

I. Read Luke 22:1-6

- A. This passage describes Judas Iscariot's betrayal of Jesus. Judas was probably from Kerioth, which is south of Judah. We are not told about his early life. He did hold office in the small band of the twelve disciples. Read John 12:6 and John 13:29 and identify that office.
He was treasurer for the disciples.
- B. According to John 12:6, Judas' heart was inclined toward evil as evidenced by:
He was a thief, stealing from the small band's treasury.
- C. In John 12:1-8, Judas self-righteously objected to Mary's use of a "very costly oil of spikenard" to anoint the feet of Jesus. What was the objection he offered?
He said the oil could be better used by selling it and giving the proceeds to the poor.

Was his concern for the poor genuine?

No, it was feigned.

- D. The tactics of Judas are used often by those with wicked motives or hidden agendas. Give some contemporary examples (hint: think of political leaders).
Feigned concern for the poor is often cited in political rhetoric when the real motive is political power and control. Liberals are apt to play the part of a demagogue by taking the moral high ground in their bid for higher taxes and more entitlement programs! An example closer to home for Christians would be those who disdain the expenditure of money to build a suitable edifice in which to worship Almighty God, claiming the money could be better used elsewhere (perhaps for themselves!). Compare our typical contemporary metallic, unimaginative, and ugly church buildings to the beautiful buildings constructed only a few decades ago. (The analogy between Mary's generous anointing of Jesus as an act of worship to our willingness to do likewise in our worship is hard to ignore).
- E. To truly understand Judas, one must realize that he was *never what he appeared* to others. Only Jesus knew what was really in Judas' heart. Even the other disciples were fooled by Judas' show of concern for the poor and for them (otherwise they certainly would not have allowed him to continue to act as treasurer and to remain as part of the twelve – Jesus tolerated Judas because He knew his presence was pre-ordained; John 13:21-25). Do you think Judas had pure motives when he *first* joined the disciples?
Not likely; however, it is doubtful that he would have had any notion of betraying Jesus in the early days. He probably joined the band thinking that they would rise in power and stature, perhaps through a military or political coup of some kind. He anticipated being given a high position in Jesus' kingdom if and when this occurred. It is important to note that Judas always had his own little game going, caring not what Jesus or the others were trying to achieve. He had a hidden agenda and was using Jesus and the others as a *means* of getting what he wanted!
- F. In Luke 22:1-6, we read that "Satan entered Judas" (NKJV) and then conspired with "the chief priests and captain" (NKJV), thus betraying Jesus. Do you think this is an example of demonic possession?
It may be, but if it is, it does not sound at all like other instances of demonic possession that are described in Scripture. (Read Luke 8:26-31; Mark 9:21-22.) More likely, it is a figure of speech describing Satan's tempting of Judas to an act of treachery. It is clear, however, that Satan was involved in the act of betrayal. This is true in many instances of attacks on the kingdom of God (see Ephesians 6:10-13) and the ministry of the true Church!

- G. Why do you suppose Satan might have chosen this particular moment to suggest to Judas such a terrible act of treachery and deceit?

Up until this time, Judas was still anticipating Jesus' establishment of an earthly kingdom, in which he would hold office. At this point, it had become clear that Jesus would not establish an earthly kingdom at all. Three years of planning and scheming were now falling by the wayside. In his desperation, Judas sought to either force Jesus' hand against his captors — or perhaps the hand of His followers. Once again, he had his own little game going that had nothing to do with the purposes of God.

- H. When are we most vulnerable to the temptations of the evil one?

When our plans fail — when things don't turn out as we anticipated — when we are discontent or dissatisfied with our lives. For example, your marriage is not the perpetual honeymoon you thought it would be, and there is Satan whispering in your ear. The church and the preacher are not so perfect after all, and there is Satan, accusing and plotting. Your job is not bringing the satisfaction you anticipated, and there is Satan beckoning. Being a mother is not twenty-four hours of joy and excitement as you thought it would be, and there is Satan!

- I. How did Judas end up?

He committed suicide.

What, if anything, might we infer from this?

Judas was ambivalent and confused about what he wanted. It is hard to imagine that he really wanted Jesus crucified. More likely, he just wanted to get his way — a position of status and importance in the Messiah's kingdom! Further, Judas did not truly repent of his deed; he was simply sorry it had turned out so badly. Sorrow for our sin by itself *is not* repentance! (Read 2 Corinthians 7:8-10.) Finally, some have wondered, "Is Judas in hell?" The answer is yes, not, as is supposed by some, because he committed suicide, but rather because he was never truly converted. His suicide merely underscores his failure to repent of his wickedness! (Note: Suicide is nowhere in Scripture described as an unforgivable sin. A Christian cannot lose his salvation because he sins, even in the instance of suicide.)

- J. What lessons might the church and individual believers learn from Judas?

Note to Leaders: Please read these aloud to your class after you allow those in your class to share their answers.

- 1. There will always be (until Christ's second coming), *weeds* or *tares* among the *wheat* (unbelievers among the believers). Much of the dissension and discord found in churches is the work of unbelievers (weeds & tares) that have made their way into God's wheat field!**
- 2. We should be *extraordinarily* cautious about whom we allow in leadership roles (Judas was one of the first twelve disciples and the treasurer).**
- 3. We should be discerning and attempt to look beneath the surface for true motives and hidden agendas in people. (God has given some the gift of discernment for this very purpose; Jesus was exercising it in his knowledge of Judas' wicked intent.)**
- 4. We should continue to pray that we ourselves will never be the source of discord or dissension in the church, and we should be careful not to do anything that would impede or serve as an obstacle to the growth of the church and God's kingdom.**

5. We should recognize that we are involved in spiritual warfare, being careful to put on the “full armor of God.”
6. We should be a little distrustful of our own motives when in the midst of conflict or disagreement in the church — and a little less sure that we *must be right!* No one is right all the time, and in instances in which a dispute involves a matter of personal preference or opinion, it is foolish to be dogmatic.
7. True repentance involves a genuine change of direction and not just *feelings* of guilt. If we have gone down the wrong path (or perhaps just failed to go down the right path), we should follow up with the fruits of repentance — change! Judas wasn’t willing to say that all that he had done to that point was phony, that he was wrong and filled with hate for God, and that he was ready and willing to change. He did not repent.