A CHARACTER ANALYSIS OF JUDAS ISCARIOT

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Bachelor of Divinity

by
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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION TO THE STUDY

Any study of the apostles of the Lord Jesus Christ is both interesting and spiritually rewarding. Each of them was chosen by Christ to follow Him throughout His earthly ministry, carrying out the responsibility that the Lord designated to them. Each was a distinctly unique personality with inimitable characteristics. They were important men, men with the greatest task that any human being has ever borne—that of committing the Gospel to the world of their time. They were twelve with the task of evangelizing the world.

They were not without imperfection, as the New Testament narrative clearly reveals to us. They were also not without the ability to accomplish the great task that was their heritage. They did succeed in carrying out their responsibility. But there was one among them who is the epitome of failure—Judas Iscariot. With the same opportunity that the others had, he failed.

Though much has been written concerning these men in commentaries, lives of Christ, biblical dictionaries, encyclopedias, and general works, comparatively little else has been dedicated to perhaps the most intriguing and mysterious figure among the Twelve, the person of Judas Iscariot. Somehow his infamy has left the betrayer with a stigma that
makes it desirable to blot him from memory. He who betrayed the Son of God with a kiss has become the most despised one in the annals of human history. His personality is the darkest in the chronicle of this world. Yet, the significance of this man in the plan of God and the many mentions of him in the revelation of God warrant a careful study of his person.

I. THE PROBLEM

Statement of the problem. The purpose of this study is not to make Judas the object of the author's scorn, for he is already that. The words of Mueller are correct: "There is nothing to be gained from any viewpoint in exaggerating either the moral exaltation of the saints or the degradation of a Judas."¹ The purpose is to determine, from the revelation that God has given, the character and motivation of Judas Iscariot, showing the progressive development of the man into one capable and guilty of betraying the very Christ of God.

In particular, this study will (1) discuss the call of Judas to the company of the apostles; (2) the relation of Judas to those in his experience; (3) the progressive evolution of the man and the circumstances surrounding and

precipitating this evolution; (4) the motivation for the betrayal of Jesus Christ; and (5) the reasons and circumstances surrounding his dissolution.

The problem of speculation. In dealing with his personality and motivation, there has often been much speculation in an effort to fill in the gaps in the biblical account of the character of Judas Iscariot. Pure speculation has very little value in biblical study, however, and the effort of this study shall be to survey the scriptural passages in application to the man and determine everything that is revealed about him, and then, where necessary, fill in the unknown from a close observation of the known facts. Much that is not verbally revealed can be known from analyzing that which is revealed. Exegesis will always preempt speculation. This is based on the fact that what God desired man to know He has revealed to him in His Word.

The importance of the study. A careful student of the Word of God must not avoid any of the revelation which has been committed unto him. There are two areas of importance in the revelation of Judas. There is not only the objective learning of the facts of the life of this man, but there are great lessons to be learned from the subjective study of his person. Certainly the primacy of this study lies in its uniqueness. It is the story of lost opportunity
as it has never been told, before or since. As Hastings has said:

What was it that he might have been? One of the twelve precious stones on the breastplate of the everlasting High Priest; one of the twelve foundations of the Heavenly Jerusalem; one of the twelve Apostles of the Lamb, even of them that in the regeneration, in the new heaven and the new earth, should sit on thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel; one whom in all ages and throughout all the world the Church should have held in highest honour and most thankful remembrance, as of those who stood nearest to her Lord when He sojourned among the children of men. . . .

This is what he might have been; but, what was he? The darkest of men of whom Christ said: "... good were it for that man if he had not been born" (Mark 14:21).

II. THE SCRIPTURAL PRESENTATION

The Old Testament. The Old Testament makes no direct references to Judas by name. The Psalmist does make reference to the treachery of the act of betrayal in 41:9 and 55:12-21. In 41:9, David the Psalmist says, "Yea, mine own familiar friend, in whom I trusted, who did eat my bread, Hath lifted up his heel against me." The passage in Psalm 55:12-21 is as follows:

For it was not an enemy that reproached me; Then could I have borne it: Neither was it he that hated me that did magnify himself against me; Then I would have hid myself from him: But it was thou, a man mine equal, My companion and my familiar friend. We took

sweet counsel together; we walked in the house of God with the throng. Let death come suddenly upon them, let them go down alive into Sheol; for wickedness is in their dwelling, in the midst of them. As for me, I will call upon God; and Jehovah will save me. Evening and morning, and at noonday, will I complain, and moan; and he will hear my voice. He hath redeemed my soul in peace from the battle that was against me; for they were many that strove with me. God will hear, and answer them, even he that abideth of old, the men who have no changes, and who fear not God. He hath put forth his hands against such as were at peace with him; he hath profaned his covenant. His mouth was smooth as butter, but his heart was war; his words were softer than oil, yet they were drawn swords.

In the passage in Zechariah 11:12 and 13 the prophecy is explicit in its mention of the thirty pieces of silver used for the potter's field as it is recorded in Matthew 27:6. The passage says:

And I said unto them, if ye think good, give me my hire; and if not forbear. So they weighed for my hire thirty pieces of silver. And Jehovah said unto me, cast it unto the potter, the goodly price that I was prized at by them. And I took the thirty pieces of silver, and cast them unto the potter, in the house of Jehovah.

In these words there is a clear prophecy that the thirty pieces would be purchase money and would be cast down in the house of God. Of course, this is exactly what Judas did with the thirty pieces which he made in betraying Jesus. The money was then used for the purchase of the potter's field (Matt. 27:1-10).

There are other passages which may allude to the act of Judas, but they are not as directly connected as the previous; therefore, they are omitted.
The New Testament. The Gospels present a limited amount of material regarding the person of Judas Iscariot. It is in them that one finds the complete revelation, yet incomplete history, of the man from his call to his death. It is in them that one sees the transition of the man from a disciple to a traitor.

The components of the early history of Judas are missing in the Gospel narrative, and therefore, there is much left to speculation in this area. There is no definition of his personality at the outset. One of the greatest enigmas in all of human history, according to Barclay, is the mind of Judas. He concludes that this is to be the reader's resolve because the Gospels give also strangely little material about him between his call by Jesus at the beginning and his betrayal of Jesus at the end.

There seems to be a deliberate avoidance by the Gospel writers of mentioning Judas. This is understandable as one notes that their Gospels were written in retrospect to the actions of Judas, and he undoubtedly became a despised man. There is the obvious fact, too, that the Spirit of God did not want any more written about him than there is recorded. Even the sad fate of the man seems to be

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of comparatively little concern to the writers. Matthew devotes few lines; Luke devotes even less. 5

One must not, however, conclude from this that Judas was anything less than a real person. As Fairbairn has said:

He is too real a person to be a mythical character of creation, made after Ahithophel, and draped in a history suggested by verses in the very Psalms Peter quoted in his address to his brother Apostles. 6

Judas is no bestial phenomenon resting somewhere outside the pale of humanity. 7

The testimony of the Gospels in the Word of God indicates that the man Judas Iscariot was a real person, living a historical character, and that he was humanly associated with his companions and contemporaries as well as the Lord Himself. His story is all the more pointed and important because he was made of the same nature as every human being, with the same needs and desires. His example lies in his humanity.

The only mention of Judas Iscariot in the Acts of the Apostles is found in the sermon of Peter in chapter one. In this instance the mention concerns only the transgression of

7Ibid.
Judas by which he fell (verse 25) and the circumstances surrounding his death (verses 15-20).

The Epistles, both Pauline and general, devote no consideration to the person of Judas. There is a complete avoidance of any discussion of his person or action. The name of Judas Iscariot does not appear either in any of the Epistles or in the Apocalypse of John. After his deed was narrated in the Gospel revelation and his end mentioned by Peter, the Spirit of God was pleased to strike his name from Holy Writ. There is no need to mention it again.

Extra-biblical material. There are two particular sources for the material to be considered in this section. They are the apochryphal writings and the writings of the early fathers. Since these are incidental to the consideration of the scriptural account which is the main interest of this study, they will be looked at only in brief.


There is also an apochryphal book called The Story of Joseph of Arimathea. Of course, this volume has no claim

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Tasker, op. cit., p. 912.
to validity. It does, however, have an interesting story of Judas which will give some insight into the speculative approach of apocryphal writing. According to Barclay:

Its story is that Judas was the son of the brother of Caiaphas the High Priest, and that he was persuaded by the Jewish leaders to become a member of Jesus' inner circle with the deliberate intention that he might be a spy and a secret agent. According to this story, Judas was never a loyal or real disciple of Jesus, but was always the enemy agent cunningly inserted into Jesus' inner circle in due time to become the means whereby Jesus could be destroyed.9

In the Acts of Pilate the end of the traitor is curiously treated. The writer indicates that after the betrayal he went home to his wife and found her roasting a cock on the fire. He told his wife that he was planning to kill himself because he feared that Jesus would rise on the third day and seek him out and kill him in some torturous way. His wife replied that Jesus would no more rise than the cock that she was cooking would rise up and crow. At that instant, the cock did crow and straightway Judas hurried out and hanged himself.10

Another apocryphal book, Coptic Narratives of the Ministry and the Passion, tells a similarly strange story of Judas making him the victim of his evil wife's ambition for

9Barclay, op. cit., p. 35.
money.\textsuperscript{11}

Many such legends have surrounded the strange character of Judas Iscariot. A Thirteenth century English ballad has almost the same theme as the Coptic account. The only difference is that the sister of Judas is the greedy one.\textsuperscript{12} A twelfth century "Legendary Aurea" has Judas cast away in a chest at sea by his parents. Years passed by and at a later time, while in the service of Pontius Pilate, he married a beautiful woman only to find out that he had married his mother. So this ancient legend makes the basis of all of Judas' trouble an Oedipus complex.\textsuperscript{13}

The other area for brief consideration in this section is that concerning the writings of the early fathers. Tertullian, Irenaeus, Origen, Hermas, Clement, Papias, and others make reference to Judas. In general, all these writers accept the biblical account without any further speculation. Tertullian, like Irenaeus, condemns the Cainites because they held the conduct of Judas to be meritorious. Tertullian refers to the treachery of Judas as predetermined by prophecy.\textsuperscript{14} Origen indicates that perhaps he killed

