**Judas – The Enigma**

**Matthew 27 v 1-10**

# **Introduction**

Prayer

There is a stigma attached to the name of Judas and his story is applicable today, I think it talks about tares as well as people who we know most of our life but in essence reject Gods word and follow their own lusts.

All 4 Gospels speak of Judas but the clearest in my view is the book of John and there are lots of commentaries about Judas, but not that much scripture. Some commentaries refer to the Book of Judah which was found in 1970’s and was written 150 – 180 AD and is in essence “Gnosticism” which is truth through knowledge and has a theme of there is a spark of goodness in us which I do not believe.

What I believe he is though is an enigma – “*a person or thing that is mysterious or difficult to understand*”

**Contents**

[Introduction 2](#_Toc58165438)

[**Who was he ?** 4](#_Toc58165439)

[**His relationship with Jesus** 4](#_Toc58165440)

[**His relationship with Disciples** 4](#_Toc58165441)

[His betrayal prophesised 5](#_Toc58165442)

[**Why the kiss ?** 5](#_Toc58165443)

[**Kiss backfires ?** 6](#_Toc58165444)

[**Why 30 pieces of silver** 6](#_Toc58165445)

[Was Judas Remorseful? 7](#_Toc58165446)

[**Contradictions in his death ?** 8](#_Toc58165447)

[**Suicide stigma** 8](#_Toc58165448)

[**Field of blood ?** 9](#_Toc58165449)

[**Summary Point 1. Freewill** 9](#_Toc58165450)

[**Summary point 2 - Necessary Traitor** 10](#_Toc58165451)

[**Summary point 3 –Why did he betray Christ** 10](#_Toc58165452)

[**Summary point 4 – satan’s role** 10](#_Toc58165453)

[**Summary point 5 – Under the radar** 10](#_Toc58165454)

# **Who was he?**

One of the sons of Jacob which is same line as David and Jesus.

His place of origin is related to his surname which is the town of Kiriot / Keryoth / Keryos which is twenty miles south of Jerusalem. It is mentioned in Joshua 15:25 and does not exist anymore.

The other idea associated with his surname it is linked to Sicarii who were Jewish assassin’s or revolutionaries which I will explain later.

The fact he was not same area as other disciples namely from Galilee, could be being viewed as an outsider already.

His role was the bagman, the money man, or the treasurer (*Tamias* in Greek) and we know from scripture Judas kept some of the money for himself and it was his side-line, we was a thief first then a disciple and John 12 gives us an insightful account of Judas?

**John 12:6 - This he said, not that he cared for the poor, but because he was a thief, and had the money box; and he used to take what was put in it.**

An interesting point he is usually mentioned last when listing disciples. The reason for the bagman was the giving of alms to the poor (*Tzedakah which are acts of righteousness and discussed in Matthew 6*) The bag was called a “DLOKSEMA” which was a chest which people put their collection into and form this he would have taken his ‘cut’.

# **His relationship with Jesus**

Jesus addressed him in as the devil or adversary in John and Judas in return addresses him as Rabbi in:

**Matthew 26:49 - Immediately he went up to Jesus and said, “Greetings, Rabbi!” and kissed Him**

Hence, he may have only seen Christ as a teacher and not the living God, but he would have seen him perform miracles, but Jesus knew his heart. What is key verse is in verse 25 where this is confirmation or verbal affirmation that what Jesus was asking him was the truth and Jesus told him, he was the betrayer as in;

**Matthew 26 :20-25 Then Judas, who was betraying Him, answered and said, “Rabbi, is it I?” He said to him, “You have said it.”**

# **His relationship with Disciples**

Judas was one of the disciples and an important point here is in the books of Acts.

**Acts 1:17 - For he was numbered with us and obtained a part in this ministry.**

This can be translated as “For he was counted among us” hence he had been classed as a disciple by the other disciples.

