

## When the Greatest Evil is Used for the Greatest Good. John 13:15-30

John 13:15–30 (NKJV)

<sup>15</sup> For I have given you an example, that you should do as I have done to you. <sup>16</sup> Most assuredly, I say to you, a servant is not greater than his master; nor is he who is sent greater than he who sent him. <sup>17</sup> If you know these things, blessed are you if you do them.

<sup>18</sup> “I do not speak concerning all of you. I know whom I have chosen; but that the Scripture may be fulfilled, ‘*He who eats bread with Me has lifted up his heel against Me.*’ <sup>19</sup> Now I tell you before it comes, that when it does come to pass, you may believe that I am *He*. <sup>20</sup> Most assuredly, I say to you, he who receives whomever I send receives Me; and he who receives Me receives Him who sent Me.”

<sup>21</sup> When Jesus had said these things, He was troubled in spirit, and testified and said, “**Most assuredly, I say to you, one of you will betray Me.**”

<sup>22</sup> Then the disciples looked at one another, perplexed about whom He spoke.

<sup>23</sup> Now there was leaning on Jesus' bosom one of His disciples, whom Jesus loved. <sup>24</sup> Simon Peter therefore motioned to him to ask who it was of whom He spoke.

<sup>25</sup> Then, leaning back on Jesus' breast, he said to Him, "Lord, who is it?"

<sup>26</sup> Jesus answered, "It is he to whom I shall give a piece of bread when I have dipped it." And having dipped the bread, He gave *it* to Judas Iscariot, *the son* of Simon. <sup>27</sup> Now after the piece of bread, Satan entered him. Then Jesus said to him, "What you do, do quickly." <sup>28</sup> But no one at the table knew for what reason He said this to him. <sup>29</sup> For some thought, because Judas had the money box, that Jesus had said to him, "Buy *those things* we need for the feast," or that he should give something to the poor.

<sup>30</sup> Having received the piece of bread, he then went out immediately. And it was night.

## Introduction:

The birth of a child is one of the most amazing events that can ever be witnessed by two loving parents. A life that never existed before has been conceived and matured in the mothers womb to finally be brought into the light and life of a family.

Great weight and responsibility come in waves over mother and father as they face the tremendous challenge of raising them in nurture admonition of the Lord. Knowing how evil this world is gives them great resolve to do everything possible to protect their new addition to the family.

Great thought goes into planning for the arrival of the new baby, from clothes, to bedding, to maybe a room and toys.

Sometimes parents spend hours thinking of a name for their new baby. We all know that names have meaning and we would all want our child to be a reflection of that meaning.

One Egyptian couple named their child  
“Facebook”

One twitter obsessed couple named their baby  
“Hashtag”

One New Zealand couple named their new twins  
“Fish and Chips”

But consider with me the point in history nearly 2000 year ago when a man and woman held their child for the first time and said, “We will call him *Judas.*”

What were their hopes and dreams for him? What were the moments of laughter they shared with this young boy, the memories they repeatedly

shared at the table? Consider the moments of pride the Iscariots shared as their boy learned to speak and took his first steps. Surely they felt similar emotions to most parents as they witnessed the maturation process of a boy becoming a man. Little did they know what we know now of the choices he would make, the places he would go, the things he do, and the words he speak.

The name *Judas* today is one that's familiar to most ears. Like Hitler, Stalin, or bin Laden, it conjures up many feelings of disdain and disgust. It leaves a haunting notion of evil and betrayal. Other traitors pale by comparison.

When it comes to notorious names, Judas is the name below all names, and appropriately so. While the aforementioned names deserve to be names that remain despised throughout the annals of history, Judas remains in a league of its own.

Each of the men listed committed atrocities, some large-scale, others smaller. But Judas committed the most grievous act in the history of the world: the betrayal of the second person of the Trinity. The firstborn of all creation. The One by whom, and through whom, all things were created (Colossians 1:15–16).

In the words of John MacArthur,

“Judas is the most colossal failure in all of human history. He committed the most horrible, heinous act of any individual, ever. He betrayed the perfect, sinless, holy Son of God for a handful of money.”

As Randy Alcorn writes,

“Satan works on the assumption that every person has a price. Often, unfortunately, he is right. Many people are willing to surrender themselves and their principles to whatever god will bring them the greatest short-term profit” (*Money, Possessions, and Eternity*, 41).

Judas left the fellowship of the twelve apostles after the anointing in Bethany and arranged to betray Jesus for 30 pieces of silver (Matthew 26:14-15). But when they met again at the last supper, there he was! Near enough to dip in the Savior’s cup.

That is extraordinarily Wicked!!!

## **Lesson**

1. The Example Affirmed
2. The Election Asserted
3. The Event Announced
4. The Expressed Agitation

5. The Enquiry Achieved
6. The Existence Authorized

## 1. The Example Affirmed

**15** For I have given you an example, that you should do as I have done to you. **16** Most assuredly, I say to you, a servant is not greater than his master; nor is he who is sent greater than he who sent him. **17** If you know these things, blessed are you if you do them.