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{11}Ibid.
\item \textsuperscript{12}Asbury Smith, \textit{The Twelve Christ Chose} (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1958), p. 150.
\item \textsuperscript{13}Ibid.
\item \textsuperscript{14}Tasker, \textit{op. cit.}, p. 910.
\end{itemize}
himself in order to meet the Lord and confess his guilt.\footnote{E. H. Plumptre, "Matthew," Ellicott's Commentary on the Whole Bible, ed. Charles John Ellicott (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1959), VI, 170.}

J. B. Lightfoot has compiled notes on Papias from Cramer's Catena ad Acta S. S. Apost. (1838), p. 12, and other sources.\footnote{J. B. Lightfoot, The Apostolic Fathers (London: MacMillan and Company, 1891), pp. 543-55.} Barclay, in reference to the same Papias, also refers to Cramer's Catena in the following way:

There is a dreadful account of the earthly end of Judas quoted in Cramer's Catena under Acts 1:18 in a comment cited from Apolinarias, who took the information from Papias. It is there said that Judas contracted some disease whereby he became so swollen with inflammation that a wagon could pass where he could not pass. His head became so swollen that his physician could not even find his eyes. Worms and corruption proceeded from his body, and he suffered the most terrible torments until he died. The place where he died was shunned, because of the intolerable stench which came from it.\footnote{William Barclay, The Master's Men (New York: Abingdon Press, 1959), p. 73.}

There is another strange account of the death of Judas which Oecumenius gives. This account indicates that Judas was killed by a wagon, crushed to death in a way that resulted in his body bursting asunder.\footnote{Ibid.}

The author has presented this description of extrabiblical material in a separate section within the introductory comments in an effort to avoid breaking the
continuity of the New Testament account, as it correctly narrates the life and death of Judas Iscariot.
CHAPTER II

THE CHARACTER OF JUDAS THE APOSTLE

I. HIS NAME

The name Judas. Before entering on the study of the man Judas, one should consider the significance of his name in order to identify him better. His name should also give some insight into his background.

The name Judas (Ἰούδας) is the Greek form of the Hebrew (יְהוּדָה) Judah, which in Genesis 29:35 comes from the verb "to praise." It literally means "one who is the subject of praise." The etymology of the word is in dispute, but in its most popular sense it becomes a most intriguing paradox when used as the name of one so full of shame.¹

This was a common Jewish name, but it has come to refer to no more than a "betrayer." Hastings has said, "His name has stamped the word with such evil significance that it has become the class name of perfidious friends who are no better than Judases."² The name of Judas has such


evil significance today that it is almost forgotten that there were others that bore the name in honor. One of the greatest of the historical Jewish patriots was Judas Maccabeus. Our own Lord Jesus had a brother named Judas, and one of the other apostles was also named Judas. But that name which had in generations past been a favorite was now to become the most dishonored name in any language. It may take a long history of the greatest men to make a name great, or it may take a great many outstanding deeds in the life of one man; but, it only takes one single monstrous deed by one individual to defame a name for all of posterity. Thusly did Judas defame the name.

The term Iscariot. According to The Analytical Greek Lexicon, the word indicates "a man of Carioth." was the original rendering and points to the Hebrew while corresponds to the Aramaic equivalent . This refers, then, to a Keriothite.

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Wellhausen and Schultess suggest that the word should be traced to "sikarios," coming from an Aramaicized word meaning "an assassin." Barclay indicates that it might be connected with this word "sikarios" since there was a group that went by this name whose members were fanatical Jewish nationalists, believing intensely in the destiny of Israel. He indicates further that Judas may have been connected with this group and this would make the use of this word understandable. The evidence for such a possibility is weak, both linguistically and historically.

The evidence that Iscariot refers to the city of Kerioth is given by Tasker as follows: (1) Judas and his father Simon are both called Iscariot, suggesting that it was probably a local name; and (2) the paraphrase confirms that Judas is named after his place of abode.

There are many different suggestions as to the location of the city of Kerioth, all other than the Galilean area from which all the other apostles came. Cobb makes

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9For a fuller discussion of the other possibilities of the use of this term, see Chapter Two of Roman B. Halas, Judas Iscariot (Washington, D. C.: The Catholic University of America Press, 1946).

10Tasker, loc. cit.

11Tasker, op. cit., p. 908.
it refer to a city in Moab, named in Jeremiah 48:24, 41, and in Amos 2:2, as well as in line thirteen of the Moabite Stone. He identifies it with Kir-heres of Isaiah 16:11 and Jeremiah 48:31, 36.12

Perigo gives a more feasible explanation in the following statement of the location of the city:

Twenty-three miles south of Jerusalem in a direct line, there nestled some hamlets containing farm houses which came within the lot of Judah when the land was distributed to the twelve tribes during the days of Joshua. These hamlets forming a large village were called Kerioth, and mentioned only once in Scripture (namely, Joshua 15:25), and is not to be confused with Kerioth in Moab, which is mentioned three times in Scripture. The Kerioth south of Jerusalem is exactly seven miles from Hebron, and here it was in this peaceful village that a boy was born named Judah, at the beginning of the Christian era.

As he grows up, this boy, probably through his parent's fear of the Roman Invader, altered his name to Judas, which is the Roman equivalent to Judah, and the word Kerioth was altered to Iscariot.13

This view of the location of Kerioth is also accepted by Schaff,14 Hastings,15


15 Hastings, loc. cit.
The listing of the name. Judas is listed twelfth in all the listings of the apostles. And in all these catalogs there is a note of infamy attached to his name (see Matthew 10:4; Mark 3:19; Luke 6:16; John 6:71). In both these ways, the Gospel writers are careful to indicate the character of the man and their contempt for him. This had not always been the case for he was once their choice for a position of importance within the little band of apostles. But now in retrospect he was disdained.

Some writers have tried to make him the leading one among the apostles. This seems rather extreme. Tasker presents the verse which may indicate this, and then shows the impracticality of such a view. In Mark 14:10 the best supported reading (6 BCLM) is ἀρχόμενος τῶν δώδεκα from which Wright asserts that Mark is distinctly calling Judas "the chief of the twelve." But the definite article is not...


found with this phrase in any other passage in the Gospels; moreover, it is almost impossible to believe that when the Gospels were written, the assertion that Judas was the chief had a place in the original text. The reading does not have to mean this at all. It could just as well mean "the betrayer of the Twelve." He was important as his place on the left of the Master indicates, but there is no valid assurance that he was chief of all the apostles.20

II. HIS SELECTION

The problem of predestination. This is possibly the greatest paradox in the relation of man to God. No one understands all that it involves, but it is known that the Word of God reveals that God is in complete control, and nothing exists outside his permission.

On the one hand, it belongs to the sovereignty of the Almighty and Eternal Being that we, His creatures, should be but tools in His hands; on the other, it befits His justice that no moral being, on probation, should suffer eternal loss save through his own act and choice.21

The calling of Judas is a theological problem. There are only two possible explanations for the call of Judas to the apostolate. One must conclude that Christ did not know that Judas would betray Him and chose him in ignorance of the

20Tasker, loc. cit.

21Hastings, op. cit., V, 261.
future; or, that Christ did know that he would be the instrument of betrayal, the voluntary agent of judgment, and the involuntary agent of salvation.

The solution to his call. Many reasons have been attributed to Christ's calling of Judas, in an effort to solve the problem of the foreknowledge of Christ. Lange suggests that Judas was carried away with temporary enthusiasm and offered himself to the Lord. The disciples, blinded by his glowing zeal earnestly recommended him to the Master, who, in the fulness of love consented to receive him, because his refusal would have been a stumblingblock to the disciples. 22

Schaff states that the call of Judas involves the whole problem of sin, and the answer is more dogmatical than exegetical. He presents the following possible solution:

Christ elected Judas an apostle, not indeed for the very purpose that he might become a traitor (which no sensible divine ever asserted, at least not directly); but that, through his treason, as an incidental condition or a necessary means, the Scriptures might be fulfilled (comp. John XIII, 8; XVII, 12), and the redemption of the world would be accomplished. 23

Schaff also indicates that there are two other possible solutions to the problem. These are improbable

22Lange, op. cit., p. 183.

because they are not consistent with the true concept of the deity of Christ. They are: (1) Jesus knew the financial and administrative abilities of Judas which might have been of great use to the apostolic church, but not his treacherous tendencies; and (2) Jesus knew the original character of Judas, but elected him in the hope that good quality would find its mastery through His teachings. These views limit the knowledge of Christ and eliminate His prophetic foresight.24

Barclay says that it would be blasphemy to say that Jesus knew that Judas would betray Him and still chose him.25 But this is a poor solution, since it limits Christ and goes completely contrary to the statement of Christ in John 21:24, 25, that He knew what was in man, and John 6:64, that He knew who would betray Him.

It must be concluded that Jesus did know that Judas would betray Him and that He chose him because of this knowledge. It was by the foreknowledge of God and also by the choice of Judas. It was not exclusive of the desire of Judas. As Hastings has said:

... the idea that our Lord allocated to Judas the part of the villain in the crucifixion drama is not consistent with the Master's constant attitude of rebuke. Had Judas been predestined to treachery, and

24Ibid., p. 206.

had he had no choice in the matter, our blessed Lord would surely have pitied rather than blamed him. And our feelings toward Judas would necessarily be very different. For if we offer gratitude and praise to Him who by a perfect life and in atoning death wrought our salvation, what should be our attitude to one who, by the compulsory damnation of his own soul, contributed to the saving of his fellows?  

Certainly the very choice by Judas, as well as the ordination of God's plan, was instrumental in the act of betrayal. Christ had intended to stir up in the heart of Judas individual responsibility. The New Testament does imply that Judas was thrust into the role of a traitor by the plan of God, but there is no evidence that it was not by his own choice that he carried out the deed. Calvin, Hengstenberg, Plumptre, Luther and Godet agree that Jesus selected Judas because He knew he would betray Him.  

The words of Halas are significant in relation to God's selection of Judas:

God judges the present, not the future, in that He does not make use of His foreknowledge to condemn a man, though He knows that the subject will hereafter displease Him. Such is God's goodness and clemency, for He chose Judas who, He perceived, would in the meantime be good, but who, at the same time, He foreknew, would turn out wickedly. At any rate, He extended to him the opportunity for conversion and repentance.

Why did Jesus choose Judas if He knew that he would

26 Hastings, op. cit., V, 260.


betray Him? He did it because it was God's will. Brown has said:

In all ages, Jesus Christ has occasionally employed merely worldly men, to do certain services for his church, for which their talents for secular management fitted them, who "afterwards, when tribulation, or persecution arose because of the word," proved themselves traitors.29

Judas Iscariot was the chosen instrument of God, not apart from his own will, to betray Christ and bring about His crucifixion. He was allowed to be an apostle for this very reason. In the light of this, it must be also recognized that the Lord gave him every opportunity for repentance and salvation.

