



Judas, a study in honest vs fake repentance

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Hello brothers and sisters in Christ,

The topic of for today's study sounds pretty simple, but the implications and applications all around us are huge. Did Judas get saved in his last moments? How about others such as Hitler? Let's start with what Scripture records about the ending of Judas and then we work from there.

"3 Then Satan entered Judas, surnamed Iscariot, who was numbered among the twelve. 4 So he went his way and conferred with the chief priests and captains, how he might betray Him to them. 5 And they were glad, and agreed to give him money. 6 So he promised and sought opportunity to betray Him to them in the absence of the multitude." (Luke 22:3-6)

"2 And supper being ended, the devil having already put it into the heart of Judas Iscariot, Simon's son, to betray Him, 3 Jesus, knowing that the Father had given all things into His hands, and that He had come from God and was going to God, 4 rose from supper and laid aside His garments, took a towel and girded Himself. 5 After that, He poured water into a basin and began to wash the disciples' feet, and to wipe them with the towel with which He was girded..." (John 13:2-5)

"26 Jesus answered [*John*], 'It is he to whom I shall give a piece of bread when I have dipped it.' And having dipped the bread, He gave it to Judas Iscariot, the son of Simon. 27 Now after the piece of bread, satan entered him. Then Jesus said to him, 'What you do, do quickly.' 28 But no one at the table knew for what reason He said this to him. 29 For some thought, because Judas had the money box, that Jesus had said to him, 'Buy those things we need for the feast,' or that he should give something to the poor. 30 Having received the piece of bread, Judas then went out immediately. And it was night." (John 13:26-30)

(The Lord's Prayer - John 17, in contrast to the "Disciples Model for Prayer" in Matthew 6)

"... 12 While I was with them in the world, I kept them in Your name. Those whom You gave Me I have kept; and none of them is lost except the son of perdition, that the Scripture might be fulfilled." (John 17:12)

"... 10 Then Pilate said to Him, 'Are You not speaking to me? Do You not know that I have [c]power to crucify You, and power to release You?' 11 Jesus answered, 'You could have no power at all against Me unless it had been given you from above. Therefore the one who delivered Me to you has the greater sin.'" (John 19:10-11)

"3 When Judas, who had betrayed him, saw that Jesus was condemned, he was seized with remorse and returned the thirty pieces of silver to the chief priests and the elders. 4 'I have sinned,' he said, 'for I have betrayed innocent blood.' 'What is that to us?' they replied. 'That's your responsibility.' 5 So Judas threw the money into the temple and left. Then he went away and hanged himself." (Matthew 27:3-5)

"15 And in those days Peter stood up in the midst of the disciples (altogether the number of names was about a hundred and twenty), and said, 16 'Men and brethren, this Scripture had to be fulfilled, which the Holy Spirit spoke before by the mouth of David concerning Judas, who became a guide to those who arrested Jesus; 17 for he was numbered with us and obtained a part in this ministry.' 18 (Now this man purchased a field with the wages of iniquity; and falling headlong, he burst open in the middle and all his entrails gushed out. 19 And it became known to all those dwelling in Jerusalem; so that field is called in their own language, Akel Dama, that is, Field of Blood.) 20 'For it is written in the Book of Psalms: "Let his dwelling place be desolate, And let no one live in it"; and, "Let another take his office."' 21 'Therefore, of these men who have accompanied us all the time that the Lord Jesus went in and out among us, 22 beginning from the baptism of John to that day when He was taken up from us, one of these must become a witness with us of His resurrection.'" (Acts 1:15-22)

"19 They went out from us, but they were not of us; for if they had been of us, they would have continued with us; but they went out that they might be made manifest, that none of them were of us." (1st John 2:19)

As you can see there, from Jesus' own words and the Words of Scripture, Judas chose to join satan's rebellion - probably for the love of money and dreaming he could gain favor with Jesus by forcing Jesus to over-take Rome (you see the links in the text itself, especially in John 12), but in the process Judas knew he was betraying Jesus and did it anyway. That was where Judas lost - everything. Judas was so in-tune with satan's plan to murder Jesus and silence His teachings, that for the final acts of Judas in betraying Jesus, satan himself possessed Judas. That's really bad. The only other person we find in Scripture that gets possessed by satan himself is **the** antichrist, at the second half of the Tribulation.

