

# *Who Do You Say That I Am?*

Seeing and Delighting in Jesus through an Expository  
Journey through the **Gospel of Matthew**

123- Jesus Chooses His Apostles- Part 20

The Supremacy of Jesus and the Damnation of Judas

Church March 23, 2025

## **The Acts 1:15-26**

**15 At this time Peter stood up in the midst of the brethren (a gathering of about one hundred and twenty persons was there together), and said,**

**16 "Brethren, the Scripture had to be fulfilled, which the Holy Spirit foretold by the mouth of David concerning Judas, who became a guide to those who arrested Jesus.**

**17 For he was counted among us and received his share in this ministry."**

**18 (Now this man acquired a field with the price of his wickedness, and falling headlong, he burst open in the middle and all his intestines gushed out.**

**19 And it became known to all who were living in Jerusalem; so that in their own language that field was called Hakeldama, that is, Field of Blood.)**

**20 "For it is written in the book of Psalms, 'LET HIS HOMESTEAD BE MADE DESOLATE, AND LET NO ONE DWELL IN IT'; and, 'LET ANOTHER MAN TAKE HIS OFFICE.'**

**21 "Therefore it is necessary that of the men who have accompanied us all the time that the Lord Jesus went in and out among us—**

**22 beginning with the baptism of John until the day that He was taken up from us—one of these must become a witness with us of His resurrection."**

**23 So they put forward two men, Joseph called Barsabbas (who was also called Justus), and Matthias.**

**24 And they prayed and said, "You, Lord, who know the hearts of all men, show which one of these two You have chosen**

**25 to occupy this ministry and apostleship from which Judas turned aside to go to his own place."**

**26 And they drew lots for them, and the lot fell to Matthias; and he was added to the eleven apostles.**

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

One of the most *common* Aspects of Christianity- which is also one of the most *amazing*- is the Fact that Sinners repent. The Bible teaches that for lost Sinners to be saved- they MUST “turn away” from their former Life of Rebellion and Disobedience (in their daily Lives) and gladly submit to the Authority of Scripture- so that God alone is glorified.

In other words, what the New Birth does- is to so radically *transform* the human Nature- that people no longer desire to live their Lives- *according to the dictates of their own mind and heart*- and they begin to “*hate their Sin*” by *turning away* from it. And they also begin to “*love Jesus*” by seeking to joyfully obey what Jesus said (**John 14:15**).

And so, “loving Jesus and hating Sin” are the “by-Products”; the “Fruit”; the unmistakable Proof”; or the “Results” of a person already having *experienced* the sovereign Miracle of the New Birth.

But to be “*Justified*” (forgiven and made Righteous)- *requires* Repentance and Belief. And that is one of the main Reasons I object to the modern phrase where Christians tell Sinners to just, “*accept Jesus into your heart*”- even though I understand what they mean by this.

The Reality is that the Bible doesn’t teach this phrase- and never has. And I’m NOT merely being *semantical* here. In order for anyone to be “*made fit for Heaven*”- they MUST have ALL of their Sins (Past, Present, and Future) forgiven; and they MUST have God the Father impute the spotless Righteousness of Jesus to them. And that *requires* two things:

1. Repentance
2. Belief (Faith)

... and my Concern is that by telling people to merely “*accept Jesus into their hearts*”- they might think that these two Requirements are NOT necessary- even though they absolutely are.

Now we have gone over many times in this Church just what “Faith” is and what it looks like in Salvation- in great depth. So, today, I want to concentrate on what true, genuine Repentance is- and what it looked like in the Life of two very famous men:

1. Judas Iscariot
2. Simon Peter

Now last Time- I illustrated a great “Mystery” within Christianity- that is purely biblical- that involves the Intersection of two seemingly contradictory Aspects of:

1. The Absolute Sovereignty of God

## 2. Human Responsibility/Accountability

God is absolutely Sovereign- over everything- all the Time. And Man is held completely Accountable and Responsible to God for what he thinks; believes; says; loves; wants; chooses; and does. And so, God alone rules supremely over all that He created. And Man can be either blessed or damned by God according to what he thinks; believes; says; loves; wants; chooses; and does.

So, there is NO time; and NO Situation where God is NOT absolutely Sovereign. And there is NO Time; and NO Situation where Man is NOT held completely Accountable by God. And so, God *blesses* faithful bond-slaves; and God *judges* unrepentant sinful people. And both God's Blessings and Judgment on them is based on the indisputable Fact that God is Sovereign and Man is Accountable.

