

Judas

The Traitor

Who was this person?

- Judas was one of Jesus' twelve chosen disciples, and a friend. (Matthew 26:50)
- Judas was known as the "treasurer" for Jesus and His disciples. He was the keeper of the money bag. (John 12:6)
- Judas betrayed Jesus to the chief priests, the religious leaders of the day. (Matthew 26:14-26)
- Judas was a traitor and a thief. (John 12:6)
- Judas took his own life by committing suicide.

What is this person known for?

- Just two days before Passover, a time in which Jews celebrate their rescue from Egypt, Jesus was in a town called Bethany relaxing at the table in the home of Simon the Leper. A woman (Mary, as noted in the book of John) entered the room with an alabaster jar of very expensive perfume. She broke the jar and anointed Jesus' head, pouring perfume on him. It flowed down to his feet, and she wiped his feet with her hair. Some of the men in the room were upset by her actions, claiming it was a waste of money and saying that the perfume could have been sold for a high price (a year's wages) and the money could have been given to the poor. (Matthew 26:6-13, Mark 14:3-9) But, Judas was not an honest man, and may have kept the money for himself. He was known as a thief—someone who used to help himself to the monies that were put into the money bag that he cared for on behalf of the disciples. (John 12:4-6) Jesus tells those who were grumbling and complaining that they are wrong and that she (Mary) had "done a beautiful thing" and honoured him with her actions. Feeling rebuked and upset, Judas got up and left the highly fragrant room, to go to the chief priests and officers of the temple guard to betray Jesus. The leaders were delighted to hear this and even offered to give Judas money for his actions. Judas then watched for an opportunity to hand Jesus over to these leaders when nobody was around. (Luke 22:1-6)
- Tragically, Judas did not understand God's plan for Jesus and that Jesus had to die for the sins of all humanity. Judas allowed Satan to influence him. Both Luke and John's account in scripture say that "Satan entered Judas". (Luke 22:3; John 13:27) That influence

Making The Bible Come Alive





from the enemy caused Judas to turn away from the very Son of God ... and betray Him.

- Judas did someone else's dirty work. The religious leaders were fed up with Jesus and all the attention He was getting. These leaders were becoming fearful of the power and popularity that Jesus was gaining among the people as it was decreasing their control, power and money! These religious officials wanted to arrest Jesus, but doing it publicly could have caused a riot. Judas knew that Jesus would often go to the garden to pray. It was at the garden that Judas chose to betray Jesus with a kiss.
- Judas sold Jesus in exchange for thirty pieces of silver, a decision that he regretted almost immediately. (Matthew 26:14-15). Thirty pieces of silver is certainly no reason to betray a friend!
- Eating his last meal with the others, Jesus already knew that Judas was going to betray Him and yet he didn't throw him out of the room, or tell the disciples to keep him out. With all his problems, struggles, betrayal, guilt, and sinful ways, Judas was invited and welcomed as Jesus even shared a meal with him. As they were eating, Jesus said, "one of you is going to betray Me". The disciples probably started squirming in their seats looking at each other and wondering who would do such a thing? Judas dipped his bread in the same cup as the others around the table then looked Jesus in the eye and said, "Surely not I, Rabbi (teacher)?" But Jesus answered and said, "Yes, it is you." (Matthew 26:22-25)
- Judas took his own life by hanging himself, just after the chief priests had made the decision to put Jesus to death. A traditional explanation, as described in Acts 1:18, would suggest that he hung himself from a tree limb and it was from there that he then fell to his death and his body burst open. (Matthew 27:3-10)

WHY DO YOU THINK THIS PERSON HAS BEEN INCLUDED IN GOD'S STORY?

- **Even those close to Jesus could be tempted.** Jesus knew that Judas would turn his back on him and betray Him. Nothing is ever hidden from Jesus. When we are being tried by the enemy, we must not give into temptation, but must persevere when we face trials. (James 1:12)

