



May 28, 2023
“Jesus and Judas”

SS 9:30, Service at 10:30 with King’s Kids.

News:

Memorial Day... Remember...

★VBS June 12-16★ ★Church Camp August 24-27★

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JOHN 13:21-30 ~ 21When Jesus had said these things, He became troubled in spirit, and testified and said, “Truly, truly I say to you that one of you will betray Me.” 22The disciples began looking at one another, at a loss to know of which one He was speaking. 23Lying back on Jesus’ chest was one of His disciples, whom Jesus loved. 24So Simon Peter nodded to this disciple and said to him, “Tell us who it is of whom He is speaking.” 25He then simply leaned back on Jesus’ chest and said to Him, “Lord, who is it?” 26Jesus then answered, “That man is the one for whom I shall dip the piece of bread and give it to him.” So when He had dipped the piece of bread, He took and gave it to Judas, the son of Simon Iscariot. 27After this, Satan then entered him. Therefore Jesus said to him, “What you are doing, do it quickly.” 28Now none of those reclining at the table knew for what purpose He had said this to him. 29For some were assuming, since Judas kept the money box, that Jesus was saying to him, “Buy the things we need for the feast”; or else, that he was to give something to the poor. 30So after receiving the piece of bread, he left immediately; and it was night.

None of the other 11 Apostles had any _____ of whom Jesus spoke.

1) With God, it is always plausible _____.

There is always room for human _____ when the answer is hard to accept.

It will always require _____.

Fill out the other side, detach this part of the page, and place it in the offering plate or the prayer/suggestion box in the lobby or with an Elder or Deacon of the church.

God Bless You!

“Troubled,” is ταρασσω (tä-řäs-sō), meaning to _____ or ____.

Jesus was “troubled” on behalf of _____ because Jesus loved _____ (II Peter 3:9-16).

Jesus was also “troubled” by the way the actions of Judas would put a _____ in the path of others (Matthew 18:7).

2) Jesus can never be accused of not _____.

His love is so _____ that He grieves not just for the lost soul but for the objections and excuses that such a soul gives to others.

Judas was necessary to God’s plan, not because He had no other choice, but because he _____. Judas was a lost soul who lost his soul.

Judas was no criminal _____...

Judas was not motivated by _____...

Judas wasn’t especially _____; he was especially nationalistic...

Judas desperately wanted the world around him to change into the world he coveted. For such people, their desire is _____ by a deep-seated belief that what they crave is what God craves, and so, even if brutality is required, it is brutality used on behalf of _____ - they are doing _____ work. They convince themselves that “the ends justify the means.”

It never works because it is never God’s Will to violate His _____ in order to establish His _____ (John 6:70 & Matthew 16:23, Mark 8:33). People who will perpetrate the most horrific evil conceivable in the name of a fervent religious belief that what they are doing is _____ (Matthew 27:3&4).

3) What is needed is a purging of _____-sufficiency in order to Salvifically embrace the perfect sufficiency of Jesus.