And many people- both Lost and Saved- *seem* to understand this very simple Dynamic. God *blesses* people who have *earned* His Blessings by being Obedient to what God has said. And God also judges others- who have *disobeyed* and *rebelled* against Him. And then- people go on to *assume* that "Religion" then is basically just learning about all of the "DO's and DON'TS"- so we know how to live our Lives. And if these two things was all there was- then those who believe and teach this would be Correct.

But they are NOT correct- because there is one *more* Aspect to all this- that I left out- that changes EVERYTHING about this Dynamic. And that "missing Ingredient" is the Reality that ALL human beings are already "*Fallen*" to begin with. Everyone of us- are "*Products*" of the Original Sin of Adam in the Garden. And that means that human babies do NOT start out in this Life as "*Innocent*" and then, after they get older and begin to sin- they BECOME "*Sinners*". The Bible does NOT teach that- and NEVER has.

Christianity teaches that there is NO ONE who is "*Good*" in a "Moral" or "Eternal" or "Spiritual" sense of that Word. That everyone of us are *already* "*Sinners*"- at the very Moment of Conception. So, we do NOT "become" Sinners when we sin. We sin against God because we are ALREADY "*Sinners*" in our Natures- by virtue of the Original Sin of Adam having been imputed to us in our Mother's womb. So, *everybody* begins this Life- in the Condition of already being "*Bad*"; "*Sinful*"; "*Rebellious*"; "*Fallen*"; and "*Lost*"- and in great NEED of a Savior- who is Jesus, the Christ. And this Reality MUST be added to the mix- if we are to understand this Life correctly.

But because we have added the Reality that EVERYBODY is "*Bad*" and a "*Sinner*" and NOBODY is "*Good*"- in and of themselves- we *also* have to add one *more* Aspect to this Dynamic in order to get the full Picture: The magnificence of GRACE.

And the “Grace of God” is the sovereign Power of God that effectually *overrides* or *by-passes* or *reaches past* the Reality of the fallen Condition of people- in order to grant to them God’s Favor; God’s Love; and God’s Special Treatment. So, now we have four things and NOT just two:

1. God is absolutely Sovereign over everything all the Time
2. Every Human Being is *already* Fallen and Sinful
3. God holds *every* Human Being fully Accountable
4. The Grace of God gives God’s Favor to fallen Sinners

So, *why* do people sin against God? Because, in their lost and fallen Condition- they are blind to the “Value” or the “Beauty” or the “Wisdom”; or the “Importance”; or the “Glory” of God. And because they don’t see any personal BENEFIT to God- they *ignore* or *minimize* or outright *reject* Him. And all that is left then- is for them to “*do what is Right in their own eyes*”. Look what the Apostle Paul wrote about this in **2Corinthians 4:3&4a**:

**And even if our gospel is veiled, it is veiled to those who are perishing, in whose case the god of this world has blinded the minds of the unbelieving ...**

Now the “**god of this world**” is satan. And the Bible says here that satan has, “**blinded the minds of the unbelieving**”. But *why* did satan blind the minds of the unbelieving? The Apostle went on to infallibly write,

**... so that they might not see ...**

... see what?

**... the light of the gospel [Good News] of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God. (2Corinthians 4:4b)**

... or as he put it in verse 6:

**... the Light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Christ.**

... so, satan *blinds the minds* of the Unbelieving so they will not see the Glory of God in Jesus Christ- which Paul said IS the Gospel.

So, being blind or being unable to see or comprehend the Reality of the Value and Beauty of God in Christ- is what being “Lost and Fallen” is. And that is

the Condition of every single human being on earth- from the Moment of Conception.

But if that is true- then how is anyone saved? Paul said this in **2Corinthians 4:6a**

**For God, who said, "Light shall shine out of darkness," is the One who has shone in our hearts ...**

... which is simply another Way of understanding how the sovereign Grace of God *rescues* guilty Sinners in the New Birth.

So, God sovereignly *unveils* our minds as the Word of God is being heralded. That is the Grace of God- *overriding* our lost Condition and bringing God's Favor to us- so we can see. And when our minds are sovereignly given the Ability to behold the Glory of God in Jesus- our first initial Response is that we "see"; we understand; and we comprehend. And that "seeing" brings us into very powerful Conviction.

