

The Apostle from Charioth

(Compiled by Paul R. Blake from multiple sources)

Introduction:

- A. An examination of the life of Judas Iscariot and lessons to be learned from it
- B. Judas Iscariot was a son of Simon and one of the twelve original apostles of Jesus Christ. He is known for the betrayal of Jesus to the Sanhedrin, and his name is often invoked to accuse someone of betrayal. His place among the Twelve Apostles was later filled by Matthias.
 - 1. Judas is the embodiment of the principle that God is able to take great opposition and turn it to His purposes for good. He took the great sin of betrayal and turned it into the catalyst that precipitated events that led to the salvation of humankind.

C. Background

- 1. In Greek, Judas is called Ιούδας Ισκάριωθ and Ισκαριώτης. Judas, spelled "Ioudas" in Greek and "Iudas" in Latin, pronounced yudas in both, is the Greek form of the common name Judah (יהודה, Yehûdâh, Hebrew for "God is praised").
- 2. Iscariot comes from Hebrew איש-קריות, Îš-Qrîyôth, or "man of Kerioth," or Charioth, a Judean town 10 miles south of Hebron. This makes Judas the only apostle not from Galilee. There are five other theories on the meaning of the name, but are not well documented or accepted
- 3. Character: Judas carried the disciples' common fund and embezzled. He betrayed Jesus for a bribe of thirty silver denarii by identifying him with a kiss, an act of trust and affection, to the temple police of High Priest Caiaphas, who then turned Jesus over to Pontius Pilate's soldiers
 - a. He died a suicide by hanging himself after his betrayal of Jesus.
 - b. You will not find a child named Judas.
- 4. Controversy over his life
 - a. Conflicting reports in non-canonical books and among the Coptics testify that Judas did not commit suicide, but was later run over by a Roman soldier in a chariot for sport, and that he was blessed by God for his courage in beginning the events that led to our salvation.
 - b. Even C. S. Lewis was moved by the conflicting accounts of Judas to reject the view "that every statement in Scripture must be historical truth."
 - c. The Pseudo Gospel of Judas portrays him as the best of the apostles, persecuted by them, stoned by them, and then falsely accused in canonical scripture of betraying Jesus
 - d. The Gnostic Cainites claim that Judas was actually acting as an instrument of Sophia, the Spirit of Wisdom, ersatz wife of God, to convince people to repudiate the material world. Judas was just caught in the middle
 - e. The Pseudo Gospel of Barnabas has Judas, not Jesus, crucified on the cross, transposed with Him for his sin of betrayal. This facilitated the resurrection account when Jesus was later seen.

- D. But we are compelled by the search for truth to ask: What does the word of God say about the apostle Judas?
1. He was an apostle chosen by the Lord
 2. He was the apostate betrayer of the Lord
 3. He was the agent of his own destruction - Matt. 26:14-16

I. JUDAS WAS AN APOSTLE CHOSEN BY THE LORD

- A. He is listed among the twelve apostles - Matt. 10:4; Mark 3:19; Luke 6:16
1. He ate the Passover without rejection by Jesus
 - a. Matt. 26:27; Mark 14:23
- B. Jesus specifically chose Judas to be one of the apostles.
1. Was Judas a part of Jesus' ministry serving Him as an apostle? He was until he transgressed - Acts 1:25
 - a. He sat at Jesus' feet and heard His teaching for three years.
 - b. Was taught the gospel and heard of the kingdom - Luke 8:1
 - c. Heard the interpretation of the parable of the sower - Mark 4:10
 - d. He was taught that the last shall be first - Mark 9:35
 - e. He knew about Jesus' impending betrayal and death
 - 1) Matt. 20:17; Mark 10:32; Luke 18:31
 2. He was sent out to preach to the lost sheep of the house of Israel and was given power to confirm the word.
 - a. He was given power over unclean spirits - Matt. 10:1
 - b. He preached the gospel to Israel - Matt. 10:5-7
 - c. He was among those sent out by twos - Mark 6:7
 - d. Before he was a betrayer, he was a disciple and servant of Jesus
 3. Judas' life proves that one can fall from grace and be lost - 1Cor. 10:12

II. JUDAS WAS THE APOSTATE BETRAYER OF THE LORD

- A. He engaged in conspiracy, took money for betrayal, and schemed to deceive the public - Luke 22:5-6
- B. He was motivated by greed - John 12:6; Matt. 26:15
1. Judas knew better - Luke 12:15
- C. He knew that Jesus knew that he would betray Him
1. John 6:70-71; Matt. 17:22, 26:21, 25
 2. He did it deliberately - John 13:26-27; Mark 14:10
- D. Judas allowed Satan to enter his heart - John 13:2; Luke 22:3
1. When one gives in to temptation, he allows Satan into his heart.
- E. He led the guards to Jesus' place of prayer near the Garden of Gethsemane.
1. Jesus made that place the crux of eternity, and Judas made it the site of the vilest betrayal in eternity - John 18:2-3; Matt. 26:47; Mark 14:43
- F. He identified Jesus with a kiss to complete his betrayal, an incredible use of an act of trust and affection - Matt. 26:48-49; Mark 14:44-45
1. Jesus even asked him if that was his intent, giving him yet another opportunity to consider his choices - Luke 22:48

III. JUDAS WAS THE AGENT OF HIS OWN DESTRUCTION

A. He regretted that Jesus was to be killed because he knew He was innocent.

1. Matt. 27:3-4 - The word used for remorse is not “metanoia” (compunction for guilt, including reformation; reversal of decision, repentance - Strongs), but “metamelomai” (to care afterwards, regret - Strongs)
2. Judas did not have a change of heart that resulted in a reformed life and change of character, but rather, deep regret that led to more sinful choices.
3. To his credit, he did try to restore the money he had taken, but the priests refused it - Matt. 27:4-10
4. The chief priests took the money and used it to buy a field to bury the unclaimed or impoverished dead.
5. Matthew’s description of the death as fulfilment of a prophecy “spoken through Jeremiah the prophet” does not clearly correspond to any known version of the Book of Jeremiah, but does appear in the Book of Zechariah - Zech. 11:12-13
6. It is possible that it was in a book by Jeremiah that was not preserved and canonical, or it may refer to a compilation of texts in the Book of Jeremiah (18:1-4, 19:1-13, 32:6-15)

B. Judas hanged himself, died, and fell - Acts 1:16-19

1. He had regret, but not godly sorrow - 2Cor. 7:10

Conclusion:

A. From “Unmasking the Betrayer” by John MacArthur

“Jesus and Judas--the epitome of opposites: the Perfect One and the absolutely wretched; the best and the worst. The purity of Jesus and the vileness of Judas, by contrast, became very obvious. Judas was an ultimate tragedy--probably the greatest tragedy that ever lived. He is the perfect and prime example of what it means to have opportunity and then lose it. He becomes all the more terrible because of the glorious beginnings he had. Judas followed the same Christ as the others. For three years, day in and day out, he occupied himself with Jesus Christ. He too, had left all and followed Jesus. He saw the same miracles; heard the same words; performed some of the same ministries; was esteemed in the same way the other disciples were--yet he did not become what the others became. In fact, he became the very opposite. While they were growing into true apostles and saints of God, he was progressively forming into a vile, calculating tool of Satan. Whatever his character at the beginning, he gradually became the treacherous man that betrayed Christ, a man who had no thought for anyone but himself, a man who finally wanted only to get as much as he could and get out.”

B. No one has ever fallen so far. Or have they? You can.

1. Heb. 6:4-6; 2Peter 2:20-22