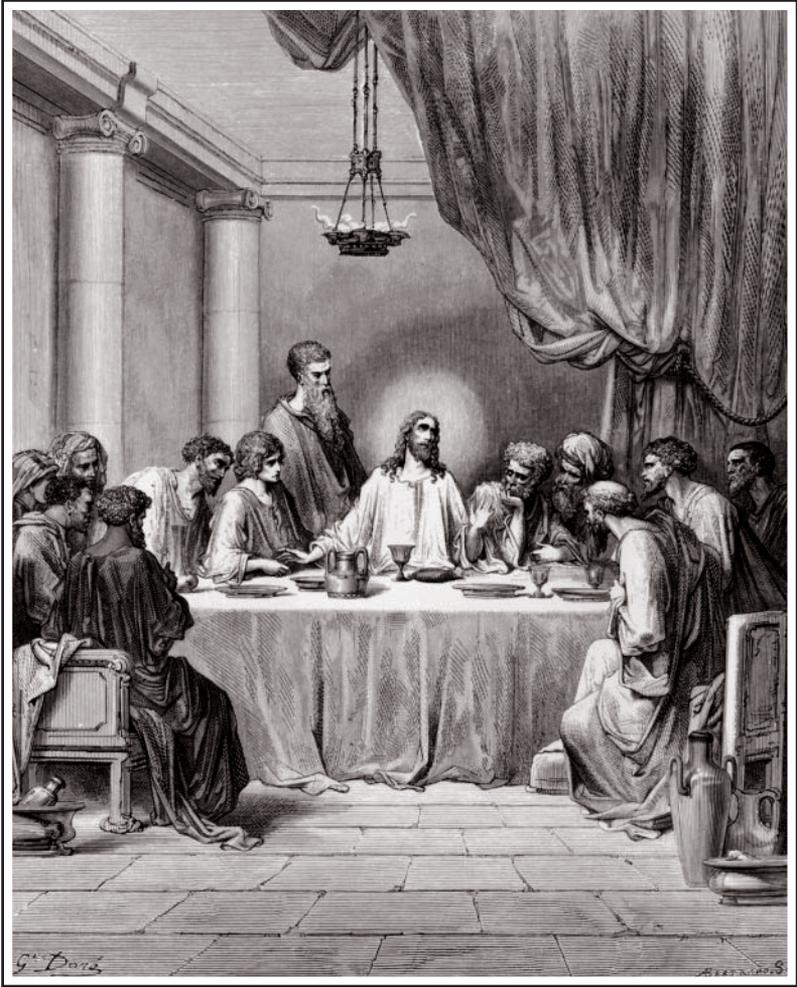
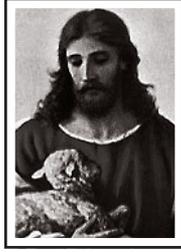


The Twelve Apostles of the Lamb



When Jesus had thus said, he was troubled in spirit, and testified, and said, Verily, verily, I say unto you, that one of you shall betray me. Then the disciples looked one on another, doubting of whom he spake ... Jesus answered, he it is, to whom I shall give a sop, when I have dipped it. And when he had dipped the sop, he gave it to Judas Iscariot, the son of Simon. And after the sop Satan entered into him. Then said Jesus unto him, That thou doest, do quickly. John 13:21-27

Chapter Eleven



The Apostle Judas Iscariot

Judas Iscariot was from Southern Palestine in Judea, whereas the other eleven of Jesus' Apostles were Galileans. Judas' name means "*Praise.*" It is thought because of this, that his mother and father Simon Iscariot, were faithful Jews.

Judas was probably drawn to his Master by the preaching of John the Baptist. His heart was prepared to receive the teaching of Jesus, because John pointed the way to the Messiah and his coming Kingdom. Along with the other Apostles, Judas had been called to walk in the footsteps of Jesus and to share in his sufferings and self-denials. Judas, with the others, preached the Kingdom, healed the sick, and cast out demons by the power of God's holy Spirit. Judas was privileged to be constantly with his Savior for three and a half years. He witnessed the purity of Jesus' life and his loyalty and obedience to his Heavenly Father. *Matt. 10:5-8*

The other Apostles and Jesus recognized in Judas a very good business sense and they placed him in charge of their treasury. Jesus and his Apostles didn't have time to work at temporal jobs. They needed to devote their entire time to preaching the Kingdom, and so some of Jesus' followers voluntarily donated money for their financial support. *Luke 8:1-3* Judas was probably very trustworthy at first in his responsibilities with the treasury and in his duties to go forth and preach the Kingdom. All of the Apostles had the same privileges and special guidance of the holy Spirit, all were tested as to their loyalty to Jesus, and all but Judas were submissive to their testing.