- **We must love our enemies and be nice to even those who might come against us.** Jesus, being fully God and fully man, showed us a perfect example of what it means to be nice to those who would come against us. Jesus included him in His group of twelve followers, he watched as Jesus did countless miracles, they travelled together. Jesus trusted him. Judas was even there around the table at the Last Supper with the other disciples. He was closer with Jesus than those who were just onlookers.
- **Always be on guard.** The enemy of our souls (Satan) is always lurking around, wanting to tear us down and wear us down. Judas was one of Jesus' closest companions and yet Satan was able to attack him, taking over his thoughts and actions. This should remind us to read our Bibles and pray every day. Pray for God's direction and protection at all times and in all situations. Learn to listen to God and know Him. Stand up for truth. Be alert. Put on the armour of God every day so you can stand up against the tricks of the enemy. The enemy of our souls is the real thief, wanting to steal from us all that God wants to give us! Ephesians 6:10-18; John 10:10-15; John 16:13; James 4:7-8)
- **Be careful—you are being influenced every day.** The world has a strong influence on our lives today. The books we read, the music we listen to, the movies and television shows we watch, the video games we play, and what we take in from the internet – they all make deposits into our hearts and minds. It is so important to make the best choices for our entertainment as all these things 'feed' our spirit and affect our decisions. We must consider the lyrics of the songs we listen to, and the story lines of the shows we watch, and the YouTube videos we look at. So many messages talk about hurting people, cheating, lying, wrong relationships, and other bad messaging that does not uplift our spirits or focus on God and His ways. It is important that we fill our hearts and minds with what is good and right. We must make choices that are good and godly. (Matthew 17:13-14; Proverbs 14:12; Proverbs 16:9; Phil. 4:8; Proverbs 13:20; Proverbs 1:5, Romans 12:2)
- **God has given us a freedom of choice.** Each person whether young or old gets to make their own choices. What we wear, what we eat, what to say or not say, to obey or disobey, to listen to our parents or ignore them. Judas had a choice to make as well. He could have stayed with the disciples and followed Jesus, but instead he chose to turn his back on Him. God has given us a choice as to whether we will choose to accept the gift of His Son, Jesus, or not. Jesus came so that we would know eternal life. What will you choose? (Galatians 6:7-8; Joshua 24:14-15; Romans 8:5-8, 1 John 1:9)
- **Disobedience can lead to brokenness:** When we have done wrong, and make choices that are against God's way, we can





become filled with guilt and shame. When he came to his senses, Judas realized that he had made a terrible mistake. Rushing back to the chief priests he tried to return their money but the rulers of that day didn't care. They had exactly who they wanted and they didn't care about the guilt and shame that Judas felt. It was from this place of despair, grief and shame that he decided that his life was not worth living, and he chose to hang himself. He was a broken and messed up man! Judas took his own life. (Matthew 27:1-10) But, because of Jesus we do not have to remain in our brokenness. We can go to Jesus and ask for His forgiveness. He is a loving God who wants us to turn to Him, no matter what we have done or become. (Proverbs 14:12; John 3:16; Romans 8:1-4)

- **Obedience brings freedom:** It is through forgiveness that we find freedom and the only person that keeps you from receiving such joy and freedom is you. Through His death on the cross, Jesus has made a way for each boy, girl, man and woman to receive such an incredible gift—the gift of God's Son and the salvation that only He can bring. Each person can come to Jesus just as they are, admitting that they have sinned and asking Jesus for His forgiveness. We can choose to follow Him and make Him Lord of our life (John 14:6; Romans 10:9-10, 13; 2 Corinthians 5:17; James 1:1-5; 1 Peter 2:16; Romans 8:1-2; John 8:32-36).
- **Jesus came as a forgiveness for sin.** Romans 3:23 tells us that all have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God. Yes, Judas included. But he chose to live in his sin by turning his back on Jesus and betraying him. And because of that decision, he also died in his sin, separated from God.

LIFE APPLICATION QUESTIONS:

Pose the following two questions to your children, one at a time. Allow for interaction and discussion, letting them share their thoughts while you guide the conversation.

- What life lessons can I learn from this Bible character about how I should and should not live?
- Based on what I have learned from this Bible character, how can I live in a way that is pleasing to God.

MORE IN GOD'S WORD

Little sins can lead to BIG sins and BIG sins can lead to DEATH!

We don't know fully what all of Judas' motives were, however it is clear that Satan fed on the 'little sins' that Judas had, like anger, greed, and doubt that were in his life. Sinful actions always start out small at first, but over time, little sins become a habit. We need to examine our own hearts and motives on a regular basis to make sure our lives are reflecting God's ways and that we aren't developing any bad habits or character qualities that would move us away from the presence of God. Judas had been a friend of Jesus, but He made the choice to turn away from him. (Proverbs 3:5-6; Deuteronomy 30:19-20; Galatians 6:7-8; Psalm 25:15; Proverbs 14:12)

Read Mark 14:21. Think for a few minutes on what you think this verse means:

"Woe to that man who betrays the Son of Man! It would be better for him if he had not been born."

Why would Jesus say that it would be better for the one who was going to betray Him if he had never been born?

Jesus does not want any one of God's creation to turn away from God's plan for all humanity. God wants nothing more than for every person on the planet to come to Him, through His Son, Jesus Christ.

2 Peter 3:9 says this: *The Lord is not slow in keeping his promise, as some understand slowness. Instead he is patient with you, not wanting anyone to perish, but everyone to come to repentance.*

Jesus does not want anyone to perish. He wants everyone to come to Him, to acknowledge Him, to accept Him, to love Him, and to trust Him. A good daily prayer that we can pray straight from scripture is this:

Create in me a clean heart, O God, And renew a steadfast spirit within me.

Do not cast me away from Your presence, And do not take Your Holy Spirit from me. Restore to me the joy of Your salvation, And uphold me by Your generous Spirit.

(Psalm 51:10-12)

