

# Jesus Betrayed by Judas

## (John 18:1-11)

Expository Lessons from the Gospel of John

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### I. Background and Recap of Preceding Events from Gospel of John

- a. As we resume in the text, it is the Thursday night, the night before Jesus is to be crucified.
  - i. Jesus has had his Last Supper with the disciples, at which (we know from **Matthew**, **Mark** and **Luke**) He instituted the Lord's Supper with the bread and the cup.
- b. After dinner has ended and Judas has departed, but before Jesus and his disciples cross over to the Garden of Gethsemane (where Jesus will be taken prisoner), Jesus gives a lengthy and very significant talk to the apostles.
- c. Jesus gives His "Farewell Discourse" to the apostles (minus Judas), which spans **John 13:31-17:26**. Topics He discusses in that talk include:
  - i. Jesus' impending departure
  - ii. The coming and mission of the Holy Spirit
  - iii. He prays that the Father will keep his disciples protected from Satan ("the evil one")
  - iv. He prays for the unity of all his future followers, those who will believe through the apostles.
- d. Now Jesus and his disciples walk to the Garden of Gethsemane. It is the night before He will be crucified.

### II. Jesus Betrayed in the Garden of Gethsemane (Read **John 18:1-11**)

- a. Summary of the events in the account
  - i. Jesus and the apostles (without Judas) cross the Kidron Brook and go to a garden where Jesus had frequently met with His disciples.
    1. Recall that Judas had departed from the group during the Last Supper, in **John 13:26-30**, after taking the bread Jesus gave him.
    2. The garden visit is recorded in all four gospels. If we look at all of them, we see that this is the Garden of Gethsemane, located on the Mount of Olives.

3. The Garden of Gethsemane is located east of the walled city of Jerusalem, overlooking the temple area. It appears this was a customary place of prayer where Jesus took his disciples. Recall that Jews, wherever they were, would pray facing toward the temple in Jerusalem (**1 Kings 8, 2 Chronicle 6**; see also examples in **Psalm 28:2** and **Daniel 6:10**).
  4. In the *other* gospels (but not in **John**) it discusses Jesus praying three times in the garden: for the cup (of His suffering and impending crucifixion and death) to be taken from Him. However, He prays for God's will to be done. The disciples are tired and fall asleep. Immediately after praying the third time, Judas arrives to betray Jesus.
- ii. Judas is leading a group of Jesus' enemies, including armed officers sent by the chief priests and Pharisees.
1. In the other gospels (**Matthew 26:48-50, Mark 14:44-45** and **Luke 22:47-48**) it mentions that Judas betrayed Jesus with a kiss.
  2. Tertullian made an interesting connection to a well-known Old Testament passage that is quoted by Jesus.
    - a. "The Christ of the prophets was destined, moreover, to be betrayed with a kiss, for He was the Son indeed of Him who was '*honored with the lips*' by the people."
      - i. (Source: Tertullian, *Against Marcion*, book 4, chapter 41; found in Ante-Nicene Fathers vol. 3, p. 419)
    - b. Here Tertullian is pointing to the passage from **Isaiah 29**, which Jesus also quotes in **Matthew 15:8** and **Mark 7:6**, when he rebukes the scribes and Pharisees.
      - i. "And the Lord said, 'This people approaches me with their mouth, and with their lips they honor me, but their heart remains far from me. And they are pious to me to no avail, teaching human rules and instructions.'" (**Isaiah 29:13**, Lexham English Septuagint)
- iii. Jesus is aware of what they are planning to do, and takes the initiative by asking them, "Whom are you seeking?"
1. They respond, "Jesus of Nazareth"