**15** For I have given you an example, that you should do as I have done to you.

Romans 15:5 (NKJV)

<sup>5</sup> Now may the God of patience and comfort grant you to be like-minded toward one another, according to Christ Jesus,

Ephesians 5:2 (NKJV)

<sup>2</sup> And walk in love, as Christ also has loved us and given Himself for us, an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweet-smelling aroma.

1 John 2:6 (NKJV)

<sup>6</sup> He who says he abides in Him ought himself also to walk just as He walked.

1 Peter 2:21 (NKJV)

<sup>21</sup> For to this you were called, because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that you should follow His steps:

1 Corinthians 11:1 (NKJV)

**11** Imitate me, just as I also *imitate* Christ.

The whole reason for this example of foot washing is

John 13:34–35 (NKJV)

<sup>34</sup> **A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another; as I have loved you, that you also love one another.** <sup>35</sup> **By this all will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another.”**

**16** Most assuredly, I say to you, a servant is not greater than his master; nor is he who is sent greater than he who sent him. **17** If you know these things, blessed are you if you do them.

**16** αμην αμην λεγω υμιν ουκ εστιν δουλος μειζων του κυριου αυτου ουδε αποστολος μειζων του πεμψαντος αυτον

Newberry, T., & Berry, G. R. (2004). *The interlinear literal translation of the Greek New Testament* (Jn 13:16). Bellingham, WA: Logos Bible Software.

Matthew 10:24 (NKJV)

**24** “A disciple is not above *his* teacher, nor a servant above his master.

Luke 6:40 (NKJV)

**40** A disciple is not above his teacher, but everyone who is perfectly trained will be like his teacher.

To refuse to follow Jesus’ example of humble service is to pridefully elevate oneself above Him, since **a slave is not greater than his master, nor is one who is sent greater than the one who sent him** (cf. similar sayings in 15:20; Matt. 10:24; Luke 6:40; 22:27). No servant dares to regard any task as beneath him if his master has performed it.



17 **If you know  
these things, blessed are you if you  
do them.**

17 **ει** ταυτα οιδατε μακαριοι εστε **εαν** ποιητε  
αυτα

Newberry, T., & Berry, G. R. (2004). *The interlinear literal translation of the Greek New Testament* (Jn 13:17). Bellingham, WA: Logos Bible Software.

**If ye know** (εἰ οἶδατε [*ei oidate*]). Condition of first class assumed as true, εἰ [*ei*] and present (οἶδατε [*oidate*] used as present) active indicative. **If ye do** (ἐάν ποιητε [*ean poiēte*]). Third-class condition, ἐάν [*ean*] and present active subjunctive, assumed as possible, “if ye keep on doing.”

Robertson, A. T. (1933). *Word Pictures in the New Testament* (Jn 13:17). Nashville, TN: Broadman Press.

The Lord’s concluding thought, “**If you know these things, you are blessed if you do them,**” reflects the biblical truth that blessing flows from obedience. The opening words of the Psalms emphasize that truth:

How blessed is the man who does not walk in the  
counsel of the wicked,  
Nor stand in the path of sinners,  
Nor sit in the seat of scoffers!  
But his delight is in the law of the Lord,  
And in His law he meditates day and night.

He will be like a tree firmly planted by streams of water,

Which yields its fruit in its season

And its leaf does not wither;

And in whatever he does, he prospers. (Ps. 1:1–3)

Psalm 119:1 declares, “How blessed are those whose way is blameless, who walk in the law of the Lord” (cf. Ps. 128:1). In Proverbs 16:20 Solomon declared, “He who gives attention to the word will find good, and blessed is he who trusts in the Lord.” “My mother and My brothers,” Jesus declared, “are these who hear the word of God and do it” (Luke 8:21). Later in Luke’s gospel, He affirmed, “Blessed are those who hear the word of God and observe it” (Luke 11:28). MacArthur, J. F., Jr. (2008). [John 12–21](#) (p. 69). Chicago, IL: Moody Publishers.

1. The Example Affirmed

## 2. The Election Asserted

<sup>18</sup> “I do not speak concerning all of you. I know whom I have chosen; but that the Scripture may be fulfilled, ‘*He who eats bread with Me has lifted up his heel against Me.*’

**18 ου** περι παντων υμων λεγω εγω οιδα ους  
**εξελεξαμην** αλλ ινα η γραφη πληρωθη Ο τρωγων  
 μετ εμου τον αρτον επηρεν επ εμε την ππερναν  
 αυτου

Newberry, T., & Berry, G. R. (2004). *The interlinear literal translation of the Greek New Testament* (Jn 13:18). Bellingham, WA: Logos Bible Software.

