

The Last Week of Jesus Christ

It's Wednesday

Wednesday of the Passion Week is often called "Silent Wednesday." The dominant thought about this day was that it served as the day Judas used for arranging the betrayal of Jesus. It seems appropriate that a man who sought riches through betrayal of the Messiah sent from God would receive silence as his reward.

Judas Iscariot is a tragic figure

Judas is derived from Judah, which means, "Jehovah leads." Is there a more paradoxical name given in history? We know that Judas was from Judah (southern Israel) from the fact that his last name is a geographic reference. Judas' last name is Iscariot, which is a compound word made up of "ish" (man) and "Kerioth" - a city in southern Judea (see Joshua 15:25). Therefore, Judas is the "man from Kerioth." Out of the twelve disciples, Judas was the only disciple who did not come from the Galilee region. Kerioth was in Judah. Judah was known for its affluence and, therefore, Judas was most likely from an affluent culture. For this reason, it is understandable that Judas was given charge of overseeing the treasury for the disciples (see John 12:6). All of the other disciples were somehow connected to one another prior to following Christ (a brother, friend, family member), but the connection Judas had is a mystery. How and when did he begin to follow Jesus? We simply do not know.

Judas must have seemed very spiritual

Judas healed people. Judas stayed with Christ when the crowd left (John 6:66-71). When Jesus spoke of betrayal at the Last Supper, not one of the disciples seemed to consider Judas to be the one who would betray Him (see John 13:21-25). As a matter of fact, Judas is never mentioned by any of the other disciples as being deficient in faith in any way. Other than Christ (see John 6:64), Judas was a master of hypocrisy!

What would drive Judas to betray Christ?

It seems that the root issue was money.

Judas had followed Christ for three years. Judas had endured persecution, hunger, endless talks from Jesus around the fire, a life abandoned to the cause of the Kingdom of Heaven, and for what? Jesus was now speaking of leaving and death (see Matt.26:2). How could Judas redeem the three years he had put in? He was a known follower of Christ and that type of reputation would follow him. Judas had hitched his wagon to Christ, and now it was clear Jesus was not going to restore the powerful Kingdom that had been long anticipated and Judas would soon be on the run. Judas needed a nest egg and fast. Since Judas had seen Jesus face a hostile mob and simply walk away when they tried to kill Him (see Luke 4:28-30), he must have thought betraying Christ would lead to one more opportunity for Jesus to escape but this time Judas would be the richer for it, thirty pieces of silver richer! Judas made his way to those who would pay the most, the religious leaders who hated Jesus with a passion (see Matt.12:14). It must have seemed like the perfect plan!

Judas was self-deluding

Tragically, Judas did not realize a fundamental problem with sin - it creates an alternate reality based on personal desire. When Judas began to strategize how to sin against Christ he entered the world of personal delusion. He began to forge his own reality based on how to get what he most wanted. He constructed an imaginary world in which He would win.

The world is replete with people who thought they could get away with something, but only find themselves wondering how they could have been so wrong or, even worse, trying to figure out how to not get caught the next time! For Judas there was no next time. Judas was living in the moment. Judas did get an outcome for his betrayal; Judas killed himself and his name is now forever associated with the spiritual bankrupt.

PERSONAL THOUGHTS:

In what ways do we seem spiritual and yet find our motivation leaning more in the direction of Judas than it is being sold-out for Jesus?