2. Jesus answers, "I am (He)", upon which they fall back to the ground.
  3. The question and answer are repeated a second time; this time Jesus requests that the others with Him (the apostles) be allowed to go their way.
- iv. Peter draws his sword and cuts off the right ear of the high priest's servant, a man named Malchus.
1. In **Luke 22:51** it recounts that Jesus touched the ear and healed the man who had been struck by Peter.
- v. Jesus orders Peter to put his sword into its sheath, and states that He must "drink the cup" (of suffering) that His Father has given Him.
- vi. Note that this story has three main characters: Jesus, Peter and Judas. We will consider the significant roles of all three.
- b. The significance of Judas.
- i. **Question:** Why did Judas do it? Why did he betray Jesus?
    1. He was one who was in Jesus' inner circle, an apostle who had been with Jesus from the beginning.
    2. Consider what it says in the gospel of **Matthew** when Judas first agreed to betray Jesus.
      - a. "Then one of the twelve, called Judas Iscariot, went to the chief priests and said, 'What are you willing to give me if I deliver Him to you?' And they counted out to him thirty pieces of silver. So from that time he sought opportunity to betray Him." (**Matthew 26:14-16**, NKJV)
      - b. Clearly, Judas was simply motivated by greed. He did it for the money. He asked how much he would get if he delivered Jesus to His enemies. (Judas was also the keeper of the money bag, for contributions that were supposed to be given to the poor.)
    3. Judas looked spiritual on the outside (even the other disciples did not know he was the one who would betray Jesus). However, he was corrupt and full of greed on the inside. He was also a *master deceiver*. This has been a chronic danger in the religious world from the beginning. Consider how Jesus rebuked the religious leaders in **Matthew 23**.

- a. “Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you clean the outside of the cup and the plate, but inside they are full of greed and self-indulgence.” (**Matthew 23:25**, ESV)
4. Let each of us beware of the danger of greed in our own lives; and be on the lookout for that sin taking over the lives others among us, as well.
    - a. Judas had a price: 30 pieces of silver.
      - i. **Question:** Do *you* have a price for which we would willfully sin?
    - b. “Now godliness with contentment is great gain. For we brought nothing into this world, and it is certain we can carry nothing out. And having food and clothing, with these we shall be content. But those who desire to be rich fall into temptation and a snare, and into many foolish and harmful lusts which drown men in destruction and perdition. For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evil, for which some have strayed from the faith in their greediness, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows.” (**1 Timothy 6:6–10**, NKJV)
      - i. I was there for the birth of my children and for the death of my parents. What Paul says here certainly is true: we came into the world with nothing and we will depart with nothing.
      - ii. However, many people live in disregard of this obvious truth; they live to accumulate more wealth and possessions.
      - iii. We are here in this world for a very short time; our life is but a mist. Paul calls us *to be content with what we have* in this brief life. We must never sell out our integrity for financial gain.
    - c. Another example of a spiritual man (a prophet) who was destroyed by greed is Balaam (**Numbers 22-24, 31:16**; his example referred to by New Testament writers in **2 Peter 2:15-16** and **Jude v.11**).
    - d. May we be on the lookout for greed in our own hearts, as well in the hearts of our brothers and sisters,

including our leaders. In some cases they may be very good at *hiding it*, like Judas!

- ii. Peter, in **Acts 1**, quotes from **Psalm 109:8** (designated **Psalm 108:8** in the LXX) and applies that to Judas, who would have to be replaced after committing suicide.
  1. Read **Acts 1:15-22**.
    - a. Peter quotes from the psalm: “let another take his place of office (or *bishopric*)”
  2. Origen (185-255 AD, a Christian teacher from Alexandria, Egypt) said that *the entire psalm* refers to Judas. In a work called *Against Celsus*, Origen is responding to the charges made by a pagan critic against the Christians.
    - a. Apparently one of the charges that Celsus used to denigrate the Christian faith was a claim that several of Jesus’ own disciples had turned against Him and betrayed Him.
    - b. Origen corrects Celsus, making it clear that only one disciple (Judas) betrayed Jesus. He then adds that Judas was a thief, and later regretted what he had done (throwing the silver coins back, then killing himself). Origen then continues...
      - i. “And if we must make a statement regarding Judas which may overwhelm our opponents with shame, we would say that, in the **book of Psalms**, the whole of the 108<sup>th</sup> (*Origen uses LXX numbering; equivalent to Psalm 109 in Bibles based on the Masoretic Text -CP*) contains a prophecy about Judas, the beginning of which is this: ‘O God, hold not Thy peace before my praise; for the mouth of the sinner, and the mouth of the crafty man, are opened against me.’ And it is predicted in this psalm, both that Judas separated himself from the number of the apostles on account of his sins, and that another was selected in his place; and this is shown by the words: ‘And his bishopric let another take.’”
      - ii. (Source: Origen, *Against Celsus*, book 2, chapter 11; found in Ante-Nicene Fathers vol. 4, p. 435).

