

Sunday, October 13, 2024 | Holy Week

Week 8 | Luke 22:1-6 | "The Betrayer"

Last week, we finished our discussion of the end times, as seen in Luke 21. This passage contained **three** end-time takeaways: **Global** and **celestial** disturbances signify **the start** of the Apocalypse, the **visual** appearance of Christ indicates **the end** of the Apocalypse, and, lastly, **we can escape** the Apocalypse by being **watchful** and **prayerful**.

While we must remain vigilant and not dismiss current events, we should not hastily interpret every disturbance, whether on earth or in the sky, as a sign of the end times. The end-time tribulations will be global and universal, and when the Apocalypse commences, it will be *unmistakable*. Similarly, the second coming of Jesus will not be concealed; it, too, will be *unmistakable*.

However, we mustn't be so fixated on the future that we neglect our present responsibilities. First and foremost, we must be vigilant, guarding against dissipation, drunkenness, and depression. Secondly, we must be prayerful, maintaining an active and thriving prayer life. The present is our responsibility; the future is God's purview. Let us not forget that.

READ: Luke 22:1-6 (ESV)

¹ Now the Feast of Unleavened Bread drew near, which is called the Passover. ² And the chief priests and the scribes were seeking how to put him to death, for they feared the people.

³ Then Satan entered into Judas called Iscariot, who was of the number of the twelve. ⁴ He went away and conferred with the chief priests and officers how he might betray him to them. ⁵ And they were glad, and agreed to give him money. ⁶ So he consented and sought an opportunity to betray him to them in the absence of a crowd.

Many famous betrayals have occurred throughout history. In 480 BC, Ephialtes betrayed Leonidas during the Battle of Thermopylae, giving the Persians a decisive victory over Greece. In 44 BC, Brutus stabbed Julius Caesar in the back, attempting to save the Roman Republic. In 1780, five years into the Revolutionary War, Benedict Arnold conspired with the Red Coats to hand over West Point, ultimately becoming a brigadier general for the British Army. But of all the betrayers, none are as infamous as *Judas Iscariot*.

Yet, though Judas' betrayal would surprise everyone, Jesus knew of it before anyone else. Shortly after the transfiguration, Jesus told his disciples, "Let these words sink into your ears: The Son of Man is about to be delivered into the hands of men" (Lu. 9:44). Then, right before he healed Blind Bartimaeus, the Lord told the twelve, "[The Son of Man] will be delivered over to the Gentiles and will be mocked and shamefully treated and spit upon" (Lu. 18:32). Long before Judas schemed, Jesus knew his friend's future. Long before Judas took those thirty pieces of silver, Jesus took him under his wing. Long before Judas led an armed guard to Gethsemane, Jesus bid him, "Follow me."

While Judas may be like many betrayers throughout history, Jesus is unlike everyone who's been betrayed. The Son of God was not tricked; he was not duped. The Lord was always in control, even when betrayed (cf. Jn. 13:27).

In this passage, there are two things of note:

i. Vs. 1-3 – Judas **communed** with the Devil

The Sanhedrin, a council of Jewish religious leaders, was seeking how to put Jesus to death. It was no secret that they wanted Jesus dead, as he was seen as a threat to their power. The Passover raised the stakes, as the influx of people in Jerusalem could lead to Jesus amassing an even bigger following. So, the quicker they could get rid of him, the better.

However, the very reason why Jesus posed such a threat was also the same reason they couldn't touch him: **the people loved him**. Luke tells us, "Every day he was teaching in the temple, but at night he went out and lodged on the mount called Olivet. And early in the morning *all the people* [emphasis added] came to him in the temple to hear him" (Lu. 21:37-38). If Jesus' enemies tried to take him while he was surrounded by the crowd, the people would riot. This is why Luke tells us that the religious leaders "feared the people." It wasn't that they couldn't find Jesus; they knew exactly where he was, at least during the day. It was that they couldn't touch him because of the people.

Coincidentally, while the Sanhedrin was hard at work, so was the Devil. Luke says, "Then Satan entered into Judas called Iscariot, who was of the number of the twelve." The term "entered" is the Greek word **εἰσέρχομαι** (*ice-err-komai*), and when used in an everyday context, it refers to nothing more complex than someone entering a place (cf. Mat. 7:21), such as a city (cf. Matt. 8:5) or a home (cf. Matt. 10:12). But when used in a spiritual context, *eisérchomai* refers to demonic possession (cf. Mar. 9:25; Lu. 8:30; Jn. 13:27). The devil took possession of Judas like how a new homebuyer takes possession of a house.

But to be clear, Judas was **not** an inanimate object; he was a man with a free will. And while Judas may have been inspired to do wrong, he was still responsible for his actions. All the pronouns that refer to Judas after verse 3 are not “they/them,” as if Satan and Judas acted as a team, but “he/him.” Even though Satan possessed Judas, the betrayer was still responsible for his actions (cf. Ac. 2:23).

