

Judas: The Profile of a Betrayer

Continuing our path through the Harmony of the Gospels, we turn the focus to Judas, the betrayer of Jesus. Perhaps we can understand a bit more about this man and make an application to our lives.

John 13:21-22 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.

- As the Passover meal progresses, Jesus begins to show signs of trouble in His spirit. What was to be a festive occasion takes a twist when Jesus drops a bombshell that someone from their tight-knit group is going to betray Him.
- Naturally the words of Jesus caused the apostles to question and dismiss themselves from that possibility.

Matt 26:22-25 And being deeply grieved, they each one began to say to Him, "Surely not I, Lord?" ²³ And He answered and said, "He who dipped his hand with Me in the bowl is the one who will betray Me. ²⁴ "The Son of Man {is to} go, just as it is written of Him; but woe to that man by whom the Son of Man is betrayed! It would have been good for that man if he had not been born." ²⁵ And Judas, who was betraying Him, answered and said, "Surely it is not I, Rabbi?" He said to him, "You have said {it} yourself."

- One by one, they ask an imperative question, "Surely it is not I, Lord?" Perhaps they are focusing on their decisive power struggles or other failings and doubting that occasionally arose in the ministry. This is perhaps what started the controversy about "Who is the Greatest?" near the same time, for it would have been a type of coping mechanism. *Luke 22:23 states "And they began to discuss among themselves which one of them it might be who was going to do this thing."*
- They work slowly work around the table, emotionally discussing the issue until they move to the man who is right behind Jesus, Judas himself.
- Not much is known about Judas apart from being the apostle of betrayal. We do know that he must have had importance among the other apostles for he was the treasurer of the group, a position that he used to pilfer from the funds. *John 12:6 Now he said this, not because he was concerned about the poor, but because he was a thief, and as he had the money box, he used to pilfer what was put into it.* This is probably why the prospect of receiving 30 pieces of silver seemed good for the betrayal of Jesus, for he had a problem with money.
- Judas does not say "Surely it is not I, Lord", but "Surely it is not I, Rabbi?" All the others are calling Jesus Lord, but Judas called Him Rabbi, meaning "Teacher". Rabbi might be a great reference to Jesus, but Lord is superior to all. Judas lost the real perspective of Jesus that "He is Lord".

- Jesus responded to Judas' futile attempt of innocence by saying, "You have said it yourself". I am persuaded that this is a private conversation between the two, even though there are many around the table. It appears that Judas simply leans a little closer to Jesus' ear and asked the question to which Jesus leans back and answers. That would certainly explain the ignorance of the other apostles, something which is further understood through John.

John 13:23-29 There was reclining on Jesus' breast one of His disciples, whom Jesus loved. ²⁴ Simon Peter therefore gestured to him, and said to him, "Tell {us} who it is of whom He is speaking." ²⁵ He, leaning back thus on Jesus' breast, said to Him, "Lord, who is it?" ²⁶ Jesus therefore 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 And after the morsel, Satan then entered into him. Jesus therefore said to him, "What you do, do quickly." 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.

- This account of the event is significant in revealing a deeper understanding of betrayal. We already know from the last lesson that they were probably sitting at a triclinium table arrangement, one which was U-shaped and stood about 6 to 8 inches off the ground. As the ancient Eastern custom had it, they would have reclined, leaning on their left elbow with the head toward the table while eating with their right hand. John the apostle was leaning against the breast of Jesus, placing him at the far left end of the table. Jesus was behind him.
- Judas was behind Jesus in the #3 spot, for he had to be close enough to have a personal conversation and receive the morsel of bread. Peter was probably on the opposite side of the table, for he was able to gesture to John. The word for "gestured" is a facial nod in which to gain John's attention. Apparently Peter was so intrigued by the words of Jesus that he was appealing to John for a little inside info as to whom the betrayer could be.
- It is very important to know that one of the greatest honors that a person could extend to another was to eat out of the same dish. In many of the places in the world today it is called the "common pot". The common pot was what Boaz extended to Ruth to show loving courtesy to her in *Ruth 2:14 And at mealtime Boaz said to her, "Come here, that you may eat of the bread and dip your piece of bread in the vinegar." So she sat beside the reapers; and he served her roasted grain, and she ate and was satisfied and had some left.* When John looked back to Jesus and made an inquiry for more information, Jesus said, "*That is the one for whom I shall dip the morsel and give it to him.*" Shortly thereafter He did that very thing, dipping the morsel and reaching over behind Him, giving it to Judas