Jesus wanted to make sure that the rest of the disciples understood when the betrayal and arrest took place that He was not a surprise victim of Judas’s treachery. They might wonder why He chose Judas, and how He could have so completely misjudged his character. Therefore the Lord clarified His earlier declaration that the disciples were spiritually clean (13:10).

**8 “I do not speak concerning all of you. I know whom I have chosen;**

However He did **not speak of all of** them; in His omniscience (cf. 2:24–25) “He knew the one who was betraying Him;

John 2:24–25 (NKJV)

<sup>24</sup> But Jesus did not commit Himself to them, because He knew all *men*, <sup>25</sup> and had no need that anyone should testify of man, for He knew what was in man.

for this reason He said, ‘Not all of you are clean’ ” (v. 11)—only **the ones** whom He had **chosen** (cf. 15:16). MacArthur, J. F., Jr. (2008).

[John 12-21](#) (p. 75). Chicago, IL: Moody Publishers.

John 6:70–71 (NKJV)

<sup>70</sup> Jesus answered them, “**Did I not choose you, the twelve, and one of you is a devil?**” <sup>71</sup> He spoke of Judas Iscariot, *the son* of Simon, for it was he who would betray Him, being one of the twelve.

John 17:12 (NKJV)

<sup>12</sup> **While I was with them in the world, I kept them in Your name. Those whom You gave Me I have kept; and none of them is lost except the son of perdition, that the Scripture might be fulfilled.**

This is before it actually happens.

**18** “I do not speak concerning all of you. I know whom I have chosen; but that the Scripture may be fulfilled, ‘*He who eats bread with Me has lifted up his heel against Me.*’

**eklegó: to select****Original Word:** ἐκλέγομαι**Part of Speech:** Verb**Transliteration:** eklegó**Phonetic Spelling:** (ek-leg'-om-ahee)**Definition:** to select**Usage:** I pick out for myself, choose, elect, select.

1586 eklégomai (from **1537** /ek, "out of" and **3004** / légō, "speaking to a conclusion") – properly, to select (choose) out of, by a highly deliberate choice (i.e. real heart-preference) with a definite outcome (as with the destination of divine selection for salvation).

Although it is clear that the immediate context indicates that the choice Christ is talking about is the choice to be an apostle or not. verse 16 is a clear illusion to the apostolic ministry of being sent ones.

**16 Most assuredly, I say to you, a servant is not greater than his master; nor is he who is sent greater than he who sent him.**

**16** αμην αμην λεγω υμιν ουκ εστιν δουλος μειζων του κυριου αυτου ουδε αποστολος μειζων του πεμψαντος αυτον

Newberry, T., & Berry, G. R. (2004). *The interlinear literal translation of the Greek New Testament* (Jn 13:16). Bellingham, WA: Logos Bible Software.

It should be clear from other text that this choice is deeper than just a choice of office or ministry.

In John 6:64,

It is more than service, but rather the Sovereign election of God that is in mind and in this text it has the reference to Judas being chosen, and he is chosen as a devil.

John 6:64–71 (NKJV)

<sup>64</sup> **But there are some of you who do not believe.”**

For Jesus knew from the beginning who they were who did not believe, and who would betray Him.

<sup>65</sup> And He said, **“Therefore I have said to you that no one can come to Me unless it has been granted to him by My Father.”**

<sup>66</sup> From that *time* many of His disciples went back and walked with Him no more.

<sup>67</sup> Then Jesus said to the twelve, **“Do you also want to go away?”**

<sup>68</sup> But Simon Peter answered Him, “Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life.

<sup>69</sup> Also we have come to believe and know that You are the Christ, the Son of the living God.”

<sup>70</sup> Jesus answered them, **“Did I not choose you, the twelve, and one of you is a devil?”** <sup>71</sup> He spoke of

Judas Iscariot, *the son* of Simon, for it was he who would betray Him, being one of the twelve.

This is the intentional deliberate sovereign choice of a sinner for the purpose of carrying out the plan of betrayal.

v.16 I know whom I have chosen; but that the Scripture may be fulfilled,

Judas is chosen as a devil, not to be a devil. Jesus says “**and one of you is a devil**”

**Judas is** already born a sinner, and left in his natural condition as a sinner, without the grace of God, Judas will freely, willfully, choose to betray Jesus. He is doing what comes natural to the sinful heart of man. Because of mans natural inclination to hate Christ, he is held responsible for his choices in the plans of God

**John 3:19–20 (NKJV)**

**<sup>19</sup> And this is the condemnation, that the light has come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil. <sup>20</sup> For everyone practicing evil hates the light and does not come to the light, lest his deeds should be exposed.**

Judas is bent towards darkness,... instead like flowering plant reaching for the Sun, Judas is like the Roach running to the Darkness.

His natural Depravity makes him fully responsible for his sin and betrayal of Christ.