So, as our mind is *forcefully, powerfully, and effectually* "unveiled" by God's Grace- we respond to that Grace by no longer being blind to the Value and Beauty and Importance of God in Christ. So, we "see" God in the very zenith of His Glory- which is found ONLY in the resurrected Jesus! And the Contrast between God in His Glory and us in our Wickedness- is so stark and clear- that we instantly hate and despise and loath and regret our Sin and the sinful person we are. And THAT is what true, genuine, Spirit- born "Conviction" is. And it is that kind of Conviction that facilitates true, genuine Repentance.

Now "*Repentance*" comes from a Greek word (*metanoia*; Strong's #3341) that has to do with a "*change of mind*". So, by God's sovereign, powerful, and effectual Grace- our minds that were veiled and blinded by satan have now been unveiled so we can comprehend the Worth and Value and Importance and Beauty and Glory of God Almighty in the Person of Jesus.

And that "Seeing" has effectively changed our minds. And so, instantly, we now have a very high Value and Worth of God in Christ and we respond to that by hating our Sin and the sinful Person we have become and we now seek to no longer run and hide from God- but we now seek to run TOWARDS God- to beg Him to forgive and cleanse us from all Sin and Wickedness! And this Desire to run *from* Sin and to run *towards* God- is the Fruit; the Result; the Response; or the Proof of having *already* experienced the Miracle of the New Birth- where God- by His Grace- *sovereignly* unveiled our eyes so we could behold God in His Glory! So, four things are true:

1. We are commanded by God to repent (and believe)

2. We WILL be damned by God if we do NOT repent (and believe)
3. Because we are already Fallen and Lost- we CAN'T repent unless God *grants* to us the “Gift of Repentance”
4. God’s Grace *grants* the Gift of Repentance to ALL He has chosen to save

Please turn with me to **2Timothy 2:24-26:**

**24 The Lord's bond-servant must not be quarrelsome, but be kind to all, able to teach, patient when wronged,  
25 with gentleness correcting those who are in opposition, if perhaps God may grant them repentance leading to the knowledge of the truth,  
26 and they may come to their senses and escape from the snare of the devil, having been held captive by him to do his will.**

Now there is a lot here that I will be happy to get into when we go on our verse-by-verse “Journey” through **2Timothy** at some point in the Future. But this morning- I want to zero in on what God the Holy Spirit “moved” on the Apostle Paul to write to his “Son in the Faith” Timothy in verses 25&26.

Paul said that *everyone* in Ministry MUST NOT be “quarrelsome” but kind and patient and able to teach with Gentleness- BECAUSE...  
**... if perhaps God may grant them repentance leading to the knowledge of the truth, and they may come to their senses and escape from the snare of the devil, having been held captive by him to do his will.**

Now Paul made the Connection here that Repentance leads to a “Knowledge of the Truth”. But then he also said that the people to whom God “GRANTS” Repentance...

**... may come to their senses and escape from the snare of the devil, having been held captive by him to do his will.**

... so, the first Stage of being “Human” in this Life- is that we are ALL two things:

1. We are ALL *ensnared* by the devil
2. We are ALL *held captive* by him

... and Paul said THAT is *why* we *automatically* “**do satan’s will**” and NOT God’s Will. And, of course, this is simply a different Way of saying that ALL of us are “Sinners”; and we are ALL “Fallen and Lost” at the Moment of Conception- and

NOT at some false and Man-made “*Age of Accountability*”. Secondly, look again at the phrase in verse 25, where the Apostle said,

**... if perhaps God may grant them repentance ...**

Now the word that was translated here into English as, “**grant**” is a Greek word, (*didomi*; Strong’s # 1325), which means: *to give; or to bestow something of Value to someone else*. And the word, “**perhaps**” is from a word (*mepote*; Strong’s #3379); which has to do with: *something being a Possibility but NOT something that is guaranteed*.