**His character at the beginning.** The character of this man at the outset of his apostleship is unknown, but we can conclude some things about him. There is no reason to assume that, when chosen by Jesus, Judas was anything other than a sincere apostle.30 Outwardly, he must have been acceptable to the group. He was ostensibly accepted on the ground of profession which was consistent to the human eye.31 Judas was also chosen because of his necessity to the plan.

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29John Brown, Discourses and Sayings of Our Lord Jesus Christ (New York: Robert Carter and Brothers, 1855), II, 83.


31Hastings, op. cit., V, 263.
He was a good man as far as can be known, since the apostles presented him with the task of caring for the little funds which they possessed. Hastings says regarding his character:

When he was chosen, he was worthy of the choice; he was not a bad man; he had, we must suppose, considerable capacity for good; there was in him perhaps the making of a St. Peter or a St. John. 32

The record of Scripture records the fact that Judas became a traitor, not that he always was a traitor. No man can become a traitor if he was one from the beginning. 33 Judas was never suspected of anything by the others. Even to the day of the last meeting together in the Upper Room, they did not suspect him. At the statement of Christ that one of them was His betrayer, they all searched their own souls with the words: "Is it I?"

Tasker gives some insight into the possibility of Judas becoming a godly man. He says:

Jesus saw in him the material out of which an Apostle might have been made,—the clay out of which a vessel unto honor might have been shaped; it implies that Judas, of freewill, chose to follow Jesus and to continue with Him; and it implies that Judas heard from the Master's lips words of gracious warning against the peril of his besetting sin. 34

Hastings pictures him as a patriotic, devout young

32 Ibib.


34 Tasker, op. cit., p. 908.
Jew, honorable in his efforts in labor and in his expectation to see the Messiah in His glory. He shared the same hope of a kingdom as his fellow apostles. He also suggests that at one time he exhibited faith in the Lord. He probably healed the sick and performed the responsibility of preaching repentance. He, too, had left all to follow Jesus. One could not surmise that he joined such a poor group for the monetary value involved although it was probable that he expected some great gain to come out of it.

A. B. Bruce indicates that he must have had some qualities that fitted him for the task of an apostle. He characterizes him as a conflict of good and evil.

The false disciple was a sentimental, plausible, self-deceived pietist, who knew and approved the good, though not conscientiously practising it; one who, in aesthetic feeling, in fancy, and in intellect, had affinities for the noble and the holy, while in will and in conduct he was the slave of base, selfish passions; one who, in the last resource, would always put self uppermost, yet could zealously devote himself to well-doing when personal interests were not compromised—in short, what the Apostle James calls a two-minded man.

Whatever his character at the time of his calling, he gradually developed into a treacherous man with no thought for anyone but himself. He followed the same Christ as the others, saw the same miracles as the others, performed the

35 Hastings, op. cit., V, 265.

same ministries as the others, was esteemed among men the same as the others; but, he did not become what his fellows became. While they were growing into true apostles, saints of God, he was progressively developing into a vile, calculating instrument of Satan. The end of Judas is all the more terrible when one realizes the glorious beginning and the constant training which was his. The same sun that melts the wax also hardens the clay, and while the others were melting, Judas was becoming hard.

III. HIS RELATIONS

His relation to the other apostles. Judas was the only Judaean among the eleven Galileans. This might have accounted for some resentment on his part. However, it did not seem to condition the opinion of the eleven at all, for they held him in esteem as the treasurer of their band.37 The fact of his southern extraction probably caused a lack of sympathy between himself and the others.38 Hastings says that the southern Jews felt a definite superiority to the northern ones. The pride of Judas would have been the cause of his estrangement from them, but he may have blamed it on

38Kerr, op. cit., III, 1765.
their unsociability. This was not, however, the basic matter which separated them. It is suggested that the basic problem was their concept of the kingdom that Christ would bring.

But the fatal difference between him and them was this—they, in the presence and under the teaching of their Lord, suffered these expectations to be transformed and transfigured from earthly to heavenly. Translated by their Lord into a new world of righteousness and purity and truth, of fellowship with Him and through Him with the Father, that was indeed a kingdom to them, a kingdom which should one day immeasurably transcend even in outward splendor all the kingdoms of the earth, but for the outward glories of which they were content to wait. Not so he. The kingdom of One who had not where to lay his head, who was not ministered unto, but laboriously ministered to others, whom the princes of this world rejected and despised—that was no kingdom to him.

Doubtless, Judas took part in the ministry and was successful as were his fellows. Nothing is known to the contrary. A. B. Bruce has said: "Graceless men may for a season be employed as agents in promoting the work of grace in the hearts of others." There is no reason to believe that he was not fulfilling the duties of an apostle through the years of Christ's ministry. He lived with them day in and day out and they never suspected anything of him, but

39 Hastings, op. cit., V, 246.
40 Ibid., V, 266.
41 Bruce, op. cit., p. 108.
the purest motives. Certainly he had positional importance in the group even if he lacked personal relationship to the Master.

The fact that the Apostle John writes of him in the bitterest of terminology indicates that he was deeply impressed and overwhelmed by the horror of his crime. Indeed, it must have been a great shock to those who knew him in an intimate way through the daily experience of three years of living together.

**His relation to Christ.** The relation which Judas had to the Lord was completely different from his relation to the apostles. All that they did not know about Judas Christ knew. As Kik suggests, Judas may have felt at the outset, because of his strong Messianic hopes, that Jesus was the Messiah, but this changed.43 There is, however, no indication that he ever really believed in Christ. The Scripture, in John 6:65, says, "And he said, For this cause have I said unto you, that no man can come unto me, except it be given unto him of the Father."

Christ knew that Judas would betray him, but . . .

Instead of pointing out Judas publicly as a traitor, Jesus carefully concealed the fact from others. To the last moment he sought to win Judas by especial love and affection. To be given the first sop, bread

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dipped in wine, was the highest honor at a feast. Jesus, instead of holding Judas up to scorn before the other disciples, actually did quite the opposite—he gave the sop to Judas.

Jesus constantly avoided any recognition of Judas as the traitor. All through the early months of ministering no one but Himself knew of the real character of the man, including, perhaps, Judas himself. He warned him many times with great concern and love. Stalker suggests in the following statement that the occasion of the resistance of Christ to be made king was the impetus to the thievery of Judas:

At that time Jesus warned Judas against the evil spirit which he was allowing to take possession of his mind by the strong saying, "Have I not chosen you twelve? and one of you is a devil." But the disciple did not heed the warning. Perhaps it was at this stage that he commenced to steal from the bag which he carried. He felt that he must have some tangible reward for following Christ, and he justified his speculation by saying to himself that what he was taking was infinitely less than he had been led to expect. He regarded himself as an ill-used man.

Perhaps the more Jesus said by way of warning to Judas the more the hatred in the heart of Judas became primary. But he never swayed from his chosen path. Defying the warnings of the Master, he held tenaciously to the purpose which was evident toward the end. Brown has stated: "An equal instance of hardihood could scarcely be produced

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44Smith, op. cit., pp. 147, 8.

from the dark pages of the huge history of human crime.\textsuperscript{46}

Even to the end he was unable to accept the spiritual significance of the kingdom which Christ presented, which kingdom was beyond his perception.\textsuperscript{47}

The question is asked, in view of the knowledge of Christ concerning the character of Judas, why Christ allowed Judas to have charge of the bag. The explanation given by Edersheim on this matter about which the Scripture is silent, is adequate. He states:

It ... was not only because he was best fitted—probably, absolutely fitted—for such work, but also in mercy to him, in view of his character. To engage in that for which a man is naturally fitted is the most likely means of keeping him from brooding, dissatisfaction, alienation, and eventual apostasy. On the other hand, it must be admitted that, as mostly all our life-temptations come to us from that for which we have most aptitude, when Judas was alienated and unfaithful in heart, this very thing became also his greatest temptation, and, indeed, hurried him to his ruin.\textsuperscript{48}

Many of the teachings of Christ were applicable to Judas. Some of His teachings which seem to one degree or another particularly directed to Judas are: (1) the parable of the unjust steward (Luke 16:1-13); (2) the parable of the wedding garment (Matthew 24:114); (3) the statement of Jesus, in John 13:11; and (4) the statements in verses 21, 27 of

\textsuperscript{46}Brown, \textit{op. cit.}, p. 89.


\textsuperscript{48}Alfred Edersheim, \textit{The Life and Times of Jesus the Messiah} (New York: Longmans, Green, and Co., 1907), II, 472.
that same chapter, as well as the passage already mentioned in John 6:70.\textsuperscript{49}

The problem of John 17:12. It is clear that this verse refers to his call to apostleship and has nothing to do with the call to salvation. God the Father had given Judas the privilege of apostleship, not salvation. The evidence for this is two-fold: (1) God could not make a wrong choice and have His plans altered by the incapability of Christ to keep one which had been given to Him for salvation; and (2) the statement that the "scripture might be fulfilled" indicates that it was the plan of God.

The phrase, "son of perdition" clearly refers to Judas, since in this section of the prayer our Lord is praying for His disciples. Ainger paraphrases this verse in a unique way:

None of them is lost, but he whose very nature it was to be lost—he (that is to say) whose insensibility to the Divine touch, whose irresponsiveness to the heavenly discipline, made it a certainty that he should fall away.\textsuperscript{50}

Martin Luther indicates that the phrase refers to "a lost child." Luther suggests that Jesus was not completely repudiating Judas but was speaking tenderly of him as a

\textsuperscript{49}Hastings, \textit{op. cit.}, V, 294.

lost child.\textsuperscript{51}

The words of Ainger are again significant. He says:

\begin{quote}
I cannot think that "son of perdition" would have been applied by divine lips, save to a being in whom the germ of apostasy existed from the beginning, and in whom, therefore, the final and astounding act of treachery was no "new departure," but a natural development.\textsuperscript{52}
\end{quote}

The same phrase is found in II Thessalonians 2:3, where it is a clear reference to the Antichrist. Some have assumed from this identical terminology that Judas will return in an incarnation to be the Antichrist. The argument for this is as follows: (1) Antichrist is Satan's son, because Christ is God's Son; (2) since it will be Christ's Second Coming, in order to be consistent it must also be the second coming of the son of Satan (the devil's scheme is to completely counterfeit the plan of God); (3) as Christ was the God-man, so Judas was also more than man--the Devil-man--as indicated by the words of Jesus in John 6:70, "... one of you is a devil?"\textsuperscript{53} This argument is, to say the least, inadequate. The analogy of Christ and Satan's son is non-scriptural and carried to extreme. When Christ said that one of the apostles was a devil, He did not mean that he

\textsuperscript{51}Rattenbury, \textit{op. cit.}, p. 293.