But Judas's role in the divine plan was not something apart from his own desire; he was no robot, programmed to betray Jesus against his will. Judas freely chose to do what he did, and was fully accountable for his actions. The same tension between divine sovereignty and human choice is evident in Judas's becoming a disciple. He chose to follow Christ, yet he became a follower of Christ only because Christ chose him (cf. John 15:16)—though not, of course, to salvation.

MacArthur, J. F., Jr. (2008). [John 12-21](#) (p. 76). Chicago, IL: Moody Publishers.

### **Matthew 26:24 (NKJV)**

**24 The Son of Man indeed goes just as it is written of Him, but woe to that man by whom the Son of Man is betrayed! It would have been good for that man if he had not been born."**

### **Luke 22:22 (NKJV)**



22 **And truly the Son of Man goes as it has been determined, but woe to that man by whom He is betrayed!”**

Judas had every opportunity to turn from his sin. Much of Christ’s teaching applied directly to him, such as the parables of the unjust steward (Luke 16:1–13) and the wedding garment (Matt. 22:11–14); and Jesus’ preaching against the love of money (Matt. 6:19–34), greed (Luke 16:13), and pride (Matt. 23:1–12). Judas also heard the Lord’s candid declaration to the Twelve, “Did I Myself not choose you, the twelve, and yet one of you is a devil?” (John 6:70), and His warning of the fearful judgment that awaited His betrayer: “Woe to that man by whom the Son of Man is betrayed! It would have been good for that man if he had not been born” (Matt. 26:24). And he had just heard Jesus declare that not all the disciples were spiritually cleansed (v. 10). But all of that left Judas unmoved. He resolutely hardened his heart and refused to repent

MacArthur, J. F., Jr. (2008). [John 12–21](#) (p. 77). Chicago, IL: Moody Publishers.

**We see the use of the devil and evil men all throughout scripture.**

## example

### Job 1-4

#### Pharaoh

Romans 9:17–18 (NKJV)

<sup>17</sup> For the Scripture says to the Pharaoh, *“For this very purpose I have raised you up, that I may show My power in you, and that My name may be declared in all the earth.”* <sup>18</sup> Therefore He has mercy on whom He wills, and whom He wills He hardens.

### The Crucifixion

Acts 2:23 (NKJV)

<sup>23</sup> Him, being delivered by the determined purpose and foreknowledge of God, you have taken by lawless hands, have crucified, and put to death;

**Acts 4:27–28** (NKJV)

<sup>27</sup> “For truly against Your holy Servant Jesus, whom You anointed, both Herod and Pontius Pilate, with the Gentiles and the people of Israel, were gathered together <sup>28</sup> to do whatever Your hand and Your purpose determined before to be done.

### General Evil plotting

Genesis 50:20 (NKJV)

<sup>20</sup> But as for you, you meant evil against me; *but* God meant it for good, in order to bring it about as *it is* this day, to save many people alive.

Psalm 105:16–17 (NKJV)

<sup>16</sup> Moreover He called for a famine in the land;  
He destroyed all the provision of bread.

<sup>17</sup> He sent a man before them—  
Joseph—*who* was sold as a slave.

### The Devil is God's Devil,

The Devil is not free to what ever he wishes outside the Sovereign plan of God. He is bound by the Fences of Sovereignty. He has a leash that allows him to go only so far.

The Scripture clearly points out that the greatest of Evils, the most sinister plot, the most wicked of schemes that has been devised by man was all part to the predetermined plan of God.

No Wickedness ever manifest itself with the signature from heaven.

No evil ever is unveiled apart from the direction of Deity.

No calamity can claim authorship apart from Christ Authority.

Although it is very difficult to understand at times,  
 There is no greater comfort than to know that all evils  
 the devil can devise, all the sin the man can supply,  
 or all the calamity that may come...

It is all under the sovereign hand of the Almighty.

“Nothing in all the vast universe can come to pass  
 otherwise than God has eternally purposed. Here is  
 a foundation of faith. Here is a resting place for the  
 intellect. Here is an anchor for the soul, both sure  
 and steadfast. It is not blind fate, unbridled evil, man  
 or Devil, but the Lord Almighty who is ruling the  
 world, ruling it according to His own good pleasure  
 and for His own eternal glory.”

— A.W. Pink, The Sovereignty of God

1. The Example Affirmed
2. The Election Asserted

### **3. The Event Announced**

<sup>18</sup> “I do not speak concerning all of  
 you. I know whom I have chosen;  
 but that the Scripture may be  
 fulfilled, ‘He who eats bread with Me  
 has lifted up his heel against Me.’

<sup>19</sup> Now I tell you before it comes,

that when it does come to pass, you may believe that I am *He*. <sup>20</sup> Most assuredly, I say to you, he who receives whomever I send receives Me; and he who receives Me receives Him who sent Me.”

