

Who Do You Say That I Am?

Seeing and Delighting in Jesus through an Expository Journey through the **Gospel of Matthew** 122- Jesus Chooses His Apostles- Part 19 Judas Iscariot, the one who Betrayed Jesus

Church March 16, 2025

Matthew 10:1-4

1 Jesus summoned His twelve disciples and gave them authority over unclean spirits, to cast them out, and to heal every kind of disease and every kind of sickness.

2 Now the names of the twelve apostles are these: The first, Simon, who is called Peter, and Andrew his brother; and James the son of Zebedee, and John his brother;

3 Philip and Bartholomew; Thomas and Matthew the tax collector; James the son of Alphaeus, and Thaddaeus;

4 Simon the Zealot, and Judas Iscariot, the one who betrayed Him.

*To the Glory of God the Father; God the Son;
and God the Holy Spirit. Amen.*

Today, I want to *rejoin* our verse-by-verse “*Journey*” through the Gospel Record of the Birth; Life; Ministry; Death; Resurrection; and Ascension of Jesus, the Christ according to the Apostle Matthew by picking back up on the biographical Record of the original twelve Apostles.

We just completed a series of Sermons on the “*Communion of Saints*” to begin this new Year of *approximately* 2,025 years since the Resurrection of Jesus- and I pray that you all enjoyed that Series and gained much from it.

So, today, as we *rejoin* our “*Journey through Matthew*”- I want to look at the *last* Apostle chosen by Jesus- a man we call, “Judas Iscariot”; who will *forever* go down in History as the “*man who betrayed Jesus*”.

Now the Story of Judas as portrayed in the Bible is one of the *saddest* and most *frightening* Accounts of a human being found anywhere on earth. Here is a man, who was *physically* and *literally* in

the very Presence of the incarnate God for over 3 years and yet, he maintained his *refusal* to believe or repent.

You and I are blessed to be able to read the four “Accounts” or “Gospel Records” in the Bible from the four Evangelists (Matthew, John Mark; Dr. Luke; and John) about the Birth; Life; Ministry; Death; Resurrection; and Ascension of Jesus, the Christ. And that Information thrills our Souls. But even though we have not *literally* seen our Lord (yet) we have been given the Ability and Desire to believe and hope in Him. And this is what the Apostle was “moved” by God the Holy Spirit to say to us in **1Peter 1:6-9**:

6 In this you greatly rejoice, even though now for a little while, if necessary, you have been distressed by various trials,
7 so that the proof of your faith, being more precious than gold which is perishable, even though tested by fire, may be found to result in praise and glory and honor at the revelation of Jesus Christ;
8 and though you have not seen Him, you love Him, and though you do not see Him now, but believe in Him, you greatly rejoice with joy inexpressible and full of glory,
9 obtaining as the outcome of your faith the salvation of your souls.

But when Jesus actually spoke the Words that have been faithfully recorded in the Bible- words that we treasure in our Minds and Hearts- Judas *literally* saw His Mouth move. Judas knew how tall Jesus was; along with the color of His eyes; and the tone of His Voice. Judas *physically* walked beside Jesus for over 36 months; and saw Him *unmistakably* prove His full Deity by *repeatedly* demonstrating His absolute Authority (as God) over fish; and plants; and animals; and food; and sickness; and demons; and Death; and Sin.

And yet, Judas did NOT repent; he did NOT believe; and he was NOT saved. Judas was *physically* circumcised and yet his heart was as hard as stone. But Judas did NOT believe in Jesus because He COULD NOT. And he COULD NOT believe- because he did NOT WANT to. So, while Judas WAS chosen to be an Apostle; he was NOT chosen for Salvation. Instead, Judas was chosen to be the “**Son of Perdition**” (**John 17:12**).

Now there are a thousand different Ways to talk about Judas. But suffice it to say that, along with the historical Facts about Judas- I

will also get into one of the most *despised* Truths found in the Holy Bible- the Truth about how the “*Absolute Sovereignty of God*” and the “*Full Accountability of Man*” work together yet NEVER interfere with each other.

To begin with- Judas’ Name was originally, “*Judah*” in Hebrew- after the Old Testament Patriarch. And the fact that his parents named him after a renown Bible character indicates that Judas’ Parents loved the Lord. The Hebrew Name, “*Judah*” was later rendered into Koine Greek as “*Judas*” in the 1st Century- as the New Testament was being developed.

