

Judas Agrees to Betray Jesus

Matthew 26:14-16; Mark 14:10-11; Luke 22:3-6

Thursday the fourteenth of Nisan after sundown

DIG: Was Judas simply a zealous Jew, like the others, hoping for freedom from Rome, or much more? At what point do you think he decided to give Jesus a little "help?" Did Judas have a choice in the matter? Could Judas have resisted the Enemy of souls, or was he "born to betray?"

REFLECT: Have you ever plotted against someone else? Did you ever admit you scheme? What is your relationship like with that person now? Have you ever had someone plot against you in some way? Once you found out, how did you feel towards your betrayer(s)? Was there reconciliation? How hard is it to forgive in that situation? What did you learn? How can you help others that experience betrayal?

Three important events took place late Wednesday afternoon the thirteenth of Nisan before sundown and on Thursday the fourteenth of Nisan after sundown.

First, late Wednesday afternoon before sundown the most important members of the Great Sanhedrin met at the palace of the high priest, Joseph Caiaphas, to plot against the life of Christ (see Ka - **The Plot Against Jesus**).

Secondly, on Thursday evening after sundown Jesus was invited to the home of Simon, formally a leper, for dinner. There, Mary, the sister of Lazarus, anointed Him with expensive perfume for burial. It was then that Yeshua rebuked Judas for wanting to sell the expensive perfume made of pure nard so the money given to the poor (see Kb - **Jesus Anointed at Bethany**).

And thirdly, on Thursday evening after sundown, after being rebuked by Jesus, Judas then left Bethany, walked to the palace of Caiaphas the high priest in Jerusalem and agreed to betray the Meshiach.

The key members of the Great Sanhedrin had met earlier Wednesday before sundown looking for a way to kill Jesus. **On Thursday, the fourteenth of Nisan,** Judas Iscariot unexpectedly went to the Sadducees to betray Jesus (Mark 14:10). When Caiaphas was told that one of the Twelve, was at his door and wanted to speak to him, he was confused. I am sure that at first he wondered, "What is he doing here? I wonder what he wants?" But then after thinking a little more about it, he must have said to himself, "Let him in. What harm can it cause? Let's hear what he has to say."

Judas, the practical betrayer, was about to meet **Caiaphas**, the practical religious leader, in one of the most somber moments in history. Had either been a man of good will, had either been honest, the story would have been different. **Judas** was tired of waiting for **his** money and notoriety after spending several years trudging all over Isra'el, and was determined to force **Jesus'** hand. Either **the Nazarene** would declare **Himself** to be **the Messiah** and elevate **Judas** to **his** proper place in the new government, or **He** would die. But **Caiaphas** had no such illusions. **He** just wanted **the troublemaking rabbi** dead.

And **Judas** went to the **Sadducees** and the officers of the Temple guard and discussed with them how he might betray **Jesus** (Luke 22:4). Under normal circumstances **Judas** would have meant little to them. The only reason **Caiaphas** met with **him** now was the possibility that this mean little **Judean** mercenary might be ready to deliver up **the Nazarene**. They were all shocked when **Judas** asked: **What are you willing to give me if I deliver Him over to you (Matthew 26:14-15a)?** Setting their normal arrogance aside, they didn't gloat in front of **him**. There would be time for that later. Their immediate goal was to manipulate **Judas** into doing whatever it took to arrange **Jesus'** arrest and execution.

The heart of the godly delights in righteousness, but the heart of the godless delights in evil. Then **Judas** had made **Caiaphas** a deal **he** couldn't refuse and **the high priest** was pleased. It would have been difficult to hide it. **The renegade rabbi** had hurt **him** in many ways, and the ways were increasingly grievous. **The Nazarene** had come from nowhere proclaiming **himself** to be a prophet, or acting like a prophet, and the multitudes had flocked to **his** words as though they believed it. **The high priest** had had much experience with others who claimed that they were sent from **God**; as a matter of fact, the City of David seemed to attract all the crazies.¹³⁶⁰ And this **Galilean** was obviously one of them. But now they had **him**. Checkmate.

Caiaphas asked **Judas** where the criminal was, and **the betrayer** told **the high priest** the exact house. **Caiaphas** nodded with some surprise because **he** knew the father of **Mark** as a rich and substantial citizen of **Jerusalem** with considerable influence in the Temple. One never knew where to look for the talmidim of this **maverick rabbi**.