18...I know whom I have chosen; but that the Scripture may be fulfilled, ‘*He who eats bread with Me has lifted up his heel against Me.*’

Jesus wanted to make sure that the rest of the disciples understood when the betrayal and arrest took place that He was not a surprise victim of Judas’s treachery. They might wonder why He chose Judas, and how He could have so completely misjudged his character. Therefore the Lord clarified His earlier declaration that the disciples were spiritually clean (13:10). However He did **not speak of all of** them; in His omniscience (cf. 2:24–25) “He knew the one who was betraying Him; for this reason He said, ‘Not all of you are clean’ ” (v. 11)—only **the ones** whom He had **chosen** (cf. 15:16).

Jesus was not caught off guard; “He was not the deceived and helpless Victim of unsuspected

treachery, but One sent by God to effect God's purpose going forward calmly and unafraid, to do what God had planned for Him to do" (Leon Morris, *The Gospel According to John*, The New International Commentary on the New Testament [Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1979], 623). The Lord deliberately chose Judas so **that the Scripture may be fulfilled** (cf. 17:12). The **Scripture** the Lord specifically cited as being **fulfilled** in Judas's betrayal, "**He who eats My bread has lifted up his heel against Me**" (or in modern vernacular, "kicked Me when I was down") is Psalm 41:9. David lamented his betrayal by a close, trusted companion (one who had shared a meal with him; a symbol of intimate fellowship), possibly Ahithophel (2 Sam. 15:31), as rabbinic sources suggest. Another psalm that may refer to David's betrayal during the dark days of Absalom's revolt is Psalm 55. In verses 12–14 David wrote,

For it is not an enemy who reproaches me,  
Then I could bear it;  
Nor is it one who hates me who has exalted  
himself against me,  
Then I could hide myself from him.  
But it is you, a man my equal,  
My companion and my familiar friend;

We who had sweet fellowship together  
Walked in the house of God in the throng.

MacArthur, J. F., Jr. (2008). [John 12-21](#) (pp. 75-76). Chicago, IL: Moody Publishers.

In both psalms David's experience points forward to Messiah's betrayal. Zechariah 11:12-13 also predicts Judas's betrayal—even giving the exact amount of money he would receive and what he would do with it afterward (cf. Matt. 27:3-10):

I said to them, "If it is good in your sight, give me my wages; but if not, never mind!" So they weighed out thirty shekels of silver as my wages. Then the Lord said to me, "Throw it to the potter, that magnificent price at which I was valued by them." So I took the thirty shekels of silver and threw them to the potter in the house of the Lord.

Thus long before Judas was born, his duplicity was foreseen and designed into God's eternal plan.

MacArthur, J. F., Jr. (2008). [John 12-21](#) (p. 76). Chicago, IL: Moody Publishers.

**19** Now I tell you before it comes, that when it does come to pass, you may believe that I am He.

## 19 απ αρτι λεγω υμιν προ του γενεσθαι ινα οταν γενηται πιστευσητε οτι **εγω ειμι**

Newberry, T., & Berry, G. R. (2004). [The interlinear literal translation of the Greek New Testament](#) (Jn 13:19). Bellingham, WA: Logos Bible Software.

In keeping with the theme of the Gospel of John, that Jesus is God, he uses one of the most powerful examples in scripture to prove that He is God. God is the only one who know the future. He knows the future not because he can look down time and see all the choices of man that are supposedly left up to the will of man, but rather, He knows the future because He has Decreed the future. He has determined the future. What has been used for many years as a reliable apologetic for the proof of the trustworthiness of Scripture, is that the Bible has accurately predicted the future. The test of a prophet in the OT was whether he was accurate in prophecy. If he missed one, he was false. God does not miss.

As noted in the previous point, Jesus wanted to make sure that Judas's betrayal would not shake the other disciples' faith in Him. By telling them about it **before it came to pass**, He assured that in the future they could look back and know that He knew everything that was going to happen. Thus **when** the betrayal did **occur**, the disciples, though scattered and fearful, would recognize His omniscient



foreknowledge (cf. 2:25) and believe in His deity. As He had done before in John's gospel (e.g., 8:24, 28, 58), Jesus took for Himself the divine name of God from Exodus 3:13–14, **I am** (the word **He** does not appear in the Greek text).

MacArthur, J. F., Jr. (2008). *John 12–21* (p. 77). Chicago, IL: Moody Publishers.

The reason why he now takes the pains to show that inclusion of Judas was not an oversight or a sign of weakness on his part is so that their faith might be strengthened for the critical hour. As in 6:70, the argument assumes that not all election is to salvation.

Carson, D. A. (1991). *The Gospel according to John* (p. 470). Leicester, England; Grand Rapids, MI: Inter-Varsity Press; W.B. Eerdmans.

