

Bible Studies

Judas and Jesus

Of all the studies I have written, this one poses more questions than it answers. Judas has become a watch word for evil, the ultimate traitor, shunned and eternally cursed. Villain or tragic disciple? The character of Judas and the part that he played are by no means that simple.



Read Luke 6v13-16

How is Judas described in this passage?

Do you think the word *became* is significant?

When Jesus sent out the 12 to preach the Gospel, Judas was among them. He healed the sick and raised the dead along with the rest of them. The Gospels remind us, along with most of the references to Judas, that He was the one who betrayed the Lord. But this of course was unknown to the disciples. On the outside he looked like everyone else.

The name Judas, is the Greek version of Judah it means praise. It was very common, two disciples were called Judas and so was one of Jesus brothers, Mat 13v55.

Iscariot probably means *man from Kerieth*. Kerieth was a village in southern Judea. If this is so he was the only one of Jesus disciples who was not from Galilee. An outsider from the start. Most of the priests lived in villages of Judea, some people have suggested that Judas was a priest. This case is strengthened by Matthew 27v5, which records that Judas threw the money into the temple. The word used here (naos=sanctuary, holy place) implies the area of the temple that only the priests had access to.

What was Judas specific job in the band of disciples? John 13v29



Read John 12v3-7

What was Judas doing with the money?

What does this passage tell us about Judas?

What does it tell us about his attitude towards Jesus?

Knowing Judas was a traitor, we tend to read into this more than is due. Had it been Peter that betrayed the Lord, what would we make of his numerous indiscretions? Again we must remember that John did not know Judas was a thief at the time, it came out later.



Read Mark 14v4-11

According to Marks account, Judas was not alone in his criticism of Mary, or the rebuke it received from Jesus. According to Matthew it was a general attitude among the disciples. Mat 26v8-9

It is recorded immediately after this incident that Judas went to the high priest. The question is why?

Did Judas feel disenfranchised by Jesus?

Did he finally realise that he and Jesus were after different goals?

Did he take Jesus comments about death as a green light?

What other reason could Judas have had?

When searching for reasons why Judas did what he did, greed, bitterness and disillusionment are all there, but none of them are sufficient motives.

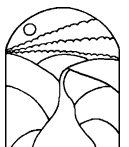
At the last supper when Jesus declares "*one of you will betray me*" no one suspected Judas. Even when he left the table they thought he was going to give money to the poor or buy something. John alone was privy to this information. (Reading the account, Peter stands out as the likely character, John 13v38).



Read John 13v22-27

Receiving the bread in this way was an honour, it was also a mark of friendship.

Why did no one guess it was Judas?



The only conclusion is, that Judas was just like the rest of them.

Even my close friend, whom I trusted, he who shared my bread, has lifted up his heel against me. Psalms 41:9 & John 13v18

How does Jesus describe Judas?

Even in the Garden of Gethsemane Jesus again calls Judas his friend.

Jesus replied, "Friend, do what you came for. Matthew 26:50

This is not *philos* the usual word for friend but, *hetairos* which means comrade, companion or partner.



What did Jesus say would have to happen? Matthew 26v24

If it were better that he had not been born, why was he?

(in the Greek it is unclear whether the *he*, is Judas of Jesus). But of course, without God's forgiveness, this statement is true of all of us.

What would have happened if Judas had not betrayed Christ?

Questions like this are hypothetical. It had to happen. Jesus had to die and he had to be betrayed.

Then Judas, the one who would betray him, said, "Surely not I, Rabbi?" Jesus answered, "Yes, it is you." Matthew 26:25

Why did Judas ask?

We conclude that Judas alone heard the reply.

When faced with the possibility of betrayal, the disciples asked the question "is it I?". When we read the serious warnings of the NT, we should ask the same question.

Jesus did know who would betray him.

Yet there are some of you who do not believe." For Jesus had known from the beginning which of them did not believe and who would betray him. John 6v64

Notice that while the betrayer is singular, those who do not believe are plural.

Then Jesus replied, "Have I not chosen you, the Twelve? Yet one of you is a devil!" (He meant Judas, the son of Simon Iscariot, who, though one of the Twelve, was later to betray him.) John 6:70-71

Did Jesus encourage Judas in his actions? John 13v27

If Jesus knew Judas would betray him, then why did he chose him?

