

LESSONS FROM THE LIFE OF JUDAS

INTRODUCTION

- A. Matthew 26 is full of seemingly competing forces.
1. God's sovereignty and the free will of man.
 2. God's plans and those of Satan.
 3. Faithfulness and treachery.
 4. Human and divine forces.
 5. Destruction and regeneration.
- B. Setting
1. This section of Scripture leads to the focal point of all of history, the cross.
 2. Jesus and His disciples had Passover meal together, Matthew 26:20, *When it was evening, he took his place with the twelve;*
 - a. Passover refers to two feasts that come right after one another.
 - 1) Feast of Passover - celebrated the night of Israel's exodus from Egypt, Exodus 12.
 - 2) Feast of Unleavened Bread - commemorated the exodus journey as well as the beginning of harvest season, Leviticus 23:6-8, *and on the fifteenth day of the same month is the festival of unleavened bread to the LORD; seven days you shall eat unleavened bread. On the first day you shall have a holy convocation; you shall not work at your occupations. For seven days you shall present the LORD's offerings by fire; on the seventh day there shall be a holy convocation: you shall not work at your occupations.*
 - 3) Josephus wrote in his *Antiquities*, *at the season of the festival of unleavened bread which we call Passover.*
 - b. Both celebrate physical deliverance and Jesus will take the symbolism of the meal and expand it to spiritual deliverance.
 3. Jesus instituted the Lord's Supper, Mat. 26:26-29, *The LORD spoke to Moses, saying: Now, the tenth day of this seventh month is the day of atonement; it shall be a holy convocation for you: you shall deny yourselves and present the LORD's offering by fire; and you shall do no work during that entire day; for it is a day of atonement, to make atonement on your behalf before the LORD your God. For anyone who does not practice self-denial during that entire day shall be cut off from the people.*
 - a. His soon death would be for payment for our sins, Romans 3:20-26, For "no human being will be justified in his sight" by deeds prescribed by the law, for through the law comes the *knowledge of sin. But now, apart from law, the righteousness of God has been disclosed, and is attested by the law and the prophets, the righteousness of God through faith in Jesus Christ for all who believe. For there is no distinction, since all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God; they are now justified by his grace as a gift, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus, whom God put forward as a sacrifice of atonement by his blood, effective through faith. He did this to show his righteousness, because in his divine forbearance he had passed over the sins previously committed; it was to prove at the present time that he himself is righteous and that he justifies the one who has faith in Jesus.*
 - b. It would establish a new covenant, Hebrews 8-10; Jeremiah 31:31, *The days are surely coming, says the LORD, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and the house of Judah.*
- C. Chronological List
1. Saturday before Passion Week, Matthew 26:6-13.
 - a. Jesus was anointed at Simon the leper's house.
 - b. Section expanded in John 12:1-8.
 2. Wednesday of Passion Week
 - a. Jesus predicts his death in two day, Matthew 26:1-2.
 - b. The High Priest, chief priests and elders plotted to kill Jesus, Matthew 26:30-5.
 - c. Judas planned the betrayal of Christ, Matthew 26:14-16.
 3. Thursday
 - a. Jesus had His disciples prepare the Passover lamb, Matthew 26:17-19.
 - b. Jesus and His disciples had Passover meal together, Matthew 26:20.
 - c. Jesus declared that one of the disciples would betray Him, Matthew 26:21-25.
 - d. Satan enters Judas and he departed, John 13:27-30.
 - e. Jesus instituted the Lord's Supper, Matthew, 26:26-29,

SURELY, IT IS NOT I? MATTHEW 26:1-29

A. Attraction

1. Judas lived in a time of messianic hope.
 - a. Some were looking for a spiritual redeemer.
 - b. Others hoped for a strong leader who could overthrow the Romans.
 - c. Jesus was exhibiting the marks of Messiah, a Teacher, a worker of miracles, one whom the crowds followed.
2. Judas received a responsible ministry
 - a. He served as treasurer for the disciples, John 12:6; 13:29.
 - b. He was gifted and/or attracted to that position.
3. Judas was called by Jesus, John 6:70
 - a. John MacArthur, *It is clear, on the one hand, that he chose to follow. He continued following even when following became difficult. On the other hand, Jesus also chose him. The tension between divine sovereignty and human choice is manifest in Judas' calling, just as it is manifest in the calling of the other apostles.*
 - b. I would note, as well as each of us.