There is significance of the timing of his suicide as after Judas hanged himself, the power of apostolic authority was given to the apostles and not before so there had to be twelve disciples for the scriptures to be fulfilled. So, when Judas hanged himself another apostle appointed, and it was prophesised one of the apostles would be replaced in;

**Psalm 109:8 - Let his days be few and let another take his office.**

# **His betrayal prophesised**

There is scripture to foretell of his betrayal in Old Testament within the character of Ahithophel who is an anti-type. A type is an early biblical reference to Christ who has one of his attributes such as Moses, Abraham or King David. An anti-type is the opposite of this.

With Ahithophel, his treachery was exposed and upon hearing this;

**2 Samuel 17:23 - Now when Ahithophel saw that his advice was not followed, he saddled a donkey, and arose and went home to his house, to his city. Then he put his household in order, and hanged himself, and died; and he was buried in his father’s tomb.**

We also know the betrayer would have to be somebody whom Jesus ate bread with as in.

**Psalm 41:9 - Even my own familiar friend in whom I trusted, who ate my bread, has lifted up his heel against me.**

Jesus knew he was going to in.

**John 6:71 -** Jesus **answered them, “Did I not choose you, the twelve, and one of you is a devil?” 71. He spoke of Judas Iscariot, the son of Simon, for it was he who would betray Him, being one of the twelve.**

# **Why the kiss?**

Jesus was kissed by Judas to show who he was, so the soldiers acting on behalf of the chief priests could arrest Jesus. What Judas did was to “give up” or to “deliver” Jesus to the priests and the guards who were with them as the soldiers were sent at the behest of the Jewish leaders. The Greek word is “Paradidonai”/” paradidomai” Hebrew word {Nath-earn} which means to be handed over or gave in as in;

**Judges 13:1(CJB) - Bnei-Yisrael again did what was evil in Adonai’s eyes, and Adonai gave them into the hand of the Philistines for 40 years.**

It is worth pointing out that it is not the same word for betrayed which in Greek is “*Prodidinai*” which means betrayal by abandonment.

The kiss itself was a sign of respect to show a sign of respect between a disciple and his master and by saying “Peace be upon you rabbi”

There is also another reference to where Joab where he greets Amasa with a kiss and then drives his sword through him and is interesting it details his entrails spilling – same as Judas.

**2 Samuel 20:9-10 – 9. Then Joab said to Amasa, “Are you in health, my brother?” And Joab took Amasa by the beard with his right hand to kiss him.**

**10 But Amasa did not notice the sword that was in Joab’s hand. And he struck him with it in the stomach, and his entrails poured out on the ground; and he did not strike him again. Thus, he died**

One of the key aspects of the betrayal was that it was done at night and in order not to stir up any demonstration from the people and no crowds as in:

**Matthew 26:5 – But they said, “Not during the feast, lest there be an uproar among the people.”**

Or put another was the priests wanted to do it before the Passover week started.

# **Kiss backfires?**

In the gospel of Marks account Jesus clearly states when he was being arrested “*My betrayer is at hand* “. Jesus pre-empts Judas and says “Hetare (my friend) what are you here for “? Was he being ironic or was he still showing forgiveness?

The other issue was that Jesus had already identified himself, which Judas had not seen the relevance and the question could be asked was he nervous by kissing him as Jesus says, “I am he” and hence this would have made Judas kiss unnecessary.

# **Why 30 pieces of silver**

Judas looked to see how much he could get and highlighted his fixation with his love of money. The same illustration is used with the perfume when he said it could have been used for alms instead of pouring over Christs feet.

The reference to the 30 pieces of silver is in;

**Zechariah 11:12-14 - 12. Then I said to them, “If it is agreeable to you, give me my wages; and if not, refrain.” So, they weighed out for my wages thirty pieces of silver.**

**13. And the Lord said to me, “Throw it to the potter”—that princely price they set on me. So, I took the thirty pieces of silver and threw them into the house of the Lord for the potter.**

**14. Then I cut in two my other staff, Bonds, that I might break the brotherhood between Judah and Israel.**

There is also reference to silver in

**Hosea 13:2 - And now they sin more and more, and have made them molten images of their silver, and idols according to their own understanding, all of it the work of the craftsmen: they say of them, Let the men that sacrifice kiss the calves.**

The silver here was used to make idols of Baal and is referring to Judas love of money.