So, Paul was teaching Timothy that ALL Ministers MUST act in accord with his Teaching BECAUSE... *It is Possible (NOT Guaranteed) that God may choose to bestow Repentance on that individual*. Which also means that God may NOT choose to do so. So, once again, we see the “Sovereignty of God” meeting up with “Man’s Responsibility” in a *mysterious* Way. Because on the one hand- EVERYONE is *commanded* to repent. And God WILL damn those who don’t. But on the other hand- we see that Repentance is much MORE than a mere Choice or Decision that ALL people are “free” to choose. The Bible says that Repentance MUST be “Granted”. It has to be “given” or “bestowed” by God on someone. So, both the Desire and Ability for human beings to repent- is a Gift of God’s Grace. And that means two things:

1. Repentance is distributed according to God’s own Divine Prerogative
2. Everyone is NOT given the Gift of Repentance

For example, satan knows and understands and believes in God. The first Pastor of the Church in Jerusalem said this in **James 2:19**:

**You believe that God is one. You do well; the demons also believe, and shudder.**

The entire time that Jesus was on the earth- demonic fallen angels recognized Jesus as being the “**Holy One of God**” (**Matthew 1:24**)- while the Pharisees denounced Him as being “**Beelzebul, the ruler of the demons**” (**Matthew 12:24**). Also, the demons NEVER denounced or rejected ANY of the Miracles Jesus performed. So, in that sense- demons honored Jesus MORE than the hypocritical Pharisees.

Both satan and demons believe that Jesus is God in human Flesh. Satan and demons believe that God raised Jesus from the dead. Satan and demons believe Jesus is Holy. And satan and demons acknowledge that Jesus has total Authority

over ALL of God's Universe. And both satan and demons understand things about God that are NOT in the Bible and that have NOT been revealed to us. And James said they believe so strongly in all of this- that they literally shudder (tremble).

And yet- all demons as well as satan himself will perish eternally in the Lake of Fire! Why? Because even though both satan as well as fallen angels- believe- they CAN'T repent! God has NOT given them the "Gift of Repentance". And so, they will burn forever- and they KNOW they will burn forever- and yet they are NOT ABLE to repent! And THAT is why they are so angry. But they are NOT the only ones who CANNOT repent. Please turn to read what the unknown writer said in **Hebrews 12:14-17**:

**14 Pursue peace with all men, and the sanctification without which no one will see the Lord.**

**15 See to it that no one comes short of the grace of God; that no root of bitterness springing up causes trouble, and by it many be defiled;**

**16 that there be no immoral or godless person like Esau, who sold his own birthright for a single meal.**

**17 For you know that even afterwards, when he desired to inherit the blessing, he was rejected, for he found no place for repentance, though he sought for it with tears.**

... now please read what Dr. Luke infallibly wrote in **The Acts 8:18-22**:

**18 Now when Simon saw that the Spirit was bestowed through the laying on of the apostles' hands, he offered them money,**

**19 saying, "Give this authority to me as well, so that everyone on whom I lay my hands may receive the Holy Spirit."**

**20 But Peter said to him, "May your silver perish with you, because you thought you could obtain the gift of God with money!**

**21 You have no part or portion in this matter, for your heart is not right before God.**

**22 Therefore repent of this wickedness of yours, and pray the Lord that, if possible, the intention of your heart may be forgiven you.**

So, unless God sovereignly issues His powerful and effectual Grace- NOBODY would be convicted; NOBODY would repent; NOBODY would be forgiven; NOBODY would believe; and NOBODY would be saved! That is the Power of God's Grace!

Now there are many Lessons we can take from this. But one of them is that we must NEVER "presume" on the Grace of God. We should NEVER say things



like, “I’m going to go ahead and sin now and I’ll ask God to forgive me later on- because I know He WILL.” Or “I’m not worried about my Sin- because I know I’m saved; and I know that God loves me; and He would NEVER allow me to perish!”

My dear Friends, that is *presuming* on the Grace of God. And as these Passages have proved to us- God is NOT *obligated* to grant Repentance to anyone; and NOBODY can *earn* or *deserve* this wonderful Gift! Repentance is distributed by God to unworthy Sinners the SAME WAY that *everything else* about God is distributed: according to God’s own Divine Prerogative! And that Knowledge will cause us all to fear God; and to be Humble; and Grateful; and so very Thankful; when God DOES grant to us the Desire and Ability to repent.

