

THE APOSTLES OF CHRIST JUDAS ISCARIOT

The last apostle in the gospel of Matthew's listing is the infamous "Judas Iscariot, who also betrayed Him" (10:4). The Scriptures often refer to Judas Iscariot's notorious sin of betraying Jesus both in prophecy (Psalm 41:9; 109:8; Zechariah 11:12-13; Matthew 26:21-25) and in retrospect as his office as Christ's apostle is filled by Matthias after the guilt-induced suicide of Judas (Acts 1:16-25).

The events surrounding the character of Judas can be used to teach a wealth of lessons. Yet, most of those lessons center around Judas' main flaw—the sin of greed. No one can deny the temptations of greed were part of the downfall of Judas Iscariot. Notice what greed did to Judas and what it can do still to Christians today.

Greed caused Judas to fall from grace. Many deny the possibility of apostasy claiming "once in grace, always in grace." Yet, Judas is a strong rebuttal to this false doctrine. He was no less an apostle of Christ before He betrayed Jesus than any other apostle (Matthew 10:1-4). Yet, as Acts 1:25 states, "...Judas

by transgression fell, that he might go to his own place." How sad to see one who had "escaped the pollutions of the world" become "again entangled in them and overcome..." (2 Peter 2:20). Greed can cause the impenitent child of God to be rejected in eternity (Galatians 5:19-21).

Greed led Judas to save money so he might use it for himself.

John 12:1-8 provides an early indication of the greed of Judas. As Mary anointed the feet of Jesus with "very costly oil" Judas asks, "Why was this fragrant oil not sold for three hundred denarii and given to the poor?" (12:5). John explains the true motive behind Judas' statement, "This he said, not that he cared for the poor, but because he was a thief, and had the money box; and he used to take what was put in it" (12:6). A symptom of greed is our willingness to spend luxuriously on ourselves while being stingy with God and others (see Luke 12:16-21; 1 Timothy 6:17-19).

The covetousness of Judas led Him to betray a friend. Some people will hurt the most innocent of people if money is at

stake. Judas betrays the innocent Son of God to receive the Jews' reward of thirty pieces of silver (Matthew 26:14-16, 47-50). The "kiss of Judas" would forever be memorialized as a symbol of a hypocritical, empty love. Sin often hurts others but always causes suffering to God (2 Peter 3:9).

The 30 pieces of silver ultimately led Judas to a burden of guilt.

The reward of silver was nowhere worth the debt of a guilty conscience. After Judas betrays Jesus he tries to bring the silver back to "the chief priests and elders" (Matthew 27:3-5). They are not interested in his blood money. Judas, in the depths of grief goes out and hangs himself in "the

potter's field" (27:6-10). Ultimately, the sin of Judas led to his "remorse" but not a full circle repentance. Paul tells Timothy, "the love of money is a root of all evil, for which some have strayed from the faith in their greediness, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows" (1 Timothy 6:10).

Greed. It led to spiritual perdition, selfish ambition, a friend's deception and a guilty condition. Jesus says it would have been good if Judas "had not been born" because of the eternal punishment awaiting his selfish soul. Do the very opposite of Judas with reference to greed and avoid the same fate of one of the Bible's most notorious sinners!

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