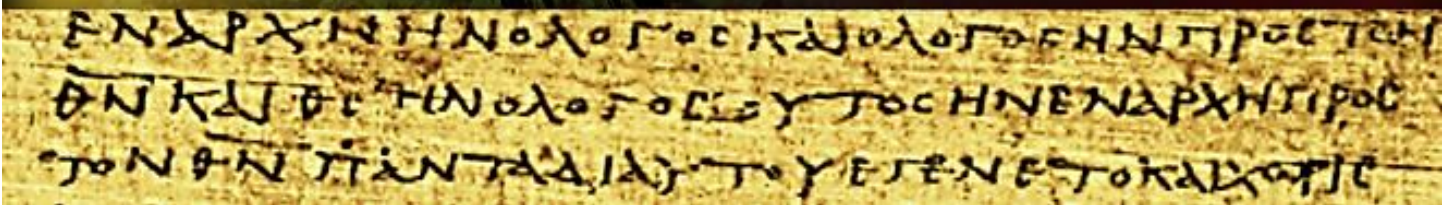
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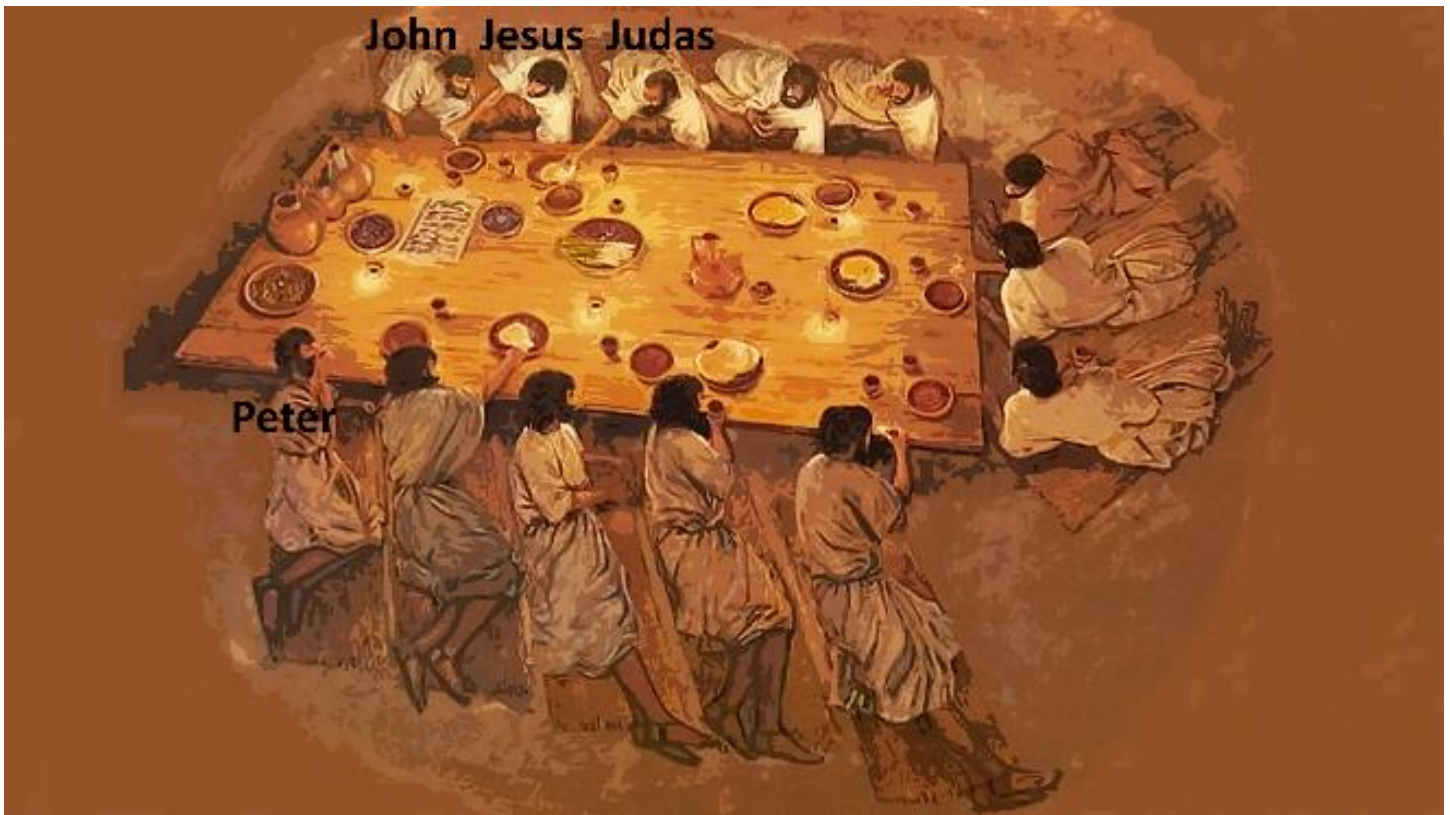
Name _____ Address _____
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CHRISTIAN FELLOWSHIP





Last week we talked about triclinia and so this slide simply serves as a reminder of the arrangement for the meal. Each person would lay down front to back, on their left side, supported by their left elbow, eating with their right hand, and with their feet out away from the food. Jesus as the host, John, in front of Him, functioning as the ἀρχιτρικλινος (ä̀-ḗ-tṛē-klē-nōs), or coordinator of the meal. Judas to Jesus' back in the most honored and trusted position, and Peter across the way in the lowliest spot.