Now with all of this in mind- I want to look closely at what Dr. Luke wrote about Judas Iscariot by looking again at what he wrote in **The Acts 1:16:**

**Brethren, the Scripture had to be fulfilled, which the Holy Spirit foretold by the mouth of David concerning Judas, who became a guide to those who arrested Jesus.**

Verse 16 says that 1,000 years BEFORE Jesus was born- God the Holy Spirit “moved” on King David to prophesy about Judas. And so, last Time- we saw that Judas betraying Jesus was “predestined” and “foreordained” by God. So, in **The Acts 2:22&23a**, Peter said,

**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...**

... and then in verse 23b- Peter told us about the “full Accountability of Man” in this terrible Sin, when he said,

**... you nailed to a cross by the hands of godless men and put Him to death.**

So, last week- we saw both the absolute Sovereignty of God and the full Accountability of Man meet together in the horrible Act of betraying Jesus. And based on that- we concluded five things:

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

... and I also told you that it is my own personal Belief that Judas had grown horribly *disillusioned* with Jesus being the promised Messiah- because the Lord was simply NOT doing what was the most common eschatological Belief among the Jews of the 1<sup>st</sup> Century. And this Disillusionment was profound among many of the Jews- *including John the Baptist*- who came to the wrong Conclusion that Jesus could not possibly be the Messiah because He was NOT fulfilling what they had been taught all their Lives as to what the Messiah would do when he got here.

But Judas could have just walked off and left Jesus at any time. Many other Disciples did. But the fact that Judas *betrayed* Jesus for Money- shows us that Judas betrayed Jesus in order to *discredit* Him and get Him out of the Way so that room would be made for the genuine Messiah- who would fulfill all their Expectations.

So, even though Judas was chosen by Jesus to be an Apostle- he was NOT chosen for Salvation. And even though Jesus gave Judas the Ability to cast out demons; heal the sick; raise the Dead; and preach the Gospel- he betrayed Jesus because he was Evil and Unsaved and because he *wanted* to. God did NOT *force* Judas to sin.

But we have to understand that Judas did NOT betray Jesus because he loved God and wanted to be used to fulfill the ancient Prophecies concerning the Messiah's Betrayal. Judas NEVER loved Jesus at all- precisely because he had NEVER experienced the Miracle of the New Birth. So, even though it was God's Will for Jesus to be betrayed and executed- the man, who was used by satan to betray Jesus- was forever damned by God!

And yet- Judas was NOT the only one who betrayed Jesus. Look at **Luke 22:54-62:**

**54 Having arrested Him, they led Him away and brought Him to the house of the high priest; but Peter was following at a distance.**

**55 After they had kindled a fire in the middle of the courtyard and had sat down together, Peter was sitting among them.**

**56 And a servant-girl, seeing him as he sat in the firelight and looking intently at him, said, "This man was with Him too."**

**57 But he denied it, saying, "Woman, I do not know Him."**

**58 A little later, another saw him and said, "You are one of them too!" But Peter said, "Man, I am not!"**

**59 After about an hour had passed, another man began to insist, saying,**

**"Certainly this man also was with Him, for he is a Galilean too."**

**60 But Peter said, "Man, I do not know what you are talking about."**

**Immediately, while he was still speaking, a rooster crowed.**

**61 The Lord turned and looked at Peter. And Peter remembered the word of the Lord, how He had told him, "Before a rooster crows today, you will deny Me three times."**

**62 And he went out and wept bitterly.**

The ONLY Difference between Judas' Betrayal and Peter's is that no Money was involved with Peter. Peter was simply a coward. Now, in Peter's Defense- he WAS there- while the other ten Apostles had run to Safety. And I really don't believe that even if Peter had stepped up to defend Jesus that the Romans and Jewish Rulers would have let Jesus go. But Peter didn't know that at the time. And so, in order to save his own skin- Peter "wimped out" and allowed Jesus to be beaten, tried, and crucified.

And the ONLY Sign I can find anywhere that Peter repented- or simply felt bad about his Sin is in **Luke 22:61&62** that says,

**The Lord turned and looked at Peter. And Peter remembered the word of the Lord, how He had told him, "Before a rooster crows today, you will deny Me three times." And he went out and wept bitterly.**

... yet, when we examine what Judas did AFTER he had betrayed the Lord- we find this in **Matthew 27:3-5**:

**3 Then when Judas, who had betrayed Him, saw that He had been condemned, he felt remorse and returned the thirty pieces of silver to the chief priests and elders,**

**4 saying, "I have sinned by betraying innocent blood." But they said, "What is that to us? See to that yourself!"**

**5 And he threw the pieces of silver into the temple sanctuary and departed; and he went away and hanged himself.**

... so, the Holy Bible says that Judas,

- Felt Remorse
- Returned the Money
- Openly confessed his Sin
- Called Jesus, "Innocent"

...and Judas was so utterly destroyed by what he had done- he committed suicide.