Jesus also knew he was a thief. He even knew, when he washed Judas' feet, that he had plotted with the priests to hand Jesus over. Knowing what we are like, why did Jesus choose us?

How could Jesus demonstrate is love to someone He knew would betray him?



Why did he not expose him?

Why did he not protect himself for Judas plans?

Why did he not help Judas to overcome, the way he did Peter? Luke 22v32

Hopefully answers to theses question will become clear in the course of these studies. The third question gives us a place to start from. Jesus did not protect himself because His very mission was to die on the cross.



The Son of Man will go just as it is written about him. But woe to that man who betrays the Son of Man! It would be better for him if he had not been born." Matthew 26:24

While I was with them, I protected them and kept them safe by that name you gave me. None has been lost except the one doomed to destruction so that Scripture would be fulfilled. John 17:12
May their (his) place be deserted; let there be no one to dwell in their tents. Psalms 69:25
May his days be few; may another take his place of leadership. Psalms 109:8 cf Acts 1v20

The role Judas played was predicted in Scripture. It had to happen. We will see why later.

How could Judas have stayed so long with Jesus and yet stay so uninfluenced by his teaching?

Walking around with Jesus, is not the same as following him. The heart is deceptive above all things and through a host of reasons people fall. Is Judas so very different from some of the famous names of our time who have sinned and fallen? The danger is there for all of us. We must guard our hearts. Judas failure, was a failure of faith. Studying these scriptures you are left to realise it could so easily have been Peter, or you and I.

Bible Studies

Judas and the Priests

"We are going up to Jerusalem, and the Son of Man will be betrayed to the chief priests and the teachers of the law. They will condemn him to death and will turn him over to the Gentiles to be mocked and flogged and crucified. On the third day he will be raised to life!" Matthew 20:18-19



Read **Matthew 26v3-5** Mark 14v1-2
 Matthew 26v14-16 Mark 14v10-11 Luke 22v1-6

According to Mark the priests offered Judas money.

What does Luke say prompted Judas actions? Luke 22v3

Why did the priests need Judas help?



Some have suggested it was because they did not know Jesus well enough to ensure arresting the right person. This is very unlikely, it had never been a problem for them before! Another question reveals the answer.

What were the dangers of arresting Jesus?

The passages above specify that the priests were afraid to arrest Jesus, for fear of the crowd rioting. Someone who knew Jesus actions intimately and could provide an opportunity to arrest Jesus quietly, would have been of great benefit to them. John 18v2 eludes to this inside information.



**What time did the priest say would be unwise to arrest Jesus?
When did they arrest Jesus?**

This conflict is one of the fundamental factors between the lines of the gospel accounts. Jesus was arrested at the worst possible time. Long before the priests had their preparation in place. This explains the frenzied activity, the trial by night, the early morning Sanhedrin and the problems with Pilot. The reason was that Judas came to them the night of the Last Supper, and told them that *Jesus was morose, he was talking about dying. If they moved now, he would not resist, nor would the other disciples. This was the time to act there, might not be another opportunity.*



This explains the second reason the priests needed Judas. The Priests had tried to arrest Jesus before and failed. John 7v32, 8v58, 10v39, Luke 4v30. They could not afford to fail again, if they did, it would backfire on them seriously with the crowds. Jesus had even raised the dead, they could not deny His miracles and there was a real fear that He would prove unarrestable. And where would that leave them?



Thirdly, the entire Jewish justice system was witness orientated, Witness brought the charges, arrested the person, questioned them and if guilty of death were the first to throw a stone. Two witness were needed, but maybe Judas was intended for this role. If so he only fulfilled the first part of it.



**Read Matthew 26v47-50; Mark 14v43-46 Luke 22v47-48, John 18v1-4
Why a kiss?**

It is what didn't happen next that is interesting. Judas played no subsequent part in the trial of Jesus. How glad the Priests would have been to have one of Jesus own disciples act as a witness against him.

Why did the priests not use him as a witness?

Was he unreliable, unable, unwilling?

In the end what was Judas actually responsible for?

If he had not done his part, how would it have changed things?



Read Matthew 27v1-5
It is the morning after Jesus arrest.
What is his legal status?

Jesus has been found guilty by the highest Jewish court, they now need the Roman authority to endorse this verdict and carry it out.

v3 When Judas... saw that Jesus was condemned

What else did he think was going to happen?

What was Judas' attitude?