\textsuperscript{52}Ainger, \textit{op. cit.}, p. 237.

was Satan incarnate but that he was controlled by Satan—an instrument of Satan. There are similar instances to be found in Isaiah 14 and Ezekiel 28, as well as the rebuke of Peter recorded in Matthew 16:23 and in Mark 8:33.

Certainly one must admit that there is a similarity in the case of Judas and Antichrist. As Judas was a perfect imitation of an apostle, so, in the last days, will Antichrist be a counterfeit of Christ in the eyes of the world.54

The author cannot leave a discussion of this verse without considering the phrase, "... that the scripture might be fulfilled." The act of Judas in betraying the Lord was prophesied in the Old Testament (see the first chapter of this thesis) according to the plan of God. Judas was probably not aware of it. Brown gives insight into the use of the phrase. He says:

The words "that the Scripture might be fulfilled," do not mean "Judas is to betray me, with the intention of fulfilling the Old Testament prophecy." Judas had no such intention. His intention was to gain a little money, and, it may be, at the same time to revenge what he might consider as a personal affront offered him. Nor does it mean, that any direct divine influence (Satan entered) was exercised on Judas' mind to secure the accomplishment of the prophecy; but it means that, by the overruling providence of God, such a man as Judas was brought into such circumstances as, acting in the uncontrolled exercise of his own free choice, he "did what God's hand and counsel had beforetime determined to be done," as the means of producing that series of

events, which terminated in Christ's taking away sin by the sacrifice of himself.\textsuperscript{55}

IV. HIS DEVELOPMENT

The process of change. The only definite allusions to Judas during the interval between his call and the events immediately leading up to the crucifixion are recorded in John's Gospel. Kerr says that these allusions are

\ldots made with the manifest purpose of showing forth the nefarious character of Judas from the beginning; and in their sequence there is a gradual development and growing clearness in the manner in which Jesus makes prophecy regarding his future betrayer.\textsuperscript{56}

The downfall of Judas was progressive; his passion grew gradually. Says Hastings, "Utter baseness requires a long education; but it is carried on in secret, and so we do not notice it."\textsuperscript{57}

Biederwolf has said, "Neither the heights of saintliness nor the depths of infamy are reached other than by a step at a time."\textsuperscript{58} Gradually as Judas watched, he became disturbed with the events. Things were not going as he had expected. Kerr characterizes his change in these words:

The words of love by which Jesus gradually drew the hearts of the other disciples to Himself, the teaching

\textsuperscript{55}Brown, \textit{op. cit.}, p. 88.
\textsuperscript{56}Kerr, \textit{op. cit.}, III, 1765, 66.
\textsuperscript{57}Hastings, \textit{op. cit.}, V, 291.
\textsuperscript{58}Biederwolf, \textit{op. cit.}, p. 14.
by which He uplifted their souls above all earthly things, were as chafing bonds to the selfishness of Judas. And from his fatterfed greed and disappointed ambition sprang jealousy and spite and hatred. It was the hatred, not of a strong, but of an essentially weak man. Instead of making an open breach with his Lord, he remained ostensibly one of His followers; and this continued contact with a goodness to which he would not yield (cf. Swete on Mk 14:10), and his brooding over the rebukes of his Master, gave ready entrance for "Satan into his soul." But if he "knew the good and did not do it" (cf Jn 13:17), so also he was weak in the carrying out of his nefarious designs. It was this hesitancy, rather than a fiendish cunning, which induced him to remain till the last moment in the supper room, and which prompted the remark of Jesus, "What thou doest, do quickly."

Judas managed to get through the years with the group of apostles and the Master without feeling any deeply spiritual effect from the experience. Proximity to Christ is not the answer to the need of man. No one ever had greater opportunity than Judas, and no one ever became so despicable. It is not assimilation of religion or knowledge of Jesus Christ, or awareness of His miracles, or even talking about His message which saves a man and fits him for the kingdom; but, it is a personal relationship with Jesus Christ, a relationship based on faith in His person and work. Such a relationship Judas did not have.

As Judas saw that the success that he was dreaming about was fast waning, he became a brooding man, silent in the New Testament narrative, dissatisfied with himself and with those with whom he companied. There was no response in

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59 Kerr, op. cit., III, 1767.
him to all that was being done. He was becoming irritated with the concern for others and dwelt only on the things which would benefit him. Undoubtedly, he became a very lonely man, and his loneliness contributed to despair, his despair to hatred, and his hatred ultimately to betrayal.

The impetus to action. Feeling the odds against success were greater than he could overcome, he began to take what little he could salvage from this fiasco in which he had wasted three years of his life. Slowly and insidiously he became a victim of the thing which he loved most. His greed was indicated at Bethany (see John 12:1-8) by the Apostle John when he clearly wanted to take that which was intended for Christ and have it for his own. Covetousness had replaced piety, and it was poorly concealed at that. Money-lust began to rule his life. Stalker comments on the lust for gain:

But there was a canker at the root of his character, which gradually absorbed all that was excellent in him, and became a tyrannical passion. It was the love of money. 60

He had cast his lot with an unpopular cause, lived in constant danger and opposition, labored in difficulty, and had nothing but the barest necessities of life for sustenance. Now he was ready to depart but not without all that he could take with him. Greed, ambition and worldliness took

60Stalker, op. cit., p. 119.
over completely in his heart. Avarice became his besetting sin.† He acted in betrayal, Farrar indicates:

The failure to struggle with his own temptations; the disappointment of every expectation which had first drawn him to Jesus; the intolerable rebuke conveyed to his whole being by the daily communion with a sinless purity; the darker shadow which he could not but feel that his guilt flung athwart his footsteps because of the burning sunlight in which for many months he now had walked; the sense too that the eye of his Master, possibly even the eyes of some of his fellow-apostles, had read or were beginning to read the hidden secrets of his heart—all these things had gradually deepened from an incipient alienation into an insatiable repugnancy and hate.‡

Now, in the light of the development of his character, he had reached a plane where he was ready to do anything, even to sell the Master for money.

The steps to betrayal. Edersheim said:

... When the Messianic faith of Judas gave place to utter disappointment, the moral and spiritual character of Christ's teaching would affect him, not sympathetically but antipathetically.†

Certain events contributed more than others to the final downfall of Judas. They were: (1) the several rebukes of Judas by the Lord; (2) the particular rebuke at Bethany; and (3) the failure of Jesus to take advantage of the disposition of the populace on the Sunday of the triumphal entry.‡

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‡Ibid. †Edersheim, op. cit., II, 474.
‡Stalker, op. cit., p. 120.
Judas was convinced in many ways by these events, but in particular, that the time had come for him to carry out the plan ripening in his deluded, degenerate mind.
CHAPTER III

THE BETRAYAL AND ARREST OF JESUS CHRIST AND THE MOTIVATION OF JUDAS

I. THE EVENTS OF THE BETRAYAL

The circumstances of the Passion Week which led up to the betrayal by Judas are very important in setting the scene for the event. The occurrences of this last week before the Passion show clearly how the external causes affected the internal motive for the act of treason committed by the traitor, Judas Iscariot.

The experience at Bethany. The apostle John makes the anointing at Bethany (John 12:4) a significant step in the development process which finally resulted in Satan taking control of Judas (John 13:27).1

When Mary attempted to anoint the Master with the valuable spikenard, the disciples raised a protest regarding the waste. According to the Gospel of John it is Judas who led the protest against the waste of the money which might have been obtained from the ointment if sold. Undoubtedly the others were caught up in the haste of Judas' remark. They certainly did not have the same motive as Judas. This

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is evident from the characterizing remark of John in rebuke of Judas. John's stinging commentary on Judas indicated that Judas commonly pilfered from the bag and that was the real reason that he wanted the money there, not for the poor as he had hypocritically suggested. Judas was a thief.  

Judas saw nothing of the beauty of the act of Mary. The other disciples in their blind response to Judas also failed to see the love involved. Brown describes the act of the anointing of the feet and head of Christ in the following words:

The only use of this was to refresh and exhilarate—a grateful compliment in the East, amidst the closeness of a heated atmosphere, with many guests at a feast. Such was the form in which Mary's love to Christ, at so much cost to herself, poured itself out.

Judas wanted the money regardless of the attitude of the heart of Mary in doing this for her Master. For three hundred pence he would rob Jesus of this gift of Mary's love. Lange gives some insight into the mind of Judas when he says regarding the disciple:

The calculating disciple thus ventured to characterize the inspired handmaid in this action as a thoughtless enthusiast. He threw out to her the reproach that she had deprived the poor of this costly

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benefit. Therefore, as was suitable to such a disposition, he rated the probable value of the ointment at its highest. But not only the Lord, even John also, seems to have looked through the hypocrite at that moment. He points out Judas as the man who was about eventually to betray the Lord, and remarks that he had thus expressed his indignation, not because he cared for the poor, but because he was a thief and took all.4

It does not seem likely that John recognized the motive of Judas at this point but that he knew by the time he wrote the Gospel. O'Rahilly feels that Judas never gave himself away. He was always cloaked in the garb of charity, and to the end the others never suspected him.5

The Lord defended the action of Mary. In the defense of the beautiful act of Mary was a rebuke to Judas and an unmasking of his hypocrisy.6 At this instant Judas faced an important decision. Krummacher discusses this moment. He says:

This was a decisive moment for Judas—a moment in which blessing and cursing were once more offered to his choice, and one which must necessarily exercise a definite influence for good or evil on the further development of his inward life. The erring disciple must now either cast himself down at Jesus' feet, with streams of penitential tears, and seek, by a frank confession of his lost condition deliverance and mercy at the throne of grace; or his mortified pride must

6Tasker, loc. cit.
gain the victory, and by urging him to the opposite course of a willful hardening, afford Satan the opportunity of imparting the infernal spark of secret bitterness against Him. 7

