

BIBLE STUDY QUESTIONS

JUDAS ISCARIOT -THE TRAITOR DISCIPLE

OPENING QUESTIONS:

- What do you normally think of when you think of Judas?
- What part of the Judas story makes what he did sinful?
- What types of things can we learn from his life?

HIS ORIGINS

His name – “Judas” – derives from Judah, which means “Jehovah leads.” Although we know nothing about his family (other than his father was named Simon), we can assume that given his name they were people of some faith.

He was the only disciple *not* to come from Galilee, so he would have had an accent and may have thought of himself as an outsider. Indeed, no mention is made of him being close with any of the other disciples.

- Do you think Judas could easily have hidden his intentions from the other disciples?
- What application can we gain from this concerning our church?

HIS CALL

Scripture doesn't record the specifics of when and how Jesus calls Judas, but we do know that he came willingly and that he stayed willingly. We don't know his motives for staying, but he was known:

- To enrich himself from the purse;
- That he was a politically patriotic Jew not fond of Roman rule;
- That he likely was expecting the Messiah to be more of a liberating force and ruler.

We also know that Jesus knew his heart, and knew he would be the one to betray Him. We also know that in spite of his daily exposure to Jesus' teachings, and his witness to miracles he never fully accepted Christ as Lord, and consistently chose sin.

- Was Judas doomed to failure? Why or why not?
- One theory of predetermination holds that God does not necessarily pre-determine our fates, but that rather He has seen all of eternity already, and knows how things will unfold... more a “pre-knowing” than “pre-determining.” Does this make you more comfortable with Judas' fate? Why or Why not?
- What does that mean for our personal responsibility?

HIS DISILLUSIONMENT

Even though Judas travelled with Jesus, heard Him speak and watched Him perform miracles, in the end he was disillusioned with Him, again – possibly because of his personal expectations of what the Messiah should be. By the time of the Passover, Judas' mind was made up to betray Jesus to the Romans.

- Do we have preconceived notions about God? How do they mold and shape our character?

HIS GREED

Judas' greed was apparent, especially towards the end. John specifically mentions Judas' tendency to steal as part of the story of Mary and the perfume. Judas' concern for the poor is almost certainly feigned, although the other disciples seem to share his views. It is possible however that his dismay at what he saw as a wasteful display was real, and it appears to have been the breaking point for him, as he immediately thereafter goes to the High Priests to sell Jesus out.

- Have you ever disagreed with Christ? How are you able to reconcile what He says or does with what you believe?
- Why is the anointing of Christ with the expensive oil not a contradiction?

HIS BETRAYAL

Jesus dismisses Judas at the Last Supper, and Judas goes straight to the Sanhedrin. The other disciples are presumably still puzzled and concerned over Jesus' statement that one among them would betray Him, yet even though Judas leaves, none seem to suspect it's him.

He returns with soldiers to the Garden of Gethsemane where Jesus and the disciples retired after dinner, and he indicates who Jesus is by kissing him on the cheek.

- Why is the kiss especially significant?
- Jesus was famous, and in John 18 we learn that Jesus identifies Himself to the Romans as they arrive, so why was the kiss even necessary?
- What does the betrayal of Judas reveal about our own relationships with each other, and with Jesus?

HIS DEATH

After he betrays Jesus, his conscience seems to get the best of Judas. He returns the money, saying: "I have sinned! I have spilled innocent blood!" and the next thing we learn he has committed suicide.

- Do you think his remorse, and his acknowledgment of sin represent confession and repentance? Why or why not?
- Given everything he knew about Jesus, and about His mission as Messiah, why would you think Judas would still feel compelled to kill himself?