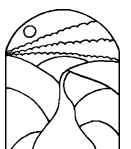
What do you think was going through his head?

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Did Judas acknowledge his sin? v4

Is remorse the same a repentance?

Did Judas repent?

We do not know whether Judas was truly repentant, we cannot know. Throwing the money into the temple was a dramatic act and the best indication of the depth of Judas' feelings. There is a worst condition than Judas', to sin and be so hard in your heart as to feel nothing. We have a fairly clear idea of the cause and effect that Judas had in mind. Is the evidence open to other interpretation?

Is it possible that Judas thought Jesus would be acquitted?

Is it possible that Judas thought he was carrying out Jesus wishes?

It has been suggested that Judas plan was to force Jesus hand, to make him act radically, To make him conform to Judas' plans for him, plans of power and fame. To be the kingly Messiah that the people wanted.

Do you think this is possible?

Why did he hang himself?

People usually kill themselves because they can see no future. It seems that the depth of Judas guilt was more than he could bare. He could see no way out and no way back. Even if he asked for forgiveness, it is clear he did not appropriate it. (that does not mean it was not given, or could not have been given.)



Some other theories He thought his death would somehow help acquit Jesus. Many in the 2nd and 3rd century taught Judas hung himself to get to Hades ahead of Jesus and meet Him there because he knew He (Jesus) had entered His Kingdom through death. (Origin, Theophanes, Theophylact, etc.)

What happened next

Read Matthew 27v6-10 and Acts 1v18-19

What happened to the money?

Who bought the field?

This is often pointed to as one of the most glaring contradictions within the Gospels. (Acts is a continuation of Luke).

How long did Judas have to buy the field?

At most one week, one of the busiest weeks of the year. Was this enough time to buy a field? This is assuming that they paid in advance! Something that is not likely. It is highly questionable whether Judas had time to buy the field.

How does Acts describe the money used?

This could be the money Judas embezzled, the field an early acquisition. If so there is no problem, two lots of money, two fields with very different descriptions. As for the method of Judas death, it is possible that Judas fell from the rope.

Why did Jesus need Judas?

That sounds like a strange question. What I really mean is, why did it have to happen this way? Jesus consistently said He would be betrayed, the Scriptures also predicted it. Why could Jesus not just be arrested?



Judas and his betrayal stand for something. Who killed Jesus, was it Judas, the Priests, every Jew that ever lived, or the Italians who did the deed?

Who are we to blame for Jesus death?

Who did Jesus say was responsible for his death? John 10v18; 20v11-12; *For what I received I passed on to you as of first importance : that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, 1 Corinthians 15v3*

The only Christ killer I can point the finger at, is me. I am the Judas, it was my sin that betrayed the Lord. When we look at Judas, we are supposed to realise that it was our actions that caused Jesus to die. We are not supposed to pass the blame.



The examining priest.

It is well understood that Jesus fulfilled the Passover festival, with it's deliverance for the land of sin. *For Christ, our Passover lamb, has been sacrificed. 1 Cor 5:7* The animal live with the family for four days, Exodus 12v6. The lamb or goat had to be without spot of blemish. It was the priests job to examine the animal and declare it clean. For Jesus this referees to purity from sin, the only human never to sin.

Who declared Jesus clean?

The Priests were accusing him of blasphemy. Pilot did, but he was a gentile and not a priest, he didn't count.

"I have sinned," he said, "for I have betrayed innocent blood." "What is that to us?" they replied.

"That's your responsibility." Matthew 27:4

Judas had been with Jesus from the beginning and he declared him clean. So Judas in fact fulfilled an important role.

Bible Studies

Judas and Satan



Thirty pieces of silver.

The Gospel writers find this very significant

Read Exodus 12v32 *the price of a slave;*

Read Zechariah 11v11-12

Read Jeremiah 32v7-9

Matthew puts together two historically unconnected passages. (the NT does this in other places as well). Jeremiah refers frequently to the potters field 18v2; 19v2. Judas in returning the money to the temple did what Zechariah did, the priests in buying the potters field did what Jeremiah did. It is also possible that Matthew is quoting Jer 19v4vb. Talking about the same field he says, *they have filled this place with the blood of the innocent.* For me Jeremiah 19v1-13 fits better. There are certainly parallels between both passages, but it is not easy to understand the exact fulfilment.