But we also need to know that Judas’ last name was NOT “*Iscairiot*”. That name is a *transliteration* from the original Greek to the Latin to the English over several Centuries. Judas’ Family originally came from a small village or a region in the *southern* part of 1st Century Judaea called, “*Kerioth*”. And Kerioth was an *ancient* village because in **Joshuah 15:21-25**, we read:

**21 Now the cities at the extremity of the tribe of the sons of Judah toward the border of Edom in the south were Kabzeel and Eder and Jagur,
22 and Kinah and Dimonah and Adadah,
23 and Kedesh and Hazor and Ithnan,
24 Ziph and Telem and Bealoth,
25 and Hazor-hadattah and Kerioth-hezron (that is, Hazor),**

... and archeologists have discovered the ruins of a town called, “*el-Kureitein*” about 10 miles south of Hebron that many believe is Kerioth.¹

So, according to **John 6:71**- Judas was the son of a man, name “*Simon*”- who was from that Region of Kerioth. And so, Judas was known by Jesus and the other Apostles as “*Judas, who was from Kerioth*”- NOT “*Judas Iscairiot*”.

And because he was from that Region- there is reason to believe that Judas was highly educated and was “well-off” financially- because that was a highly developed area. And that probably had something to do with the Fact that Jesus set Judas over the Finances of His Ministry.

Now the Logic of the lost and pagan World is to divide people between the “*Good*” ones and the “*Bad*” ones. And those Designations

¹ Amos 2:2 says, “I will send fire upon Moab And it will consume the citadels of Kerioth” but this is in a different Location and so, is a different city.

are usually given based on what those people do in this Life. And by following this Logic- we say, “*That’s a Good Person*” about someone doing “*Good*” and “*Noble*” (Religious) and “*Acceptable*” things (things we agree with). Unless we don’t like them. And in that case- we don’t think they’re “*Good*”- no matter what they do.

And we say, “*That’s a Bad Person*” about someone doing “*Bad*” and “*Corrupt*” and “*Unacceptable*” things. Unless we like them or agree with them. And then we make *excuses* for their “*Bad*” Behavior; and we put them in the “*Good*” Category- no matter what they do.

In that Logic- those who “*make their minds up*” to “*do Good*” have *earned* and *deserve* the Favor of God. And those who “*did what was Right in their own eyes*”- have *earned* and *deserve* God’s Wrath.

But that means that “*doing Good*” and thus, becoming a “*Good person*” is simply a Choice that individuals either make or don’t make. And that is why this Logic is called a “*Works-based Salvation System*”.

So, for example, with someone who has bought into that Logic- being “*Saved*” or being “*Healed*” or being “*Blessed*” has NOTHING to do with God or His Grace and Sovereignty. These things are simply a matter of an individual- *choosing* to live their Life in a certain Way. So, those people (who *think* they follow such Logic)- believe that God’s Salvation or His Blessings or physical Healings or God’s Favor comes by Way of people *earning* them or *deserving* them based on the “*Good*” Choices they make and the “*Good*” Works they do.

And in that Logic- Man is glorified the BEST and the MOST while God is *reduced* to being nothing more than a celestial “*Errand Boy*” or a “*Divine Tool*” that gives out “*Goodies*” to those who *deserve* them.

But that is NOT at all the “*Logic of Scripture*”. The Scriptures teach that NOBODY is “*Good*” and EVERYBODY is “*Bad*”- in the sense that EVERYBODY is a Sinner- *deserving* of NOTHING but God’s Judgment on their Life. So, the Bible divides people between those who are “*Chosen*” by God and those who are NOT Chosen and who are “*left to themselves*”.

And by doing it this Way- God’s Grace is magnified; the Pride and Arrogance of Man is humbled; God receives ALL the Glory; Mercy is the ONLY game in town; and those chosen- receive ALL the Benefits- even though they DON’T deserve ANY of them!

And in this Logic- Salvation is BY Grace ALONE- and NOT by Works! And God blesses and heals and gives His Favor to patently

UNDESERVING Sinners- for ONE Reason: So that God ALONE is glorified!

So, even though the lost and pagan World understands the latest Technology; and astounding medical Breakthroughs; as well as how to make a whole lot of Money- the Concept of God's Grace given to unworthy Sinners- is a serious Mystery to them. Because in the Logic of Scripture- it DOESN'T matter how "*Bad*" a person has been in this Life. If God has chosen that individual- God will sovereignly "make" him to be "Good" and "Acceptable" to God- all by Himself (Sovereignly)!

So, a person, who has earned the Label, "*Good*" by what he has done for *himself* in this Life- may be completely EXCLUDED from the Grace of God and end up in a devil's Hell. While a person, who has earned the Label of "*Bad*" in this Life by the horrible Acts he carried out- may be chosen to be sovereignly given God's Grace and be able to live forever in the unspeakable Joys of Heaven! And that is solely the "Divine Prerogative" of our sovereign God.

