

Wednesday, March 29, 2023

## Behind the Scenes of the Cross

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Let's take a look at the cross from maybe a bit of a different angle today.

- ◆ **Luk 4:13 (ESV) And when the devil had ended every temptation, he departed from him until an opportune time.**

Satan had failed in his attempt to derail Jesus from the cross at the outset of his ministry and so he would choose to wait and seek out another opportunity at another time.

### What do we know about Judas Iscariot?

1. Jesus specifically called Judas to be a disciple and an apostle (Mark 3:13-19).
2. He followed Jesus for three years. He preached the gospel. He witnessed miracles. He heard Jesus' teaching about the kingdom, day in and day out.

### But was Judas truly a follower of Jesus? What is revealed through the character of his life?

1. Jesus himself stated that one of the twelve was a "devil." This is an indication that Judas was not really following Jesus, but was only playing the part. (John 6:70-71).
2. John reveals that Judas was in charge of the moneybag of the disciples and that he was a thief who routinely helped himself to what was in the bag. This would demonstrate that Judas was greedy, a thief, and a liar (John 12:6).

### How does Judas play into the spiritual backdrop surrounding the cross?

1. **God had a plan for the cross from eternity.**
  - ◆ Rev 13:8 (RV) And all that dwell on the earth shall worship him, every one whose name hath not been written in the book of life of the Lamb that hath been slain from the foundation of the world.

- ◆ Act 4:26-28 (ESV) The kings of the earth set themselves, and the rulers were gathered together, against the Lord and against his Anointed' – [27] for truly in this city there were gathered together against your holy servant Jesus, whom you anointed, both Herod and Pontius Pilate, along with the Gentiles and the peoples of Israel, [28] to do whatever your hand and your plan had predestined to take place.
- ◆ Col 1:20 (ESV) and through him to reconcile to himself all things, whether on earth or in heaven, making peace by the blood of his cross.
- ◆ Col 2:14 (ESV) by canceling the record of debt that stood against us with its legal demands. This he set aside, nailing it to the cross.

**2. Even the evil, determined actions of Satan and Judas played a role in the plan of God for the cross.**

- ◆ Psa 41:9 (ESV) Even my close friend in whom I trusted, who ate my bread, has lifted his heel against me.
- ◆ Psa 55:13 (ESV) But it is you, a man, my equal, my companion, my familiar friend.
- ◆ Zec 11:12-13 (ESV) Then I said to them, “If it seems good to you, give me my wages; but if not, keep them.” And they weighed out as my wages thirty pieces of silver. [13] Then the LORD said to me, “Throw it to the potter” – the lordly price at which I was priced by them. So I took the thirty pieces of silver and threw them into the house of the LORD, to the potter.

**3. Satan came looking for his opportunity once again to derail the cross. Judas helped to fulfill Satan’s plan, but ultimately, they both fulfilled God’s plan.**

**\*\*\*Below is a reconstructed scripture timeline of events that show the progression of activity of Satan and Judas that ultimately fulfilled God’s plan for the cross. (Take time to discuss the scripture as you read through them)**

- ◆ Mar 14:1-5 (ESV) It was now two days before the Passover and the Feast of Unleavened Bread. And the chief priests and the

**scribes were seeking how to arrest him by stealth and kill him,** [2] for they said, “Not during the feast, lest there be an uproar from the people.” [3] And while he was at Bethany in the house of Simon the leper, as he was reclining at table, a woman came with an alabaster flask of ointment of pure nard, very costly, and she broke the flask and poured it over his head. [4] There were some who said to themselves indignantly, “Why was the ointment wasted like that? [5] For this ointment could have been sold for more than three hundred denarii and given to the poor.” And they scolded her.

- ◆ Joh 12:4-8 (ESV) But Judas Iscariot, one of his disciples (he who was about to betray him), said, [5] “Why was this ointment not sold for three hundred denarii and given to the poor?” [6] He said this, not because he cared about the poor, but because he was a thief, and having charge of the moneybag he used to help himself to what was put into it. [7] Jesus said, “Leave her alone, so that she may keep it for the day of my burial. [8] For the poor you always have with you, but you do not always have me.”
- ◆ Luk 22:3-6 (ESV) **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.
- ◆ Joh 13:1-2 (ESV) Now before the Feast of the Passover, when Jesus knew that his hour had come to depart out of this world to the Father, having loved his own who were in the world, he loved them to the end. [2] **During supper, when the devil had already put it into the heart of Judas Iscariot, Simon's son, to betray him,**
- ◆ Joh 13:6-11 (ESV) He came to Simon Peter, who said to him, “Lord, do you wash my feet?” [7] Jesus answered him, “What I am doing you do not understand now, but afterward you will understand.” [8] Peter said to him, “You shall never wash my feet.” Jesus answered him, “If I do not wash you, you have no share with me.” [9] Simon Peter said to him, “Lord, not my feet only but also my hands and my head!” [10] Jesus said to him, “The one who has bathed does not need to wash, except for his feet, but is completely clean. **And you are clean, but not every one of you.**”