B. Betrayal

1. Scriptural passages
 - a. Psalm 41:9, *Even my bosom friend in whom I trusted, who ate of my bread, has lifted the heel against me.*
 - b. Psalm 55:12-14, *It is not enemies who taunt me—I could bear that; it is not adversaries who deal insolently with me—I could hide from them. But it is you, my equal, my companion, my familiar friend, with whom I kept pleasant company; we walked in the house of God with the throng.*
 - c. Zechariah 11:12-13, *I then said to them, “If it seems right to you, give me my wages; but if not, keep them.” So they weighed out as my wages thirty shekels of silver. Then the LORD said to me, “Throw it into the treasury”—this lordly price at which I was valued by them. So I took the thirty shekels of silver and threw them into the treasury in the house of the LORD.*
 - d. Matthew 27:9-10, *Then was fulfilled what had been spoken through the prophet Jeremiah (possibly referring to zechariah 11:12-13), “And they took the thirty pieces of silver, the price of the one on whom a price had been set, on whom some of the people of Israel had set a price, and they gave them for the potter’s field, as the Lord commanded me.”*
 - e. John 13:18, *I am not speaking of all of you; I know whom I have chosen. But it is to fulfill the scripture, ‘The one who ate my bread has lifted his heel against me.’*
2. Motivation - What led Judas to betray Jesus?
 - a. Envy - Alienation and/or jealousy
 - 1) Iscariot refers to his hometown of Kerioth, in southern Judah.
 - 2) He was a Judean, the only one of the Twelve who was not from Galilee.
 - b. Greed - for the money
 - 1) Possibly, he wanted to cover his losses because Jesus wasn't going to be the type of king Judas had hoped He would be.
 - 2) Scripture notes that he was a thief in charge of the money box, John 12:6, *(He said this not because he cared about the poor, but because he was a thief; he kept the common purse and used to steal what was put into it.)*
 - 3) Norval Geldenhuys, *What is clear is that Judas was a self-serving thief who followed Jesus not because his inner man had converted to Him, but because he hoped for personal gain by the relationship.*
 - c. Destiny
 - 1) Judas was known by Jesus as a traitor from the beginning, John 6:70, *Jesus answered them, “Did I not choose you, the twelve? Yet one of you is a devil.”*
 - 2) He was called the Son of Perdition (*one destined to be lost*), John 17:12, *While I was with them, I protected them in your name that you have given me. I guarded them, and not one of them was lost except the one destined to be lost, so that the scripture might be fulfilled.*
 - a) He was identified with eternal destruction whose destiny is the Lake of Fire.
 - b) This is a predictive designation as seen in Acts 1:25, *to his own place*, the place of his choosing.
 - c) Judas was not foreordained from eternity past to go to hell without opportunity to be saved.
 - d) He chose to reject Jesus Christ as everyone who chooses not to receive God's gift of grace.

d. Criticism

- 1) Anointing of Jesus at Simon's house, John 12:3-6, *Mary took a pound of costly perfume made of pure nard, anointed Jesus' feet, and wiped them with her hair. The house was filled with the fragrance of the perfume. But Judas Iscariot, one of his disciples (the one who was about to betray him), said, "Why was this perfume not sold for three hundred denarii and the money given to the poor?" (He said this not because he cared about the poor, but because he was a thief; he kept the common purse and used to steal what was put into it.)*
- 2) Rebuke by Jesus was the trigger that set betrayal in motion, John 12:7-8, *Jesus said, "Leave her alone. She bought it so that she might keep it for the day of my burial. You always have the poor with you, but you do not always have me."*
- 3) This is the first time on record that he spoke out as an individual and he received a rebuke from Jesus.
- 4) His inner disillusionment would soon move to betrayal.

e. Direction

- 1) There were clear warnings that Jesus' path was not for Judas
- 2) Jesus' prediction of His death, Matthew 26:1-2, *When Jesus had finished saying all these things, he said to his disciples, "You know that after two days the Passover is coming, and the Son of Man will be handed over to be crucified."*
- 3) Religious leaders plot to kill Jesus, Matthew 26:3-5, *Then the chief priests and the elders of the people gathered in the palace of the high priest, who was called Caiaphas, and they conspired to arrest Jesus by stealth and kill him. But they said, "Not during the festival, or there may be a riot among the people."*

f. Exposed

- 1) Jesus declared one of the disciples would betray Him, Mt. 26:21-25, *and while they were eating, he said, "Truly I tell you, one of you will betray me." And they became greatly distressed and began to say to him one after another, "Surely not I, Lord?" He answered, "The one who has dipped his hand into the bowl with me will betray me. The Son of Man goes as it is written of him, but woe to that one by whom the Son of Man is betrayed! It would have been better for that one not to have been born." Judas, who betrayed him, said, "Surely not I, Rabbi?" He replied, "You have said so."*
- 2) Imagine how the betrayer must have felt to have been discovered.
- 3) Each disciple says, *Is it I, Lord?* but Judas says, *Is it I, Rabbi?*

3. Method

- a. Judas planned the betrayal of Christ, Matthew 26:14-16, *Then one of the twelve, who was called Judas Iscariot, went to the chief priests and said, "What will you give me if I betray him to you?" They paid him thirty pieces of silver. And from that moment he began to look for an opportunity to betray him.*
 - 1) For profit
 - a) The pieces were probably shekels, the temple currency.
 - b) The reward for betraying Jesus was 120 denarii, 120 days wages.
 - 2) In secrecy
 - a) The hope was to seize Jesus in absence of the crowd.
 - 1] Norval Geldenhuys, *He was...so admired by the people, and regarded by so many as the possible Messiah, that the Jewish authorities, who had already long ago taken sides against Him, did not dare to forbid His appearance in the temple or to have Him arrested.*
 - 2] In the evening, after the teachings of the day, Jesus spent the night outside Jerusalem on the Mount of Olives.
 - 3] Passover evening would be a good time when the thousands attending the festival would be indoors together in small groups engaged in celebrations.