Judas accepted the latter alternative. He reacted, not in love but in the hate that had been festering in his soul. In his hatred and mad despair he crept away from Bethany in the very same night and came to Jerusalem. At this point he was introduced to the chief priests and had the first fatal interview in which he bargained to betray the Lord Jesus Christ. 8 Miro suggests that after he had made the bargain, he stole back into Bethany, rising unsuspected in the morning. 9

The scene at Bethany was, then, both a blessed one and a tragic one. In this regard, Barclay comments: "On this day the woman at Bethany anointed him in overflowing love; on this day Judas betrayed him. . . ." 10 There is no possibility of neutrality in regard to the person of Jesus Christ. Either a man longs to enthrone Him in his heart or to completely eliminate Him from his life. 11

10 Barclay, op. cit., p. 38.
11 Ibid.
The supper in the Upper Room. This was the last meeting between Christ and His disciples before He was crucified. Judas had conspired with the Jewish authorities prior to the Last Supper, but it was after his dismissal from this supper that he consummated the final treachery. Judas' opportunity for betrayal came on the evening of the Master's supper with His chosen men.12

Krummacher has indicated that there were possibly three reasons for Judas returning to be with the others at the supper. These are: (1) the fact that he was tormented by uneasiness and an inward curse; (2) the fact that he was apprehensive of drawing suspicion by his absence; and (3) the fact that if the Lord did by some miracle establish a kingdom, he wanted to reserve his place.13 Not only did Judas carry his hypocrisy so far as to be present at the feast, but he took for himself the place near his Master as a trusted friend.14

Judas had sold the Lord for thirty pieces of silver, the price of a slave (Exod. 21:32), and now the false disciple had returned to the Master and taken a place of conspicuous prominence. The apostle John was seated on the


13Krummacher, op. cit., p. 64.

14John Brown, Discourses and Sayings of Our Lord Jesus Christ (New York: Robert Carter and Brothers, 1855), II, 124.
right and Judas on the left. John 13:23 indicates that John was on the right of Jesus, and Matthew 26:25 reveals that it was likely that Judas was near, on the other side. The traitor Judas had gone as far as to break the bond of table-fellowship, a bond which should have been a sign of friendship and protection.15

The events of this significant meeting are compiled from the Gospel narrative by Robertson and placed in chronological order.16 At the outset of the meal, the disciples began to bicker among themselves about the coming kingdom. It was not the first time that the apostles had shown a particular interest in their rank and honor. Matthew indicates it at least twice before, in 18:1-5 and in 20:20-28.17 Jesus, then, rebukes their jealousy (Luke 22:24-30) by giving them a lesson in humility. Halas indicates the probable response of Judas to the words of Jesus. He says that Christ was giving the apostles the lesson of humility and the promise of eternal happiness in the Kingdom to come. The other apostles' hearts were encouraged by these words,


but not the heart of Judas. It became all the more hardened in its evil design. These words were strange and empty as they fell upon a mind occupied with Satan's treachery. Repentance was possible, even at this point in the treason but Judas would not repent. Perhaps he feared the Sanhedrin. 18

As was the characteristic of Jesus to add example to precept, He arose to wash the feet of His disciples. This was a beautifully profound act of humility. The feet of Judas were washed by the Master, but even this had no deterring effect on the mind of the man. Jesus knew this fact and so He said, "... and ye are clean, but not all." Here can be seen another indirect appeal to Judas by the Lord.

The unmasking of the traitor. In John 13:18, the words of Jesus are directed to Judas. They are likewise the words of Psalm 41:9 which prophesied that a feigned friend would be the traitor. Halas sees the betrayer unmasked in three distinct phases. They were:

(1) general allusion to Judas' approaching crime (Jn. 13:10, 18); (2) designation of the traitor as one of the Twelve (Jn. 13:21b; Mt. 26:21; Mk. 14:18; Lk. 22:21); (3) positive indication of the person (Jn. 13:26). 19

18Halas, op. cit., p. 97.
19Ibid., p. 100.
After the general indications in John 13:10, 18, Jesus becomes deeply moved and John says that he became "... troubled in the spirit." Brown clearly indicates the character of the troubled spirit.

The sense of ill-requited kindness—ingratitude in opposition to numerous peculiar favors—a deep loathing of such moral turpitude so near him—a shrinking from contact with one just about to betray, as a martyr might be supposed to do from the sight of the instruments of torture by which his body was soon to be mangled—a clear view equally of the heinousness of the sin, and the horrors of the punishment, in which the miserable man was about to plunge himself—an inward conviction that Judas, guilty, miserable wretch as he was, was but a development of the depravity of that sinful flesh whose likeness Jesus bore, and for whose liabilities, when exaction was to be made, he was to be held responsible,—these, we cannot doubt, were some of the ingredients of our Lord's trouble in spirit. 20

In the same verse, John 13:21, Jesus states the fact that one of the disciples is going to betray Him. Aghast with wonder and examining their own innocence the disciples, other than Judas, reply, "Is it I?" The general allusion has been made and now it is narrowed down to the Twelve. The next phase puts the guilt on one man.

The others were still desirous of knowing who the betrayer was. Peter, probably seated next to John, who was couched next to the Master, asked John to learn from Jesus who the traitor was. The privilege of knowing the identity of the betrayer was reserved for John. Jesus did not give

20 Brown, op. cit., p. 121.
the name of the man, but by an action he revealed to John
the guilty one. John 13:26 states that Jesus determined
to give the sop to the guilty one as the sign of his guilt.
He gave it to Judas. The other disciples were not aware of
this sign, for even when Judas was dismissed they thought it
was to take care of some business. Hastings has commented
regarding the dipping of the sop:

In the east it is a mark of special consideration
to dip a piece of bread or meat in the sauce or gravy
that forms part of a meal, and to pass it to the guest
whom one has it in one's heart to honour specially.
With a heart full of pity for the traitor, Jesus
dipped in the dish and gave the sop to Judas Iscariot.
Such an act was bound either to shame him out of his
evil purpose or to harden perversity into determined
wickedness. It was the latter that happened. The
favour of his Lord did but confirm the evil in the
heart of Judas; and, recognizing the true inwardness
of what had taken place, he rose from the couch and
passed from the room. 21

After Judas had taken the sop, John writes that Satan
entered into him. Judas had been flirting with Satan and
now Satan took him over to use him completely. The devil
had already put it into the heart of Judas to betray Jesus,
and now he entered him for the purpose of carrying it out.
Krummacher says:

That moment, the evil will of Judas overcame the
last and most powerful attraction of mercy, and the sin
against the Holy Ghost was perpetrated. The day of
salvation closed; the hour of the visitation of divine
mercy expired; the angels of peace sorrowfully removed
from his side, and Satan triumphantly entered into him.

21 Hastings, op. cit., V, 251.
The saying of the Saviour, "One of you is a devil," was now verified. The most terrible specimen of humanity which had hitherto trod the earth, now appeared upon the stage.\footnote{Krummacher, \textit{op. cit.}, p. 65.}

Christ then dismissed Judas with the words, "... What thou doest, do quickly." So Judas departed from the room, from Christ, and from grace. He went out into the night to carry out the plan. It was not only night by the fact that the sun had set and darkness covered the land, but it was night in the heart of the man who was the possessor of a sin-blackened soul. And it was soon to be for Judas eternal night!

It seems to have been the plan of the Lord to get rid of the evil presence of Judas before he instituted the ordinance of the Supper. The traitor did not belong in the midst of a pledge of love to Christ. Though it is not conclusive that he was not present at the institution of the Supper, it seems reasonable to assume this in the light of the character of the man and the Supper. The harmony of the Gospel narratives allows for this quite readily.\footnote{Robertson, \textit{op. cit.}, pp. 193-95.} For an extensive discussion of this matter, see \textit{Judas Iscariot} by Roman B. Halas.\footnote{Halas, \textit{op. cit.}, pp. 104-136.}

Where Judas went after he left the Upper Room is not
recorded in the Gospels. It seems certain that he
approached the Sanhedrin and told them of the complete
breach. He probably informed them of the fact that now was
the best time to execute the plan. And so, while Jesus was
completing the celebration of the Supper, Judas was making
the final arrangements for His capture.

The bargain of the thirty pieces of silver for the
Son of God was concluded. The smallness of the sum indicates
to some degree the scorn of the rulers for Jesus and for
Judas. They treated Judas as a common informer, not an
associate of honor. Even to them, he was a contemptible
inform-er.

Judas, now filled with satanic joy, anticipated the
right time to accomplish his purpose. Judas concluded that
by the time all the deliberation of the Sanhedrin and the
gathering of the forces for the capture would be completed
Jesus could be found in Gethsemane. He was right.

II. THE ARREST

The scene in Gethsemane. Judas was now ready to
betray the Master; the plan was laid, the place was set and

25Asbury Smith, The Twelve Christ Chose (New York:

26Alfred Edersheim, The Life and Times of Jesus the
Messiah (New York: Longmans, Green, and Co., 1907), II, 476.
the time was ripe. Judas had seen all the miracles the others had seen. Even the men who came with him to take Jesus had seen miracles. How could they believe that they could fool Jesus? Reid says:

Reason could agree that He must be God. Judas must have seen that. And so must the Jewish leaders who conspired with him. But emotion blinded them. And their sorry hopes threw reality out of focus.²⁷

Lange gives the position of the band of disciples in the garden. He indicates that they were stationed in two divisions, like a watch. Peter, James and John were in the background while the eight others were near the entrance.²⁸

Into this quiet scene pressed a troop of men led by Judas Iscariot. According to John, Judas brought with him the Roman cohort (στρατιάς). This consisted of five hundred men who were stationed at Castle Antonia. There is no evidence that all of them came, but a large representation of them must have been there. Along with them were the temple officers and the multitude. This, in itself, must indicate their respect for the power of Jesus.²⁹ Judas came forth boldly and was presumably in the place of greatest danger if Jesus was to use His power. This seems to indicate


²⁹Ibid, III, 222.
that he was assured in his own mind that Jesus would not resist. 30

The encounter with Jesus. Judas had made his plan with the armed men to point out Jesus by the sign of a kiss. Lange explains this, in the following statement:

It would appear that he might have accomplished his treachery quite simply; but this is only an appearance. The same spirit of mental confusion which made him a traitor, led him likewise to this devilish refinement—
to this unheard of combination of the disciple's kiss with the traitor's sign, which has no parallel in the world's history—to this highest, most pointed expression of the diabolical declension from God and Christ, in which the most cunning wit degenerates into the most brutal stupidity, and in which, so far, the serpent's bite finds its most accurate human copy. 31

As the company entered upon the place where Jesus was, according to John 18:2-9, Jesus stepped forth and questioned them as to whom they were seeking. When they heard that it was He to whom they were speaking, they fell backward to the ground. Lange says that the channel of this miracle was their terror of conscience. Possibly it was a psychological reaction to the boldness of Christ. 32 Robertson indicates that the kiss came after the bold statement of

31 Lange, op. cit., III, 223.
32 Lange, loc. cit.
Christ and the subsequent falling to the ground. Other scholars believe that the kiss came first, but it seems from the consistency of the narrative as John gives that it was the object of Christ to spoil the plan of Judas. There would have been no reason for the men to question Jesus as to His identity if Judas had given them the sign already. If the conversation between the Lord and the men was before the kiss, then the kiss was purely gratuitous, and was an effort of Judas to assure his right in collecting the money. This makes it all the more diabolical.

