence of the Gospel, must be our mark so it is our impact. Because we are influenced by His love, we will contemplate (think deeply) upon it and become empowered and stimulated by it. Only then will our faith stand, even when we are not thinking about it or when we are as Peter was when the rooster crowed--stressed, hurt, or confused.

Key Takeaway: Judas was considered the "best" disciple--the best looking and the most promising. Obviously, looks and position do not tell us what is inside a person. We all--at some point--will stumble, make bad choices, and/or fail. Contrastingly, in the midst of Judas' and our stumbling, Jesus models goodness, humility and love as keys to happiness and commitment in life and ministry. The question is *Where are we going with our faith and due diligence of His teachings?* We must seek to please God and submit our will to

Him; by so doing, we will become humble, trusting, and obedient to God and others (Ex. 32:19-20; 30-34; Num. 12:1-3; Psalm 37:11; Matt. 5: 3-12; 11:29).

The Call to the Church? We can either say *God, your will be done*, or He will say, *I will let your will be done*; we and our congregation will live with the consequences! The church leadership is called to real, spiritual growth and to facilitate the improvement comes from surrendering our will--not opposing or imposing upon His will. We are always called to keep Christ-centered for the Glory of God. Pointing to ourselves is not Christ-centered. Keeping Christ-centered leads the people in our care in the will of God. This is our learning about Christ as LORD, worshiping and following His decrees, and building fruit and character with and to one another. In seeking that, we can make good decisions and not be false teachers. Seeking to place Jesus first and foremost, so to follow only Him, and thus love, trust, and obey Christ is a mindset and lifestyle (Matt. 6:33; Col. 3:16; Eph. 5:17; 1 Thess. 4:3; 5:18; 1 Tim. 2:4; 1 Pet. 2:13-15; 4:19).

Questions to Ponder

1. Have you ever faced betrayal or disloyalty from a close friend? If so, how did you handle it? How could you have handled it better?
2. Have you fully appreciated or understood what Jesus has done on your behalf? What does it take for you to yield your personal rights and expectations over to God?
3. Judas was one of Jesus' most trusted Disciples; so, why do you think he betrayed Him?
4. What happens when love is not the prime mark of a Christian? What happens when it is absent from the life of a church?
5. When have you denied Jesus? Consider your selfishness and desires that may override His work, character, values, precepts, and call in you?
6. What do God's great mercy and grace mean to you? How does He cover your inadequacies and weakness? What can you do when you miss an opportunity to be strong and loyal?
7. What are you willing to sacrifice for the Kingdom? Consider that Christ gave it all for us! So, what can you and your church do to avoid being destroyed by trivialities and rather focus your endeavors on Christ?
8. Why is a person's looks and position unable to tell us what is really inside him/her? What does?
9. How have you been instructed and prepared to live out the faith? Do you feel prepared? If not, why not? Why is it important to be instructed with encouragement and joy by the best means and manner? What happens when we neglect this in our churches?
10. What does it take for a prideful person to yield his/her personal rights and expectations to God? What about you?
11. How can you be better at focusing on Christ? What do you need to do to be better with humility and keeping your focus on God's plan?
12. How and why can your spiritual improvement only come from surrendering your will--not opposing or imposing upon God's will? How can you be better at learning about Christ, following His decrees, and building fruit and character?