

THE FOREST HILL NEWS



Forest Hill Church of Christ

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VISIT US SOON!

Sunday:

Bible Study..... 9:30 A.M.
Morning Worship.....10:30 A.M.
Evening Worship..... 6:00 P.M.

Wednesday:

Bible Study7:00 P.M.

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Far East/World Evangelism
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In Search of the Lord's Way
Kakinada, India
Manila, Philippines
Murmansk, Russia
Truth for the World
Words of the Master (Memphis
Time Warner Cable ch17)

Volume 33

April 18, 2006

Number 15

The Judas Make-Over

by Wayne Jackson

[Editor's Note: All of us should be thankful for the sound scholarship of brother Wayne Jackson. Our readers should find the following relevant article very informative.]

Judas Iscariot, the betrayer of Christ, was one of the most despicable characters ever to disgrace the human family. Why has it become so fashionable to attempt a rehabilitation of this culprit? Because perverse men delight in calling darkness light, and light darkness.

“Was Judas Iscariot a ‘hero,’ who secretly worked together with Jesus Christ to bring about the Messianic mission? Or was he a villain who betrayed his Lord and Master?”

Ever since the second century A.D. there have been efforts to cast Judas Iscariot (the traitor who delivered Jesus over to the Roman authorities) into a redesigned mold of historical revisionism. From the so-called “Gospel of Judas,” exposed by Irenaeus (c. A.D. 130-200) as a “fictitious history” (*Against Heresies* 1.31.1), to the era of modern musicals, fantasy novels, and National Geographic specials, radical journalists have attempted to rehabilitate Christ’s betrayer, transforming him from the rogue he was, into a character deserving of adulation.

One delusional journalist characterizes Judas as possibly “the indispensable and most-favored disciple, ordered by Jesus to betray him so that his mission could be fulfilled” (Jay Tolson, “Was This Villain Really a Hero?”, *U.S. News & World Report*, April 17, 2006, p. 52).

The so-called “Gospel of Judas” has Christ saying to the traitor, “But you will exceed all of them [the other disciples]. For you will sacrifice the man that clothes me” (*The Gospel of Judas*, Translators, R. Kasser, M. Meyer, G. Wurst, in collaboration with Francois Goudard, Washington, D.C.: National Geographic Society, 2006).

Unanswered Questions

No serious New Testament student denies there are mysteries the Gospel records do not fully explain regarding this sinister person. And that is perfectly understandable. Such matters **are not germane to our salvation**, and it has never been the will of God that every whimsical curiosity of man be satisfied.

Why did the traitor sell Jesus for the paltry sum of only 30 pieces of silver when, supposedly, he could have obtained a larger sum (yet see Zechariah 11:12-13)? Why was he allowed to be the treasurer of the apostolic band? Why did the Lord identify Judas as a traitor to certain disciples as they ate the Passover meal? Why did the betrayer return the money, and then commit suicide? Why did the Savior choose a man of this character? More than a century ago (1871), noted scholar A.B. Bruce penned an essay on Judas that contains the most probing analysis of that rebel this writer has ever read. For those who may be interested, see chapter xxiii in Bruce’s book, *The Training of the Twelve*.

These questions, though, will never be plumbed satisfactorily. But that does not deter hucksters from attempting to answer them for us, all the while raking in money with their contrived scenarios. There is none so disgusting as he who attempts to achieve fame and fortune by “hitching a ride” on the back of the crucified Son of God. See “[Judas’ Deal, 2,000 Years Later](#).”

Oddly, Judas increasingly is becoming a sympathetic figure in the minds of the rabble. He has been transformed into a romantic character who was closer to the Lord than the other disciples, and in fact, is being portrayed as “the most loyal of all the disciples.” Amazing! There is not a shred of evidence for this bizarre theory. Let us consider the “Judas” issue.

Prophecy

First of all one should reflect upon the fact that Judas’ works were known long before his birth, and his character is subtly etched in Old Testament prophecy.

1. David declared: “Yes, my own familiar friend, in whom I trusted; who did eat of my bread, has lifted up his heel against me” (Psalm 41:9). In this song the king speaks of a time of hardship in his life, and the villainy of a false friend who compounded his pain. Interestingly, Christ quotes a portion of this text and makes application to Judas. However, the Lord omits the section about “trusting” this friend, for he “knew from the beginning” that Judas was the one who would betray him (John 6:64). He does declare, though, that the treachery of this apostle lay within the prophetic structure of David’s declaration of a thousand years earlier, and that ultimately it was “fulfilled” by the action of the traitor (see John 13:18).
2. In Acts 1, in connection with the selection of a replacement apostle to fill the vacancy left by Judas’ apostasy and death, Peter quotes first from Psalm 69:25 (a free rendition of the Greek version): “Let his habitation be made desolate, and let no man dwell therein” (Acts 1:20a). Then, subsequently, from Psalm 109:8, “His office let another take” (1:20b). Peter “fleshes out” the matter by calling attention to the reasons why Judas had to be replaced. He functioned as a “guide” to those who took Christ (v. 16). He was unfaithful in the “ministry” granted him (v. 17). He was guilty of gross “iniquity” (v. 18). He “fell away” and went to “his own place,” i.e., the sorry destiny he made for himself (v. 25).
3. Then there is this prophecy from the pen of Zechariah.