My dear Friends, God can save *everybody* or *nobody*. God can bring MOST of the people on earth to Salvation or very few. God can save one person or 8 billion people; and still remain *perfectly* Righteous and *perfectly* Glorious. But *who* God saves; or *how many* He saves is NOT based on how "*Good*" or how "*Acceptable*" we have made *ourselves* based on what we have done for ourselves. And this is why God said this in **Exodus 33:19**:

I Myself will make all My goodness pass before you, and will proclaim the name of the Lord before you; and I will be gracious to whom I will be gracious, and will show compassion on whom I will show compassion."

... and this in **Romans 9:18**:

So then He has mercy on whom He desires, and He hardens whom He desires.

... so, the Distribution of Mercy; Compassion; and Grace to Sinners lies solely within God's own Divine Prerogative- because NO ONE can *earn* or *deserve* these things- no matter what he does.

And so, the main Goal of God in ALL that He does- including the Distribution of His Mercy; Grace; and Compassion- is that He alone is glorified. So, being glorified is the primary Reason behind why God does

all that He does. And that means that God is “white-hot” in His Passion to be glorified.

But that means that “Salvation” is the sovereign Act of God whereby underserving Rebels are so radically and eternally transformed (by what God alone does for them) that they receive the Fullness of their own Joy- when God alone is glorified!

So, Judas, like John and Peter and ALL the other Apostles, was a wicked Sinner- who deserved NOTHING from God except Divine Punishment. And Jesus spent all night in Prayer (**Luke 6:12**)- seeking God’s Face so He would choose the right men to be the “*Shaliah*” or the “*Representatives*” or the “*Apostles*” of the Lord- who would speak the very SAME Message and verify that Message with the very SAME Miracles.

And as He chose Andrew and Peter and James and John and Philip and Bartholomew and Matthew and Thomas and James the son of Alphaeus and Simon the Terrorist and Judas the son of James- Jesus picked these men- out from the much larger Group of “Disciples” (Students), who were very ordinary and very common Sinners- who He could teach and train to become the Apostles of Jesus Christ.

But Jesus also *purposefully* chose Judas Iscariot- a man that Jesus knew would be able to *resist* the Grace of God and *maintain* his sinful lost Condition- no matter what he saw or heard or experienced.

So, Jesus chose Judas *on purpose*. And that means that Judas’ Betrayal was NOT a surprise to Jesus. And this is where we need to take several true things together and bring them all forward at the same time- so, hold on to your hats.

In the Life of Judas and his Betrayal of Jesus- there are two *titanic* spiritual Issues: the “*Full Accountability of Man*” and the “*Absolute Sovereignty of God*” that will meet together and work together- without contradicting each other.

So, on the one hand- the Bible *clearly, repeatedly, and unapologetically* teaches that the one, true, and living God, Who is revealed in both Nature and Scripture- is “SOVEREIGN”. And our God is ABSOLUTELY Sovereign. God is absolutely Sovereign OVER EVERYTHING; and God is absolutely Sovereign over everything- ALL THE TIME! So, there is NOTHING in the created Universe that operates *independently* on its own. EVERYTHING operates in complete Submission and in total Concert with God’s Will, Word, and Decree- AT ALL TIMES! EVERYTHING that exists- was made either *directly* or

indirectly by God and owes its Existence to God. And everything that exists- exists for one single Reason- so that God alone is glorified!

As we have studied in this Church- the God of the Bible is many things. He has many Attributes that all serve to function seamlessly together in the “ONENESS” of all three Persons of God’s “TRI-UNITY”. And one of God’s Attributes is that God is “*Effectual*”. And by *Effectual* we mean to say that God does NOT do something and then *hope* that it all turns out for the Best. So, God does NOT “*try*” to do anything- He simply DOES. Look at how the Old Testament Prophet spoke for God and said this in **Isaiah 46:9-11**:

**9 “Remember the former things long past, For I am God, and there is no other; I am God, and there is no one like Me,
10 Declaring the end from the beginning, And from ancient times things which have not been done, Saying, ‘My purpose will be established, And I will accomplish all My good pleasure’;
11 Calling a bird of prey from the east, The man of My purpose from a far country. Truly I have spoken; truly I will bring it to pass. I have planned it, surely I will do it.**

So, in His sovereign *Effectualness*- God actually *accomplishes* EVERYTHING He desires. And NOTHING can thwart God’s Plan- NOT satan and NOT the evil Decisions of wicked men. **Isaiah 43:10-13** says,

**10 “You are My witnesses,” declares the Lord, “And My servant whom I have chosen, So that you may know and believe Me And understand that I am He. Before Me there was no God formed, And there will be none after Me.
11 “I, even I, am the Lord, And there is no savior besides Me.
12 “It is I who have declared and saved and proclaimed, And there was no strange god among you; So you are My witnesses,” declares the Lord, “And I am God.
13 “Even from eternity I am He, And there is none who can deliver out of My hand; I act and who can reverse it?”**

... and this is absolute Sovereignty on display.

