

Our Lenten Bible Study

Return from Betrayal

Judas in the Garden of Gethsemane: Betrayal
Matthew 26:14–25, 44–56

OPENING

Each lesson will begin with a reading of Joel 2:13 and a prayer specific to the theme of the study for that week, keeping with the theme, “Return to the Lord.”

Return to the Lord your God, for He is gracious and merciful, slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love. (Joel 2:13)

Prayer: Gracious Lord, as part of Your suffering, You knew that one of Your own, Judas Iscariot, would betray You into the hands of sinners, bringing the hour of Your suffering and our salvation to fulfilment of the Father’s will. You have shown us the Father’s love in that while we were still sinners, You died on the cross for the forgiveness of our sins. Create in us clean hearts and renew a right spirit within us. Draw us ever closer to You that we may dwell in Your presence the remainder of our days and unto eternal life with You. In Jesus’ name we pray. Amen.

INTRODUCTION

Judas . . . the name has become synonymous with betrayal. Jesus, who had chosen Judas as one of the twelve disciples, referred to Judas as “a devil” (John 6:70–71). In His High Priestly Prayer, Jesus called Judas “the son of perdition” (John 17:12 KJV). Though Judas, when he saw that Jesus was condemned to die, felt remorse, it still had been said of him by Jesus, “The Son of Man goes as it is written of Him, but woe to that man by whom the Son of Man is betrayed! It would have been better for that man if he had not been born” (Matthew 26:24).

QUESTIONS

1. What is betrayal? Why is it such a damaging sin?
2. In what way did Judas’s betrayal come about? How did Judas plan his handing over of Jesus? Imagine you are a reporter. How would you answer the usual questions: the who, what, when, where, why, and how of Judas’s betrayal of Jesus?

3. The night that Jesus was betrayed was not the only time the Mount of Olives (or Olivet) was mentioned during Jesus' life and ministry. What events took place on the Mount of Olives besides Jesus' betrayal by Judas?
Matthew 24:3 Luke 19:29 Luke 21:37 Luke 22:39 Acts 1:12

4. Why did Jesus come forward toward Judas and the officers bearing lanterns and torches and weapons (John 18:3–6)? Why did Jesus ask the question, "Whom do you seek?" What is the reaction and posture of the officers when Jesus says, "I am He"?

CONCLUSION

Much is made in the four Gospel accounts about Judas. More is written of him by Luke in Acts 1. Betrayal is one of the more sinister acts that a human being can perpetrate because it involves intentionally breaking the trust of someone close to gain something. The account of Jesus being betrayed by Judas is evocative of Joseph being betrayed by his brothers in Genesis 37 and, after everything, how Joseph responds to them. The words "You meant evil against me, but God meant it for good, to bring about that many people should be kept alive, as they are today" (Genesis 50:20) have a Christological component, which looks forward to Judas's evil deed of greed and Jesus dying to win salvation for all.

CLOSING:

Alas! And Did My Savior Bleed (LSB 437, st. 1-2)

Alas! And did my Savior bleed, And did my sov'reign die?
Would He devote that sacred head For such a worm as I?

Was it for crimes that I had done He groaned upon the tree?
Amazing pity, grace unknown, And love beyond degree!

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We pray the Lord's Prayer