

Scriptures and we know very little of Judas Iscariot apart from the Gospels and truly, if we are to understand this man, we must look in the Gospels for the answer.

II. In the Light of the Bible

I should like for us now to come and look at Judas in the light of the Holy Scriptures. John says, "He was a thief". Luke says, "Satan entered into him". Jesus said, "It would have been better for him if he had never been born". It seems that all of them regarded him as a famous traitor.

1. A Member of the Apostolic Band

Judas Iscariot, as far as we can determine, was the only Judean of the Apostolic Band. Of the others were Galileans and when we think about this it is not unimportant, that twelve men were chosen that they might be with him and eleven of them came out of the north country and one from the south. The southerner was Judas Iscariot. He spoke with a different accent.

2. John 6:70. The Bible Says That He Is Said to Be of the Devil.

MASTER, IS IT I?

Matthew 26:25

This is a heart searching question asked by a traitor. We know that a traitor is one who is opposite to a loyalist. Out in the world men expect to be shot by their enemies, but not by their friends. This is what makes this question perplexing to the Christian. The Christian cannot understand the mind of Judas Iscariot. The mighty forces of the world were prepared to put Jesus to death, and Judas is the man who says, I know where he is, I can lead the soldiers to him. And if we assume that the enemies would have captured Jesus anyway, it perplexes us that anyone who has known Christ so intimately, who had lived with him, talked with him, eaten with him and watched him work, could do so foul a thing. It perplexes us further that anyone could commit such a deed for such a small bribe, 30 pieces of silver. 30 pieces of silver, the sum, of course, was not fixed at random. 30 pieces of silver, as laid down in the Old Testament, was the price of a slave. In the currency of today, someone has calculated it to be \$12.00. Some people would not sell a dog for \$12.00, and the reward seems to be out of proportion to the deed. We are perplexed

further when we think of Judas being a free agent committing such a crime. Yet it seems that he was almost born to carry out this deed.

I. Many Modern Theories Are Offered

There are many who try to avoid the and some Bible students have suggested that Judas was a different type of man and they have sort of white washed him to cover over this sin.

First, there have been some who have said that he was honest and he had reached a conclusion that Jesus was a danger to the nation and he betrayed him out of pure love for Israel.

Second, others have said that he was a loyal disciple but he was impatient and he was confident that Jesus had the ability to take care of himself in any situation. He had seen the hungry multitude fed and the sick made well and by putting Jesus in such danger it would give Jesus opportunity to display his sovereign power.

The third way in which people have expressed it is

that Judas was in close touch with the people and knew that after Palm Sunday there were disappointed. That instead of Jesus going on and proclaiming himself as a king, that he had slipped away into retirement and spent the whole day at Bethany. In other words he thought that Jesus was putting off the day when Jesus would declare himself the king of glory.

In the fourth place, there are those who argue that Judas was wondering about the Messiahship of Jesus. That at times he thought he was the Messiah, that at other times there was a question and he felt that this would be one sure way of determining whether or not Jesus was the Messiah. Let him be put to a test. Let him be arrested on a capital charge. If he was the Messiah all of his power would come to light. If not he would be proved an imposter.

These and many other efforts, with a good deal of variation, have been set forth to explain the perplexities of Judas Iscariot. I believe that many of these are the desire of some preachers to say something new rather than to say something true, because these ideas run counter to

but we are gradually discovering that his affection was in obtaining larger sums of money. You see, he had missed out at the conversion of Zacheus of Jericho because he handled the transactions himself without the help of Judas and now here is Mary, instead of selling the ointment for 300 pence she pores it upon Jesus. And Judas said, of what purpose is this waste. These are the first words of Judas which the Gospel has transmitted to us, John 12:5, Matthew 26:8, and in revealing these words are to express the feelings of a thief that he was not interested in the poor and Jesus instructed him, "Let her alone, why troublest thou the woman." What a tender rebuke.

6. Bargaining

The painful truth appears that Judas Iscariot was a covetous man. He not only with some of the money entrusted to him as an imbezzler, but he could not hide behind his greed when Mary of Bethany seemed to be extravagant with the ointment. Here was our Lord in the shadow of the cross. She was preparing him for the day of his burial and everything was shaping up for the sacrifice and Judas moves from this incident on to the priests for a meeting for the purpose of treason,

When we consider this man he is not an isolated example but he has been repeated through all the ages and we come to see what the enemy of the soul desires and he took possession of Judas during his lifetime. We must not overlook that Judas, during his lifetime, traveled a downward path.