Now 150 years ago, the overwhelming majority of people in the visible Church believed this. But as gross Darkness and Ignorance of both God and His Word has swept over the people; and has been

replaced with very shallow and unbiblical Teachings that *tickle* the ear; *magnify* Man; and *minimize* God- we live in a Day when the overwhelming majority in the modern Church no longer believe or even understand the “*Absolute Sovereignty of God*”.

And as a Result- ancient Heresies, that the Church of Jesus *confronted, exposed, and defeated* many Centuries ago- have made a huge Comeback; and are now, in some areas, *more popular* than biblical Truth! And one of the most prevalent false Teachings that abounds in our Day is the Concept of what is called, “*Human Free-Will*”. This is a Heresy that was exposed, condemned, and cast out of the Church- 1700 years ago. But even though that is true- MORE people believe this unbiblical Teaching today than believed it 17 Centuries ago!

This unbiblical Lie teaches that, although Mankind is “Fallen”- we are NOT so fallen as to have lost our Ability to make “Choices” and “Decisions” that are entirely “Free”. And this “*doctrine of demons*” goes on to teach that God Himself so values “Human Free-Will” that He is NEITHER “able” nor “willing” to *violate* it or even *interrupt* it- and that Almighty God is actually in Bondage to *agree with* and *obey* it! And that, dear friends, is Blasphemy!

And nowhere in the Bible is the Concept of God’s Absolute Sovereignty put on Display in opposition to the supposed “Free-Will” of Man more clearly than right here with Judas Iscariot and his Betrayal of Jesus. So, let’s examine both of these Issues together in the infamous Sin of Judas.

Now right off “Jump-street” the Holy Bible declares clearly and repeatedly that human beings have a “Will”. We HAVE the Capacity to Choose and to make Decisions. And because God has given us that Ability- we are then fully Responsible *before* God and Accountable *to* God for choosing the Right thing. So, here is Truth #1:

Mankind- even lost and unsaved Mankind- has a “Will” and is able to make Choices and Decisions.

... but we CANNOT stop with this Truth. We must go on to the next one. Truth #2:

It is because we have a “Will” and are able to make Choices and Decisions as to why God holds us fully Accountable for the

Choices we make

... which is why God can punish us for NOT choosing the Right thing.

Okay. We can make Choices and God holds us accountable for the Choices we make. Truth #3:

Our “Will” (and thus what we Choose) is NOT “Free”. Our “Will” is “in Bondage” to our Nature.

The Problem with the Teaching of “*Human Free-Will*” is NOT the word, “*Will*”. It is the word, “*Free*”. The word, “*Free*” as used in this Context has to do with being: “*Autonomous*”- which is “*Self-ruled*”. In other words, when we say that our “*Wills*” are “*Free*” we are saying that our “*Choices*” and “*Decisions*” are completely *unencumbered* by ANYTHING else- *including* our fallen Loves or even God Himself. And this would mean that ALL our Choices are made “*in a Vacuum*” and are both Arbitrary and have NO Connection *to* or *with* anything else. And that is simply NOT true and has NEVER been true.

We do NOT choose *anything* in a vacuum. Never have and never will. All of our Choices are ALWAYS based on something else. And that “something else” is what we *love*; what we *want*; and what we *desire*. So, do human beings make Choices? Yes! All day long. But NONE of our Choices are “Free”.

Human beings can ONLY choose in accord with what we love; what we want; and what we desire. In fact, without some external Coercion, we CANNOT choose contrary to what we want; what we love; and what we desire. So, ALL of our Choices are ALWAYS attached to what we love; what we want; and what we desire.

Now everyone on earth is either saved or lost. And saved people love God and the things of the Spirit of God (**1Corinthians 2:14**). And ALL of their Choices reflect those divine Loves; Wants; and Desires. So, ALL saved people love God. Yet NO lost person loves God. So, what do lost people *love*? What do lost people *want*? And what do lost people *desire*? Do lost people *love* God? No, they do NOT! Do lost people *desire* to obey God? No! Do lost people *want* to glorify God? No! What do lost people love; want; and desire? *Whatever* will *magnify* them; *whatever* will “*make much of them*”; and *whatever* will *promote* the things they love; want; and desire- like MORE Sin and MORE Rebellion

against God. So, lost people love; want; and desire two things:

1. Sin
2. Self

... and so, ALL their Choices reflect their “*fallen* Loves”; their “*sinful* Desires”; and their “*depraved* Wants”.

But WHY do lost people *love* what they love? WHY do they *want* what they want? And WHY do lost people *desire* what they desire- even when they, intellectually understand, that their Choices will eventually bring them to Destruction? ALL of their “Loves”; “Wants”; and “Desires” flow out from their “*Nature*”.