The kiss of betrayal. John omits any mention of the kiss. Luke, if consulted alone, seems to indicate that Judas is foiled by the words of Jesus as he attempts to place the kiss upon the innocent Master. From Matthew and Mark, however, it is clear that the kiss was given. The answer of the Lord followed the kiss immediately.

Kissing is a mark of homage paid in respect and love. It is still the sign of intimate friendship and love. In the East it was a mark of affection. Judas' kiss had been frustrated in its design by the self-presentation of Jesus, but it was executed nevertheless. Says Hastings regarding the kiss itself:

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33 Robertson, op. cit., pp. 205-6.
34 Jamieson, Fausset and Brown, op. cit., II, 161.
Inferiors kiss the back of the hand, or if above the position of a servant, the palm. Slaves kiss the foot, and so do suppliants deprecating anger, or begging pardon. Kissing the hem of the garment expresses great reverence, and holy men or dervishes are especially so saluted.

But the kiss on either cheek is the sign of close intimacy and warm affection among equals. It is the mark, not of gratitude nor of homage, but of unselfish love and esteem. Hence the betrayal by Judas with a kiss intensified the black act of treachery. 35

The kiss of Judas was feigned innocence. It was a weak attempt to conceal the real character of Judas' treachery. It is bad enough to betray a friend, worse to have sold God, but a greater delusion for having thought that he could hide from God behind a kiss. 36

Matthew reveals that Jesus called him "Friend."
Here is the extreme depth of meekness and gentleness.
Following this evidence of love is the rebuke for betraying Him with a kiss. It must have been a stinging pain to the heart of Judas. Lange has said:

No human joy is for the Man of Sorrows unmixed. The very height to which these eleven had risen through doubt and difficulty, in honest hearts and earnest lives, shows the depths to which one, with like power and capacity, like call and opportunity, had fallen. 37

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36Reid, op. cit., p. 49.
The obvious hatred of the priests, the loud raucous noise of the multitude, the later evidence of the pitiful cowardice of Pilate, and the brutality of the soldiers Jesus could suffer with a quiet heart; but, the thought that one of His own Twelve should betray Him to His foes pierced Him to the quick. How could this man return treachery for love?

Stalker lists three particular aggravations concerning Judas at the arrest of Jesus. They are: (1) the fact that he profaned the Passover, the most sacred season of the year; (2) the fact that he invaded the sanctuary of the Master's devotions—His place of prayer; and (3) the fact that the sign of the betrayal was a fervent kiss. 38

Here in the garden of Gethsemane a parting scene is witnessed. This is one of the most tragic, melancholy and mysterious partings that the world has ever beheld. Here one may watch as Jesus and His disciple Judas are separated forever. 39

Is the act of Judas so very unique? Does one not read in the Old Testament of those who, according to Ezekiel, pollute God among the people for handfuls of barley and bread? Does not Amos indicate that there are those who sell


the righteous for monetary gain, and the poor for shoes? Men have done it in all times past and they continue to do it today. Judas is not any the less guilty because through his treachery God's redemptive plan was executed.

III. THE MOTIVATION

In this section a study will be made of the various reasons or motives which have been ascribed to Judas in the betraying of Jesus Christ. The Gospels do not provide the reader with an exhaustive analysis of the motives of Judas. They simply state the facts historically. The sin of betrayal is most probably the result of many motives. In the previous considerations the external circumstances leading to the act itself have been presented and, to some extent, evaluated. But they are only contributing factors, not the real causes. They are incomplete in themselves.40

The patriotic view. In the apocryphal book, The Story of Joseph of Arimathea, Judas is presented as the brother of Caiaphas the High Priest. He was persuaded by the Jewish leaders to become a member of Jesus' inner circle with the deliberate intention of being a spy. He was the means whereby Jesus could be destroyed at the right time.41

40Halas, op. cit., p. 79.
41Barclay, op. cit., p. 35.
This view has absolutely no biblical basis, and is only conjecture. It is to be completely rejected.

Barclay links Judas with a group called the "Sicarii" (connected with Iscariot), who were literally the "dagger-bearers." He describes them as follows:

The sicarii were fanatical Jewish nationalists. They believed intensely in the destiny of Israel; they believed that Israel was intended by God to rule the world; but they believed that God would not help Israel until the men of Israel helped themselves. They were therefore pledged to a campaign of murder, assault, assassination, sudden death, directed against the Romans; and they drew their name from the fact that concealed beneath their robes, they carried daggers with which they were prepared to murder any Roman who gave them any opportunity to do so. They were patriots fanatical to the extent of insanity. Such was the flame of their nationalism that they were prepared not only to murder their Roman masters, but also to murder any Jew who would not take their way of violence or who could be suspected of the least collaboration with Rome.42

If this is true of Judas, and it most likely is, according to Barclay, there are two possibilities open. First, he may have joined the band believing Jesus to be the great potential leader that his group needed, and when he discovered that Jesus refused to take the way of violence, he may have betrayed Him into the hands of His enemies. This is what a disappointed "dagger-bearer" might have done. Secondly, and even more likely, says Barclay, is the view that Judas betrayed Jesus to put Him in a position where he could throw off His captors and launch the campaign against Rome. By the

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42 Ibid., p. 36.
kiss Judas was saying: "Now is your chance to act! Blast them with your power!" 43

The absence of scriptural evidence is against this view. It is not recorded in Scripture, and is based on an incorrect grammatical analysis of his name. Christ never gave to Judas any thought of a just motive. He called him a devil, a betrayer, and said that Satan entered him. John revealed that he was a thief. Peter indicated that he went to his "own place" after his sad end. If Judas had so great an idea of Jesus' power, why so mean an idea of Jesus' wisdom? Why did his violent enthusiasm slumber so long? 44 Judas was not even enthusiastic in his natural makeup. For all the years he was with the band of disciples, he was quiet, always in the background.

The idea that Judas was only a disappointed enthusiast is hard to accept. All the disciples were disappointed, but they did not seek revenge on Christ. 45

Some have said that his patriotism was Judaistic, and that he wanted to get rid of Jesus because He was a foe of Herod. If this is true, why did the chief priests reject him after he had done the deed, and why did he hang himself?

43Ibid., p. 37.


45Hastings, op. cit., V, 278.
if his goal was accomplished?46

The kingdom view. This view is closely connected with the previous one in that it gives to Judas a pure motive in the act of betrayal. Hastings says that for eighteen centuries Judas was regarded as the lowest of humanity, but since the nineteenth century he has become something of a hero. This theory originated in Germany and was subsequently presented to the English public by DeQuincey.47

The theory is stated that Judas betrayed Jesus to put Him into a position where He would be compelled to exercise His great power in a triumphant way, confounding His enemies and setting up the kingdom which was to belong to Messiah. He never believed that Jesus would submit to arrest, and so when He did, Judas was filled with remorse, and killed himself. There are many variations on this central theme.

Archbishop Whately, in his discourse on Judas' act of treason, says that Judas was not a traitor in the sense that he wanted to see the death of Christ. He wanted to force Christ to a crisis with His opponents and watch Christ overthrow them and set up the throne. He believed that Jesus was the Messiah and could not die. He killed himself--a


47Hastings, op. cit., V, 276.
disappointed man. Whately even indicates that Judas took on himself the role of a traitor in order that the Scripture might be fulfilled and Jesus might reign.\textsuperscript{48} Perhaps Judas felt that if he was so instrumental in the setting up of the kingdom, he would assume a high place in it.

The evidence against this view is similar to that of the previous view. The Scripture does not record any such motive. It is inconsistent with the scriptural tone of moral repulsion in which they speak of Judas.\textsuperscript{49} How could anyone with such a high opinion of Jesus' power have such a low estimate of His wisdom and ability to act? How could Judas believe that the crisis he forced would change the character of Jesus?\textsuperscript{50} If Judas' motive was good, there are many other ways he could have achieved his desire without assuming the role of a traitor.

The statements of the Evangelists about his covenant with the chief priests, his conduct at the arrest, his return of the money, the words of Peter respecting him, and especially the words of the Lord, "Good were it for that man if he had not been born," conclusively show that he sinned, not through a mere error of judgment, while at heart hoping to advance the interests of his master, but with deliberate perfidy, designing to compass His ruin.\textsuperscript{51}


\textsuperscript{49}Stalker, \textit{op. cit.}, p. 74.

\textsuperscript{50}Smith, \textit{op. cit.}, p. 151.

\textsuperscript{51}Hastings, \textit{op. cit.}, V, 276-77.
The Satan incarnate view. Daub, in one of the strangest works he has written, reveals that Judas was the embodied evil standing in antithesis to Christ as the embodied good. Judas was the power of Satan in human form, while Christ was the embodiment of the power of God.52

Boyd Scott makes Judas a very large man with heroic temperament who chose deliberately the service of Satan. Scott likens this heroism to that of Nietzsche, who called Christianity the darkest blot on the history of mankind. He likens that boldness to Judas who may have cried, "Evil, be thou my good."53 Smith says that Scott's theory that Judas openly allied himself with Satan makes the struggle on Golgotha simply a conflict between God and Satan with Jesus and Judas as the human representatives.54

Many say that Judas was not a human being at all. They take literally the words of Jesus: "One of you is a devil." Judas becomes no less than evil incarnate.55

There are many objections to this theory. First Judas is presented in the biblical record as a human being. If he were anything more the Bible would so indicate. There is

53 Smith, op. cit., p. 149.
54 Ibid.
positively no evidence for such a view. It is only conjecture. To regard Judas as Satan or embodied evil is to misunderstand the phraseology of Jesus. One might as well call Peter a devil for Jesus said to him, "Get thee behind me, Satan." Second, Judas never made any open attack on the Lord and was not even known as a traitor until he kissed the Master in Gethsemane. It seems highly unlikely that he could have been undiscovered for so long, and also that he could have waited so long to perpetrate his deed. 56

The mystical view. There are many speculative considerations which could come under this heading, but it is not worth the study to present them. Only a brief representation of them is presented, because they bypass the biblical record which is the criterion of this thesis.