- to eat. Jesus told him to carry out his plan quickly.
- How did the disciples not know it was Judas? They apparently took the saying in the generic sense rather than the specific sense. That saying can mean being at the same intimate table or specifically the way Jesus carried it out. The fact that they thought Judas was going for more supplies indicates they did not take it to mean the latter.
 - The passage said that after Judas ate the morsel, Satan entered him. What does this mean? We see a similar statement in Luke 22:3-6. What is the Bible referring to when making this statement?
 - We do not know the intricate workings of Satan as to what way this occurred. Perhaps the devil has ability to plant evil ideas in the minds of people. It could very well be that evil plans are credited to the devil's work. We don't know, but what we do know is that he is involved in a way that alters the ambitions of individuals.
 - *Acts 5:3 But Peter said, "Ananias, why has Satan filled your heart to lie to the Holy Spirit, and to keep back {some} of the price of the land?"*
 - *2 Cor 4:4 in whose case the god of this world has blinded the minds of the unbelieving, that they might not see the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God.*
 - *2 Cor 2:11 in order that no advantage be taken of us by Satan; for we are not ignorant of his schemes.*
 - We do not fully know in what way Satan entered Judas, but we do know that the choice of betrayal was known by Jesus and it was Judas' personal choice to do so. He had committed to the workings of the devil in the betrayal of Jesus and he would eventually wish he would have never been born. From there Judas departs to meet with the Sanhedrin to betray Jesus for thirty pieces of silver. He was officially committed to the betrayal of Jesus.

Four lessons from Judas the Betrayer

1. Always remember that Jesus is Lord.

Judas had a problem not recognizing Jesus as Lord, but a teacher. This was an ongoing problem with this man far back in the ministry. One year prior Jesus addressed this problem at the last Passover. *John 6:69-71 "And we have believed and have come to know that You are the Holy One of God." 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.* Judas had a "Jesus is Lord" complex.

We must always make sure that Jesus is the Lord of our life or we are at risk of betraying Him. Yes, Jesus was a teacher! Yes, Jesus was a miracle worker! Yes, Jesus was a caring man! Yes, Jesus was great debater! Jesus was so much to so many, but if He is not the Lord of our life, we risk betraying Him in our lives. Being Lord of our life says that I will submit to Him in every

way as a faithful servant. If He is not Lord, then we can not be His slave!

2. Always remember that Jesus knows.

Judas thought that he was hiding this fact from Jesus, that is until Jesus revealed that He did know exactly what Judas was planning.

- Jesus knew it days prior. *Matt 20:18 "Behold, we are going up to Jerusalem; and the Son of Man will be delivered to the chief priests and scribes, and they will condemn Him to death,*
- Jesus knew it weeks prior. *Matt 17:22 And while they were gathering together in Galilee, Jesus said to them, "The Son of Man is going to be delivered into the hands of men..."*
- Jesus knew it months prior. *Luke 9:44 "Let these words sink into your ears; for the Son of Man is going to be delivered into the hands of men."*
- Jesus knew it years prior. *John 6:70-71 Jesus answered them, "Did I Myself not choose you, the twelve, and {yet} one of you is a devil?" Now He meant Judas {the son} of Simon Iscariot, for he, one of the twelve, was going to betray Him.*
- Jesus knew it centuries prior. *Ps 41:9 Even my close friend, in whom I trusted, who ate my bread, has lifted up his heel against me.*
- Jesus knew it before time. *John 17:12 "While I was with them, I was keeping them in Thy name which Thou hast given Me; and I guarded them, and not one of them perished but the son of perdition, that the Scripture might be fulfilled.*

There is nothing that we can pull over the eyes of Jesus. He sees us in our sinful plans and evil plots. We might think that we have fooled the people around us just like Judas had fooled the others around the table, but we cannot fool Jesus.

- □□□□□□□□ Prov 5:21 For the ways of a man are before the eyes of the LORD, and He watches all his paths.
- □□□□□□□□ Prov 15:3 The eyes of the LORD are in every place, watching the evil and the good.
- □□□□□□□□ Heb 4:13 And there is no creature hidden from His sight, but all things are open and laid bare to the eyes of Him with whom we have to do.

3. Always remember that Jesus reaches out.

Jesus offered the common pot of fellowship to Judas even when he knew what was in the heart of Judas. Jesus thought enough of Judas that he was sitting right next to him at the table in one of the chief positions at the table. Jesus handed Him the morsel as if to say, "Judas, don't betray me!" This had to be one of the toughest moments in the life of Judas, betraying Him at the same time of taking the morsel of fellowship.

Jesus is reaching out to us. He does not want us to go down that path. He

wants us to submit to Him as Lord and to abandon our "secret" plans of evil which He is so well aware of. He always reaches out to us.

4. Always remember that Jesus gives choice.

Jesus let Judas make the choice of betraying Him. Yes, the plan of Jesus to be handed over to the Pharisees was fore-known, but the choice to do this was Judas'. We also are faced with the decision to BE WITH Jesus or BETRAY Jesus. It is our choice.

So what is your CHOICE? "What you do, do quickly."