There is also reference to the price of a slave if he had been gored by an ox of an adjacent farm in;

**Exodus 21:32 - If the ox gores a male or female servant, he shall give to their master thirty shekels of silver, and the ox shall be stoned.**

This was the law concerning the “Canaanite slave” and hence a derisory or minimum sum – contemptuous. This was about 120 denarii which equates to a labourer’s salary for four months and would have been at minimum wage. The money given to Judas by the chief priests was taken from the fund for buying sacrifices from the temple – hence it bought the final sacrifice for sin. The money itself was used from holy treasure of Corban within the synagogues and as it was blood money, it could never be returned and could only be used for holy purposes. Hence, I see they knew what they had done was wrong and was a clear indicator of their guilt. In Luke, the money is referred to the “*price of his wickedness*” and we should take from this that our reward should be in heaven and not in this earth i.e., our reward to come in the next life;

**Matthew 6: 19-21 - Do not lay up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy and where thieves break in and steal;**

**20. but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys and where thieves do not break in and steal.**

**21. For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.**

# **Was Judas Remorseful?**

In following verse.

**Matthew 27:3 - Then Judas, His betrayer, seeing that He had been condemned, was remorseful and brought back the thirty pieces of silver to the chief priests and elders,**

It does say he “repented himself” in the King James Version and the Greek word is “*metamelomai*” {meta-mel-ai} which is closer to the word “regret” and you can regret without being repentant. But unlike **Peter** instead of turning to God he turned to himself and killed himself as in the Hebrew word Teshuva which is to stop sinning and turn to God.

Most people if they thought their actions would lead to somebody’s death would feel guilty as in.

**Matthew 26:24 - The Son of Man indeed goes just as it is written of Him, but woe to that man by whom the Son of Man is betrayed! It would have been good for that man if he had not been born.”**

Some commentators see this as proof that Judas as eternally lost and in rabbinic literature, the act of suicide says, “It would be better if that man had not been created” as well as “fell by transgression and went to his own place” and Augustine says of Judas “*By despairing of Gods mercy he abandoned himself to an impenitent remorse*”. Also, in Luke it explains the **cosmic** scale of the significance of what he had done;

**Luke 22:52-53 - Then Jesus said unto the chief priests, and captains of the temple, and the elders, which were come to him, be ye come out, as against a thief, with swords and staves?**

**53. When I was daily with you in the temple, ye stretched forth no hands against me: but this is your hour, and the power of darkness.**

# **Contradictions in his death?**

Judas, we know killed himself and in following it says guts spilled;

**Acts 1:18 - Now this man purchased a field with the wages of iniquity; and falling headlong, he burst open in the middle and all his entrails gushed out**

In Matthew it says he hung himself and there is no contradiction it was just the sequence of events as detailed by Arnold Fruchtenbaum whom states that Judas committed suicide on the first day of Passover. It was a morning sacrifice which could not be done if there was a dead body in the city walls, hence after hanging himself, his body was thrown into the valley of Hinnom hence the city was cleansed and Passover could begin and if the body had been rotting in the sun then decomposition would have occurred, hence the description above in Acts.

Another explanation is that some commentators believe Judas had a type of disease which caused him to swell and explode.

# **Suicide stigma**

The act of committing suicide was against Jewish law as there is a duty to preserve life which in Hebrew is called “Pikku’ah Nefesh”. It is worse than murder as it denies the doctrines of reward and punishment and there was a special part of the cemetery where suicide victims were buried and were not to be buried next to the righteous. It is today seen because of an unsound mind and within other cultures at that time the Romans were denied a burial and in Greek cultures their hand was removed, they were buried outside the cemetery.

# **Field of blood?**

This was referred to as the field of Akeldama which was prophesised in Zechariah as we spoke about earlier. It is in the Valley of Hinnom which is also known as the valley of slaughter. There is also reference to “Gehenna” which some people translate as hell and it is discussed in the writings of Josephus who details the romans entering Jerusalem in AD70 and raising it to the ground. It talks about how there were so many dead there was no more room left in the valley of Hinnom. It was thought to belong to Judas but was bought on his behalf by the Priests once he was dead as well as used later for a burial place for strangers.