Silver in scripture often speaks of atonement. Lives were redeemed with silver.

Then Satan entered Judas, called Iscariot, one of the Twelve. Luke 22:3

As soon as Judas took the bread, Satan entered into him. "What you are about to do, do quickly," Jesus told him, John 13:27



Despite whatever motive we may have found in Judas for betraying the Lord, he was incapable of acting alone. Satan entered him. Nor was it just a demon that oppressed him, but Satan himself.

Was Judas capable of resisting Satan?

If Satan was involved does this mean Judas was not responsible for his actions?

One could say he was unable to resist him, because he had left himself open to attack. It was Judas sins and wrong attitude toward Jesus, that gave Satan a foot hold. It was Satan that tempted Adam and Eve, and yet God still held them responsible.



What did Satan hope to achieve?

We are in the ironic position of it being the will of our heavenly Father that Jesus should die on the Cross and that of our infernal opponent. This has been the topic of much debate. It is clear that Satan wanted Jesus to go to the Cross, but he did not want the result that it brought. Maybe Satan thought Jesus would fail this great test. Certainly he thought he was winning, that Jesus death was playing into his plans. The resurrection must have come as a nasty surprise. Satan had totally misunderstood what God was doing.

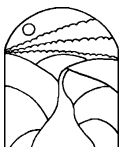
One of the big problems behind the story of Judas is the argument over predestination and eternal security. Ie that Judas had no choice as to his actions, therefore he cannot be held responsible for them. And, that once a person has truly committed themselves to Christ, it is impossible for them to fall. These are two bigger subjects do discuss in full now, but we do have to have a quick look.



Was Judas a true follower of Christ?

What is the evidence both ways?

We cannot judge, he gave every indication that he was, Jesus called him an apostle. No one guessed he was the traitor. The only things that stand against him are John's revelation that he was a thief and his act of betrayal.





Read Romans 9v14-23

But I will harden Pharaoh's heart, and though I multiply my miraculous signs and wonders in Egypt, Exodus 7:3, 4v21, 14v4, 14v7

This passage describes how God hardened Pharaoh's heart, in order to use Pharaoh's rebellion for God's purposes. Paul is adamant that God has the right to do this.

What similarities are there between Pharaoh and Judas?

We have seen that Judas actions were pre-ordained, Jesus knew from the beginning who would betray Him, and He described his actions as necessary.

Romans 9 never fitted a man so well as it fits Judas

What if God, choosing to show his wrath and make his power known, bore with great patience the objects of his wrath—prepared for destruction? What if he did this to make the riches of his glory known to the objects of his mercy, whom he prepared in advance for glory— Romans 9:22-23

How does this apply to Judas and to us?

Was it possible for Judas to avoid his fate?

Did God make Judas betray Jesus?

We are left with two choices, either Judas was a special case, in which event there is very little we can say, as we do not understand the dispensation under which he lived.



The other option is that he lived by the same set of rules as the rest of us. He could have resisted Satan, but he was already too weak from backsliding. If he repented then he was forgiven, If he didn't he wasn't. He was the same as us.

Both Judas and Pharaoh had sufficiently twisted hearts to open themselves up to be objects of wrath.

We cannot say that God made Judas betray Jesus, were this true the Bible would hardly say that *Satan entered him*.

Were Judas' sins beyond forgiveness?

And so I tell you, every sin and blasphemy will be forgiven men, ...

Anyone who speaks a word against the Son of Man will be forgiven... Mathew 12:3132

Jesus is contrasting these sins with the sin against the Holy Spirit, of which Judas is not accused. It seems clear to me that Judas would have been forgiven. The big question is did he come to the place of asking forgiveness?

If Judas teaches us anything, it is that we must guard our hearts and not allow them to stray from a simple love and trust for our Lord.

So, if you think you are standing firm, be careful that you don't fall! 1 Cor 10:12

How has your view of Judas changed over these studies?

How do you see him now?



We have villainised Judas to disassociate ourselves from him, for fear that what was in him, may be us. Instead we would do well to examine our own hearts and deal with any greed, pride or bitterness we find.

They were very sad and began to say to him one after the other, "Surely not J, Lord?" Matthew 26:22

*O Judas don't you come to close for I fear that I might see
That traitors look upon you face might look too much like me,
For just like you I sold the Lord and often for much less
And like a filthy traitor I betrayed him with a kiss.*

Michael card.