We sometimes wonder why Christ who knew everything and whose vision penetrated the great deeps of the heart should choose for his disciple a man so unnatural as to betray him. Was Christ mistaken at the time he made his choice, especially as he spent a whole night in prayer; must we believe that he chose him intentionally that he might fulfill a mission. In reality Judas did not spot his downward course when he was called. You must also notice that Jesus does not say, "One of you was a devil when I chose you". One can, therefore, be a disciple and even chosen an apostle and yet turn his life over to the devil.

3. His Name

Judas Iscariot, the man of Keriot. This not only tells us the name of Judas' birthplace, but casts a slur on it and explains the reason which prompted him to offer

his services to Christ. The town is situated in Judea, Joshua 15:25, in the Roman province. As we have stated, probably the other disciples were Galileans, this is, they were subjects of Herod Antipas. Judas was a Judean and that indicated he was a Roman subject. Now, while a certain independence was granted to the Galileans, the people of Judea were ruled by a Roman Governor. The foreign yoke was heavy upon their shoulders and consequently they waited for the promised Messiah to deliver them. They were more impatient about this than the Galileans and thus we see that from his name there is an indication that he had ambition that the Master would re-establish the kingdom of Israel. For they looked forward to the end of the rule by the Romans. They desired that Jesus would come and rule over all the nations. Even the eleven had much to learn, Acts. 1:6, but they submitted to the Master, whereas Judas was desirous, perhaps, that he would deliver them at once.

4. Love for Money

It seems that Judas had a love for money and that he must have had some ability as (an accountant), and so he was put in charge of the money bag, their company moving from

one place to another, and we might state here (was 13.) This is probably the origin of the (superstition) concerning the number 13. Thirteen sat down to the last supper and one of them was a traitor, and superstitious people have dreaded the number 13 ever since. But a company of this size, moving from one place to another, for one person to handle the expenses, it saves trouble and they had only to deal with one man and it seems that he had the business ability that could be used. Someone has suggested that he might have become a disciple through interest and he perhaps offered his services with some other motives in mind. He hoped to derive some financial benefit from his position, but never the less, this played a part in the life of Judas for he loved money.

5. Opposed to Wastefulness

John tells us that Judas (protested) against the wastefulness of (Mary), the sister of Lazarus, who had annointed the feet of Jesus with costly ointment. In that incident you have the impression of love and gratitude, and also hatred. The love of Mary and the hatred of Judas is quite a contrast as this was taking place just a few days before the Passover. Perhaps he was really interested at first

presence of Christ and drift away from it. It is possible to be in his company and be regarded as one of his and then go on to betray him. You see, it is dangerous for us to say we are in a place of such security that it is impossible for us to sin. For the foundation might now crumble. As I read the story of a young lawyer who climbed some high mountain peaks, and a friend said to him as they climbed over green slick rocks, "Do be careful." To which the young man replied, "Oh, it's as safe as anything, I couldn't fall here". They were the last words he uttered. They picked his body up at the bottom of the cliff.

2. In the Group and Not Part of the Group

I think we get from this that Judas was a part apparently with the disciples, and yet his heart was not in it and so it seems that it is possible for people today to be in the church and yet not be a disciple at heart. It is feared today that some people come to church without serious commitment to Christ in their heart. They lack loyalty but almost conceal themselves until some severe test comes and they reveal their allegiance, when a chance of earthly advancement presents itself, they turn the back

to bargain with the high priest, to make a deal with him. We do not know how many meetings he had with the high priest, but certainly he said, "What will you give me?". "I will deliver him unto you". Matthew 26:15. These words make us tremble, but they filled the high priest with joy. He now had someone to help him in this precious plan and yet the priest hid his joy because he wanted to get the victim at the lowest possible price and then he began the bargain with Judas. (Luke) tell us that they were glad and covenanted to give him money, Luke 22:5-6. This tells us that they were not agreed at first about the price and really we are surprised that Judas was content with such a small sum, and maybe he took it as a first installment with a promise that he might derive more from it.

7. The Upper Room

The Bible next gives a description of Judas in the upper room as Christ designates the positions they are to occupy and served them. It was here that the famous question was asked, "Lord, is it I?" Jesus had a desire to eat the Passover before he should suffer, but Judas had hardened his heart.

I expect this question was more astonishing as our Lord arises from the table, and with a towel and basin begin to wash the feet of his disciples. John tells us that Peter objected but he tells us nothing about Judas, and if anyone should have protested against it it should have been Judas, knowing that in his heart he planned to sell the Master. I wonder how he felt as Jesus knelt before him. Perhaps it was like Rev. 3:20, "Behold, I stand at the door and knock". How can anyone fail to be without concern.