So, what you just saw shows that Scripture says that Judas is in Hell, waiting for the Lake of Fire. Yes? Okay, so while we're talking about Judas, let's review what quality of person he appeared to be to all of the other disciples. Let's start at the Last Supper. Jesus and His disciples are gathered together (that was the twelve and more) in the upper room. Jesus leads a Passover Seder, but changes it slightly because He is starting the Lord's Supper, and He is about to fulfill the requirements of the Jewish Feast of Passover as the Passover Lamb, or in the words of John the Baptizer "**Behold! The Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!**" (John 1:29). So, that just briefly sets the scene for Jesus' words.

"17 In the evening He came with the twelve. 18 Now as they sat and ate, Jesus said, 'Assuredly, I say to you, one of you who eats with Me will betray Me.' 19 And they began to be sorrowful, and to say to Him one by one, 'Is it I?' And another said, 'Is it I?' 20 He answered and said to them, 'It is one of the twelve, who dips with Me in the dish. 21 The Son of Man indeed goes just as it is written of Him, but

woe to that man by whom the Son of Man is betrayed! It would have been good for that man if he had never been born." (Mark 14:17-21)

> **Notes:** We see very clearly here that Jesus was talking to the twelve and at least a few others, but Jesus was specific that the one betraying Him was "one of the twelve". So, what is the response of every disciple? **"Is it I?"** Can you believe that? The betrayer is among them, and they aren't all pointing at him, they are asking about themselves - would I betray Jesus? That is one key clue of how clever and deceptive Judas was among them. They never suspected him - in fact they trusted him more than most of the disciples, even trusting him to be the money keeper. The apostle John fills that in for us.

"4 But one of His disciples, Judas Iscariot, Simon's son, who would betray Him, said, 5 'Why was this fragrant oil not sold for three hundred denarii and given to the poor?' 6 This he said, not that he cared for the poor, but because he was a thief, and had the money box; and he used to take what was put in it." (John 12:4-6)

And this man Judas was apparently so skilled at his deceptive game, that when he went out with the 12, he was able to look like and act like them. **"These twelve Jesus sent out and commanded them, saying: "Do not go into the way of the Gentiles, and do not enter a city of the Samaritans..."** (Matthew 10:5)

Judas is a prime example of what Jesus warned about in Matthew 7.

"21 "Not everyone who says to Me, 'Lord, Lord,' shall enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of My Father in heaven. 22 Many will say to Me in that day, 'Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in Your name, cast out demons in Your name, and done many wonders in Your name?' 23 And then I will declare to them, 'I never knew you; depart from Me, you who practice lawlessness!'" (Matthew 7:21-23)

In case you missed it, Judas will hear those words, the most chilling of all Scripture and all eternity **"... depart from Me"**... it's too late for him. He can't undo his actions.

So the next question is what about Hitler and even false "saints" like "Mother Teresa" (Anjezë Bojaxhiu of Argentina)? Where are they? If after doing so much evil, they never repented publicly - they're in Hell, waiting the Lake of Fire for all of eternity. The topic here is the difference between a fake performance that looks like repentance for humans, versus the real repentance that leads to a real change (2nd Corinthians 5:17; 1st John 1:9)

>> But, some will say - "Steven, how can you say that? What about the thief on the cross?" I say - good question. Let's look at the thief on the cross and the difference between genuine repentance and not quite genuine remorse/sorrow for sin.