John 13:21–30, 21When Jesus had said these things, He became troubled in spirit, and testified and said, “Truly, truly I say to you that one of you will betray Me.”

22The disciples began looking at one another, at a loss to know of which one He was speaking. 23Lying back on Jesus' chest was one of His disciples, whom Jesus loved. 24So Simon Peter nodded to this disciple and said to him, "Tell us who it is of whom He is speaking." 25He then simply leaned back on Jesus' chest and said to Him, "Lord, who is it?" 26Jesus then answered, "That man is the one for whom I shall dip the piece of bread and give it to him." So when He had dipped the piece of bread, He took and gave it to Judas, the son of Simon Iscariot. 27After this, Satan then entered him. Therefore Jesus said to him, "What you are doing, do it quickly." 28Now none of those reclining at the table knew for what purpose He had said this to him. 29For some were assuming, since Judas kept the money box, that Jesus was saying to him, "Buy the things we need for the feast"; or else, that he was to give something to the poor. 30So after receiving the piece of bread, he left immediately; and it was night.

This is all quite straightforward because we've been discussing aspects of most of it over the last month or so. Notice that after Jesus had gone around the room behind the Apostles, washing their feet, likely finishing up with Peter, and then returning to His place, He became "troubled." I want to talk about that a bit, but,

while we still have this picture up, let me point out a couple of things.

None of the other 11 Apostles had any idea of whom Jesus spoke. So, “out there” Peter gestured across to John who in-turn leaned back on Jesus to whisper Peter’s question. Jesus answered that He would show him with a gesture, and then Jesus immediately followed through, so that it would be painfully obvious to John that Judas was the betrayer...

It’s so incredibly obvious most people assume that John now knew but kept it to himself. Contrary to that human opinion, the Bible declares otherwise. John still had no clue. Why, how is that possible?

1) My first point today is that with God it is always plausible deniability. I don’t mean that in a way that God tries to obfuscate, or mislead, or protect His reputation; I mean that with God, there is always a way for a human to rationalize that it wasn’t God, wasn’t a miracle, wasn’t what He said, or at least it wasn’t what He meant.

We see that here. Jesus told John, not in plain unambiguous words like, “John, dude, it’s Judas who is

about to betray Me.” Instead, it was “That man is the one for whom I shall dip the piece of bread and give it to him.” Jesus then did exactly what He just said, but it was also exactly what was expected of Him as the host at such a meal.

Jesus immediately dipped a piece flatbread into some kind of minced, pureed, or mashed food, and offered it to Judas, the guest of honor. Such a gesture was as required from the host as eating it would be for the guest. Refusal to offer, or refusal to accept, was socially unacceptable.

We see in the other Gospels that Judas’ hand was already in the bowl. It means that Judas didn’t want Jesus to serve him, Jesus did anyway, and Judas was on the spot to accept nourishment from the hand of the Lord, one more time.

For John, it was ambiguous. Did Jesus do that to show that it was Judas, or was that just part of His duty and He will give the actual sign later? Could it be Judas? Well, of course not. Jesus put Judas in the spot of trust and was just doing what was expected - I need to watch for another sign. Plausible deniability in this vein

means that there is always plenty of room for human rationalizing when the answer is hard to accept.

Then in an intimate moment Jesus leaned back on Judas, like John just had on Him, and He whispered to Judas that He knew that it was him. Since there was no changing his mind at that point, Jesus told him to quickly get on with it. The passage declares that Judas was now possessed by Satan himself and after leaving the room still “none” of the guys had a clue about Judas.