Levitt contends that Jesus never really believed that he was the Messiah, but John and Judas in good faith, and after seeing some of his magical works, concluded that he was the Messiah. As soon as this occurred Judas and John also realized that the Old Testament said Messiah must die. Consequently, they talked Jesus into dying. Levitt, denying the resurrection, says that when Jesus did not rise from the dead, Judas killed himself in remorse for causing Jesus to die as the Messiah which he was not at all, as his failure

56 Smith, op. cit., p. 150.
to rise indicated. 57

Some have concluded that Judas was nothing more than the personification of Judaism. This view invalidates the historical value of much of the scriptural writing. 58 Others have said that he was the executive of a divine and irresistible purpose to bring about Christ's death, which was necessary to the salvation of the race. The Peraties and Cainites, Gnostic groups of the second century, represented him as the true apostle, whose deed liberated Christ from the curse of matter. This view has no support in the biblical record. It is contrary to the words of Christ: "but woe unto that man through whom the Son of man is betrayed! good were it for that man if he had not been born." 59

All such mystical views are only speculative and they have little value for any study of biblical teaching.

The vindictiveness view. Some have suggested that it was resentment or revenge that prompted Judas to carry out the act of betrayal. The fact that Judas was the only one


58 Kerr, loc. cit.

of the Twelve that was not a Galilean may have bred resentment in his soul. The rebuke of Judas at Bethany may have added to his resentment. Certainly the fact that he had wasted these years with a false hope of glory would plant resentment in his heart. A. B. Bruce says:

The manner in which the betrayal was gone about supports the idea that the agent was actuated by malicious, revengeful feelings. Not content with giving such information as would enable the Jewish authorities to get their victim into their hands, Judas conducted the band that was sent to apprehend his Master, and even pointed Him out to them by an affectionate kiss.60

Clausen has said:

Not hatred of Jesus! Not the inescapable wiles of the devil! Not the mysterious exigencies of an uncontrollable fate! Not the cruel mechanism of a spiritual drama set by prophecy and demanding its victim! ... This black deed was the unreasoning result of a smoldering resentment.61

Certainly this motive is justified by the scriptural account of Judas. There is no evidence that he did not feel vengeance in his heart; but, on the contrary, there is strong possibility that he did. This is not, however, the sole motive for Judas' act. The Scripture indicates that there are others.

The avarice view. The immediate motive of Judas was

61Bernard C. Clausen, Pen-Portraits of the Twelve (New York: Fleming H. Revell Company, 1924), p. 27.
possible avarice. Judas asked the chief priests, "What are ye willing to give me, and I will deliver him unto you?" (Matt. 26:15). John called him a thief ostensibly for his objection to the waste of the ointment at Bethany. Gain seems to have been his primary motive. Thirty pieces of silver was his prize for Jesus Christ. "Judas is set as an everlasting example of greed," says Halas.62

Great scholars of the church, such as Chrysostom, Origen, and Thomas Aquinas, accepted the position that Judas was moved by avarice.63

Bruce presents the motive of avarice on the basis of four arguments: (1) he took money for the service; (2) a vindictive man would scorn the payment; (3) he pilfered from the bag; and (4) the fact that he was the treasurer revealed that his heart hankered after greed.64

Avarice was indeed significant in the action of Judas, but it was not the only motive. Objections to this motive as the central and only motive are given by Bruce. He indicates that greed could not have been the only motive because, if this were so, it would have been better to have continued as treasurer. He also indicates that following Jesus was not the way to make money in the first place, and

62Halas, op. cit., p. 80.
63Smith, op. cit., p. 146.
64Bruce, op. cit., p. 372.
if that were the guiding force in the life of Judas he would have been elsewhere seeking bigger funds. If avarice was all that was in the mind of Judas why did he destroy himself? Does greed not destroy conscience?\textsuperscript{65}

Schell believes that Judas’ motive could not have been greed because Jesus would never have permitted Judas to fall into this temptation had it been his greatest weakness.\textsuperscript{66} This objection is weak. If this was Judas’ greatest weakness he would have fallen victim to it no matter what position he had or did not have.

Avarice did play a very important role in the heinous crime of Judas, but it was not the only motive.

The combination view. This is the thesis of the writer, that Judas was a man of many motives. No single motive can stand alone as the direct and only cause of the crime of Judas. As Farrar indicates:

Probably by this time a turbid confused chaos of sins was weltering in the soul of Judas—malice, worldly ambition, theft, hatred of all that was good and pure, base ingratitude, frantic anger, all culminating in this foul and frightful act of treachery—all rushing with blind, bewildering fury through this gloomy soul.\textsuperscript{67}

Macartney suggests that the motives were

\textsuperscript{65}\textit{Ibid.}, p. 373.

\textsuperscript{66}Edwin A. Schell, \textit{Traits of the Twelve} (Cincinnati: Jennings and Graham, 1911), p. 183.

\textsuperscript{67}Farrar, \textit{op. cit.}, p. 422.
vindictiveness, avarice, revenge, vex and vengeance. Schaff accepts the idea that avarice, the desire to save himself and malice toward Christ were the main motives. Schilder holds to the idea that Judas was moved by a combination of motives, most prominent of which were the desire for freedom, and greed.

Tasker says that the truth to the motivation of Judas lies between the extremes and suggests three mingled motives: covetousness, ambition, and jealousy. His covetousness, says Tasker, is not foreign to the fact that he chose discipleship. The call of Jesus could have aroused a new affection within him, and especially in the light of his ambition. His ambition, however, was stifled by the plan of Jesus, and he became discontent and then jealous.

Tasker says:

"It is probable that the flame of resentment, kindled by baffled ambition, was fanned by malign jealousy and base desire to scratch at paltry gain when all seemed lost."

Hastings gives the three primary motives as avarice, ambition and selfishness. These follow in logical order, as


69Schaff, loc. cit.


71Tasker, op. cit., I, 912.
selfishness is the result of a nature that is greedy and ambitious. 72

All the previously mentioned motives are certainly relevant to the deed of Judas, but there is one more which must be added to the list. This one is the most significant of them all. The previous motives have dealt with Judas as a physical, natural man. This motive is connected to Judas as a spiritual man. Besides the loneliness of the man, the reproaches of Christ, the greed of his person, his ambition, his resentment, and his desire to preserve himself, there is the fact that he was spiritually disillusioned. He had a wrong concept of the kingdom from the start to the end. The other disciples learned to accept the kingdom as Christ presented it, and to have the faith to believe in Him as the Messiah, even without the visible setting up of the kingdom. Judas never did realize the plan of Christ regarding the kingdom.

Krummacher says:

That which led Judas into fellowship with Jesus was probably the hope of acting a prominent part in the kingdom of his wonder-working Master. Finding that he had formed an erroneous idea of that kingdom, which was the reverse of what he expected, he seized, as we have already seen, the money with which he was intrusted, to compensate him in a small degree, for his disappointment. The scene at Bethany then occurred, which convinced him that his baseness was discovered; and he then gave way to those feelings

72 Hastings, op. cit., V, 279-81.
of animosity and hatred which afterward prompted him to betray his Master for thirty pieces of silver.73

McClelland says that Judas saw in Jesus his Messianic hope and became completely disillusioned when He spoke of dying. This ran contrary to his national hope.74 Kik gives the two primary motives as the misunderstanding of the nature of the kingdom and the love of money.75 O'Rahilly says that Judas thought: "Instead of becoming the leader of the nation, he was skulking with a small band of nonentities."76 Coupling this with the growing resentment of the Jewish authorities, Judas was ready to abandon the sinking ship after getting all he could out of it.

The statement of Hastings is significant in recognizing the main reason for the act of treason—his misunderstanding of the kingdom due to spiritual blindness. He says:

It is this absolute deadness of spiritual perception that was the radical flaw in the character of Judas, and that makes the study of his history really profitable for our example and warning. It is a very exceptional thing that one of us should be under a temptation to anything that may be called treachery; but we may all do well to bear in mind that what made

73Krummacher, op. cit., p. 124.


76O'Rahilly, op. cit., p. 25.
the fall of Judas possible was that he was clear-sighted with respect to material objects, and to all the things of this life, but that the spiritual world was quite invisible to him.
CHAPTER IV

THE END OF JUDAS AND THE LESSONS OF HIS EXAMPLE

I. THE CONSEQUENCES OF THE BETRAYAL

The despair of Judas. With the accomplishment of the betrayal, Judas was filled with remorse and bitterness toward his own sin. Sadly enough, it is only remorse and not repentance. Fairbairn says that the apostasy of Judas came from the feeling that he had been deceived, but the despair of Judas came from the consciousness that he had deceived himself, and so became the instigator of a stupendous crime. Sin always leaves guilt and remorse. A man is victimized by his sin. The sin of Judas was so monumental that it bore unbearable conviction on him. Remorse flashed on his heart, sorrow welled up within him and he could only remember his crime and think only of trying to undo what he had done. He desperately sought to relieve his conscience. Perhaps this sad man expected that the Lord would miraculously escape as He had done before. Perhaps he did not. Whatever his expectations, his sin was unbearable.