Now if we were to simply remove Judas' name from what he did here- I would suppose that the overwhelming majority of people would believe and teach that *anyone* demonstrating all of these obvious and public Signs of genuine Sorrow- would qualify as genuine Repentance; and that the person would be saved- no matter what Sin he had committed. And I would go on to say that, *compared to the one single Sign that Peter gave (Luke 22:62)*, that MOST of us would say that Judas genuinely repented and was forgiven and saved- while Peter did NOT repent and was NOT saved.

And the Reason we might reach this Conclusion is NOT because we are all-knowing and that we have the Power to judge the heart of individuals. Most people in the modern Church might reach this Conclusion today- because of how much Ignorance exists about what the Bible teaches about Conviction; Repentance; and Forgiveness; and how the Sovereignty and Grace of God are involved in it all.

I was NEVER taught by ANY Church Leader in ANY of the Churches I ever attended- that God was absolutely Sovereign in bringing guilty Sinners to a Place of Conviction; Repentance; and Forgiveness. If and when these Subjects came up- ALL that was ever mentioned was the Command of God that everyone MUST repent. And that is because ALL of the Churches I attended were *consumed* with a "Man-centered Theology"- where the Will; Thoughts; Beliefs; Choices; Decisions; Words; and Actions of human beings are ALL that matters.

A "Man-centered Theology" has Man at the very Center of EVERYTHING. And so, in that false Teaching- God exists for no other Reason than to do "Man's Bidding". Now many of these people periodically give "lip-service" to the Sovereignty of God. But when they begin to teach just about ANY Subject at all- their Teaching *minimizes; ignores; or even outright excludes* God and His absolute Sovereignty from having ANY Position at all- other than to be at Man's "beckon Call". And with all due Respect- that is nothing more than Blasphemy!

The abject Ignorance among the people of the modern Church about what the Bible actually teaches about God and His absolute Sovereignty is both staggering and frightening! And every day that goes by- that Problem is getting *worse*- as Man is *continually* being elevated at the expense of God- in both the Minds and Hearts of the people who say they are His!

Suffice it to say that even though Repentance of Sin is both *commanded* and *expected* by God- no one CAN repent- unless Repentance is GRANTED to him by God's Grace. Now those of you who have traveled with me through the Bible understand this. But for those of you, who may not have heard things like this before- let me say that the Holy Bible- from cover to cover- teaches that God does EVERYTHING for one Reason- that is expressed in Scripture three different Ways:

1. For My Glory!
2. For My Name's Sake
3. So they will know there is NONE like Me

... EVERYTHING God does- He does- so that HE ALONE will be glorified! THAT is the sole motivating Factor as to WHY God does ANYTHING! So, God is "white-hot" in His Passion to be glorified. And for God to be glorified means for God to be known; loved; adored; obeyed; admired; feared; and wondered after- which is what is called, "Worship". So, to *worship* God is to *love* God. And to *love* God is to *admire* Him; and *fear* Him; and *obey* Him; and *be in Awe* of Him and to *marvel after* Him! And to do all of that means to live your entire Life for one single Goal: *So, that God alone is glorified!*

And so, Creation; and Salvation; and Blessings; and Healings; and Heaven; and Hell; and ALL of Life- *has been* created by God and is being governed by God- so that He alone is glorified! And the SAME Logic is true when it comes to the Issues of Conviction; Repentance; and Forgiveness. They are ALL sovereign Gifts of God's Grace and given to unworthy Rebels. And they are all carried out for one reason: So that God alone is glorified! For example, the Apostle John said this in **1John 2:12:**

**I am writing to you, little children, because your sins have been forgiven you for His name's sake.**

... so, Yes! We are to go to God when we sin. And, Yes! We are to ask God to forgive us. That is true. But the Reason; the Cause behind WHY God forgives us- is that it brings God great Glory (His Name's Sake) to forgive Sinners- who have been granted the Gift of Repentance- by what He alone does for them

A "*Man-centered Theology*" teaches that the Reason Peter was forgiven and Judas was not- has something to do with either the degree of their Sin or the degree of their Actions in Repentance. So, some will say, Judas' Sin was somehow *worse* than Peter's. Or, they will say (incorrectly) that Peter's Repentance was *more* "heart-felt" or *more* sincere- even though Judas's Repentance involved more outward Signs.

