

Judas Iscariot Recap

Is there anyone more notorious than Judas Iscariot? Scriptures tell us that he was chosen by Jesus and called to an apostolic office. He was one of the twelve!

Knowing the story of how Judas would betray Jesus begs us to ask many questions: What do we know about Judas Iscariot? Did Jesus know what would happen? What caused Judas to betray Jesus? Was Judas a good man? Did he love Jesus? Was he saved? Did he make it into Heaven? How could someone be so close to Jesus commit the worst sin in the history of the world?

Let's begin with the background story: we don't know much about him. He was the treasurer of the twelve. Essentially, he was the CPA or CFO, in charge of stewarding the resources of Jesus' ministry. Sadly, he was stealing money the whole time (John 12:6 "...because he was a thief, and had the money box; and he used to take what was put in it.").

We can derive from his name that he came from a small town in South Judea called Kerioth Hezron. Contrary to the rest of the group, which was made up of two sets of brothers, and various sets of friends, Judas was a solitary figure. He was the only apostle not from the region of Galilee. This probably aided in his deception, because he was unknown to the rest of the group.

The fact remains, Jesus CHOSE Judas to be one of the twelve apostles! And Judas followed Him. Obviously, Judas had witnessed miracles and knew Jesus had extraordinary powers. Who wouldn't want to follow Him? The difference is Judas followed Jesus out of selfish desire and greed. Wealth, Power, and Prestige were what fueled his ambitions to follow Jesus. He was not interested in the Kingdom, progressive sanctification, or salvation.

And, nonetheless, Jesus knew that Judas would betray Him. Let's look at one of several prophecies stated in Scripture:

Psalms 41:9, a messianic prophecy, says "Even my own familiar friend in whom I trusted, who ate my bread, has lifted up his heel against me." Jesus cites that verse in John 13:18 and said that its fulfillment would come in His own betrayal.

Did Jesus know what would happen? YES! And He said it himself:

Luke 22:22 "Truly the Son of Man goes as it has been determined, but woe to that man by whom He is betrayed!"

John 6:70 "Have I not chosen you, the Twelve. Yet one of you is a devil!" This happens not long after Jesus had walked on water, and fed 5000. This was somewhat early in His ministry.

Jesus spent approximately three years training the twelve. Then came His last and final night on Earth...the night of the Last Supper...the night he was betrayed by Judas. We turn to the Gospels to tell the story:

Luke 22:1-6

John 13:2 and 21

Then, in the Garden of Gethsemane, after Jesus had prayed fervently, and literally sweat blood, a large mass of Roman soldiers show up. Guess who is leading the group. Judas. He approaches Jesus, saying, "Greetings, Rabbi!" and kisses him on the cheek. And Jesus replies "Judas, are you betraying the Son of Man with a kiss? Friend, do what you came for." You see, Judas had told the soldiers he would kiss the one who is known as Jesus...that way they'd know who to arrest.

How about that moment? How do you think Jesus felt? How about the Apostles? A guy you've been spending every day with, eating, sleeping, traveling, experiencing miracles with, one you would call a closest friend for the last three years....can you imagine the feeling of betrayal?

So they take Jesus away, and we know the rest of that story.

Remember when we talked about a similar story a few weeks ago with Peter? Peter denied Christ three times. What's the difference here, between Peter and Judas? Remorse and Repentance. There's a big difference. Judas felt bad, but he never changed. This is like all of us! We sin the same sin over and over and over....we feel bad over and over and over...yet sometimes we fail to admit it and give it to God, and ask for forgiveness, and turn away from our sin.

Rather than running to Jesus, Judas ran to a tree. Rather than saying he was sorry, he made a noose. Rather than making it RIGHT, he made it END. That's remorse....not repentance. You must take it to God. You must change. Judas failed to do so.

So why did Judas betray Jesus? MONEY! He betrayed Jesus and the other 11 apostles for 30 pieces of silver...which equates, in our time, to just a couple hundred bucks! Judas is the classic illustration of how the love of money is a root of all kinds of evil. (1 Timothy 6:10)

Was Judas a good man? NO! He was a phony, and a traitor! He faked his faith the whole time! His story serves as an example of the depths to which the human heart is capable of sinking. The other 11 apostles are all great encouragements to us because they exemplify how common people, with typical failings, can be used by God in uncommon, remarkable ways. Judas, on the other hand, stands as a warning about the evil potential of spiritual carelessness. As the other 11 were growing in faith and spiritual maturity, Judas was hardening his heart and becoming hateful.

Judas was not a victim!! Judas' desire was to betray Jesus, and Satan came and empowered that desire. Remember, in Luke we read that Judas opened his heart to Satan. Satan and demons empower the fallen, wicked, deadly desires of unrepentant sinners. **Satan doesn't make us do things we don't want to do, but he does empower us to do the things that God doesn't want us to do.** Our sinful nature has evil desires, and Satan wants to empower those desires. The good news is: if you are a

Christian, you have authority over Satan and demons thru Jesus Christ. If you are not a Christian, it's a tough battle when you don't have Jesus.

So, was Judas saved? Did he make it to Heaven?

John 17:12 - Jesus says to His father: "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." That means NO!

In conclusion, God did not make this happen, because God is not evil. But God uses even evil for good. He uses the *greatest* evil for the *greatest* good. He uses the betrayal of Judas Iscariot to bring Glory to God and salvation to sinners. That's how God uses even the evil of Judas for our good.

Judas demonstrates how the sovereign will of God cannot be thwarted by any means. His betrayal of Christ seemed at first glance like Satan's greatest triumph ever. But in reality, it signaled utter defeat for the devil and all his works. 1 John 3:8 "...The reason the Son of God appeared was to destroy the devil's work."

So how can we be sure something like this won't happen to us? We must cling to the Word of God. Find truth and God's abundant peace in these passages:

[James 4:7,8](#) - "Submit yourselves therefore to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you....come close to God, and He will come close to you."

1 Cor 10:12-13 (NIV) "So, if you think you are standing firm, be careful that you don't fall! No temptation has seized you except what is common to man. And God is faithful; he will not let you be tempted beyond what you can bear. But when you are tempted, he will also provide a way out so that you can stand up under it."

2Thessalonians 3:3

Ephesians 6:10-18