It is thought how Jewish people can give alms or an act of charity is to bury the dead.

We know by scripture it was uninhabited in;

**Psalm 69:25 - Let their dwelling place be desolate; Let no one live in their tents**

Some rabbinic texts specified that a righteous person should not be buried next to a wicked one.

# **Summary Point 1. Freewill**

In:

**John 13:2 - And supper being ended, the devil having already put it into the heart of Judas Iscariot, Simon’s son, to betray Him**

**S**atan had put the thought of betraying Jesus into Judas head or as we know heart and then in

**Luke 22:3 - Then Satan entered Judas, surnamed Iscariot, who was numbered among the twelve.**

We are specifically told Satan entered Judas which is the same word as conquering and taking possession of an object such as in battle a fort. The word is Greek is “Eiserchomai” {ICE-ER-KOMAI}.

The question could be asked did Jesus appeal to him in John and the disciples did not understand and maybe Judas did not realise, and he was blinded to what he was going to do. Jesus death had been pre-ordained to die in time eternal past and it had been prophesised in mankind’s existence for hundreds of years. One commentator puts it like this

“*From Pauls standpoint, the death of Jesus was part of working of divine providence {explain this word} and to have ascribed it to an act of Jewish malevolence {evil} would have made it as a result of a human action*”

What is obvious is that Judas had clear and free will to steal and he also had the clear and free will to repent.

# **Summary point 2 - Necessary Traitor**

Some commentators see Judas as necessary which I do not. I see God working his plan through Satan and man’s wrongful actions but again he was still responsible for his own actions. His name is the “son of perdition” which is also name given to the anti-Christ and we know he was a deceiver and I do not believe any of the other disciples knew his real character as they were there to watch Jesus back and may have missed Judas true motives.

# **Summary point 3 –Why did he betray Christ**

Judas is something of an enigma and what is sad is Judas did not understand what was going on around him. Jesus spoke of not serving two masters, one of which was money, and he could have been speaking about Judas in

**Matthew 6:24 - No one can serve two masters; for either he will hate the one and love the other, or else he will be loyal to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and mammon**

There are of course several other theories, firstly Judas may have seen Jesus as a revolutionary he saw Jesus as his meal ticket when he started the revolution as well as the fact, he would have been blinded to what he was doing.

# **Summary point 4 – Satan’s role**

Satan’s role in this all is quite clear, and we can take from this a couple of points. Firstly, Satan wants to lead us to sin and then feel remorseful about it without being repentant and ultimately it would be better if you kill were to yourself and go to a lost eternity. The antithesis of this is illustrated by Peter who sinned by denying Christ but repented and chose Gods mercy which he had just witnessed by Jesus dying on the cross, but he was repentant. Peter would probably remember this himself as he lay upside down on the cross when his life too ended. Your sins can either be confessed, repented, and forgiven or you can take matters into your own hand as Judas did. We have had family friends who committed suicide and I have seen the despair, pain, and frustration it has caused. Jesus was sent to die on the cross so we would not be condemned, and we are to ask his forgiveness and move on from your sin and within the theme of forgiveness I believe Christ forgave him Judas by washing his feet.

# **Summary point 5 – Under the radar**

When a plane is in combat, they do what is called flying below the radar whereby to stop them being spotted on the enemy’s radar and allow them to fulfil their mission. With Judas, I wonder how he could get so close to Jesus by the disciples and not be spotted by them. My thoughts are he was clever and methodical and perhaps the Charity bag was never counted so his theft was never spotted as well as the fact that Jesus never called his sin out before also is not understood and sometimes in life, we do not suspect those closest to us. Perhaps we put too much trust in our own discernment and not ask for our oil to be topped up like in the song “Give me oil in my lamp”

What I do believe is in an almighty God, who knows all and above all, these acts are ultimately to give him the glory

Genesis 50:20 - But as for you, you meant evil against me; but God meant it for good, to bring it about as it is this day, to save many people alive

**Amen**