So, in their View- what Man does or does not do- is the Catalyst behind *why* God forgave them. And that is a purely "*Man-centered*" Way of thinking. Statements like this come from people who don't understand God's absolute Sovereignty in Repentance as well as the Grace of God itself. So, let's review:

- Both Peter and Judas were Sinners

- Both Peter and Judas were chosen by Jesus to be Apostles
- Both Peter and Judas were given the Ability to perform Miracles
- Both Peter and Judas were taught wrongly by the Pharisees about the Future
- Both Peter and Judas demonstrated their sinful Proclivities during Jesus' Ministry
- Both Peter and Judas betrayed the Lord
- Both Peter and Judas demonstrated outward Signs of Repentance
- God forgave Peter but did NOT forgive Judas

... and my Question is, "*Why?*"

*Why* did Jesus forgive Peter but did NOT forgive Judas? And I can only find one Reason- and it has NOTHING to do with either Peter or Judas. Please look at what Jesus told Peter several months BEFORE His Arrest and Crucifixion from **Luke 22:31&32:**

**31 Simon, Simon, behold, Satan has demanded permission to sift you like wheat;**

**32 but I have prayed for you, that your faith may not fail; and you, when once you have turned again, strengthen your brothers."**

Now there is a lot here- but please focus on what Jesus said at the End of verse 31:

**Satan has demanded permission to sift you like wheat...**

... and this has to do with the Truth about how satan comes to people to tempt them.

The Bible says- *repeatedly and clearly*- that satan CANNOT touch a genuine child of God- unless God sovereignly allows him. Satan has to go to God and ask Permission in order to move on any of us who are truly saved. So, according to the **Book of Job**- God has sovereignly placed a "Hedge of Protection" around His people whereby satan and ALL those who are in league with him- CANNOT cross. And so, we are absolutely Safe from all Attacks from the devil and those who are in alignment with the devil.

But periodically, it is God's Will to drop that "Hedge of Protection" and sovereignly "step aside" and "allow" satan and/or those who belong to him- to cross over and tempt; hurt; trouble; steal; rob; or in some Way attack the saved individual. And so, even though satan asks for Permission all the Time to attack God's people- only when it is God's Will- does God give satan Permission to do so. So, satan CANNOT attack God's people UNLESS God gives him Permission.

But why would a Good and Kind and Loving God allow satan to attack them? The Bible teaches it is so that the individual may be “tested” and “tried”. Tested and Tried in what Way? So, that his Love for God and his Desire to obey God will be genuine and based in what God alone has done for him and NOT based on anything else.

Now I have taught you the Truth concerning Tests, Trials, and Temptations. God tests us and tries us- while satan tempts us. And the Bible teaches in James that God DOES NOT tempt us. Only satan tempts us- but God WILL test and try us.

Okay- but the Reality is that all three of these things (Tests; Trials; and Temptations) come from the very SAME word and are carried out for the very SAME Reason. And that means there is NOT any difference from a Test by God or a Temptation by satan.

BOTH are allowed to come to us; and BOTH are used by God to prove or verify that our Faith is genuine. God uses Himself to test and try us while God uses satan to tempt us. So, the ONLY Difference in a Test from God and a Temptation from satan- is NOT in the Word but in the INTENT. God’s Intent in “testing” and “trying” us- is that we will be victorious over them and prove that our Faith is genuine. The Intent in satan tempting us- is that we fall into Sin and fail God and prove that Jesus’ Life; Death; and Resurrection wasn’t Good enough to keep us.

So, satan had very seriously wanted an Opportunity to “sift” Peter in the Way that wheat was sifted back in the 1<sup>st</sup> Century. In other words, the Intent of satan was to utterly destroy Peter. And so, periodically, satan would go to Jesus and ask for Divine Permission to destroy Peter. But look at what Jesus said He did- in response to that:

**but I have prayed for you, that your faith may not fail ...**

Now this is an amazing Statement from the Lord. Because Jesus *could* have sovereignly forbidden satan to tempt Peter at all. Jesus *could* have told satan that Peter was “off-limits”- but He didn’t. So, Jesus gave satan Permission to periodically attack Peter.

