

RUSSELL SANDERS

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JUDAS ISCARIOT – LESSON 1

OVERVIEW

When we think of Judas Iscariot, one of Jesus' twelve specially chosen disciples, we usually think only of his betrayal of Jesus. But who really was this man? What was his background? How might he have been different from the other eleven chosen ones? Weren't they all being disciplined (trained) by Jesus to become Apostles bearing His message after the ascension of Jesus?

Our investigation of his life will be drawn primarily from the following four passages of scripture, one from each of the four gospels, as follows:

1. Matthew 26:6-10, 14-16
2. Mark 14:1-11
3. Luke 7:36-50
4. John 12:1-11

These four passages provide the story so familiar to us but includes some often-overlooked detail. There may be some additional scriptures added as well as some historical and geographic details.

The fact that Jesus specifically chose Judas Iscariot is recorded in Luke 6:12-16. Jesus had just spent the entire night on the mountain in prayer to God His Father. He had received the plan of who were to be the twelve of His inner circle. Some had already been previously called, but now was the time to complete that special group. It included not only Iscariot, but also at last three others of whom little more or nothing more is said in the gospels. Yet there was a reason for each one to be chosen even if we do not know God's reason for it.

We do, however, know the reason for Iscariot's choosing. God had a plan, and He knew who best to carry it out due to "the seeds" in Iscariot's heart and due to his differing background. We know very little from the gospels alone of James the son of Alphaeus, his brother Judas (of Alphaeus) or Simon Zelotes, but each had their purpose. After Jesus' ascension, each of them were faithful martyrs who gave their lives preaching Jesus to the lost.

Judas Iscariot's role had been prophesied in the Old Testament, without his betrayal, prophecy could not be fulfilled, and the plan of redemption could not happen. Judas' ultimate sacrifice of his life in remorse was a price he paid. Is it possible that his great sorrow resulted in repentance before hanging himself? That is a question for which we have no answer, but it appears that this was not a true repentance as his deep regret and guilt did not turn him to Christ.

However, it took Judas a lifetime to come to this result. Tomorrow we will begin our search to see what brought things around this way as we seek to understand him. There are things we can learn from this investigation. That is why we will “look into it.” Stay tuned.