The acting high priest told **Judas** to wait in the courtyard and, in a moment, **the money-keeper** was alone. **Caiaphas** lifted the hem of **his** costly robe and hurried across the courtyard of **their** conjoined estates to tell **his** father-in-law **Annas** the good news. If **Judas** noted the happiness on the face of **the high priest**, **he** must have thought at once **the he** had sold **Jesus** too cheaply. Had **he** only realized how important **the Lord** was to the socially elite sect of **the Sadducees**, **he** might have asked for much more.¹³⁶¹

And they were delighted because they had found their dupe, and agreed to give him money (Luke 22:5). This broke the elders' own laws regulating trials. When Jesus was found guilty of blasphemy, there were twenty-one rules of the Sanhedrin regarding trials (see Lh - [The Laws of the Great Sanhedrin Regarding Trials](#)) and in their zeal to kill Him they broke every one of them. Rule number 1 said that there was to be no arrest by religious authorities that was affected by a bribe. Nevertheless, they counted out for Judas thirty pieces of silver right before his eyes (Matthew 26:15b). They clinked off one after another as they fell into his purse. The traitor is paid off in advance. Thirty pieces of silver was not an accidental price. It was a price of contempt. It said you were worth no more than a dead slave (Exodus 21:32). However Zechariah 11:11-12 says that one day God Himself would be sold for the price of a dead slave.

Judas had lost the opportunity to obtain money through the sale of the pure nard that Mary used to prepare Jesus for burial (see Kb - [Jesus Anointed at Bethany](#)). Now he gladly accepted payment from the Sanhedrin for participating in their plot to kill Jesus. Judas had lived a meager existence as a talmid for several years, rarely having more than a few extra coins in his purse, and very little in the way of luxury. But thirty pieces of silver was the equivalent of four month's wages. Along with his desire to be famous when the messianic Kingdom was ushered in once Christ overthrew the Romans, he could not resist the money. After all, getting paid to force Jesus' hand couldn't be a bad deal for him - could it?

The money-keeper was convinced that one of two things would happen: Jesus would be arrested and then declare Himself to the Messiah. If the Master was truly the Anointed One, then He would have not problem saving Himself from Caiaphas and the Sanhedrin.

However, if Yeshua was not the Messiah, He would die.

Either way, Judas' life would be spared. He couldn't lose . . . could he?

The pieces of silver came from the Temple treasury, which was for the purpose of purchasing sacrifices for sin. Little did they realize that is exactly what they did. They purchased the death of Yeshua ha-Meshiach, the ultimate sin offering.

They were delighted to hear this and promised to give him money (Mark 14:11a). The word delighted is *chairō*, and more expressive of an inward feeling of joy or delight. In other words, they were more delighted than they cared to show. So Judas watched for an opportunity to hand Jesus over (Mark 14:11b). Judas needed to do three things. First, he needed to show where the Lord could be arrested away from the masses of people. Secondly, under Roman law a cohort could not be released to make an arrest

unless someone first appeared before the procurator accusing **Jesus** of a crime punishable under Roman law. Thirdly, at the Roman trial **he** would be needed to serve as the prosecuting witness. **Judas** would not be needed for the Jewish trial, but **he** would be desperately needed for the Roman trial because the Romans had taken away the Jewish right to impose the death penalty by stoning.

Then **Satan** entered **Judas**, called **Iscairiot** (or *the man from the town of K'riot*), **one of the Twelve** (Luke 22:3). This was **his** choice because **his** betrayal would have been impossible if **he** had not willingly submitted **himself** to **the devil**. **James** tells us: **Submit yourselves, then, to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you** (James 4:7). However, **Judas** did not resist.

So **Judas** consented, and from then on the traitorous talmid watched for an opportunity to hand **Jesus** over to them when no crowd was present (Matthew 26:16; Mark 14:11b; Luke 22:6). **Judas** was a zealous Jew, like the others, hoping that the messianic Kingdom would be established during their lifetime. But when it became clear that it would not happen that way, **he** gave up and was self-deceived (with **the Adversary's** assistance) to the point of betraying **his** former **Rabbi**.¹³⁶²

Jesus controlled **His** own destiny. **The Sanhedrin's** plan was to wait until the Passover was over and all the pilgrims had gone home to make their move. But when **Yeshua** identified **Judas** as **the betrayer**, **He** forced **their** hand. **They** had to act on the very night that **they** didn't want to act. The trial was confused and disorganized because **they** never intended to bring **Him** to trial on the Passover. The end of **a traitor** is like the end of a star - the result is always seen long after the event has taken place.¹³⁶³ And so it was with **Judas**.

The missing apostle walked the two miles back to Bethany in the moonlight. Robbers might be lurking on the roads. **He** wondered how **he** would hide such a large and noisy reward. "But it will all work out," **he** thought to **himself**. For **Judas** truly believed that **he** was smarter than **his** companions and deserved a reward. After all, **he** had sacrificed so much. If **Jesus** really was **God** that would soon be made known.¹³⁶⁴