You may ask, “But why did Judas do it?” We’ll talk about his motivations in the next point. **But do not miss this lesson:** the saying, “the Devil made me do it,” is **false**. Though he is incredibly persuasive, Satan *does not* make anyone do anything. But if we invite him, he’ll use our will to do his will. The Devil is indeed the Prince of Darkness; there’s no end to the wickedness that his vile imagination can think up. In fact, Jn. 13:2 tells us that the Devil “**put it into the heart of Judas Iscariot, Simon's son, to betray**” Jesus. But Judas is the one who ultimately pulled the trigger. Though he had every reason **not** to entertain such an idea, the more he entertained the thought, the more appealing it became, and the more he became Satan’s puppet. **It is always our choice** whether we participate in evil deeds.

READ: James 1:13-15 (ESV)

¹³ Let no one say when he is tempted, “I am being tempted by God,” for God cannot be tempted with evil, and he himself tempts no one. ¹⁴ But each person is tempted when he is lured and enticed by his own desire. ¹⁵ Then desire when it has conceived gives birth to sin, and sin when it is fully grown brings forth death.

All iniquity begins in the heart. As such, **every** sin is first and foremost an inside job.

ii. Vs. 4-6 – Judas **collaborated** with the Sanhedrin

Luke tells us that Judas “**went away and conferred with the chief priests and officers how he might betray him to them.**” Rather than associating himself with Jesus, he became a coworker of the Sanhedrin. **In other words, Judas got in bed with the enemy.** This was no accident either. It’s not like he went to this meeting unsure of what he wanted. No. Mark 14:10 makes it clear Judas sought out the religious leaders for the purpose of betraying him. He knew exactly what he was doing.

Luke says that the Sanhedrin “were glad.” This is decidedly different than how they were characterized in vs. 2. **Without Judas’s help**, they were perplexed; they didn’t know how exactly they were going to kill Jesus. And they were afraid of the people; they could not control the city. But now, **with Judas’ help**, they were overjoyed! Luke tells us that after this meeting, Judas “sought an opportunity to betray” Jesus “in the *absence* [emphasis added] of a crowd.” The religious leaders still feared the people; after all, Jesus’ betrayal in Gethsemane and the trials before Caiaphas/Pilate almost entirely occurred in the middle of the night while everyone slept! But now they had a golden opportunity to get rid of Jesus while the “crowd” wasn’t looking. **Like a present underneath a Christmas tree, Judas presented Jesus to the Sanhedrin. And, like any child on Christmas morn, this made them very happy.**

But Judas’s help would not be free. Luke tells us the religious leaders “agreed to give him money” for his services. Matt. 26:15 states the price they agreed on was “thirty pieces of silver.” Arguably, *no* amount of money would be worth it to betray the Son of God himself. However, 30 pieces of silver wasn’t a steep price if you were to pay for a human life. In fact, according to Ex. 21:32, if an ox gores a servant, the animal’s owner has to give the servant’s master “thirty shekels of silver.” Thus, in the eyes of the Sanhedrin, Jesus’s fair market value was equivalent to that of a dead employee. They got quite a deal.

Moreover, **30 pieces of silver is equivalent to *four months’ wages* for a day of labor.**¹ This is not an insignificant amount, but it is a paltry sum when compared to the spikenard Mary used to anoint Jesus: **300 denarii. This is about *a year’s wages* for a day laborer.** And ironically, we only know the value of spikenard because of Judas (cf. Jn. 12:4-5)! He cared a great deal about the value of the ointment but not so much about the value of a person’s life, even when that person was his master and teacher!

¹ Turner (2008), p. 621, explains that a shekel was equal to 4 denarii.

Now, hear me. Do not psychoanalyze Judas. First, he was no more complex than you or I. Second, according to the Scriptures, he was a greedy thief long before he betrayed Jesus (cf. Jn. 12:6). Let this be a lesson to us all. One need not have a great reason to do a great evil.

READ: Ephesians 4:26-27 (ESV)

Be angry and do not sin; do not let the sun go down on your anger, and give no opportunity to the devil.

Paul warns us that unresolved anger gives the Devil an “opportunity” to influence our decisions. Everyone knows that a bitter person will perpetuate heartache and sin. But make no mistake, anger isn’t the only way that old snake can sink his teeth into us. Satan gets a foothold in our lives anytime we allow sinful desire to rule. Sin crouches at the door of us all (cf. Gen. 4:7). For Judas, his greed gave the devil a perfect opportunity to use him. What sort of sin crouches at your door? Lust? Jealousy? Pride? Gluttony? Laziness? Apathy? Self-indulgence?