Jesus “became troubled in spirit.” We saw in the last chapter where Jesus said, “My soul has become troubled,” and in the chapter before that, we saw that

Jesus was, “deeply moved in spirit and was - troubled.” “Troubled,” is ταρασσω (tä-räs-sō) meaning to agitate or stir up, and so it means to be greatly disturbed or upset due to a state of dread, or by being terrified, or because of an intense concern. It’s a word denoting such a powerful inner turmoil that it’s often all of those things combined in a swirling cauldron of torment.

Jesus felt human emotions just as intensely as any of us. The difference is that He always had enough faith to overrule His sorrow, anger, and fear.

Notice that there is a variation in the way it is stated in each of the three chapters that I mentioned, and while it is generally the same feeling, there is a little nuance involved. Here it was His “Spirit” that was “troubled.” This, along with the context of His statement “one of you will betray Me,” would indicate that His dread about what was coming, while still personal and multifaceted, was more centered on His concern for others.

Jesus was “troubled,” or we could say stressed out, by Judas’ inability to understand what he was doing, and He was concerned about how that would affect the rest of the team.

FOR
GOD
SO LOVED
THE world THAT HE GAVE
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JOHN 3:16

Jesus was “troubled” on behalf of Judas because Jesus loved Judas enough to die for him too. Jesus had done everything in His power, other than taking control over Judas’ choices, that He could do in order to save Judas. Jesus knew how it was going to play out and He knew the horrible remorse that Judas would feel and far worse, He knew the eternal torment that Judas would fail to avoid.

The Bible declares that God will go to extraordinary lengths, with great patience, in order to save all who can be saved, and that He grieves for those who cannot be saved - “not willing for any to perish, but for all to come to repentance” (2 Peter 3:9–16).



Jesus was also “troubled” by the way the actions of Judas would put a stumbling block in the path of others. It isn’t enough for us to destroy our own future; we must drag others down with us. From the stumbler’s side of it, I cannot begin to tell you how tired I am of people telling me that they reject Christianity, or at least reject organized Christianity, because the church hurt them. It is always the same. Human beings, whether clergy or laity, whether genuine Christians or pseudo-Christians, failed to live up to that person’s expectation, and so they’re going to take it out on Jesus by either rejecting Him, or by rejecting His Bride.

People looked at Judas and rejected Christ. The Truth is that such people would have found another stumbling block to blame, but as Jesus said in Matthew 18:7, “It is inevitable that stumbling blocks come; but woe to the person through whom the stumbling block comes!” When Jesus says “woe,” it isn’t good.



Don't misunderstand, I'm not, for a moment, saying that the church hasn't hurt people. The church hurts everyone - it always has its Judas'. Sometimes he's me and sometimes he's you. You see, the church, as I intimated, is made up of all kinds of people - people just as broken and sinful as you are and some who may be far worse. Some things that the church has done are unspeakably horrible, but no matter what

fallen and depraved human beings have done as the church, it does not change the only question that matters. What are you going to do with Jesus? There are countless objections and excuses, but it never changes the question that remains, what are you personally going to do with Jesus?



I watched a show that I cannot recommend. In it, a non-Christian is talking to a religious zealot Catholic Priest who has abused him. The non-Christian said, "Your God has all these laws. You're supposed to teach His laws, but you break them to teach them. So, the laws mean nothing to you. Which means... Your God doesn't exist, and you know it."



The first extrapolation is reasonable. Any Christian who disobeys Christ for any reason, has proven that Christ's command to love does not mean enough to them, to keep. Without recognition and repentance - "woe to that person." The second extrapolation, while understandable under the circumstances, is a clean break from rational thinking - it is foolish in the extreme. The priest, in this case, is as unloving as he could be and therefore is an example of the kind of fanatically legalistic religiosity that launches inquisitions, but his vile and despicable behavior has nothing to do with the Truth of the Gospel that he himself did not understand. This priest was a stumbling block. Jesus would be "troubled" by the priest, just as He was by Judas, both

for the soul of the stumbling block and for the objections and excuses that the stumbling block's behavior would enable in others.