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Judas had certain expectations of what his Lord would do to bring about the Kingdom. He thought that soon Jesus would force his political leadership against the Roman government and Israel would be in command under the leadership of Christ. It is easy to see how Judas could have thought, “*I will be more than just the treasurer of this lowly, despised band of Jesus’ followers. I will be treasurer of a great and powerful Kingdom!*” But, in time Judas probably saw his ambitions dashed when Jesus repeatedly talked of being put to death. Judas began to fear that Jesus was not working out the plans of God correctly, and soon his hopes of kingdom power would fail.

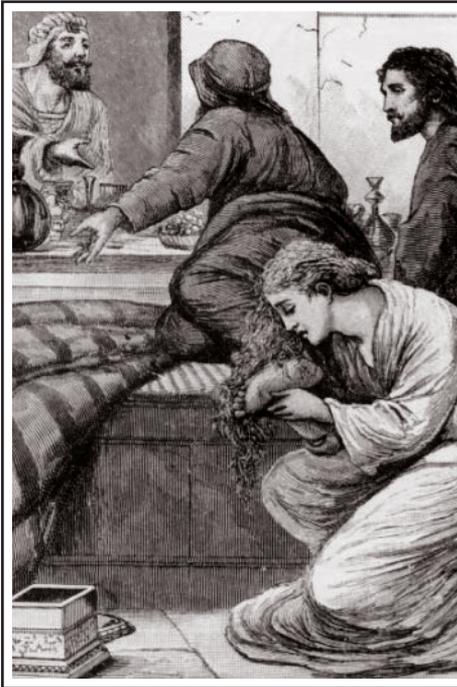
Judas’ love and devotion to Jesus was tested more and more, and soon the seed of pride and self-will took root. In time it took over his entire character, as Judas became impatient with the loving, humble approach of Jesus’ mission. “*With all the power of the universe at his fingertips,*” he thought, “*why doesn’t Jesus use it in front of greater numbers of people so all can see his power and superiority?*” But each miracle of Jesus continued to be performed in a quiet, humble way. Judas didn’t listen when Jesus explained how the “*Son of Man*” must die and that his Kingdom was not of this world. He explained that he would someday return to do the work of a General in an army, but not now. The other Apostles didn’t quite understand this either, but they submitted their wills to Jesus and trusted that he was doing the will of God, his Father. *Reprint 4487*

There is an important lesson in this to young Christians today. Have we ever been very upset with our parents for not allowing us to do something our way? There are two ways of handling this situation. One way is to continue to be angry, to argue with them and then do things our own way, in spite of their wishes. The other method of handling our disagreement with our parents is to obey them and patiently trust that they are wiser than we are. The first way is called *rebellion* and the second way is called *obedience*. With which do you think the Lord is pleased? Certainly Judas was rebellious and a bad example when he constantly wanted his way, even though he knew Jesus was wiser.

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The more time went on, the more Judas became entrenched in his own will. He may have thought, *“My plans are sure to bring about the Kingdom more quickly. God probably needs me to help things along. He must be speaking especially to me and using me to perform this wonderful plan to get Jesus the recognition he deserves.”* How it must have irritated him to see year after year go by with only a small number coming to believe in Jesus. Slowly he began to devise a scheme which would bring his expectations to pass—or so he thought.

Judas, no doubt, thought of the treasury as a means to also bring about his plans. He hoarded the purse of money as if it were his own. He became obsessed with the idea of money. Six days before Jesus was crucified, Judas was so concerned about money that he rebuked the Lord for allowing Mary to pour her precious ointment upon Jesus’ head. He exclaimed, *“What a waste! This ointment might have been sold for a year’s wage and given to the poor!”* How wrong it was for Judas to have criticized this sweet sacrifice of Mary. And

