

Character Study: Judas Iscariot

The Betrayer

Various Bible Passages

What's happening?

- Judas Iscariot was the son of Simon Iscariot ([John 6:71](#)). The surname “Iscariot” means “man of Kerioth,” which indicated his family was from Kerioth, a town in south Judah (he was the only Apostle not from Galilee).
- We are not given the details concerning his call to follow Christ, though we see he gained the trust of the other Apostles and was made the treasurer. Over time, however, it became exposed that he was driven by selfish ambitions and greed. He stole money from the group, and was even opposed to Mary using expensive oil to anoint Jesus’ feet ([John 12:3-8](#)).
- When following Christ did not meet his selfish expectations, he resented Jesus and went to the chief priests and accepted thirty pieces of silver in exchange for delivering Jesus over to them ([Matt. 26:14-16](#)). At the Last Supper, Jesus revealed that Judas would betray Him, telling him “What you are going to do, do quickly” ([John 13:21-30](#); note Satan was actively involved as well). While Jesus was in the Garden of Gethsemane, Judas brought men to arrest Him. Judas identified Jesus with a kiss, and the horrible act of betrayal was complete ([Matt. 26:47-56](#)).
- After Judas betrayed the Lord, he became overcome with regret. He offered the money back to the chief priests, and when they refused to take it, he went out and hanged himself ([Matt. 27:3-10](#); [Acts 1:18](#) tells how his attempt to hang himself ended). Matthias was selected to take his place among the Apostles ([Acts 1:21-26](#)).

What's God doing?

> Why did Jesus select Judas Iscariot to be an Apostle if He knew he would betray Him ([John 6:70-71](#); [Mark 14:18](#))? God was fulfilling a purpose set in motion long ago (note [Ps. 41:9](#) with [Matt. 26:23](#); and [Zech. 11:12-13](#) with [Matt. 27:5-10](#)). Judas Iscariot’s betrayal led to the crucifixion of Jesus Christ, and it must be noted that Judas was responsible for his wilful action ([Matt. 27:4](#); [Mark 14:21](#)). Even in this dark moment of time, God’s hand was at work bringing salvation through the shed blood of Christ.

What's to learn?

→ Deep-rooted hypocrisy can result in unthinkable acts, even when the goodness and grace of God is near. May the life of Judas Iscariot cause us to examine ourselves, ensuring our motives are pure and genuine.