3. Let us read all of **Psalm 109** (**Psalm 108** from LXX), a psalm about the conflict between Judas and Jesus.
  - a. Points I noticed, related to Judas include:
    - i. The mouth of the deceitful man opened against me...deceitful tongue.
    - ii. I am falsely accused; but pray.
    - iii. Devil at his right hand.
    - iv. Let his days be few (die an early death).
    - v. Let another man receive his office (of bishop or overseer).
    - vi. May his family line be cursed.
    - vii. He persecuted the poor and needy (recall Judas stealing from the money kept for the poor)
    - viii. The righteous poor man (Jesus) is considered cursed; but is delivered (saved) by the Lord in the end.
  - c. The event with Peter and the sword.
    - i. Peter brought the sword as told; however, he seems to get rebuked by Jesus *for using it when they are attacked by their enemies.*
    - ii. “And He said to them, ‘When I sent you without money bag, knapsack, and sandals, did you lack anything?’ So they said, ‘Nothing.’ Then He said to them, ‘But now, he who has a money bag, let him take it, and likewise a knapsack; and he who has no sword, let him sell his garment and buy one. For I say to you that this which is written must still be accomplished in Me: “And He was numbered with the transgressors.” For the things concerning Me have an end.’ So they said, ‘Lord, look, here are two swords.’ And He said to them, ‘It is enough.’” (**Luke 22:35-38**, NKJV)
      1. Jesus quoted from **Isaiah 53**, said it was about to be fulfilled.
      2. He also told them to bring swords. They only had two, but Jesus said that would be “enough”.
      3. Jesus was insistent about them bringing swords with them; even if they had to sell something on the spot to obtain one!

- iii. Note that although clearly outnumbered and facing superior force (the disciples having only two swords) Peter is bold enough to go on the attack anyway.
  - 1. Later that night he would deny Jesus, but at this point he is willing to risk his life to defend Jesus.
- iv. **Question:** Enough, *for what?* Why did the men need to bring swords, yet only two were adequate?
  - 1. Was this business of bringing swords required to fulfill some prophecy? Is there any prophecy that speaks of bringing swords (but not using them; or cutting off someone's ear)?
    - a. **My Own Answer:** None that I know of!
  - 2. Or was this for an object lesson that Jesus was going to teach (= even though you have access to a sword, *don't use it*)?
    - a. Read **Isaiah 2:1-5** (similar to **Micah 4:1-4**)
      - i. Kingdom to come would be a kingdom of peace.
    - b. Also read **Isaiah 9:5-6**
      - i. The one to rule over the kingdom of David will bring peace.
  - 3. From a work by Tertullian (c. 160-230 AD, Christian writer living in Carthage, North Africa), *On Idolatry*.
    - a. He logically explains the reasons Christians could not serve as officials in the government.
      - i. Oaths, idolatry, sacrifices, maintaining pagan temples, etc.
      - ii. Sitting in judgment of others; imprisoning or torturing people.
      - iii. Wearing the purple and gold ornaments; forswearing "the devil's pomp" at baptism, idolatry.
    - b. He then moves on to address Christians and military service. From chapter 19, *Concerning Military Service*:
      - i. "In that last section, decision may seem to have been given likewise concerning military service, which is between dignity and power. But now

inquiry is made about this point, whether a believer may turn himself unto military service, and whether the military may be admitted unto the faith, even the rank and file, or each inferior grade, to whom there is no necessity for taking part in sacrifices or capital punishments. There is no agreement between the divine and the human sacrament, the standard of Christ and the standard of the devil, the camp of light and the camp of darkness. One soul cannot be due to two masters—God and Caesar.