“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” (Zechariah 11:12-13).

That this prophecy envisions the diabolical maneuvers of Judas in selling out Christ is hardly to be disputed by anyone with a smattering of respect for the authority of scripture (cf. Matthew 27:9-10). [Note: For a discussion of Matthew’s use of “Jeremiah,” instead of “Zechariah,” see the following article on this web site: [Did Matthew Blunder?](#) See also: [Zechariah’s Amazing Prophecy of the Betrayal of Christ.](#)]

New Testament Evidence

Let us now briefly reflect upon the evidence of the Gospel accounts regarding the character of Judas Iscariot.

1. Consider, for instance, the Greek term *paradidomi*. The word literally means to “give up,” “deliver up,” or “betray” – depending upon the context. It is found 122 times in the New Testament. It can be used in a good sense (e.g., of the gospel that has been “delivered” to us – Romans 6:17). By way

of contrast, the word may carry an evil connotation (as when Herod “delivered” John the Baptizer to prison – Matthew 4:12). As noted already, the **context** must determine the character of the action at a given point in time.

In a wonderfully thrilling sense, God “delivered up [his Son] for us all” (Romans 8:32; cf. 4:25). And then there also is Paul’s sweet affirmation that Jesus “gave himself for me” (Galatians 2:20; cf. Ephesians 5:2,25).

In the case of Judas, however, *paradidomi* (to betray, deliver up) is used 44 times. **Never** in the New Testament record is Judas portrayed in **any** light other than that of a wretched traitor who, perhaps for a variety of base motives, negotiated the deliverance of Christ to his enemies (Matthew 26:14-16,47-50; Mark 14:10-11,43-46; Luke 22:3-6,47-48; John 18:3-5). He is always mentioned last in the lists of the apostles – a hint of the infamy that forever was to be associated with his name.

2. If Judas Iscariot was really the “hero” of the crucifixion plot, it is uncommonly strange **he was unaware of it!** Rather, he “repented himself” of the foul deed (Matthew 27:3). “Repented” derives from *metamelomai*, to “regret,” but, in this instance, with no inclination of change. In addition he confessed “I have sinned, in that I betrayed innocent blood” (27:4). He then “hanged himself” (v. 5). In legal circles, a “death-bed” confession is of the strongest caliber. This is hardly the way one acts if he imagines he has just performed one of the more noble deeds of all history!
3. If the foregoing evidence were not sufficient (and it is overwhelmingly compelling), the testimony of Christ himself ought to be decisive.

Jesus declared Judas to be devilish (*diabolos*) in his character (John 6:70; see J.H. Thayer, *Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament*, p. 135). The Savior characterized him as being “not clean” (John 13:10-11). As a result, Judas “perished,” being described as the “son of perdition” (John 17:12).

Luke later adds that Judas “fell away that he might go to his own place” (Acts 1:25). A.T. Robertson contended there was no doubt in Peter’s mind as to Judas’ guilt and his destiny (*Word Pictures in the New Testament*, Vol. II, 18).

Conclusion

Neither the ancient Gnostics (with their “Gospel of Judas”), nor Hollywood with its perversion of history, nor the National Geographic Society with its anti-Christian agenda, can alter the facts of antiquity. History **is** what it **was**, and nothing can change that. And of that traitor, Christ hauntingly said:

“The Son of man goes, even as it is written of him: but woe unto that man through whom the Son of man is betrayed! It would have been better for that man if he had not been born” (Matthew 26:24).

(from www.christiancourier.com)

SPRING CLEANING FOR THE SOUL (pt 3)

Matthew Martin

WINDEX IS A MUST

The vacuum is for a lot of *little* problems. The mop is for one *big* problem. Why use Windex? Well, have you got smudges? Then you need Windex. Smudges on your personality, perhaps. Maybe you have a bad attitude. Maybe you are overly critical, or never look at the bright side. If so, you could use some spiritual Windex.

Maybe you are a person who is depressing to be around; always grumpy and never positive. Is it a sin to have a bad day? No. But it is if you take your bad day out on someone for no reason. Don't let those smudges get out of hand: clean them up with the spiritual Windex.

Maybe the problem is not you, but those with whom you associate. *You* may not have a bad attitude, but if you are constantly around a person who has one, then it is bound to rub off on you, even a little. Don't let those smudges get you dirty: clean them up with the spiritual Windex.

What is this Windex? Well if the problem is you, then prayer is needed. If the problem is someone with whom you associate, then more action is needed. You still need to pray, but you will probably also need to confront (in a loving manner) your friend that is causing the problems.

Yes, I know that no one really *likes* to spring clean. But it is something that needs to be done. Fortunately (for those of us who are more "lethargically inclined") spring cleaning is only a yearly ritual. *Spiritual* Spring cleaning, however, is a task that must constantly be performed. If not, the damage done will not be to a house, or a car, or a garage, but to the most precious and eternal commodity that we possess: our soul.

This past weekend our young people enjoyed the annual Spring Youth Retreat, at Chickasaw State Park. As always, the topics we studied were both edifying and encouraging. Though the heat, and the bugs, and the walking, and the rest of the bugs were *physically* draining, the four sermons we heard were *spiritually* strengthening.

A special thanks on behalf of the Youth Group, to all those who helped behind the scenes (whether by cooking, cleaning, or organizing) to make everything run smoothly.

Matthew

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