2) That's my second point for today... Jesus can never be accused of not caring. Why is there so much evil in the world? Well, that's what happens when you allow humans to choose. Our universe and all that it contains was created by the Will of God through the Word of God propelled by the Breath of God to be good, and it was good - perfectly good.

The ancestors from whom every person who has ever walked the planet descend, chose to reject God in favor of being their own gods. Evil begets evil and so

evil ensued, and evil gains momentum with every sin since. We stand back and wonder why there is so much evil and why it seems to be multiplying. It's like a person shoveling mouthful after mouthful of cake and ice cream day after day, week after week, and then wondering why they are gaining weight.

No one wants a world full of evil. We all desire what is perfectly good. It shows that this world, this reality, isn't our home. Some reject God all the more because of evil and others seek out and accept God all the more because of evil. The first says that God cannot exist, or if He does, He cannot be good. The second rightly recognizes that evil is caused by us and that only God has the cure.



Jesus is the cure. He proved beyond doubt that He will go to extraordinary extremes pursuing people with great patience and forbearance because He is Love. The only way anyone is going to join Satan and Judas in the Lake of Fire is by continually hardening their heart against His offered opportunities until there is nothing left but evil. His love is so unconditional that He grieves not just for the lost soul but for the objections and excuses that such a soul gives to others.

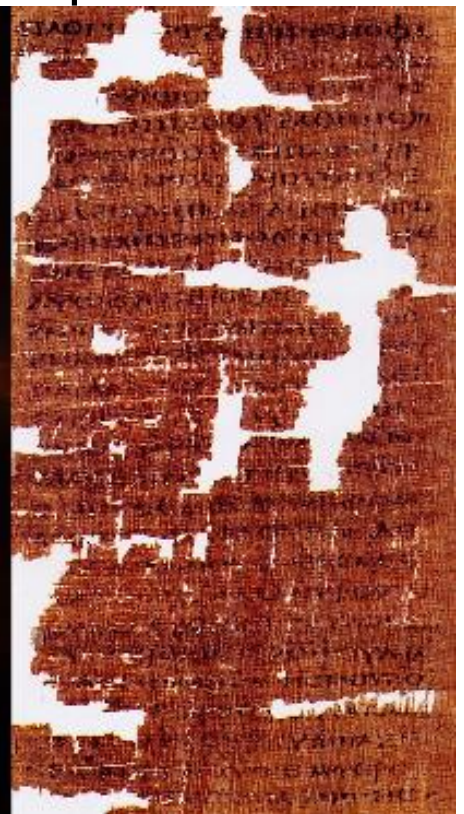


Let's talk about Judas for a moment. There's a lot of misinformation and misunderstanding about the only man considered worse than Adolph Hitler. First, we need to understand the necessity of Judas to God's plan. While the Jewish leaders were eager to kill Jesus, they had already decided to act after the Passover was finished to avoid a riot. Better to wait for a time less connected with the coming of the Messiah and when the city was back to normal, and all the pilgrims had returned to their homes and all the clamor for Jesus had subsided.

God's plan was for Jesus to institute a new Passover with His guys and then to be the ultimate Passover

Lamb the next day, hence the need for two calendars and Judas. An inside man to get the Jewish leaders to move up their timetable with the ability to ambush Jesus at night and get Him into the hands of the Romans, charged with treason, before anyone in the city was up and around the next morning.

I mentioned last week that there is a liberal school of thought that Judas was truly the most trusted Apostle, and all-around good guy, who was only doing what Jesus had commanded him to do. This, in order for the Crucifixion to take place at the same time that the priests were sacrificing lambs in the Temple.