The thief on the cross was a common thief, seemingly not a career one who made a fortune stealing - that would have probably been more like Herod. So, this thief was being put to death probably because he had murdered someone when he was stealing - I can't think of another reason why he would have had the death penalty, and I don't know how to figure it out differently, so for now, it's the best I've got. We do know that Barrabbas was a murder, anarchist, and a thief from the gospels accounts and he had the death penalty - which was placed on Jesus instead. Anyway, so back to this thief - he and the other thief started out cursing Jesus (we see that in Matt. 27:44). After 3 hours of agony pushing their bodies off of the nails in their feet and pulling on the nails in their wrists to get air in their lungs - the thief was finally sobered and repentant, even publicly rebuked the other thief on the cross and pleaded for God's mercy (you find that in Luke 23:39-43). Jesus even publicly promised him that he'd be in Paradise (then Heaven after Jesus' resurrection).

I think too many people ignore or are seemingly unaware of Jesus' teachings where He lays out so clearly how a person can be hardened in sin and not able to repent and at the same time don't want to. Sin isn't just mistakes - it's willful rebellion against God. A person is either choosing to repent of sin daily, or they are hardening their heart in sin daily. By the time they are close to dying, they have made a lot of choices toward repentance or toward hardened rebellion. That is explained very clearly in Galatians 6.

"7 Do not be deceived, God is not mocked; for whatever a man sows, that he will also reap. 8 For he who sows to his flesh will of the flesh reap corruption, but he who sows to the Spirit will of the Spirit reap everlasting life. 9 And let us not grow weary while doing good, for in due season we shall reap if we do not lose heart." (Galatians 6:7-9)

As you can see, we are either getting closer to God and away from sin, or we are getting close to sin and away from God. A person whose pattern has been chasing sin and gotten to the extent of hardening their hearts in sin/rebellion against God (especially if they are a leader in it) - that person cannot do a "hail mary" or a "deathbed repentance". It doesn't work that way. Can they then say a simple *"I'm sorry for whatever I did that bothered you God"* and be saved? No. Jesus made that very clear. Sometimes, in God's grace, God does allow/arrange for an individual to have close call with death or even to die and be brought back, so that they can get right with God then and change from there (for however many days they have left)... but if they have lived for sin and doing evil, and in their final moments they are still hardened, smug, or even pretending to be righteous and ignoring their sin when they are dying, you have a lot of clues where they are going, and it's not Heaven - their destination is Hell/Lake of Fire for all eternity (based on Jesus' teachings).

So, is there a way to tell the difference between true and false repentance? Yes, we have the example of Judas and we have God through Paul explaining the difference.

Let's review Judas first. After doing all of that evil in betraying Jesus so He would be captured (with His consent) and then falsely accused and then crucified... what was Judas' response? Let's look at that.

"3 Then Judas, Jesus' betrayer, seeing that He had been condemned, was remorseful and brought back the thirty pieces of silver to the chief priests and elders, 4 saying, 'I have sinned by betraying innocent blood.' And they said, 'What is that to us? You see to it!' 5 Then he threw down the pieces of silver in the temple and departed, and went and hanged himself." (Matthew 27:3-5)

You see there a remorse... and yet it falls short of repentance that saves the soul. God through Paul explains that in his second letter (epistle) to the house churches in the city of Corinth:

"9 Now I rejoice, not that you were made sorry, but that your sorrow led to repentance. For you were made sorry in a godly manner, that you might suffer loss from us in nothing. 10 For godly sorrow produces repentance leading to salvation, not to be regretted; but the sorrow of the world produces death. 11 For observe this very thing, that you sorrowed in a godly manner: What diligence it produced in you, what clearing of yourselves, what indignation, what fear, what vehement desire, what zeal, what vindication! In all things you proved yourselves to be clear in this matter." (2nd Corinthians 7:9-11)

That's the difference. I'm sure all of us have seen fake repentance. Many of us can name a regular liar who when forced to will apologize - and then keep lying. Same with a thief. A porn addict. A drug addict. A drunkard. A sexually immoral person. Etc. Having sorrow doesn't change the heart, just like knowing God exists doesn't make someone a Christian. James 2 reminds us: **"19 You believe that there is one God. You do well. Even the demons believe—and tremble!"** (James 2:19) The devil (satan) and his rebel demons (fallen angels) do have fear and do have regret... they even have an understanding that God not only exists, but that He is the Eternal Judge... but does it change how they act? Nope. On a lesser level -

same thing can happen in humans, and many do just that - harden their hearts, yet feign/fake repentance. God knows the difference - and sometimes we can too.

