

## Easter Teachings No. 2

### The Betrayal

From our last teaching we saw that in Matthew 26 it was only two days before the Feast of Passover began and the chief priests and elders were looking to kill Jesus, but not during the festival as they feared the crowds and thought there may be a riot.

What they needed was someone in the know, someone who worked closely with Jesus, someone who knew his habits and where he would be, away from the crowds.

Here we introduce Judas Iscariot.

Matthew 26:14-16, Mark 14:10 & 11 and Luke 22:3-5 are all parallel accounts of the same event, but each giving a slightly different detail - so putting them all together:

We see that Judas went to the chief priests (Pharisees) and elders (Sadducees) to ask what they would give him if he handed Jesus over to them. Mark's account tells us they were delighted and gave him 30 pieces of silver to betray his master.

30 pieces of silver is actually quite significant, according to Exodus 21:32 this is the price of a dead slave. If an ox gored a man's servant to death, then the owner of the ox had to pay 30 pieces of silver to the servant's master. Later on, but before this event, 30 pieces of silver became an amount of derision, an amount of contempt. If you gave someone 30 pieces of silver, it meant you counted them or their service as worthless. So they counted Jesus to be as worthless as a dead slave.

Who gave Judas the money? The chief priests and elders (P and S) but not out of their own pockets, it came out the Temple treasury. The money in the Temple treasury was only to purchase sacrifices, and unbenowingly to them all, this is exactly what the 30 pieces of silver did, it purchased a sacrifice that would be slaughtered at Passover, the Passover Lamb, Christ himself.

What sort of person was Judas and what made him do such a deed? After all he had worked closely with Jesus and the disciples for 3½ years. He had seen the miracles that Jesus had performed, he had heard the teaching from his Master. He had lived, eaten and breathed in close proximity with Jesus, so why would he want to do this?

Judas was one of the 12 disciples but he was not one like them. He was the Treasurer in charge of the money bag but we are told.

In John 12:1-5 we see the scene is 6 days before the start of Passover when Mary the sister of Martha poured pure nard over Jesus' feet and dried them with her hair.

This nard was worth nearly a year's wages. Judas objected and asked why this perfume hadn't been sold and the money given to the poor.

However John 12:6 tells us

'He did not say this because he cared about the poor but because he was a thief; as keeper of the money bag he used to help himself to what was put into it'

So he was dishonest and loved money, so much so, that he stole from his own team of disciples. Luke 22:3 tells us that before he went to the chief priests and elders to offer his services, Satan entered Judas.

We all have our weaknesses and the devil will try to get us to give in to them, we are told to put on the whole armour of God and that the Devil is like a roaring lion seeking to devour us. With Judas's love of money and the coaxing by Satan, he yielded to the temptation.

Judas was needed for three reasons:-

- He would know where Jesus retired, away from the crowd
- As a point of Roman law, an accusation had to be brought before the Roman Governor. No man could be brought to trial without a formal indictment.
- He was needed as a prosecution witness in the trial

We see Judas later in the story but for now he rests, watching and waiting for an opportunity to earn his 30 pieces of silver.