<sup>20</sup> **Most assuredly, I say to you, he who receives whomever I send receives Me; and he who receives Me receives Him who sent Me."**

20 αμην αμην λεγω υμιν Ο λαμβανων εαν τινα πεμψω εμε λαμβανει ο δε εμε λαμβανων λαμβανει τον πεμψαντα με

Newberry, T., & Berry, G. R. (2004). *The interlinear literal translation of the Greek New Testament* (Jn 13:20). Bellingham, WA: Logos Bible Software.

At first glance, Jesus' statement, **Truly, truly, I say to you, he who receives whomever I send receives Me; and he who receives Me receives Him who sent Me** (cf. Matt. 10:40; Mark 9:37; Luke 10:16) appears to be disconnected from the context.

Yet upon further reflection the connection becomes evident. The disciples (the eleven) would be shocked by Jesus' prediction that one of them would betray Him. They might think that having a traitor in their midst would destroy their credibility as a group and end their mission. Further, if the Lord was betrayed to His death, their hope for the immediate establishment of the earthly messianic kingdom would die with Him.

But the Lord, dropping this statement into the middle of references to Judas, reassured the eleven apostles that Judas's treachery would not nullify their commission; He was still going to **send** them as His representatives in the world. The very title that Christ gave them (Luke 6:13) emphasizes that truth; the Greek word translated "apostle" (*apostolos*) refers to one sent out having the full authority of the person who sent him, much like an ambassador today. But though the apostles had a unique, nontransferable authority (cf. Eph. 2:20), all believers represent Jesus Christ in the world. As Paul reminded the Corinthians, "We are ambassadors for Christ, as though God were making an appeal through us"; begging sinners "on behalf of Christ [to] be reconciled to God" (2 Cor. 5:20; cf. Eph. 6:20). As citizens of heaven (Phil. 3:20), believers represent

their King to a world of lost sinners, among whom they live “as aliens and strangers” (1 Peter 2:11).

MacArthur, J. F., Jr. (2008). [John 12-21](#) (pp. 77–78). Chicago, IL: Moody Publishers.

1. The Example Affirmed
2. The Election Asserted
3. The Event Announced

## 4. The Expressed Agitation

**21** When Jesus had said these things, He was troubled in spirit, and testified and said, “**Most assuredly, I say to you, one of you will betray Me.**”

**21** Ταυτα ειπων ο Ιησους εταραχθη τω πνευματι και εμαρτυρησεν και ειπεν Αμην αμην λεγω υμιν οτι εις εξ υμων παραδωσει με

Newberry, T., & Berry, G. R. (2004). [The interlinear literal translation of the Greek New Testament](#) (Jn 13:21). Bellingham, WA: Logos Bible Software.

Having prepared the disciples by reassuring them that they would continue to be His representatives, Jesus **became troubled in spirit, and testified and said, “Truly, truly, I say to you, that one of you will betray Me.”** **Troubled** translates a form of the verb *tarassō*, a strong word used figuratively to speak of severe mental or spiritual turmoil. It describes the disciples’ terror at seeing the Lord

walking on the water (Matt. 14:26), Zacharias's fear when the angel Gabriel appeared to him in the temple (Luke 1:12), the disciples' fear when Jesus appeared to them after the resurrection (Luke 24:38), the deep anguish of Jesus' soul at Lazarus's tomb (John 11:33), and His distress at the prospect of facing the cross (John 12:27).

Several things **troubled** the Lord; His unrequited love for Judas, Judas's ingratitude for all the kindness He had shown him, the malevolent presence of Satan, who would shortly possess Judas (v. 27), the fearful fate that awaited Judas in hell, and the knowledge that the betrayal would lead Him to the cross, with its sin-bearing (2 Cor. 5:21) and separation from the Father (Matt. 27:46). "In the present passage, Jesus' emotions are shown to be in a state of turmoil, his whole inner self convulsing at the thought of one of his closest followers betraying him to his enemies" (Andreas J. Köstenberger, *John*, Baker Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament [Grand Rapids: Baker, 2004], 413). Such would be the terrible consequences of the betrayal Jesus now openly declared.

MacArthur, J. F., Jr. (2008). [\*John 12-21\*](#) (p. 78). Chicago, IL: Moody Publishers.

## 1. The Example Affirmed

2. The Election Asserted
3. The Event Announced
4. The Expressed Agitation

## **5. The Enquiry Achieved**

**22** Then the disciples looked at one another, perplexed about whom He spoke.

**25** Then, leaning back on Jesus' breast, he said to Him, "Lord, who is it?"

Stunned by Jesus announcement, the disciples (with the exception of Judas, of course) were thrown into confusion, as D. A. Carson suggests:

The Twelve were already somewhat disoriented by Jesus' allusions to his suffering and death, categories they still could not square with their conviction that he was the promised Messiah. Doubtless references to betrayal and treachery seemed similarly obscure. Perhaps some wondered if Jesus were referring to disciples just outside the ring of the Twelve; others might have wondered if betrayal would be inadvertent. Perhaps the notion of betrayal did not seem very threatening to them, since their Master could calm

storms, raise the dead, feed the hungry, heal the sick. What possible disaster could befall him that he could not rectify? (*The Gospel According to John*, The Pillar New Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1991), 472)

Obviously, since they were alone in the room with Jesus (cf. Matt. 26:20; Mark 14:17–20; Luke 22:11, 14–15), they knew that one of their number—one of those with whom they had lived and ministered for more than three years, one of those whose feet Jesus had washed, one of those chosen to be His ambassadors—would do the unthinkable and betray Him.