But instead of leaving Peter to fight satan all by himself- Jesus said, “**I have prayed for you, that your faith may not fail!**” So, Peter’s Ability to NOT be *overrun* by satan and be *destroyed* was NOT due to what Peter did for himself. Peter’s Ability to NOT be completely defeated by satan- was due to the fact that Jesus prayed for him! So, Jesus sovereignly *prohibited* satan from completely destroying Peter by the fact that Jesus *interceded* for him. Yet this “Divine Interceding” did NOT stop Peter from sinning at all. It simply gave him the Power and Ability to genuinely repent and to turn away from it.

But what about Judas? Jesus did NOT pray for Judas. Ever. Instead, look what Jesus told Judas in **John 13:21-27**:

**21 When Jesus had said this, He became troubled in spirit, and testified and said, "Truly, truly, I say to you, that one of you will betray Me."**

**22 The disciples began looking at one another, at a loss to know of which one He was speaking.**

**23 There was reclining on Jesus' bosom one of His disciples, whom Jesus loved.**

**24 So Simon Peter gestured to him, and said to him, "Tell us who it is of whom He is speaking."**

**25 He, leaning back thus on Jesus' bosom, said to Him, "Lord, who is it?"**

**26 Jesus then answered, "That is the one for whom I shall dip the morsel and give it to him." So when He had dipped the morsel, He took and gave it to Judas, the son of Simon Iscariot.**

**27 After the morsel, Satan then entered into him. Therefore Jesus said to him, "What you do, do quickly."**

So, Jesus sovereignly *allowed* satan to enter into Judas and *compel* his Betrayal. Now He *could* have stopped satan from doing this- but He chose not to. So, Jesus chose to *allow* Judas to do what was already in his heart to do- including being destroyed by his Betrayal- while our Lord sovereignly *intervened* and *prevented* Peter from being fully destroyed by his Betrayal. But now look at **John 13:28-32**:

**28 Now no one of those reclining at the table knew for what purpose He had said this to him.**

**29 For some were supposing, because Judas had the money box, that Jesus was saying to him, "Buy the things we have need of for the feast"; or else, that he should give something to the poor.**

**30 So after receiving the morsel he went out immediately; and it was night.**

**31 Therefore when he had gone out, Jesus said, "Now is the Son of Man glorified, and God is glorified in Him;**

**32 if God is glorified in Him, God will also glorify Him in Himself, and will glorify Him immediately.**

By sovereignly *allowing* Judas to betray Him and NOT stopping him- which would lead to His Arrest; His cruel Beatings; His Trial and Crucifixion- Jesus made the fantastic Statement, "**Now is the Son of Man glorified, and God is glorified in Him!**" But how could Jesus make such a Statement about something so Evil?



How could Jesus equate this terrible Sin- with both God the Father and Himself being glorified?

Because Jesus had a “*God-centered Theology*”. And so, Jesus wanted what was God’s perfect Will- *regardless* of what that cost Himself personally and *regardless* of what it looked like to Man. And Jesus knew it was God’s perfect and holy Will for Him to be betrayed and be crucified and to die a horrible Death. And so, Jesus desired God’s Will MORE than He desired to live.

But how could Jesus’ Betrayal and Death bring God any Glory? Because that is how the Glory of God’s Grace in saving unworthy Sinners would be magnified the MOST and the BEST! And so, I conclude:

- It was God’s perfect Will for Jesus to be betrayed and murdered
- It was God’s perfect Will for Judas and Peter to BOTH betray Jesus
- It was God’s perfect Will for Jesus to *intercede* for Peter while leaving Judas to himself
- Jesus did NOT *force* Judas nor Peter to sin
- They BOTH sinned against God because they *wanted* to
- BOTH Betrayals were Evil
- Judas was NOT granted with the Gift of Repentance
- Peter was sovereignly given the Ability and Desire to repent
- God was NOT *obligated* to give this Gift to either one
- Neither Judas nor Peter had *earned* nor *deserved* the Gift of Repentance
- God *showered* Peter with His Grace while *allowing* Judas to do what was already in his heart to do
- God gave Peter His Grace/Mercy and gave Judas His Justice
- Peter was saved while Judas was damned
- God was glorified with BOTH

The Reality about these two men should make us all tremble before God. But it should also make us rejoice when we *are* granted with both the Desire and Ability to repent; and the Knowledge that, right now- Jesus is *interceding* for us- that our Faith will NOT fail!

Amen! Let’s pray.

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The Grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit. Amen. Be watchful and quicken your Pace. Soli Deo Gloria. For the Glory of God alone.