Even though no Christian can be demon-possessed (cf. 1 Jn. 4:4), the Devil can oppress us in a variety of ways. And sadly, we often invite that oppression into our lives by our own hand, by our own immoral actions. Every day, we must resist the devil, knowing he'll flee from us (cf. Ja. 4:7). Every day, we must scare that old roaring lion away (cf. 1 Pet. 5:8-9). Because if we don't, he'll seize any and every opportunity to draw us away from Christ, enticing us to sin.

So, what’s the takeaway?

Proximity to Jesus and a profession of faith *aren't* enough. A true believer must be possessed by Christ.

READ: Matthew 7:21-23 (ESV)

²¹ “Not everyone who says to me, ‘Lord, Lord,’ will enter the kingdom of heaven, but the one who does the will of my Father who is in heaven.²² On that day many will say to me, ‘Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in your name, and cast out demons in your name, and do many mighty works in your name?’²³ And then will I declare to them, ‘I never knew you; depart from me, you workers of lawlessness.’

This is not to say that proximity to Jesus and a profession of faith are irrelevant. They are important steps in the discipleship process. You will not grow as a Christian if you do not identify yourself with Jesus, and you will not mature in your faith if you do not grow closer to Jesus. However, Judas is a cautionary tale for us all. He was as close to Jesus as one could get.

As an apostle, he had to of professed some kind of faith. **However, the problem with Judas was not his location or confession but his possession.** Judas was never possessed by Christ; he never really invited the Son of God into his heart. A doer of God's "will" enters the kingdom of heaven, not a doer of great and "mighty works." One who lives up to Christ's name will be saved not those who identify themselves with Christ's name.

If apostasy occurred within the ranks of the apostles, then no faith community is immune.

Goats will always be among the sheep (cf. Matt. 25:32) and tares among the wheat (cf. Matt. 13:24-30). For every John Mark who leaves the faith but returns (cf. Ac. 15:38; 2 Ti. 4:11), there is a Demas who leaves never to return (cf. 2 Tim. 4:10). Judas is the exception to the rule; this is true. But he is a sobering reminder that anyone can succumb to sin; absolutely everyone at some point in their lives will be influenced by darkness to do dark deeds.

What do we do in those situations?

READ: Romans 13:11-14 (ESV)

¹¹ Besides this you know the time, that the hour has come for you to wake from sleep. For salvation is nearer to us now than when we first believed. ¹² The night is far gone; the day is at hand.

So then let us cast off the works of darkness and put on the armor of light. ¹³ Let us walk properly as in the daytime, not in orgies and drunkenness, not in sexual immorality and sensuality, not in quarreling and jealousy. ¹⁴ But put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make no provision for the flesh, to gratify its desires.

Whom do you "gratify"? The "flesh" or the "Lord"? What sort of clothes do you wear? Have you "cast off the works of darkness" and "put on the armor of light?" Or is it the other way around? Such questions will help you determine whether you're possessed by the Light or oppressed by the dark, whether you've given place to Christ or to Satan.

Video Description:

Holy Week | Week 8 | “The Betrayer” (Luke 22:1-6)

SPEAKER: Ben Hyrne, Pastor

Many famous betrayals have occurred throughout history. In 480 BC, Ephialtes betrayed Leonidas during the Battle of Thermopylae, giving the Persians a decisive victory over Greece. In 44 BC, Brutus stabbed Julius Caesar in the back, attempting to save the Roman Republic. In 1780, five years into the Revolutionary War, Benedict Arnold conspired with the Red Coats to hand over West Point, ultimately becoming a brigadier general for the British Army. But of all the betrayers, none are as infamous as *Judas Iscariot*.

Yet, though Judas’ betrayal would surprise everyone, Jesus knew of it before anyone else. Shortly after the transfiguration, Jesus told his disciples, “Let these words sink into your ears: The Son of Man is about to be delivered into the hands of men” (Lu. 9:44). Then, right before he healed Blind Bartimaeus, the Lord told the twelve, “[The Son of Man] will be delivered over to the Gentiles and will be mocked and shamefully treated and spit upon” (Lu. 18:32). Long before Judas schemed, Jesus knew his friend's future. Long before Judas took those thirty pieces of silver, Jesus took him under his wing. Long before Judas led an armed guard to Gethsemane, Jesus bid him, "Follow me."

Though Judas is like many betrayers throughout history, Jesus is unlike everyone who's been betrayed. The Son of God was not tricked; he was not duped. The Lord was always in control, even when betrayed (cf. Jn. 13:27).

Pastor's manuscript can be found here:

Grace Pointe Baptist Church

12029 Eastern Ave.

Baltimore, MD 21220

Contact: info@GracePointeLife.com

Website: <https://www.gracepointelife.com>

Give here: <https://www.gracepointelife.com/give/>

Podcast Details:

Season 39 | 8