But which one? It is a tribute to the effectiveness of Judas's hypocrisy (and to Jesus kindly treating him no differently from the other eleven disciples) that no one suspected him. Instead of immediately accusing Judas, **the disciples began looking at one another, at a loss to know of which one He was speaking.**

Mark records that “they began to be grieved and to say to Him one by one, ‘Surely not I?’ ” (Mark 14:19)—even “Judas, who was betraying Him, said, “Surely it is not I, Rabbi?” (Matt. 26:25), thus maintaining his deceitful hypocrisy to the end. Luke

adds that “they began to discuss among themselves which one of them it might be who was going to do this thing” (Luke 22:23). One can only wonder what Judas said.

**23** Now there was leaning on Jesus’ bosom one of His disciples, whom Jesus loved. <sup>24</sup> Simon Peter therefore motioned to him to ask who it was of whom He spoke.

Since the disciples had no clue as to who the betrayer might be, demonstrating the competence of Judas’s hypocrisy, Peter at length took the initiative to find out. But rather than ask the Lord directly, he turned to the disciple who **was reclining on Jesus’ bosom** (lying next to Him at the supper table) **whom Jesus loved**. That beloved disciple was John, who never names himself in his gospel. His deep love for Jesus stands in stark contrast to Judas’s intense hatred. (For evidence that the beloved disciple was the apostle John, see *John 1–11*, The MacArthur New Testament Commentary [Chicago: Moody, 2006], 6–7.) Assuming John knew who the betrayer was, **Simon Peter gestured to** him to attract his

attention and said to him, “Tell us who it is of whom He is speaking.” But John did not know either, so he leaned back thus on Jesus’ bosom and whispered to Him, “Lord, who is it?”

MacArthur, J. F., Jr. (2008). *John 12-21* (pp. 79–80). Chicago, IL: Moody Publishers.

**25** Then, leaning back on Jesus’ breast, he said to Him, “Lord, who is it?”

1. The Example Affirmed
2. The Election Asserted
3. The Event Announced
4. The Expressed Agitation
5. The Enquiry Achieved

## **6. The Existence Authorized**

**26** Jesus answered, “It is he to whom I shall give a piece of bread when I have dipped *it*.” And having dipped the bread, He gave *it* to Judas Iscariot, *the son* of Simon.

Evidently **Jesus** spoke so softly that only John heard when He answered, “That is the one for whom I shall dip the morsel and give it to



**him**” (see the discussion of vv. 28–29 below). The **morsel** was a piece of unleavened bread, which was dipped into a mixture of bitter herbs, vinegar, water, salt, crushed dates, figs, and raisins. To be given the **morsel** by the host was to be singled out for special honor.

Jesus thus made a gesture of honor toward Judas, showing kindness right up to the bitter end (cf. Rom. 2:4). But he was so far gone into his apostasy that even after the Lord **dipped the morsel ... and gave it to Judas** the wretched traitor’s heart remained implacably hardened. Judas spurned Christ’s final gesture of love to him, just as he had all the previous ones for three years

MacArthur, J. F., Jr. (2008). [John 12–21](#) (p. 80). Chicago, IL: Moody Publishers.

**27** Now after the piece of bread,  
Satan entered him. Then Jesus said  
to him, **“What you do, do quickly.”**

At that moment the day of salvation (cf. 2 Cor. 6:2) ended for Judas; hell arrived as **Satan then entered into** him. (The Devil evidently gained direct control over Judas on two occasions: just before the

betrayal was arranged [Luke 22:3], and now as it was about to be carried out.)

Divine mercy gave way to divine judgment and Judas was in essence handed over to Satan (cf. 1 Cor. 5:5; 1 Tim. 1:20). He had spurned Christ's love for the last time, and his eternal doom was sealed. F. F. Bruce writes,

Jesus' action, in singling Judas out for a mark of special favour, may have been intended as a final appeal to him to abandon his treacherous plan and play the part of a true disciple. Up to that moment, the die had not been irrevocably cast. If Judas wavered for a second, it was only to steel himself to carry out his fatal resolution, to become the willing instrument of Satan whereas he might have been the free follower and messenger of his Master. Satan could not have entered into him had he not granted him admission. Had he been willing to say "No" to the adversary, all of his Master's intercessory power was available to him there and then to strengthen him. But when a disciple's will turns traitor, when the spiritual aid of Christ is refused, that person's condition is desperate indeed. (*The Gospel of John* [Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1983], 290)

Once Judas had irrevocably crossed that line, Jesus dismissed him, telling him, “**What you do, do quickly**” (cf. Matt. 26:50). Jesus controlled every detail of His death, proving the truth of His declaration, “No one has taken it away from Me, but I lay it down on My own initiative. I have authority to lay it down, and I have authority to take it up again.

