

RUSSELL SANDERS

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JUDAS ISCARIOT – LESSON 5

THE DINNER IN BETHANY

Judas Iscariot, son of the Pharisee, Simon “the leper” Iscariot, had all the training Jesus had given to the twelve. He had even done “the works” of Jesus when sent out in the group of twelve and the group of seventy, two by two. Jesus had given him every opportunity, even giving him special status of being the group treasurer to keep the money bag.

Unfortunately, Judas’ heart was not really right. Yes, he was indeed the odd man of the group being the only non-Galilean. But he had a weakness called “the love of money.” John 12:6 says, “**...he was a thief, and had the bag (of money), and bare (pilfered) what was put therein.**”

As Jesus came into His final week (passion week) approaching Passover, he was invited to a large dinner in Bethany, just outside Jerusalem, at the house of Simon the leper. All of Jesus’ disciples were in attendance, along with other local residents. Lazarus, Mary, and Martha were all present as well.

While at dinner, Mary brought out an alabaster box of very expensive perfume, spikenard, probably imported from India. She took the spikenard and anointed Jesus’ head with it, then used some on his feet and wiped it with her long hair. This was prophetically symbolic. Jesus’ head is anointed signifying Him as King of Kings. His feet are anointed to show His servanthood. The significance of the spikenard was that of a burial spice signifying his death. Of course, none of them understood that at that moment. Prophetic typology is usually understood best in hindsight.

Mary’s act of love caused quite a big stir. The host, Simon, was offended that Jesus would accept such radical behavior from a woman who was such a sinner as Mary. Jesus perceived the Pharisee’s objection and promptly rebuked his host for his haughty attitude. He also pointed out that Simon had not anointed or honored his guest, not even to have the dust washed off his feet. (Luke 7:36-40, 44-50.)

Judas’ father had just been publicly rebuked by Jesus. This was Judas’ home too, in all likelihood. Being reprimanded in his own home was extremely embarrassing to both Simon and to his son Judas. Judas also had another problem with this incident. Judas rebuked Jesus for accepting Mary’s gift to be wasted like this. He pointed out that it could have been sold for 300 pence and given to the poor as Jesus had often done in the past. This amount of money was approximately worth one whole year’s worth of wages for a worker. It was a “smokescreen” objection; Judas wanted it for the money bag so he could steal a little of it. This revealed the true condition of his heart. Tomorrow we shall see what precipitated from this dinner event that surely offended both Judas and his Father Simon Iscariot.