So, ALL the Choices of lost people are *predicated* on what they love; want; and desire. And ALL of the Loves; Wants; and Desires flow out from their Nature. Thus- ALL of the Choices of ALL lost people are “*in Bondage*” to their Nature.

But what kind of “Nature” do ALL lost people have? The Bible teaches that ALL lost people have a “*fallen*” Nature; a “*sinful*” Nature; and a “*depraved*” Nature. So, what does this fallen, sinful, and depraved Nature look like? **Ephesians 2:1-3** teaches us about the Attributes and Characteristics of a “Nature” that is “lost” and “fallen”?

- Spiritually “Dead” (v.1)
- Walking (living out our daily Life) according to the “Course of this World” (v.2)
- Walking according to the “prince of the Power of the Air” (satan) (v. 2)
- Walking according to the “spirit that is now working in the sons of disobedience” (v. 2)
- Living in the “lusts of our Flesh” (v. 3)
- Indulging the Desires of the Flesh and of the Mind (v. 3)
- Children of God’s Wrath (by Nature) (v. 3)

... and this is why Moses was “moved” by God the Holy Spirit to write this in **Genesis 6:5**:

Then the Lord saw that the wickedness of man was great on the earth, and that every intent of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually.

Now please look again at the *last* part of this verse. Moses said,

... every intent of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually.

Look at the words Moses used here:

- **Every**
- **Intent**
- **Only**
- **Evil**
- **Continually**

The phrase, “**only Evil**” means: NO capacity for Good. None. And the word, “**continually**” means: “All the Time”. So, lost and fallen people are “ALL Evil- ALL the Time”!

Now if this is the Condition of all lost people- how is *anyone* saved? This is why we MUST be “born again”; and WHY the New Birth MUST be a “Sovereign Act of God alone”. You see, in the Miracle of the New Birth- God graciously and sovereignly (all by Himself) gives us a new “Nature”. And that new Nature produces new, spiritual Loves; Wants; and Desires that are focused on God and the “things of the Spirit of God”. And those new, godly, spiritual Loves; Wants; and Desires bring forth new, spiritual and godly Choices.

But God and God alone is the ONLY one who can *initiate* this New Birth. We CANNOT *initiate* it; or *ask* for it; or even *want* it! Why? Because we are “spiritually Dead”! So, the New Birth must be “given” to us. It is NOT something we engineer or make happen. So, who is it who will experience the New Birth? All who have been chosen by God for Salvation, from “**before the Foundation of the world**” (Ephesians 1:4)! ... and many people find that to be frightening.

But here is the Good News. Because the New Birth is a Sovereign Act of God alone; and because the Predestination of God to save His people is “Unconditional”- it doesn’t matter how “Bad” we have been or how much we have sinned! God’s Grace will *triumph* in the Lives of those our God has determined to save!

Okay, now let’s put what we have learned back together in the Life and Betrayal of Judas. Five Points:

1. It was God’s “Predetermined Plan” for Jesus to be betrayed and crucified
2. Judas was chosen as the “Son of Perdition” BEFORE he was born

3. God did NOT force Judas to betray Jesus
4. Judas betrayed Jesus because he wanted to
5. God damned Judas for betraying Jesus

It was God's "Predetermined Plan" for Jesus to be Betrayed and Crucified

The Acts 2:22&23

22 "Men of Israel, listen to these words: Jesus the Nazarene, a man attested to you by God with miracles and wonders and signs which God performed through Him in your midst, just as you yourselves know—

23 this Man, delivered over by the predetermined plan and foreknowledge of God, you nailed to a cross by the hands of godless men and put Him to death.

Now look again closely at verse 23- because this is where the twin Mysteries of "*Man's Accountability*" and "*God's Sovereignty*" meet together:

this Man, delivered over by the predetermined plan and foreknowledge of God, you nailed to a cross by the hands of godless men and put Him to death.

Jesus is "**this Man**" in this verse. And the Apostle Peter is preaching that Jesus was "**delivered over**"- where that phrase includes BOTH Judas' Betrayal as well as Jesus' kangaroo Trial and Crucifixion. But what was the Way that Peter said Jesus was "**delivered over**"? By TWO completely *different* Ways:

- 1. by the predetermined plan and foreknowledge of God**
- 2. by the hands of godless men**

The Bible says that Jesus was "**delivered over**" to be betrayed and crucified by the "**predetermined plan and foreknowledge of God**". And that illustrates "*God's absolute Sovereignty*". So, BEFORE God made the Universe- He determined and planned and decreed that His Son- Jesus, the Christ- the Jewish Messiah- would be "delivered over" and betrayed and crucified. So, from that we can say and believe and teach with all Confidence-

**It was God's perfect Will for Jesus to be "delivered over"
and betrayed and crucified**

... and because God is “Effectual” He did NOT simply *plan* for this and then hope that *somehow, some day*, and with *someone*- it would come to pass. No, God sovereignly MADE this happen! God “saw to it” that all of the minute Details of His “**predetermined plan and foreknowledge**” concerning the Betrayal and Crucifixion of Jesus- would happen! And that illustrates for us the “*Absolute Sovereignty of God*”.