This commandment I received from My Father” (John 10:18). Christ was about to institute the Lord’s Supper and He was not going to have it marred by Judas’s (and Satan’s) presence.

MacArthur, J. F., Jr. (2008). [John 12–21](#) (pp. 80–81). Chicago, IL: Moody Publishers.

**28** But no one at the table knew for what reason He said this to him.

**29** For some thought, because Judas had the money box, that Jesus had said to him, “Buy *those things* we need for the feast,” or that he should give something to the poor.

As noted above, evidently only John heard Jesus say how He would point out His betrayer (and even he might not have realized that the betrayal was imminent).

They could only speculate that **because Judas had the money box, that Jesus was saying to him, “Buy the things we have need of for the feast”; or else, that he should give something to the poor** (which was traditionally done at Passover).

MacArthur, J. F., Jr. (2008). [John 12–21](#) (pp. 80–81). Chicago, IL: Moody Publishers.

**30** Having received the piece of bread, he then went out immediately. And it was night.

**After receiving the morsel** and hearing Jesus’ words of dismissal, Judas **went out immediately**. Now that he had been exposed as the betrayer, he knew that he had to act quickly before the whole plot collapsed. He evidently went straight to the Sanhedrin and told them that the “opportune time” (Mark 14:11) when they could arrest Jesus “apart from the crowd” (Luke 22:6) had finally come. Judas knew that after the meal Jesus, “as was His custom” (Luke 22:39), would head for the Mount of Olives. He knew the exact location of Gethsemane, “for Jesus had often met there with His disciples” (John 18:2).

### v.30 ...**And it was night.**

John's footnote that **it was night** is more than the reminiscence of an eyewitness; it has a deeper significance. Not only had darkness descended over Jerusalem but also over Judas's heart. He was now completely under the sway of the power of darkness (cf. Luke 22:53; Acts 26:18; 2 Cor. 6:14–15; Eph. 6:12; Col. 1:13). The next time Judas appears in the narrative is at the head (Luke 22:47) of those coming to arrest Jesus (John 18:3–5).

MacArthur, J. F., Jr. (2008). [John 12–21](#) (pp. 81–82). Chicago, IL: Moody Publishers.

## **Lessons learned**

1. The lesson of missed opportunity
2. The lesson of wasted privilege
3. The lesson of the danger of the love of money, materialism and position
4. The Lesson of self deception
5. The Lesson of the darkness of depravity of man, to reject in full light.
6. The Blindness of the heart to the glorious gospel.
7. The Sovereignty of God over evil, and evil choices, responsibility of sinners for their choices

8. The engagement of evil and satan in the purposes of God

9. The impossibility of man or Satan to thwart, stop or divert the plan of God. The plan of Satan, to stop the plan of God becomes the very atonement that saves sinners from Satan

“Whether it’s Judas, John, or Jennifer, all of our names have been tarnished by the sin that poisons every human heart. It may not have traded for thirty pieces of silver, or earned historical notoriety, but I too have betrayed the Son of God. There are times I’ve denied knowing him, like Peter. There have been moments of adultery, like David. I’ve murdered. Gossiped. Lied. Stolen. I’m unable to love God with my heart, soul, mind, and strength. For Christians to grasp the weight of our sin, we must stop looking down on the name Judas as though we are on higher ground. The same temptations, cares, lusts, and greeds of Judas’s heart are in yours and mine. I get the sense that Christians often think of Judas like some character from a myth or fable. He’s just a villain, perhaps. In doing so, we separate ourselves from him, and when we do that, we are in danger of the same mistakes of Judas.

As J.C. Ryle once said, “A right knowledge of sin lies at the root of all saving Christianity.” Or Christ himself, “The tax collector, standing far off, would not even lift up his eyes to heaven, but beat his breast, saying, ‘God, be merciful to me, a sinner!’” (Luke 18:13). Only those who know their sin are justified (Luke 18:14).

As John Piper has preached,

If we are ever to grasp the gospel, we must grasp the ugliness of our sin. If we never admit that we don’t just do bad things — we *are* bad — the gospel will never land in power. Our sins will always be healed lightly. I need to crawl into the cesspool of my heart and claw my way to the bottom, believing there’s Jesus’s blood down there, not hell. But it’s at the *bottom* of our sin, not only part way down.

Those who know the saving work of Jesus Christ look at the life of Judas and see themselves. Instead of seeing a person they scoff at, they look upon Judas with sobriety and even a kind of empathy, knowing that the only thing that separates them from Judas is grace.”