

## Judas Iscariot (Acts 1:13-25)

### Introduction: *The effect of betrayal*

How does it happen, that such warm, gracious, devoted, serious followers of Christ should then become and remain His bitterest enemies? I don't know. But when such people like turn and become enemies of Christ, the effect is devastating not only on the Christian community but even on those outside. If such a man turned against the Lord so viciously, what does this mean about us, about Christ, about Christianity? What would you think if you had believed through their ministry?

### 1. The Betrayal Predicted (vv. 16-20)

It was a shock to the disciples—but not to Jesus (John 13:21-27). Jesus was destined to be betrayed. Psalm 69: Here's the anointed king of Israel who's despised and rejected, betrayed and attacked. He prays, "Let Your salvation, O God, set me up on high" (Ps 69:29). Do you see how relevant this psalm is? This comes up again and again in the book of Acts (see Acts 2:23). **Lesson:** Such betrayal may shake us when it happens, but it should hardly surprise us (see 1 Tim 4:1, Matt 24:12, etc.).

### 2. The Betrayal Explained (v. 17)

Judas was one of these men who healed the sick and raised the dead (Matt 10:8), and he was the treasurer of the group (John 12:26). Judas wasn't the kind of man people doubted. He was the kind of man people trusted. When Jesus says in the upper room, "one of you will betray Me," we read that "the disciples looked at one another, perplexed about whom He spoke" (John 13:21-22). **Lesson:** This is why we must constantly be urging the gospel on each other, pointing each other to Christ, and have close and honest dealings with God. When Jesus reminded the disciples that one would betray him, they all said, "Lord, is it I?" (Matt 26:22). What most take as assurance is most frequently pride: "Even though all may fall away ... I will never fall away" (Matt 26:33, see 1 Cor 9:27). That wasn't Biblical assurance, that was sinful pride. What was it that made the difference in Peter's life that night? Jesus said, "I have prayed for you, that your faith should not fail" (Luke 22:32). And our response must be, not simply to look deeper within, but to draw nearer to Christ our savior.

### 3. The Betrayal Handled (v. 21-26)

There were to be twelve apostles (see Matt 19:28, Rev 21:14, Luke 22:28). And so they sought out qualified men (compare Deut 1:13, Acts 6:3), however, only the Lord can choose his Apostles. For such a decision as only the Lord can make, they cast the lot. **Lesson:** Every betrayal is a tragedy, but God is never frustrated nor his cause ultimately hindered. For every Judas, there are both Josephs and Matthiases ready to carry on the work. It does not depend on man, but on the Lord who builds his church.

### Application

1. *This is inevitable; we cannot read the heart or avoid the problem (Matt 13:1-22)*
2. *Let us each take heed lest we fall (1 Cor 10:12)*

### Conclusion

We have all betrayed the Lord and succumbed thousands of times to our foolishness and overweening pride. We are always overestimating ourselves and underestimating our sin. The difference between Judas and Peter is not that one man was a sinner and the other was not, one a traitor and the other was not. The difference was in the grace of God in Jesus Christ (Luke 22:32). Let us abide in Him.

## Our Future Hope (Micah 4:1-4)

### 1. The Promise of Hope: *What is promised in these last days?*

We are given a vision of universal repentance and worship (4:1-2), universal obedience (4:2b), universal peace (4:3-4), Jewish restoration from exile and returning to worship the Lord (4:7-10), Messianic rule (5:1-4), and the saints' victory (5:5-15). This is to take place in the "last days," which is quite a long period of time (Heb 1:2, 1 Cor 10:11, Dan 2:28-44). Such prophecies are poetic (see Ps 57:4, Isa 14:23, 49:2, 5:13, 10:21, 58:12), at times hyperbolic (see Zeph 1:2-4, Jer 25:9, Isa 32:14 Ps 74:1-2), compressed (see Heb 1:2, 1 Cor 10:11, Dan 2:28-44), and progressive (Dan 2:28-44, Isa 9:6-7, Matt 13:31-33, 1 Jn 3:3). But this concerns the present age (Acts 2:17, 15:14-18, Rev 2:27, 3:21).

### 2. The Interpretations of Hope: *How are the promises to be fulfilled?*

The Messiah's kingdom has been established (Matt. 12:28; 28:18; Rev 3:21), and the nations are his inheritance (Ps 2:8, Rev 2:26-27). His kingdom shall grow to fill the whole earth (Dan. 2:35, 44-45); and "of the *increase* of his government and peace there shall be no end" (Isa 9:6-7). The kingdom is like a mustard seed, or a little leaven put into a great mass of meal until it's all leavened (Matt 13:31-33). "He shall have dominion from sea to sea, and from the river unto the ends of the earth ... All nations shall serve Him" (Ps. 72:7-11). "All the ends of the earth shall turn to the Lord" (Ps. 22:27), and "the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord as the waters cover the sea" (Isa. 11:9). Therefore, the gates of hell will not prevail against Christ's church (Matt 16:18) and he must reign till his enemies are made his footstool (Ps 110:1, 1 Cor 15:25-26, Heb 10:13).

### 3. The Eclipse of Hope: *How did the church come to believe otherwise?*

(a) *Liberalism* - Hegel and others taught a very different view of history and Scripture, and they opposed the doctrine of a sovereign God, a resurrected Savior, and a powerfully present Spirit guiding history.

(b) *Evolutionary Progressivism* - Darwin's ideas were applied to society and history, and there was an optimism—not Biblical but secular in its hope and outlook—that society would get better and better. This was soon read back into the Bible, and the result was what we call the social gospel (see Walter Rauschenbusch's, *A Theology for the Social Gospel*), a view that died with the horrors of the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

(c) *Dispensationalism* - In 1825, Edward Irving began to preach the imminent premillennial return of Jesus to set up his thousand-year reign. Irving was followed by Darby, Moody, Scofield, and Dallas Seminary. Darby (1840) declared that the advance of the gospel is impossible in the present church age, and we must expect only the constant progress of evil rather than the earth to be filled with the knowledge of the Lord prior to Christ's return.

### 4. The Effect of Hope: *What did hope—or the lack of it—do to world missions?*

As A. A. Hodge observed, premillennialism led foreign missions to abandon the establishment Christian educational initiatives, Christian institutions, and missionary infrastructure, concentrating almost exclusively on the conversion of individual souls. Dispensationalist F. W. Newton declared that the imminent return of Christ "totally forbids all working for earthly objects distant in time." Zahn criticized Calvin because "he considered it his task to make the secular authorities submissive to his interpretation of the Divine commandments." Greg Bahnsen comments, "The visible church was depreciated, its pastoral office deemed unnecessary, and its historic doctrine disregarded."

**Conclusion:** *The future on a need-to-know basis.*