b) Jesus guarded the time he would have with His disciples, Matthew 26:17-19, *On the first day of Unleavened Bread the disciples came to Jesus, saying, "Where do you want us to make the preparations for you to eat the Passover?" He said, "Go into the city to a certain man, and say to him, 'The Teacher says, My time is near; I will keep the Passover at your house with my disciples.' "* So the disciples did as Jesus had directed them, and they prepared the Passover meal.

1] Why did Jesus not tell the name of the host and the location?

- a] He still had much to say to His disciples during Passover Eve.
- b] It would be the last time to celebrate the Passover together.
- c] It was the time He would institute the Lord's Supper.

2] He sent two (Mark 14:13) of the disciples to prepare the location.

- a] It was a secret until they arrived.
- b] They were to look for a man carrying a pitcher of water (only women carried pitchers, men carried water in pouches).
- c] Judas must not deliver Him into His enemies hands until this time was completed.

b. Judas was empowered by Satan and left, John 13:27-30, *After he received the piece of bread, Satan entered into him. Jesus said to him, "Do quickly what you are going to do." Now no one at the table knew why he said this to him. Some thought that, because Judas had the common purse, Jesus was telling him, "Buy what we need for the festival"; or, that he should give something to the poor. So, after receiving the piece of bread, he immediately went out. And it was night.*

3) Darrell Bock, *"a reference not so much to possession as to direction."*

4) Judas did not resist Satan but opened himself up to Satan's will.

5) Judas apparently went straight from the Upper Room to the Sanhedrin.

6) At the moment Jesus instituted the Lord's Supper, Judas was revealing to the religious leaders where they could arrest Jesus, Gethsemane, where he regularly went to pray

- a) Luke 22:39, *He came out and went, as was his custom, to the Mount of Olives; and the disciples followed him.*
- b) John 18:2, *Now Judas, who betrayed him, also knew the place, because Jesus often met there with his disciples.*

C. Remorse, Matthew 27:3-5, *When Judas, his betrayer, saw that Jesus was condemned, he repented and brought back the thirty pieces of silver to the chief priests and the elders. He said, "I have sinned by betraying innocent blood." But they said, "What is that to us? See to it yourself." Throwing down the pieces of silver in the temple, he departed; and he went and hanged himself.*

1. He gave seeming evidence of his sincerity.

- a. He confessed his guilt.
- b. He asserted the innocence of Christ.
- c. He returned the money.

2. He was remorseful but not repentant.

- a. Matthew did not use the word which means a change of mind and will.
- b. He used a word which connotes regret or sorrow.
- c. Such sorrow can lead to repentance but for Judas it led to suicide.

PERSONAL RESPONSE

A. Questions

- 1. Why examine Judas prior to partaking of the Lord's Supper?
- 2. What does Judas have to do with me?

B. As a reminder of the majesty of God

- 1. His love is limitless - it was on display in the Upper Room and at the cross.
- 2. His plans are sure - all the minions of hell can't thwart His good plans for His children.
- 3. His grace through Christ is sufficient - whoever the sinner or whatever the sin.

C. For illustration

1. Emmaus Journal, *The message of his life is for insiders, for members of churches, for elders, deacons, stewards, trustees, ministers and evangelists. The same essential thing may happen today. And our judgment may be even greater, for we have great privileges today, with our completed Bibles, with the many biblical teachers we hear, with a friendly government, and with other advantages.*
2. Judas heard every lesson taught by Jesus but never applied them to his life.
3. Jesus did not fulfill Judas' personal ambitions.
4. Judas was never drawn to the person of Christ but only saw Him as a means to an end.

D. For personal examination - Am I closer to Judas than I care to admit?

1. Am I attracted to Jesus for personal gain?
2. Am I more concerned about my agenda than His for my life?
3. Do I allow the teaching of God's Word to change the way I live?
4. Has my attraction to Jesus turned to submission to His will?
5. Do I care more for the church and its programs than I do for the Savior?
6. Judas continually rejected God's grace. Is that you?

E. As a warning

1. Jesus instituted the Lord's Supper after Judas had departed.
2. We are instructed in 1 Corinthians 11:27-32, to examine ourselves before we come to the Lord's Table.
 - a. Faith - have I placed my faith in Christ alone for eternal life? If not, do so now.
 - b. Motivation - am I coming to this table trying to gain favor with God instead of thanking Him for the full favor I have in Christ? If so, release yourself to His grace.
 - c. Confession - am I carrying unconfessed sins? If so, lay them at the cross.