That's not a new idea. The false "Gospel of Judas" was written by Gnostics in about 150 A.D. In this apocryphal gospel, Judas was the only Apostle to correctly understand Jesus. The other 11, and all the other disciples, got it wrong and the Christianity they taught is a false religion. Gnostics believed that each human was divine and that the goal was to free your mind from the evil physical, material, natural realm and embrace the God within you. Judas' betrayal was his attempt to help Jesus shed His corrupt physical body.

Many similar claims have been made in more recent and popular works such as *The Last Temptation of Christ*, *Jesus Christ Superstar*, and *the Da Vinci Code*.

It's all utter nonsense, of course. The Bible, both with the Old Testament prophecies and the New Testament accounts confirm that Judas was a lost soul who lost his soul. I'd like to quickly address three other common ideas that swirl within Christianity that, while not as blasphemous, are just as false. The first is the idea that Judas was evil. The second is that Judas was motivated by greed. The third is that Judas was a masterfully artful deceiver.



Taking the last one first, Judas was no criminal mastermind and never outsmarted anyone, except maybe himself. Jesus was always aware of Judas' machinations. The inability of the other disciples to catch on to Judas' treachery was due to Jesus, not Judas. Jesus was the one Who continued placing Judas in positions of supreme trust. Jesus appointed Judas treasurer and accountant of the ministry's money. Jesus set Judas in the most honored and trusted position at the Last Supper.



Nothing could be more American than to “Stand up for religious freedom.” But that means the religious freedom for everyone equally, especially when you don’t agree with them and their religious views. As to Judas’ motivation. While it is true that Judas was greedy and that he was a thief, long before he was the most infamous traitor of all time, that didn’t motivate him to betray Jesus. Judas tried to give the 30 pieces of silver back and when they refused, he threw it on the floor at their feet. What motivated Judas was religious fervor that was masking an intense pride for an ideal, along with a parallel hatred of all that hindered his ideal.

His true motivation answers the first thing as well. Judas wasn't especially evil; he was especially nationalistic. Judas was deeply religious and if I'm correct about his family nom de guerre, Iscariot, Judas was fiercely so, from birth. To understand what I mean we need to recognize that "there is nothing new under the sun" (Ecclesiastes 1:9), and that the Judaism of the first century was similar to American Christianity today, in that, it was made up of people who, based upon their particular bias, exercised their faith with very different areas of emphasis.

Some, like the Essenes, were similar to the Desert Fathers, the Monks to follow, and the Brethren Groups like the Amish and Hutterites today - they physically separated from secular society.

Some, like the Sadducees, were similar to a lot of middle-of-the-road, have-your-cake-and-eat-it, Christians today - they compartmentalized their spiritual life, in order to enjoy secular life, without restriction or guilt. They separated their spiritualized spirituality and their physical secularism and enjoyed both.

Some, like the Pharisees, were similar to a lot of seriously studious Christians today - they lived their faith openly, fully, and unapologetically. They condemned sin where they found it believing that while God was establishing His spiritual Kingdom through them, it was He, not them, who was going to establish His physical Kingdom. They spiritually separated from secular society.

Some, like the Zealots, were similar to both the extremely liberal and extremely conservative branches of Christianity today - they actively try to radically change society to mirror their religion. We see that on the left in denominations like the Salvation Army and we see it on the right with movements like the Second Great Awakening, the Moral Majority, and Christian Nationalism today. It is a belief that God will establish both His spiritual and His physical Kingdom through the actions of His devout followers. For such people there is no separation between spiritual and secular therefore the secular must be controlled, by force, if necessary, to mirror the spiritual. Interestingly in the last many decades a shift has taken place within liberal groups where they have abandoned changing society and have instead changed the church. For them, the spiritual must conform to the secular to bring the two in

alignment, whereas the conservative groups still insist that the secular must conform to the spiritual.



There are many other categories, but this one, this category of conservative Zealots dedicated to changing society is our focus today. This was Judas to a “T.” It is a type of nationalism that desires to establish a state where the person’s religious views are the enforceable law of the land.

With Judaism 2,000 years ago, or with the Islamic State 20 years ago, or with the current wave of nationalism in America today, the key component is a self-righteous belief that everyone must conform to the group’s religious views.