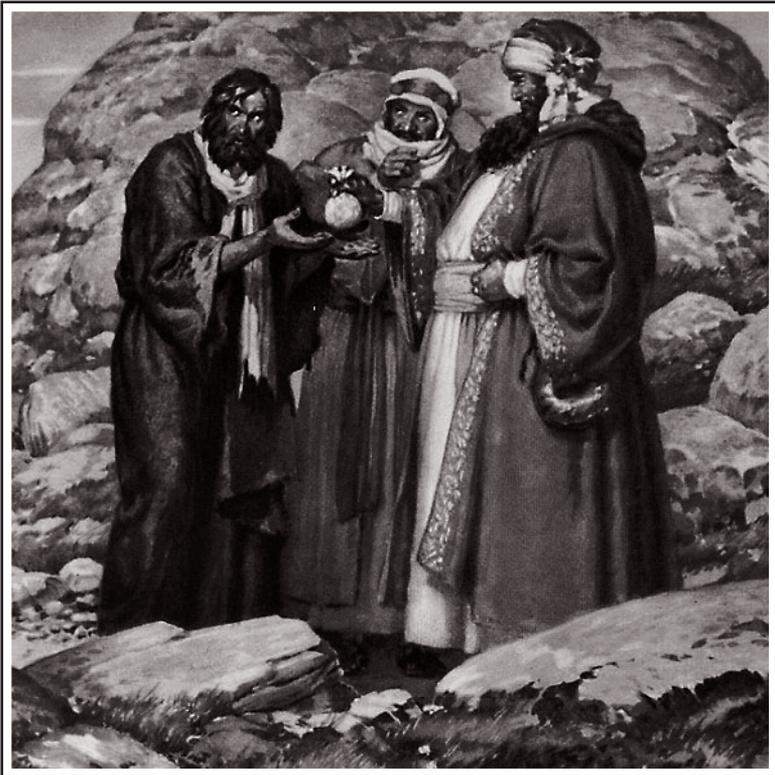


how doubly wrong to criticize his Master in front of all his followers. He even got some of the others to join in the criticism. But Jesus quickly rebuked him saying, *“Leave her alone for she anoints me for my burial!”* The hypocritical concern for the poor and needy was really greed for money. *Matt. 26:7-12 & John 12:3-8* Thus, the love of money ensnared Judas and his love for his Lord was very questionable. *1 Tim. 6:10 & Reprint 5552*

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The final event of Judas' life proved that he no longer lived to serve his Lord Jesus, but he now lived to serve himself and his schemes. He no longer was inspired by his Lord Jesus, but was now inspired by the prince of evil, Satan. *John 13:2* After the incident with Mary, Judas went to the chief priests who had already been plotting to rid themselves of Jesus, and he said, "What will you give me if I deliver Jesus to you?" They contracted to pay him thirty pieces of silver. This very event was prophesied in Zechariah 11:12-13.

From this point on, Judas sought an opportunity to betray Jesus. *Matt. 26:14-16* When the night of the Passover had come, Jesus said to his Apostles, "One of you shall betray me... He that dippeth his hand with me in the dish, the same shall betray me" (sharing a meal meant a vow of trust and friendship—for Judas to share a meal with Jesus and then be



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a traitor, would be considered a very serious wrong).” Even with all of the many clues revealed in Judas character, still, the other Apostles knew not of Judas’ treachery. *John 13:26-29*

It was after this that Jesus told Judas to leave and be about his evil business. Judas left and went straight to the chief priests. Jesus was in the Garden of Gethsemane when Judas led a multitude of priests, servants and elders to his Master. Judas came to Jesus and said, “*Hail, Master,*” and then he kissed Jesus. Even then, Judas thought of Jesus as his Master and probably thought of this whole event as a way to get Jesus to take control. But the group seized Jesus and led him away like a common criminal to be crucified.

When Judas saw that his plans had failed, he went back to the chief priests the next morning and said, “*I have sinned in that I have betrayed innocent blood.*” And they said, “*So, why come to us, you are responsible for that!*” Judas cast down the pieces of silver, ran away and hanged himself from a tree.