To wrap up this point, we need to look just a bit more. Especially when a person's life is that they have become a multiple murderer and/or multiple pervert, it's extremely hard to repent because they love that sin and cover it up with various things. They don't hate that sin - they won't let go of it, so their heart is decided, as Romans 1 explains - God gave them over because of their choices. So, just like Judas who walked with Jesus and betrayed Him couldn't easily repent because of how much evil he did, so is true about those who pledge themselves to evil and do so for many years - they don't repent, because they don't want to. Many of those in leadership who are doing evil have also made covenants with evil people or even satan/demons - those can't be broken with a half-hearted "I'm sorry" on their death-bed. That is why I say what I do ~ Scripture is very clear... it's sadly not well-read or well-taught in North America though.

So, some will ask "Steven, what about others who died in the Bible?". We don't have a lot of their dying words. Sometimes we have God's conclusion on them - sometimes we only have a few clues. One example that is often asked about when talking about Judas dying is - what about King Saul? Where is he? King Saul was a very unique example. Let's look at what the Scriptures show.

"12 When the woman [*a witch*] saw Samuel, she cried out with a loud voice. And the woman spoke to Saul, saying, 'Why have you deceived me? For you are Saul!' 13 And the king said to her, 'Do not be afraid. What did you see?' And the woman said to Saul, 'I saw a spirit ascending out of the earth.' 14 So he said to her, 'What is his form?' And she said, 'An old man is coming up, and he is covered with a mantle.' And Saul perceived that it was Samuel, and he stooped with his face to the ground and bowed down. 15 Now Samuel said to Saul, 'Why have you disturbed me by bringing me up?' And Saul answered, 'I am deeply distressed; for the Philistines make war against me, and God has departed from me and does not answer me anymore, neither by prophets nor by dreams. Therefore I have called you, that you may reveal to me what I should do.' 16 Then Samuel said: 'So why do you ask me, seeing the Lord has departed from you and has become your enemy? 17 And the Lord has done for Himself as He spoke by me. For the Lord has torn the kingdom out of your hand and given it to your neighbor, David. 18 Because you did not obey the voice of the Lord nor execute His fierce wrath upon Amalek, therefore the Lord has done this thing to you this day. 19 Moreover the Lord will also deliver Israel with you into the hand of the Philistines. And tomorrow you and your sons will be with me. The Lord will also deliver the army of Israel into the hand of the Philistines.'" (1st Samuel 28:12-19)

> There is so much to cover to explain this passage well. But the short notes are King Saul summoned a witch to call up Samuel since God would not speak to him - because of his public refusal to obey very specific commands of God. And God through Samuel tells him that he and his sons will "be with me" - meaning Paradise (the place of righteous souls before Jesus came, died, and rose again).

You have to remember, each person is an individual. We cannot know if someone is saved or not - but we can follow the pattern of fruit of their life so that we can lovingly (even boldly so) warn them to flee God's wrath, or at least their children and families, or to comfort the children and families of the honestly saved and to teach them to walk in the fear of the Lord and learn what God says is right and wrong.

So, that doesn't solve all of the questions on this matter, but I pray it helps a lot of them be answered - right from God's clear Written Word. Feel free to share if you think this can help someone else. And feel

free to ask if you have a Bible question that you'd like to see some Bible verses on. I realize I referenced a few other studies here - if you'd like them, again - just ask. Let's pray.

Heavenly Father, Thank You for Your Word. Thank You for explaining so much of the world around us in it - past, present and future. Please grow us in hunger and thirst for Your Word so that we make more quality to spend in it and learn more about You, more about us and sin, and how we can grow in following Your beautiful holy ways, but also that we might boldly yet graciously compel others around us to turn from sin and give their lives wholly to Jesus Christ. We Thank You again. We love You and praise You, in Jesus' Name, amen

~ Watching, Preaching, Praying, your growing bro, SH