Christian nationalism in America is different than concerned conservative Christian citizens exercising their American rights. There is a world of difference between being patriotic and being nationalistic. Patriotism is a love for, and devotion to, your country. Nationalism is prejudice with a flag. The nationalism of Judas and of Hitler and of Abu Musab al-Zarqawi forces compliance, there is no room for compromise. This is the willingness to use violence, murder, and even genocide, in order to get the change in society that they desire.

Judas was a guy in this category, a guy who desperately wanted the world around him to change into the world he coveted. For such people, their desire is rationalized by a deep-seated belief that what they crave is what God craves, and so, even if brutality is required, it is brutality used on behalf of God - they are doing God's work. They convince themselves that "the ends justify the means."

“The ends justify
the means”

- Machiavelli



How far Judas would have personally gone to effect the change that he saw as God's desire is unknown, but what we do know is that he was at least willing to put Jesus in a serious pickle to get the change started. That was Judas' primary motivation in betraying Jesus. He was impatient and willing to take matters into his own hands all the while convincing himself that he was doing God's work.

We know that Judas's evil stemmed from what he personally believed was his good - doing whatever it took to help God out. So many millions of people have that same idea today. The world is not as it should be... God isn't doing what I think that He should do to fix it...

So, I will assume that He's waiting for me to act on His behalf.

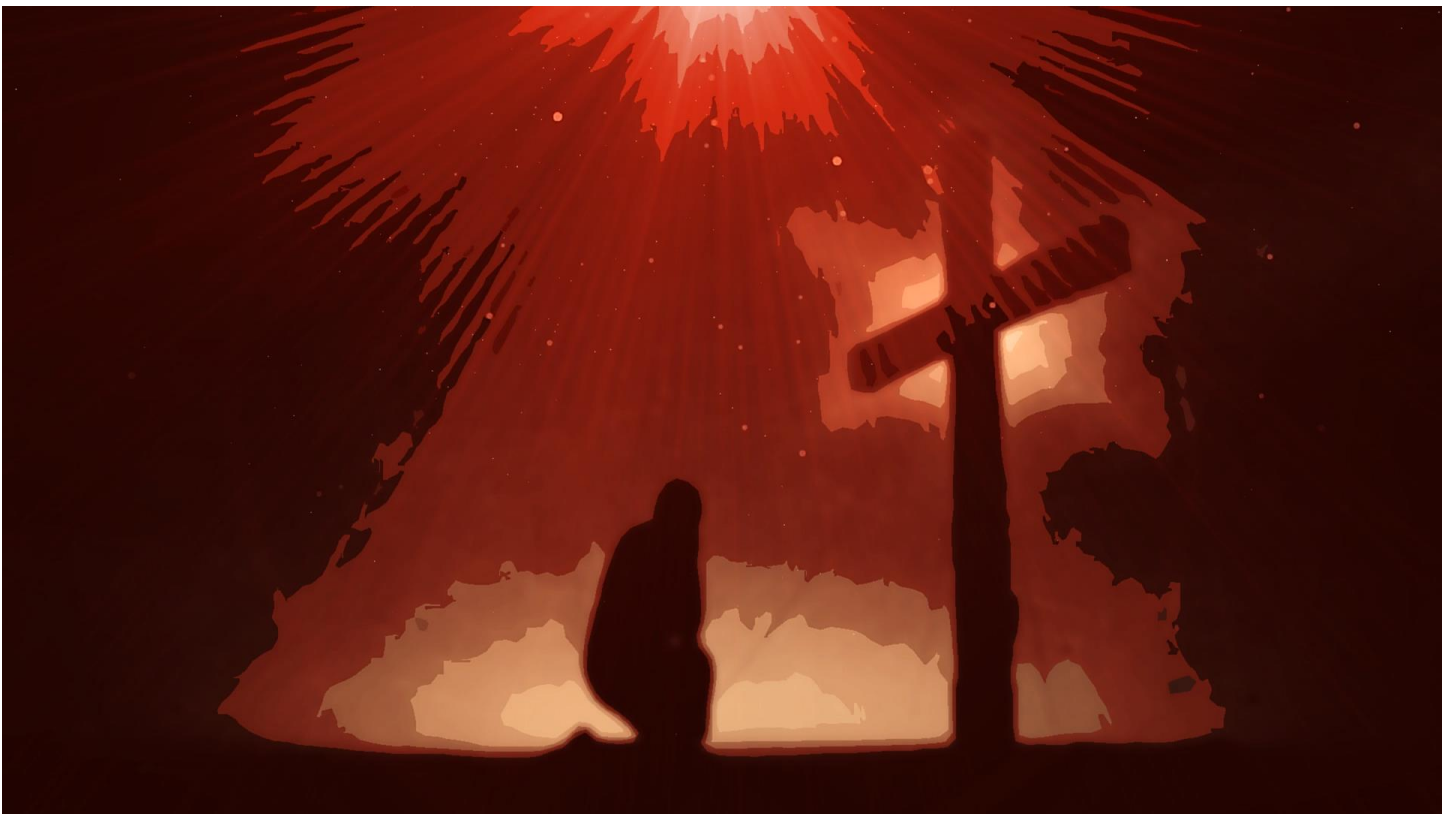
I hope that you can see it for the blasphemy that it is - I hope that you can see the seed of that blasphemy in your own heart and instead of watering and fertilizing it, that you keep spraying it with weed killer.