Now if that was all the Bible said- we could close up shop and go home. But that is NOT all that the Bible says about this. In *addition* to the Betrayal and Crucifixion of Jesus being the perfect Will of God- it was ALSO carried out...

... by the hands of godless men

... which illustrates the “*Accountability of Man*”.

So, while God is Sovereign and the Will and Choices of Man are NOT “Free”- Man is held fully Accountable for what he does choose to do. The Fact that Dr. Luke quoted Peter here as saying those men were “**godless**” shows that what they did was Sinful, Evil and Wrong. But it also shows “Volition”. The men involved in “delivering over” Jesus to be crucified- **CHOSE** to do so. And therefore, they were able to be damned by God for that Choice.

1,000 years BEFORE Jesus was born- King David was “moved” by God the Holy Spirit to infallibly write **Psalms 69** and **109** that predicted Judas’ Betrayal. And now look at **John 6:70&71:**

70 Jesus answered them, "Did I Myself not choose you, the twelve, and yet one of you is a devil?"

71 Now He meant Judas the son of Simon Iscariot, for he, one of the twelve, was going to betray Him.

... so, way BEFORE Judas actually betrayed the Lord- Jesus called him a “**devil**”. Yet Jesus also said He had *purposefully* chosen all of the Apostles. So, from that we can confidently say and believe and teach:

1. It was God’s Will and predetermined Plan that Judas betray Jesus
2. Jesus chose Judas so he *would* betray Him
3. Judas’ Betrayal was *sinful*
4. God did NOT *force* Judas to betray Jesus

5. Judas betrayed Jesus because he *wanted* to
6. God *judged* Judas for that Betrayal

God does NOT directly *Cause* Evil. He *Allows* Evil to exist- and *Uses* Evil to bring forth a *greater* Good that would NOT come forth had God not allowed the Evil

So, the greater “Good” in the Evil of the Betrayal of Jesus by Judas- that would NOT have come forth had God not allowed that Evil- is the Salvation of all of God’s Elect!

So, was it God’s Will for Judas to betray Jesus? Yes! God *predetermined* it! Did Jesus choose Judas *purposefully* so he WOULD betray Jesus? Yes! That is the ONLY Reason Jesus chose him to be part of the Apostles.

Now some would argue that this is NOT “fair” and that God is somehow “Unjust” to choose Judas for no other Reason other than that he would betray the Lord. So, you say, “*That’s NOT ‘fair!’*” But is it true? Did God do this before Judas? Yes, He did. Please look at **Romans 9: 13-21:**

13 Just as it is written, "JACOB I LOVED, BUT ESAU I HATED."

14 What shall we say then? There is no injustice with God, is there? May it never be!

15 For He says to Moses, "I WILL HAVE MERCY ON WHOM I HAVE MERCY, AND I WILL HAVE COMPASSION ON WHOM I HAVE COMPASSION."

16 So then it does not depend on the man who wills or the man who runs, but on God who has mercy.

17 For the Scripture says to Pharaoh, "FOR THIS VERY PURPOSE I RAISED YOU UP, TO DEMONSTRATE MY POWER IN YOU, AND THAT MY NAME MIGHT BE PROCLAIMED THROUGHOUT THE WHOLE EARTH."

18 So then He has mercy on whom He desires, and He hardens whom He desires.

19 You will say to me then, "Why does He still find fault? For who resists His will?"

20 On the contrary, who are you, O man, who answers back to God? The thing molded will not say to the molder, "Why did you make me like this," will it?

21 Or does not the potter have a right over the clay, to make from the same lump one vessel for honorable use and another for common use?

... now there is a lot here- but please focus on verse 17:

For the Scripture says to Pharaoh, "FOR THIS VERY PURPOSE I RAISED YOU UP, TO DEMONSTRATE MY POWER IN YOU, AND THAT MY NAME MIGHT BE PROCLAIMED THROUGHOUT THE WHOLE EARTH."

Now here, in **Romans 9**- the Apostle Paul is teaching about God's absolute Sovereignty in Salvation. And, in this Section, he is making the Point that since God is Sovereign- He can do with His Creatures *whatever* He deems to be Proper and Correct. And here, in verse 27, Paul quotes from **Exodus 9:16** where God Himself says that the ONLY Reason Pharaoh is alive- is so that through him, two things might happen:

1. So that God's Power (Judgment) might be demonstrated through him (in destroying him)
2. So that God's "Name" (Reputation/Renown) might be proclaimed throughout the whole earth

... and Paul is teaching here that these two Purposes are the ONLY Reason Pharaoh was born; the ONLY Reason his heart was beating; and the ONLY Reason his breathed air.