This also brings us back again to the foreknowledge of our Lord of all these events and that John 6:64 means that Jesus knew the destiny of Judas from the beginning of his ministry. You will still remember that foreknowledge is not the same thing as fore-ordination. I know that the sun will rise tomorrow morning. But my knowing it does not make it rise. It was at least possible for our Lord to know that Judas would betray him without the knowledge compelling Judas to act as he did. He still acted for reasons of his own and with the freedom of choice.

8. The Garden

The Bible next ushers us to the Garden and we behold Judas with a group of soldiers coming along behind. And he probably whispers to them, the one whom I kiss is he. He went forward, therefore, and took him in his arms and kissed him. This was the signal by which Judas proposed to point out his Master to the enemies. It was that by his own affections and great tenderness he would betray his Lord. Of course, he knew that some of the men had swords, but he intended to make it appear by chance that he just happened to drop into the Garden at that time.

And it was night, the Bible says, and if we ^{if could} just visualize the shadow of a man's face and see that there were the traces of a supreme struggle. How brow marked with the drops of blood which, during his agony, had dropped down to the ground. Luke 22:44. Judas was ignorant of what had been taking place but he comes to give the signal.

III. What Can We Learn From This Question?

1. It is possible to drift away. We discover here that, like Judas, one might profess to live in the

and courage the testimony of a good conscience is.

And here Jesus openly gives his identity as he did to the woman at the well. "I that speak unto thee am he".

We as Christians should never be timid about confessing our allegiance to Jesus. We should always stand up for his cause. I read of a minister once who declined to have a prayer at the exercises of a public school because they stipulated that he delete from his prayer any use of the name Jesus and because he could not use the name which is above every name, he refused to have a part in the service.

We should never be ashamed to openly stand for him.

Therefore, we learn from Judas that it does not pay to be ashamed of Jesus.

And as Jesus revealed his identify that night, he reveals his identity to us today. The question is, I wonder if we are able to recognize it. Is there one who says, "Master, is it I?" Have I been one who has been betraying you with a wicked life.

to the church and their Lord. We should ask ourselves the question, "Am I really in this because of devotion to my Lord?"

3. The Dangers of Money

A lesson comes out of this that we ought to watch money. It is awfully useful and yet at the same time terribly dangerous. The Bible does not say that the money is the root of evil, but it does say that the love of money is the root of evil.

4. Do Not Limit God's Grace

After the betrayal Judas took things in his own hands. He forgot that Jesus had forgiven many sinners and perhaps if he had listened to the forgiveness of the thief on the cross, only if he had gone to the cross and cast himself down saying, Lord Jesus, forgive me. If he had done that, do you not believe that Jesus would have forgiven him. He forgave those who nailed him to the cross. It was the crowning error of Judas' life. And many times today we are prone to put a limit on God's grace, by saying, he is too great a sinner. But Judas must have scorned the appeals of the Master. Even from the early days, and then in the

upper room when they had gathered, he still had time to escape, but he turned his back upon the appeals of Jesus. It seems that he was (in a hurry), that he (made haste), that he must (act quickly). The voice of God speaks to our hearts and (we may turn away) and go out into the night in haste to make sinful arrangements. The world offers all kinds of distractions. Some of them may be legitimate, but Judas goes on to agree on a signal and sells Jesus.

5. Jesus Did Not Deny His Identity.

This we believe must have happened at the gate of Gethsemane. (John 18:6) There was Judas and they were startled as he said, "Whom seek ye". And he said, "I am he". They felt ashamed as they stood in the purity of his life. They felt backward. For they had (heard him preach) and now they were coming to put him (under arrest). They knew that they were arresting a man who was more than a prophet and his face must have been aglow, somewhat as (Moses) as he descended from Sinai, he wist not that his face shone, or as (Stephen) who looked beyond the grave and the bystanders saw his face as though it were the face of an angel. It must have been something like the incident in (Roman history) when a slave was sent to bring Marius to his

execution. When he appeared in his presence and this ruler said in a serene voice, "Fellow, darest thou to slay Marius." The slave threw down his weapon and departed from the prison without his prisoner. Someone has said that (Frances Horner) had the Ten Commandments inscribed on his face.

(Dean Robert Rott) in writing of an interview he had with Woodrow Wilson said, "Before five minutes had passed I knew that I was in the presence of a very great man. I recognized that I had never talked face to face with so compelling a person."

What was there about the face of Jesus that overwhelmed his enemies. It was his (absolute innocence). Even a (guiltless man) might have refrained from coming out and capturing Jesus.

But here is (Judas whose record has not been clean.) (John B. Gough), a convert from drunkenness was a powerful influence for abstinence. The last speech he made was in a church in Philadelphia. At the close of his speech he fell dead, but the last words were important, "Young man, keep your record clean". What a shield of protection