Hollings has said:

Alas, because he had mind and heart on natural, worldly values, weighting the cost, he cannot grasp the size of God's forgiveness, he cannot see the

prodigal love of Christ mirrored in Magdalen; he has even despised it as beneath his common sense; and now it is too big for him.2

The remorse of Judas did not drive him to Christ as it might have. He did not seek forgiveness; he sought to undo his crime by returning the price of the betrayal to the source. Matthew indicates that he "repented himself." The word used is not the common Greek word for "repentance," but rather "regret"—a simple change of feeling.3 Seized with violent remorse Judas wished that he had never committed the crime. But instead of turning to the only one who could help, he went back to the chief priests. The words of Stalker are well-chosen as he comments:

Oh that it had been in him to flee to Christ—that, breaking through all obstacles and rules, he had rushed to Him wherever He was to be found and cast himself at His feet! What if the soldiers had cut him down? Then he would have been the martyr of penitence, and that very day he would have been with Christ in Paradise. Judas repented of his sin; he confessed it; but his penitence lacked the element which is most essential of all—he did not turn to God. True repentance is not the mere horror and excitement of a terrified conscience; it is the call of God; it is letting go the evil because the good has prevailed; it includes faith as well as fear.4

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4James Stalker, The Trial and Death of Jesus Christ (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1894), p. 78.
Matthew reveals that he threw the silver down on the sanctuary floor and then went out and hanged himself. Although he admitted that the blood of Christ was innocent blood, he did not take refuge in this blood as having the power to make others innocent before God.\(^5\)

His unforgiven soul cried out for vengeance on himself. Reduced to despair by the mocking of the priests and the disparaging remarks of the spectators, Judas went out and took his life. From the very initial seeking of the chief priests to the bitter act of suicide, says Hastings, "we are dealing with a madman, capable of a madman's cunning and passing through paroxysms of frantic grief and ineffectual remorse."\(^6\) At the height of this frantic remorse Judas became a suicide.

The death of Judas. The death of Judas is recorded in Matthew 27:5 and in Acts 1:18. These two accounts do not contradict, but they supplement each other. Matthew indicates that he hanged himself, and Peter indicates that he fell and burst asunder. Both are true. Krummacher is correct when he indicates that Judas, attempting to hang

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himself, fell to the ground and burst asunder when the rope broke. Says Hastings:

A certain mystery broods over Judas's obscure and lonely death, through which we dimly discern an unsteady attempt at suicide, a treacherous knot or a cord that breaks, a heavy fall into the hollow whence the potters had long since dug out the clay, and last of all, a hideous mass, the strange antithesis of that undesecrated body which even then perhaps was being reverently laid in a new tomb, and which saw no corruption.

Suicide is contemptable. It is a shameful escape from the circumstances of life. Even the Jews did not practice suicide, and Judas, in the light of Judaism, chose a base mode of death.

Judas is indeed a strange man. Macartney suggests that "a man, according to all experience, who could commit such an abnormal crime ought to have been too bad a man to suffer such remorse." There is Judas, so wicked in his hypocrisy that he can live and eat with Christ and then go out and betray Him; yet, at the same time, so sorry for his act that he commits suicide.

Why did Judas hang himself? The suicide of Judas is

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8Hastings, op. cit., V, 255-56.

9Stalker, op. cit., p. 79.


11Ibid.
a direct rebellion against God's sovereign good pleasure which Christ was revealing. It was not all self-accusation, for real self-accusation can only proceed from the Spirit of Christ. It was not as much self-accusation as it was remorse for sin and failure. It was the act of a deranged mind.

The purchase of the field. When the chief priests had received the returned money, they determined that since it was blood money it could not be placed in the treasury of the temple. After counselling together, they decided that it would be used to purchase the potter's field to bury strangers in. Matthew tells of the purchase and the naming of the field. It was called the field of blood. Peter gives the name Akeldama (Acts 1:19). Smith comments on the act of the chief priests in the following statement:

With a scrupulousness which is the most striking example of religious formalism glossing over moral deformity, the chief priests decided that the thirty silver pieces, as the price of blood, must not be put back into the treasury; so they purchased with them the potter's field, without the city, as a burial place for strangers. It seems to be implied in the narrative that the field thus purchased was also the place where Judas committed suicide, and the double memorial of the scene and the price of blood was preserved by its name, Aceldama, the field of blood.13

12 Schilder, op. cit., p. 255.
Baker says that it is the most marvelous irony that the price of the betrayal of the most significant man in history should be used to provide a last resting place for the most insignificant of men. 14

The fact that Acts 1:18, 19 says that Judas obtained the field with the silver does not contradict the record of Matthew 27. It merely states it in a different way. For it was the use of Judas' money that purchased the field, and in that sense it was he who purchased it. It was the action of the chief priests with the money that belonged to Judas. Peter was not concerned in his sermon with the details of the purchase but was only showing the significance of the fact that the money which belonged to Judas was used to purchase the field. Says Lange:

The manner in which the obtaining by purchase of the field for the thirty pieces of silver occurred, Peter could not describe, since it was in his mind to represent, in a painfully rhetorical antithesis, the ironical working of the curse, that instead of the curse-laden money, the disciple should only receive an inheritance equally accursed. 15

In comparing these two accounts of the purchase, one must see Peter in the role of an orator before an assembly gathered to decide the successor to Judas. The purchase is


referred to Judas himself, because it was the consequence of his deed and it was done with his money. The piece of ground was purchased with the price of Judas' treason.\textsuperscript{16}

The problem of Matthew 27:9, 10. Matthew sees in this act of purchase a fulfillment of some words which he ascribes to Jeremiah, which are not in Jeremiah, but are in Zechariah. There are many conjectures as to the reason for the appearance of this ascription to Jeremiah. The question is one more of critical interest than real importance.\textsuperscript{17}

Since it does not deal particularly with the character of Judas, it is here dealt with only briefly.

Some say that Jeremiah had the first place among the prophets, and thus he is named. When Matthew cited a text of Zechariah under the name of Jeremiah, he was referring to the whole volume of the prophets under the name of the first one, Jeremiah.\textsuperscript{18} Others attempt to solve the problem by saying that it is a wrong reading. They conclude one of several possibilities: (1) the prophecy did exist in some writing of Jeremiah which is now lost; (2) it was uttered by Jeremiah but not written down; (3) it was erased by the Jews.


\textsuperscript{17}Robert Jamieson, et. al., \textit{A Commentary, Critical and Explanatory, on the Old and New Testaments} (New York: John D. Alden, Publisher, 1895), II, 61.

\textsuperscript{18}Ibid.
from the existing book of his prophecy; or (4) as Meyer and Alford conclude, with Augustine, Matthew had suffered a lapse in memory. The absence of Ιαπεμίου from some of the early Latin and Syriac versions indicates that the name was a stumblingblock to some of the early translators of the New Testament.

The view of Krummacher is different. He says:

God so ordered it that the elders of Israel purchase the field on which the curse of Jeremiah rested, thus making it the property of the Jewish state. By so doing they transferred that curse to themselves and the people. It was not therefore the purchase of the field itself, but rather the symbolic appropriation by it of the divine curse upon Tophet [Jer. 19: 11-13], with its final accomplishment in the destruction of Jerusalem by the Romans, and that is here described as the fulfillment of Jeremiah's prophecy.

The previous explanations have no convincing evidence to root them, and they seem to lack conclusiveness to the mind of this writer. The explanation of Lange seems to be the best. He indicates that this is probably the living and great word of Jeremiah which Matthew quotes according to the meaning, while he more closely defines it by the representation of the prophet Zechariah. He is using the words of

19 Lange, op. cit., II, 251.


21 Krummacher, op. cit., p. 200.
Zechariah to convey the message of Jeremiah.  

There are many other explanations for this passage, but it is not the task of the author to deal in this particular critical study.

II. THE EXAMPLE

The lessons by way of the example of Judas are many. Certainly the life of Judas stands in history as the greatest example of tragedy because of his proximity to the truth. Hastings comments on the example of Judas to the world:

Only his history remains; not as a discouragement, for that it cannot be, but as a warning to us, how the greatest spiritual privileges may be neutralized by the indulgence of one illicit passion, and the life which is lived in the face of the unclouded sun may set at last in the night of despair.  

Judas stands in the fairest surroundings that the world has ever presented. The beginning was ample and winsome, but the end was bitter, black and dead. After the consummation of his dreadful sin his eyes were opened and his remorse became despair, his despair became madness, and his madness led to suicide. May Judas serve the world as the vital testimony that sin leaves terrifying marks on its victims. "There is not any distance in space or time, not

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22Lange, *op. cit.*, II, 252.

23Hastings, *op. cit.*, V, 256.
any change in circumstances, which will so cut a man off from his fellowmen as one sin will do."

Sin not only sever a man from his fellow but from God. Judas separated himself and, as Peter indicates, he went "to his own place." It is the place that is occupied by all who separate themselves from God and are victimized by unforgiven sin.

Privilege does not ensure men against ultimate disaster. The same kind of tragedy that befell Judas may be awakening in any life. Observe the answer of the Twelve: "Lord, is it I?" Do not allow self-complacent pride to remove a man from the guilt of a Judas. There are undetected instabilities in all men. "Wherefore let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall."25

Judas is no "solitary monster"26 standing alone in the history of the world. Many men have sold out for money. There have been Judases in every age. There are Judases in this era. There are men who have eaten of Christ's bread at His table, and lifted their heel against Him.27 Such men may pass quietly through the world never suspected until

24Hastings, op. cit., V, 293.
251 Corinthians 10:12.
26Hastings, op. cit., V, 275.
27John Brown, Discourses and Sayings of Our Lord Jesus Christ (New York: Robert Carter and Brothers, 1855), II, 90-91.
they reach an "experimentum crucis" which nothing but sincerity can stand. It is here that they will fall. Certainly there is an evil heart of unbelief in everyone, and if it were not contacted by divine grace, it would make of all men—Judases!

Krummacher suggests this sad truth:

Would that the traitor's kiss had remained the only act of its kind! But, in a spiritual sense, Jesus has still to endure it a thousandfold to this hour. For, hypocritically to confess Him with the mouth, while the conduct belies Him—to exalt the virtues of His humanity to the skies, while divesting Him of His divine glory, and tearing the crown of universal majesty from His head—to sing enthusiastic hymns and oratorios to Him, while trampling His Gospel by word and deed under foot—what is all this but a Judas-kiss with which men have the audacity to pollute His face.29

The treason of Judas is unmatched in turpitude, but not in kind!

Conclusion. The account of Judas Iscariot is a tragedy. The history of the man contains not a single bright spot. There is nothing of commendation to be said for him. He was a sinner of the most unimaginable magnitude. The heathen world could never produce such a character. Such a monster as Judas Iscariot could only mature in the brilliant sphere of Christianity.30 The tragedy of his life

29Krummacher, op. cit., p. 125.
30Ibid., p. 60.
lies in the possibility of his success.

Still as of old
Man by himself is priced
For thirty pieces Judas sold
Himself, not Christ. 31

31 Macartney, op. cit., p. 131.
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8. COMMENTARIES


C. BIBLE DICTIONARIES AND ENCYCLOPEDIAS


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