**[11] For he knew who was to betray him; that was why he said, “Not all of you are clean.”**

- ◆ Mat 26:20-25 (ESV) When it was evening, he reclined at table with the twelve. [21] And as they were eating, he said, “Truly, I say to you, one of you will betray me.” [22] And they were very sorrowful and began to say to him one after another, “Is it I, Lord?” [23] He answered, “He who has dipped his hand in the dish with me will betray me. [24] **The Son of Man goes as it is written of him, but woe to that man by whom the Son of Man is betrayed! It would have been better for that man if he had not been born.**” [25] Judas, who would betray him, answered, “Is it I, Rabbi?” He said to him, “You have said so.”
- ◆ Joh 13:23-30 (ESV) One of his disciples, whom Jesus loved, was reclining at table at Jesus' side, [24] so Simon Peter motioned to him to ask Jesus of whom he was speaking. [25] So that disciple, leaning back against Jesus, said to him, “Lord, who is it?” [26] Jesus answered, “It is he to whom I will give this morsel of bread when I have dipped it.” So when he had dipped the morsel, he gave it to Judas, the son of Simon Iscariot. [27] **Then after he had taken the morsel, Satan entered into him. Jesus said to him, “What you are going to do, do quickly.”** [28] Now no one at the table knew why he said this to him. [29] Some thought that, because Judas had the moneybag, Jesus was telling him, “Buy what we need for the feast,” or that he should give something to the poor. [30] So, after receiving the morsel of bread, he immediately went out. And it was night.
- ◆ Luk 22:39-48 (ESV) And he came out and went, as was his custom, to the Mount of Olives, and the disciples followed him. [40] And when he came to the place, he said to them, “Pray that you may not enter into temptation.” [41] And he withdrew from them about a stone's throw, and knelt down and prayed, [42] saying, “Father, if you are willing, remove this cup from me. Nevertheless, not my will, but yours, be done.” [43] And there appeared to him an angel from heaven, strengthening him. [44] And being in agony he prayed more earnestly; and his sweat became like great drops of blood falling down to the ground. [45] And when he rose from prayer, he came to the disciples and found them sleeping for sorrow, [46] and he said to them, “Why are you sleeping? Rise and pray that you

may not enter into temptation.” [47] While he was still speaking, there came a crowd, and the man called Judas, one of the twelve, was leading them. He drew near to Jesus to kiss him, [48] but Jesus said to him, “Judas, would you betray the Son of Man with a kiss?”

- ◆ Mat 26:48-50 (ESV) Now the betrayer had given them a sign, saying, “The one I will kiss is the man; seize him.” [49] And he came up to Jesus at once and said, “Greetings, Rabbi!” And he kissed him. [50] Jesus said to him, “Friend, do what you came to do.” Then they came up and laid hands on Jesus and seized him.
- ◆ Luk 22:52-53 (ESV) Then Jesus said to the chief priests and officers of the temple and elders, who had come out against him, “Have you come out as against a robber, with swords and clubs? [53] When I was with you day after day in the temple, you did not lay hands on me. **But this is your hour, and the power of darkness.**”
- ◆ Mat 27:3-10 (ESV) Then when Judas, his betrayer, saw that Jesus was condemned, he changed his mind and brought back the thirty pieces of silver to the chief priests and the elders, [4] saying, “**I have sinned by betraying innocent blood.**” They said, “What is that to us? See to it yourself.” [5] **And throwing down the pieces of silver into the temple, he departed, and he went and hanged himself.** [6] But the chief priests, taking the pieces of silver, said, “It is not lawful to put them into the treasury, since it is blood money.” [7] **So they took counsel and bought with them the potter's field as a burial place for strangers. [8] Therefore that field has been called the Field of Blood to this day. [9] Then was fulfilled what had been spoken by the prophet Jeremiah, saying, “And they took the thirty pieces of silver, the price of him on whom a price had been set by some of the sons of Israel, [10] and they gave them for the potter's field, as the Lord directed me.”**

**What do we learn from all of this? (Discuss your thoughts on these points)**

- ◆ I believe that Satan thought he was going to somehow use Judas, along with the chief priests and elders and the people of Jerusalem, to derail the cross. He didn't want Jesus going to the

cross. He knew the Scripture of the Old Testament and understood that Jesus death on the cross was going to bring redemption, so he wanted to do all he could to keep Jesus from the cross.

- ◆ Another alternative thought about Satan in this moment is this—it's possible that the Great Deceiver deceived himself into thinking he could actually win and in his hatred of Jesus, he thought destroying Jesus would bring him victory.
- ◆ I want you to grasp the imagery of a Satan possessed Judas walking up to Jesus in the Garden of Gethsemane and literally giving Jesus a kiss on the cheek in that moment. It's almost as if Satan's saying, "I've been waiting for this opportunity and the hour of your destruction is finally here!"
- ◆ Judas' rejection of and betrayal of Jesus reveals the serious horrifying nature of the outcome that goes along with it. Please feel the weight of Jesus' own words, "It would have been better for that man if he had not been born." Judas is spending eternity in hell because he refused to believe in Jesus as Lord and Savior. It wasn't simply the betrayal. It was his absolute rejection of who Jesus is. Judas is a warning for all who refuse to believe in Jesus.
- ◆ God's purposes and plans always prevail! Satan somehow thought he had won, but God's plan was that the cross would be the means to destroy sin once and for all. Satan's hour and power of darkness, was in fact Jesus' hour to bring redemption and rescue to all who will believe in him. Satan's greatest evil, was God's greatest good, the cross of Christ, where he would demonstrate his perfect love for broken sinners like us.