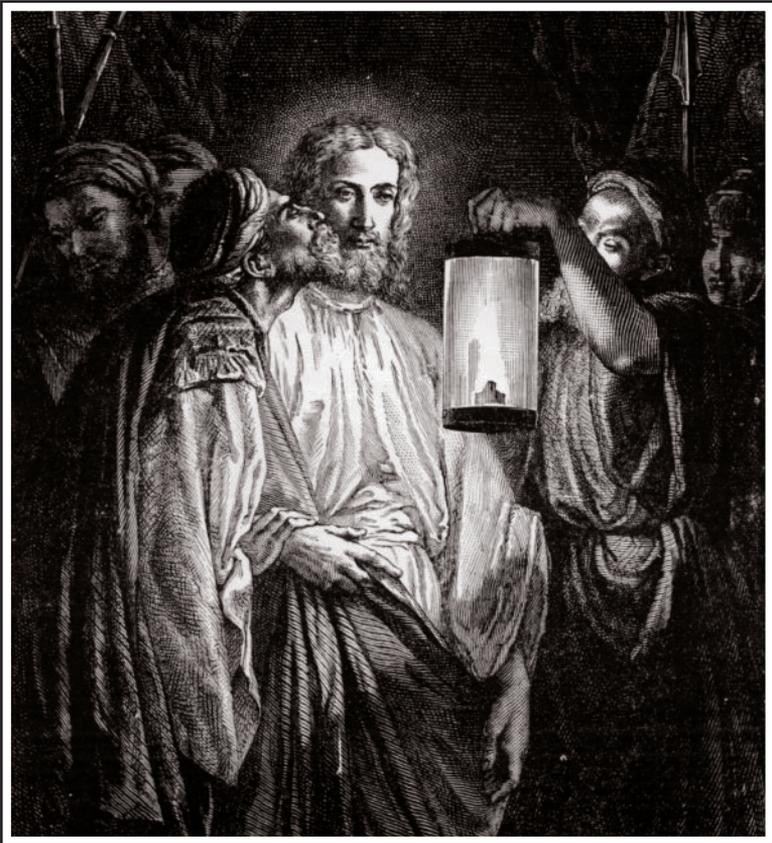
Did Judas repent of his crime? Only God knows. All we can do is judge Judas’ actions and apply lessons from his experiences to our own characters. Never did he cry unto his Master, “*Oh, Lord, forgive! I am sorry, I was so wrong!*” No, instead he went to his accomplices in crime, the chief priests who could grant no forgiveness. His pride kept him from facing his brethren, seeking their forgiveness and their help to recover from his sins. When the Apostle Peter sinned by denying the Lord three times, he humbly returned to his brethren and worked to correct his wrong. Judas acted pridefully to the end. *Matt. 27:3-10* In his mind he thought the only way out was to kill himself, for to turn back would have meant admitting to everyone that he was wrong. He didn’t think of the special assistance of God’s spirit that he had been provided. He didn’t think what a waste it would be to the Lord’s cause if he died. *Matt. 13:11,12* He selfishly ended his covenant to deny himself, take up his cross and follow Jesus. Instead of asking for help, he committed suicide. *Reprint 5452-5453*

In Judas’ life we see a very important aspect of God’s law of love. Every man is free to decide whether he will or

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will not obey his God. This is known as a “*free moral agency.*” God doesn’t interfere if someone wants to take an evil course, but allows the person to manifest his true character with each experience. If God did interfere, the person would be obedient only because he was forced to and not because he loved God and His will. Therefore, God allows us all to be tested, but throughout the testing, gives us warnings and ways to escape from our trials and temptations. *1 Cor. 10:13*

In the case of Judas, his Master offered many opportunities for Judas to repent. Jesus was of a gentle and generous spirit toward Judas right up to the very last act when he betrayed Jesus with a kiss. *Matt 26:49-50* Judas still had a choice at that point to seek forgiveness from his Master. We should take to heart



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the lesson of this gentle manner of Jesus when dealing with those who oppose us. We must keep in mind that we are not to judge the hearts of our brethren or even of people in the world. Both Peter and Judas opposed the Lord, but Jesus was loving and patient with them. He worked with them to help bring them back into harmony with God. God allowed Peter to stray far from faith for a time only to show Peter the lesson of his frail flesh. Some of our fellow Christians may stray far from the Lord as well, and, yet, there is still hope to the end. Let us all do what we can to help our brethren and leave the judgment and lessons of their lives with the Lord. *Matt. 7:1-5*

Judas Iscariot had every opportunity to be purified by the truth and useful in the work of the Lord, but instead, he became a servant of Satan. Jesus said that of the twelve Apostles given to him by his Heavenly Father, none had been lost except Judas, “*the son of perdition.*” Jesus also said, “*Woe unto that man by whom the son of man is betrayed! It had been good for that man if he had not been born.*” *Matt. 26:24 & John 6:70* Judas gave up the privilege as a faithful follower of Jesus—one who would be worthy to be called one of the *Twelve Apostles of the Lamb*. Though we learn lessons from the life of Judas Iscariot, we cannot claim him as one who is a firm foundation to the Church. Instead, the honored place he would have held as being part of the Messiah was filled by another.