ii. And yet Moses carried a rod, and Aaron wore a buckle, and John (the Baptist) is girt with leather and Joshua the son of Nun leads a line of march; and the people warred: if it pleases you to sport with [= *to trifle with* – CP] the subject. But how will a Christian man war, nay, how will he serve even in peace, without a sword, which the Lord has taken away? For albeit soldiers had come unto John, and had received the formula of their rule; albeit, likewise, a centurion had believed; still the Lord afterward, in disarming Peter, unbend [= *set free or cast loose* – CP] every soldier. No dress is lawful among us, if assigned to any unlawful action.”

iii. (Source: Tertullian, On Idolatry, chapter 19; found in Ante-Nicene Fathers vol. 3, p. 73).

c. Points Tertullian is making

- i. Clearly killing people and offering pagan sacrifices is unacceptable for a Christian. However, is there any way a Christian could be part of the military if he could avoid those things?
- ii. This is light versus darkness, Christ versus Satan; the kingdom of God versus kingdom of Caesar.
- iii. Even if you point to men in the Old Testament like Joshua who led armies in battle, Jesus disarmed all soldiers of God, when He told Peter to put away his sword!



- iv. So, the point here is that Jesus teaching non-resistance by telling Peter to put away the sword. Therefore, the only reason Jesus had told his disciples to bring a sword (that two was enough) was so they would have a sword to use and Jesus could then tell them not to use it!
4. However, the Bible is the standard; not early Christian writers like Tertullian. What does it say in the New Testament?
    - a. “But I tell you not to resist an evil person. But whoever slaps you on your right cheek, turn the other to him also.” (**Matthew 5:39**, NKJV)
    - b. “You have heard that it was said, ‘You shall love your neighbor and hate your enemy.’ But I say to you, love your enemies, bless those who curse you, do good to those who hate you, and pray for those who spitefully use you and persecute you,” (**Matthew 5:43–44**, NKJV)
    - c. “But I say to you who hear: Love your enemies, do good to those who hate you,” (**Luke 6:27**, NKJV)
    - d. “Repay no one evil for evil. Have regard for good things in the sight of all men. If it is possible, as much as depends on you, live peaceably with all men. Beloved, do not avenge yourselves, but rather give place to wrath; for it is written, ‘Vengeance is Mine, I will repay,’ says the Lord. Therefore ‘If your enemy is hungry, feed him; If he is thirsty, give him a drink; For in so doing you will heap coals of fire on his head.’ Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good.” (**Romans 12:17–21**, NKJV)
  5. In the beginning, Christians took these teachings of Jesus and Paul literally. They did not allow Christians to join the military. The convictions Tertullian expressed regarding serving in the military were widespread throughout the church, for over 300 years.
  6. Jesus did make a general application from this example, in the account of Peter with the sword in **Matthew’s gospel**. Consider what He says there:
    - a. “But Jesus said to him, ‘Put your sword in its place, for all who take the sword will perish by the sword. Or do you think that I cannot now pray to My Father, and He will provide Me with more than twelve legions of

angels? How then could the Scriptures be fulfilled, that it must happen thus?" (**Matthew 26:52-54**, NKJV)