In other words, the inspired; infallible; and inerrant Word of the living God boldly declares here that God had NO Intention of bringing Pharaoh into Conviction; NO Intention of granting him the "Gift of Repentance"; and God had NO Intention of saving his soul! Pharaoh was on earth for those two Reasons and those two Reasons- alone!

But before you get "bent out of shape" with God- please read verses 18- 20 again:

18 So then He has mercy on whom He desires, and He hardens whom He desires.

19 You will say to me then, "Why does He still find fault? For who resists His will?"

20 On the contrary, who are you, O man, who answers back to God? The

thing molded will not say to the molder, "Why did you make me like this," will it?

... and the Question that Paul asks of his own Teaching in verse 19 is:

"Why does He still find fault? For who resists His will?"

... in other words, "*That's NOT fair!*"

"Wait just a minute, Paul! God is absolutely Sovereign. And whatever He wants- He gets. So, it just isn't fair if God acts this Way toward Pharaoh!" Now this is a very common Objection to what the Bible clearly teaches. MOST people in the modern Church embrace this Objection. And they do so- in direct Opposition to what the Holy Bible actually says.

But they object to the Word of God- because they have ALREADY made an Assumption about God and His Mercy; Grace; and Compassion- that simply isn't true. So, even though they will "say" they DON'T believe that Salvation can be earned by our Works- they, nevertheless, think (and believe and say) that God somehow OWES people His Grace; Mercy; and Compassion! And that is simply a fundamental Contradiction.

Grace; Mercy; and Love- BY DEFINITION- MUST be totally "free" from God's Perspective- or they cease to be Grace; Mercy; and Compassion. Either God distributes Grace; Mercy; and Compassion- *freely*- or these things become "Payments" or "Wages"- that are *owed* to people who have *earned* them!

For Grace to be Grace; for Mercy to be Mercy; and for Compassion to be Compassion- they CANNOT be *owed* to anyone; and no one can *earn* or *deserve* them. But if that is true- then on what Basis are these things distributed? By God's own Divine Prerogative! And that is why God said,

"I WILL HAVE MERCY ON WHOM I HAVE MERCY, AND I WILL HAVE COMPASSION ON WHOM I HAVE COMPASSION."

... and that is also why God said,

So then He [God] has mercy on whom He desires, and He hardens whom He desires. (Romans 9:18)

... but now look carefully at verse 21:

Or does not the potter have a right over the clay, to make from the same lump one vessel for honorable use and another for common use?

Now notice that Paul is NOT asking, “*Does God do this?* (choose one but not another)”- because, obviously, God DOES do this. To do what?

... to make from the same lump one vessel for honorable use and another for common use?

Now the “**same lump**” in this verse is the Clay from the earth from which God fashioned Man. So, God takes, “from the same lump” enough clay to make two different vessels:

1. **one vessel for honorable use**
2. **another for common use**

The Vessel for “**honorable use**” is a clay tray used at a formal Dinner on which food is placed to serve to the guests. The Vessel for “**common use**” is a clay pot in which people use the bathroom.

But BOTH Vessels came from the “**same lump**”! So, there is NO DIFFERENCE in the Vessels themselves. Both of them are clay from the same lump! So, the ONLY DIFFERENCE is in the Potter’s Will; Design; and Plan. The Potter *could* have *reversed* His Intention and used them in exactly the opposite Ways. So, in the Case of the Potter and the Clay- the Potter is absolutely Sovereign over the Clay- even in the Way it is used!

But look again at what the Apostle is asking in this verse. Paul is NOT asking, “*Does God do this?*” Rather he asks, “**does not the potter have a right over the clay... ?**” So, the Question is, “*Does God have this RIGHT?*” In other words, there can be no doubt to anyone who reads the Bible with any degree of Honesty that God DOES do this. So, the ONLY Question that remains is, “*Is God acting sinfully by doing this? Is God unjust to do this?*” In other words, “*Is God acting like the evil deities of the pagan religions of the world- who abuse and mistreat their followers? Or, does God have this Right- since He is Sovereign?*”

And the Answer is, “**YES! God does indeed has this Right!**” But then

what is the Conclusion of all this Information?

So then it does not depend on the man who wills or the man who runs, but on God who has mercy. (Romans 9:16)

Salvation and Blessings and Healings and God's Favor does NOT depend on the one who "*makes a Choice*" (**wills**). And these things do NOT depend on the one who "*labors to earn them*" (**runs**). But ALL these things depend totally on God alone- because only God has Mercy!

