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JUDAS ISCARIOT – LESSON 2

AMONG THE GALILEANS

How did it come about that it was Judas Iscariot who betrayed Jesus while the other eleven disciples remained true to Jesus even unto their own death? How was Judas different from the others? Let us first look at the others.

Jesus was from Galilee which was a province controlled by Rome in the northernmost part of Israel. It was 50 miles by 30 miles in size and located next to Samaria and Judea, far from Jerusalem. Such geographical separations often bring about differences in culture, social status, and speech differences. We can see that in our own country. For example, if you put together someone who grew up in the Bronx of New York City with a group of men who were native to Alabama, they would probably be a bit wary of one another due to the different way they were raised. There would also be considerable difference in their speech even though they both still speak English.

Such was the case with Jesus and the Twelve. Jesus, “the man of Galilee” from Nazareth chose eleven men as disciples who were also born and raised in Galilee like himself. Judas Iscariot was the only non-Galilean. He was a “man of Jerusalem” being from Bethany which was just two miles from Jerusalem, less than a one-hour walk.

This would be like the New York/Alabama difference. Galileans were lowly regarded (and even more so, their Samaritan neighbors) as country people of very little culture. Their speech also was noticeably different from the well-cultured “proper” city people of Jerusalem. Right away this marked Judas as being different from the other eleven. It was probably not a good “social mix.” The eleven did not appear to regard Judas as being a good fit into the group.

That might have been part of the reason why Jesus gave him a special job to fulfill and give him a purpose and responsibility as the treasurer for the group. John 12:6 and John 13:29 tells us that Judas was the keeper of the money bag. More about that later.

Tomorrow we will look more closely at Iscariot to see just how different he was from these eleven “blue collar worker” disciples from Galilee.