- b. **Question:** What did Jesus mean here with this general statement, "*All who take the sword will perish by the sword*"?
- i. He uses the term "sword" twice in this statement. However, sometimes Jesus would speak in riddles, where the same word can be used in more than one sense. Examples:
    1. "Jesus answered and said to them, 'Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up.'" (**John 2:19**, NKJV)
    2. "Jesus answered and said to him, 'Most assuredly, I say to you, unless one is born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God.' Nicodemus said to Him, "How can a man be born when he is old? Can he enter a second time into his mother's womb and be born?" (**John 3:3-4**, NKJV)
    3. "These things He said, and after that He said to them, 'Our friend Lazarus sleeps, but I go that I may wake him up.' Then His disciples said, 'Lord, if he sleeps he will get well.' However, Jesus spoke of his death, but they thought that He was speaking about taking rest in sleep." (**John 11:11-13**, NKJV)
  - ii. Could Jesus possibly be using the word "sword" here in more than one sense, as well? Consider the account of Christ coming on a white horse to judge the unrighteous, in **Revelation 19**:
    1. "Now I saw heaven opened, and behold, a white horse. And He who sat on him was called Faithful and True, and in righteousness He judges and makes war. His eyes were like a flame of fire, and on His head were many crowns. He had a name written that no one knew except Himself. He was clothed with a robe dipped in blood, and His name is called

The Word of God. And the armies in heaven, clothed in fine linen, white and clean, followed Him on white horses. Now out of His mouth goes a sharp sword, that with it He should strike the nations. And He Himself will rule them with a rod of iron. He Himself treads the winepress of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God. And He has on His robe and on His thigh a name written: KING OF KINGS AND LORD OF LORDS” (**Revelation 19:11-16**, NKJV)

- iii. Something to consider. Perhaps Jesus meant: All who use the (*physical*) sword against others will be destroyed by the (*spiritual*) sword that will come out of the mouth of Jesus on the day when the nations are judged.
  - 1. I cannot be sure that this is the right way to understand what Jesus says in **Matthew 26:52**; however, that makes sense to me. (I offer this for your consideration.)
- 7. If Tertullian is right regarding his comment on the event of Peter and the sword in Gethsemane, Jesus used this episode to reinforce what He had been teaching throughout His ministry: love your enemies and do not resist evil people.
  - a. Put away the sword!
  - b. When Christians are facing persecution in the Book of Acts, they never use the sword or violence to defend themselves against unjust attacks. They are following the example and instructions of their Teacher.
- d. Why people fell backward when Jesus said “I am (He)”
  - i. Many study Bibles and commentaries claim that the Greek words “I am” refer to the divine name of God, from when the Lord speaks to Moses from the burning bush (in **Exodus 3**).
  - ii. It seems to me that about half the time when I have heard preachers say “In the original Greek it *actually means xyz...*” they are wrong! When I go back to check their assertion, it does *not* mean what they claim.
  - iii. Read **Exodus 3:11-14** (from LXX)

1. The Lord says “I am...the *Existing One*”
2. He is the one who is being, the one who exists (as opposed to all the other “gods” who don’t really exist).
3. His name (actually not really a name, just a description) is not “I am”; rather, it is “the Existing One” or “the One Being”
  - a. With “being” here in the sense of a participle, as in “being healthy”; not as a noun like “human being”.
- iv. So why did the people fall down backwards, onto the ground, when Jesus identified Himself as the one they were looking for?
  1. I don’t know.
  2. Perhaps they were afraid to encounter the famous Prophet, or they were shocked.

### III. Conclusions and Take-Aways

- a. Judas betraying Jesus was in fulfillment of detailed prophecy.
  - i. Greed drove Judas (like Balaam); a very dangerous sin.
  - ii. We need to watch out for this in our own hearts and in the hearts of our brothers and sisters, *including church leaders*.
- b. Strange details of the story (the sword event) point to Jesus’ teaching on nonresistance and may explain what Jesus meant when He told his disciples that they should bring swords, yet *only two would be enough*.
- c. Fine-sounding scholarly claims related to Greek words and terms should be checked out and not just assumed to be correct.