So, was Judas chosen *so that* he would betray the Lord? Yes! In fact, that was the ONLY Reason Jesus chose him. Was Judas' Betrayal of Jesus *sinful*? Yes! It was THE *worst* or one of THE *worst* Sins ever committed! Since it was God's Will for Judas to betray Jesus- did God *force* Judas to betray Him? No! So, *why* did Judas betray Jesus? Because he *wanted* and *chose* to! Did God have the Power to stop Judas? Yes! But because it was God's Will for Judas to betray Jesus- God sovereignly "stepped aside" and allowed Judas to do what was already in his heart to do! Did God *damn* Judas for betraying Jesus? Yes! Judas went to "**his own place**" in Hell! (**The Acts 1:25**).

So, this is one of the most obvious Displays in the entire Bible where the two Mysteries of the "*Absolute Sovereignty of God*" and the "*Full Accountability of Man*" are seen together.

But *specifically*, why did Judas betray Jesus? After watching the Lord do so many wonderful and honorable and good and helpful things- why betray Him? If you don't agree with Jesus- then just walk away. Many did- 70 in one day! Yet, walking away was NOT a choice for Judas. In Judas' mind- Jesus was wrong and had to be stopped. And that indicates something very interesting.

It is my Opinion that Judas, like MANY other Jews of that Day- had grown very *disillusioned* with Jesus as being their Messiah. And we need to try to put this into Context. For over 300 years- the Jews and the nation of Israel had been occupied and brutally dominated by a pagan military force. First it was the Greeks and now the Romans.

In addition- ever since the "Burden" of Malachi- there had been 400 years of total Silence. There was NO Vision; NO Dream; NO Voice from Heaven; No Angel; NO Prophet; NO Seer; and NO Word from on High. Just deafening Silence. And many Jews had lost Hope and thought God was either dead or had abandoned them.

And during this 4 Centuries of Silence- the Jews fabricated all sorts of ungodly and unbiblical Beliefs and Things that neither God nor Moses had authorized anywhere in the 39 Books of the Old Testament. The false Teaching of Angels and the Sabbath; along with the Jews allowing a pagan Gentile Ruler to improve and expand the Temple in Jerusalem would have NEVER been allowed had the Jews maintained their Standing with God.

The “Pharisees” rose to Power during this Time along with the Concept of “Synagogues”- that were NOT commanded by God. So, even though their Existence was NEVER authorized in the Old Testament- by the Time Jesus walked the earth- the Pharisees outshined even the Levitical Priests!

But, perhaps the most grievous Departure from biblical (OT) Authority was the gross Perversion that was made during the 400 years of Silence concerning the coming Messiah. The Angel told Joseph,

She will bear a Son; and you shall call His name Jesus, for He will save His people from their sins. (Matthew 1:21)

... yet, because of so much false Teaching- the average Jew of the 1st Century was no longer looking for a Savior- who would rescue them from God’s Wrath against their Sins.

Except for the “Remnant” of Jews who maintained their faithfulness to God- the average Jew was looking for a *political* and *military* Commander, who would raise a physical Army of Jewish Warriors, who would violently overthrow the despised pagans and return Israel to the Jews- ALONE!

These Warriors- led by the messianic Leader would then “re-patriate” the Jews who had been dispersed throughout the world because of Persecution. Then this “messiah” would wage War with all the pagan Nations of the world and conquer them. And finally, this King would sit down in the “Throne of His Father, David” and “rule the world with a rod of Iron”. This is what the average Jew was expecting from the Messiah when he came.

But when Jesus came- He NEVER said a harsh word about the pagan Romans, who were brutally occupying the “Promised Land”. In fact, He commanded that the Jews forgive and pray for their Enemies. Yet Jesus constantly confronted and rebuked the religious Leaders

(Pharisees) to their face. Jesus said He was going to tear down the Temple in Jerusalem. Jesus NEVER sacrificed a single animal the entire Time He was on the earth; and He NEVER worshipped God inside the Temple. And even though He NEVER violated God's Law a single Time- Jesus went out of His Way to insult and violate the man-made Rules of the hypocritical religious Rulers concerning the Sabbath; the Temple; and the Old Testament Scriptures.

So, it is my Opinion that Judas *genuinely* thought- in his lost, pagan, and unsaved mind- that Jesus was a Problem that would hinder or stop the true Messiah from coming. And so, Jesus had to be taken down. And that is why he betrayed our Lord.

But that leaves one more Question. Judas betrayed Jesus- in what was, perhaps the most- evil Sin ever committed. But Peter betrayed Jesus, too. On the surface- Judas did several things that would indicate a true and genuine Repentance- while Peter did NOT. And yet, Peter was forgiven while Judas was not. And my Question is, "*Why?*" And Lord willing, I'll answer that Question next week.

Amen. Let's pray.

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