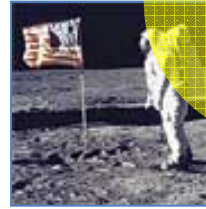


QUESTIONS

1. Judas Iscariot was one of the twelve apostles TRUE / FALSE
2. Judas was known as:
 - a. Fisherman
 - b. Tax-collector
 - c. Traitor
 - d. Advocate
3. Judas kept the purse for the group and he was:
 - a. A thief
 - b. Reliable
 - c. Eager to help the poor
 - d. All of the above
4. All the apostles had flaws, but which of them denied Christ?
 - a. Judas
 - b. Peter
 - c. John
 - d. Paul
5. How much was Judas paid for his treachery?
 - a. A Drachma
 - b. 30 pieces of silver
 - c. 10 pieces of gold.
 - d. 20 pieces of silver
6. Why is Judas known as a traitor?
 - a. He got rich by stealing from Jesus
 - b. He refused to believe Jesus was God's Son
 - c. He told lies about Jesus
 - d. He deliberately arranged for the enemies of Jesus to capture him.
7. Does God know whose heart will be hard and whose will be soft? YES / NO
8. Can a person go beyond the point of no return? YES / NO
9. Who does the Hebrew writer use as an example of someone who could not undo what he had done?
 - a. Esau
 - b. Jacob
 - b. Paul
 - c. Pharaoh
10. God can overcome everything except:
 - a. Blindness
 - b. Hard heart
 - b. Sin
 - d. Death

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But from there you will seek the LORD your God and you will find him, if you search after him with all your heart and with all your soul.

Deuteronomy 4:29

A LOOK INTO THE HEART OF GOD THROUGH THE STUDY OF HIS WORD

Part Ten

The Point of No Return

Judas

There is more than one person with the name Judas in the New Testament. In this lesson we are talking about Judas Iscariot who betrayed Jesus. This Judas is normally distinguished as “Judas who betrayed Jesus” or “Judas the traitor” (Matthew 26:25; Mark 3:19; Luke 6:16; John 18:2). When he was growing up he was simply “Judas” but at some point his name was changed to “Judas the traitor”. In the history of the U.S.A. there is such a man whose name was Benedict Arnold. Whenever you hear his name you also hear the word “traitor”. These men were not born traitors, but somewhere along the line they crossed that line. Benedict Arnold fought bravely for the Continental Army before crossing over to fight for the British. He has been called “The best General on both sides of the war.” What about Judas the traitor?

Judas Iscariot was one of the twelve whom Jesus called to be His closest disciples (Matthew 10:1-4). For the best part of three years he was a willing follower. All of those who followed Jesus had weaknesses and there were the usual power struggles that come with human nature. Mark gives us a glimpse of that.

And they came to Capernaum. And when he was in the house he asked them, “What were you discussing on the way?” But they kept silent, for on the way they had argued with one another about who was the greatest. Mark 9:33,34

John gives us a glimpse into the character of Judas, and we see a more significant flaw. When a woman called Mary expressed her devotion to Jesus Judas showed his true colors.

Mary therefore took a pound of expensive ointment made from pure nard, and anointed the feet of Jesus and wiped his feet with her hair. The house was filled with the fragrance of the perfume. But Judas Iscariot, one of his disciples (he who was about to betray him), said, "Why was this ointment not sold for three hundred denarii and given to the poor?" He said this, not because he cared about the poor, but because he was a thief, and having charge of the moneybag he used to help himself to what was put into it. John 12:3-5

What Jesus saw as a precious gift, Judas saw as senseless squandering of valuable assets. He only pretended to care about the poor and he was not enthusiastic about honoring Jesus, either. Any follower of Jesus who does not have a heart for the needy and who does not want to honor Jesus is living a lie.

People are fond of quoting from the Bible about the love of money being the root of all evil, and this might be a good scripture to look at here. It is found in 1 Tim 6:10

But those who desire to be rich fall into temptation, into a snare, into many senseless and harmful desires that plunge people into ruin and destruction.

So it sounds like Judas was a lover of money before he was a traitor. Most people will reject Christ but they will not reject His cause. They reject Him because they feel like Jesus will rob them of something that is too important to give up. So Jesus was careful to warn anyone who might follow Him that they should "count the cost" (Luke 14:25-30). Sadly, some will pretend to follow Christ who actually do not want to pay the cost. Does that make such a person a traitor like Judas? Let's look at what Judas ultimately did to earn the title of "traitor".

Then one of the twelve, whose name was Judas Iscariot, went to the chief priests and said, "What will you give me if I deliver him over to you?" And they paid him thirty pieces of silver. And from that moment he sought an opportunity to betray him. Matthew 26:14-16

So there are two questions a Christian can ask others:

1. What can I give you from Jesus? Or...
2. What will you give me for Jesus?

We either sacrifice ourselves for Jesus or we sacrifice Jesus for ourselves. Judas preferred the price for selling out to the cost of buying in. Many deny Christ but Judas deliberately sought to kill Him.

Peter denied Christ (Matthew 26:72) but Jesus continued to accept him as one of the twelve apostles. Judas committed suicide and someone else was chosen to take his place among the twelve. We read about that in Acts 1:15-26. Peter said that the Holy Spirit had predicted the events involving Judas. It seems that God had used Judas to carry out His plan because he knew that Judas would go beyond the point of no return. The Bible is full of examples where God demonstrates His omniscience (He has all knowledge) and His omnipotence (He has all power). He has used His friends and His enemies to keep His promise.

- He used Pharaoh to show his power even though his heart was hardened. (Romans 9:17; Exodus 9:13-17)
- He used the Apostle Paul to show His grace even though he was once a blasphemer and a persecutor. (1 Tim 1:12-14)
- He used Lazarus to show His Glory even though he was dead! (John 11:38-42)

These three examples show how God can, and will, use anyone, and any circumstance, to bring about His purpose on earth. His purpose is to save all souls but some who will go beyond the point of no return. Pharaoh and Judas are such individuals. Paul and Lazarus were not beyond the point of no return, however. Jesus showed His power over sin and death when He used Paul and Lazarus as examples. He showed Man's power to reject Him when He used Pharaoh and Judas. Pharaoh pretended to obey God 10 times but each time he turned against God. We don't know how many times Judas pretended to love Jesus. We do know that his final act of betrayal was a kiss that looked like the kiss of a close friend. (Matthew 26:47-49)

We all need to heed the warnings in Hebrews.

For it is impossible to restore again to repentance those who have once been enlightened, who have tasted the heavenly gift, and have shared in the Holy Spirit, and have tasted the goodness of the word of God and the powers of the age to come, if they then fall away, since they are crucifying once again the Son of God to their own harm and holding him up to contempt. Hebrews 6:4-6 (see also Hebrews 10:26-31)

The writer of Hebrews uses Esau as an example of someone who could not undo what he had done (Hebrews 12:16,17) as he tries to persuade people to remain faithful to Jesus and not fall away.