It never works because it is never God's Will to violate His character in order to establish His Kingdom. Jesus told the Twelve that "One of you is a devil" (John 6:70), in reference to Judas. What was devilish about him? The answer comes when Jesus called Peter, Satan (Matthew 16:23, Mark 8:33). In that reference, Jesus explained the problem. He said to Peter, "you are acting as a stumbling block to Me because you do not have in your mind what God wants, but what you want." The problem for Peter, and for everyone else including Judas, is that we think what we want is what God would want. Peter was trying to save Jesus' life. How could that not be what God wanted?!?!

These are the most dangerous people on earth in my opinion. People who will perpetrate the most horrific evil conceivable in the name of a fervent religious belief that what they are doing is good.

Matthew 27:3&4, “When Judas, who had betrayed him, realized that Jesus had been condemned to die, he was filled with remorse. So he took the thirty pieces of silver back to the leading priests and the elders. “I have sinned,” he declared, “for I have betrayed an innocent man.”

This is proof that Judas wasn't a psychopath or a purely evil person - such people do not feel remorse, they rationalize. Unfortunately for Judas remorse is not repentance and trying to right your wrong is not Salvation.



3) This is my 3rd point for today. What is needed is a purging of self-sufficiency in order to Salvifically embrace the perfect sufficiency of Jesus. Judas was still too proud to fall on his knees at the foot of the Cross and beg Jesus to forgive him.

Instead, Judas once again took matters into his own hands and kept taking them into his own hands until he was dead. I suppose He even thought that killing himself was what God wanted.

A moment ago, I said beg, as in beg Jesus for forgiveness. How often do we think in those terms? Can you see the human self-sufficiency and pride in the typical idea that we simply accept what Jesus has offered.

See how that minimizes our desperate need for His Grace? See how that makes it about me - what I do - that I accept Jesus and allow Him to Save me? See how that almost makes me the hero for being wise enough to Save myself by making use of this special offer from God.

Act now, this deal won't last, hurry into your nearest church, and receive a free Salvation. We market Jesus

like He's a new set of lawn furniture. If a person isn't ready to beg Jesus for forgiveness in sackcloth and ashes with wailing and gnashing of teeth, they don't comprehend the transaction necessary for eternal Salvation.

You can be like Judas, or you can be like Peter. You can be like King Saul, or you can be like King David. Both Saul and Judas served a god of their own manufacture from their own strength and died. Both David and Peter made mistake after mistake but kept humbly falling before the Lord relying solely on His Grace and lived.



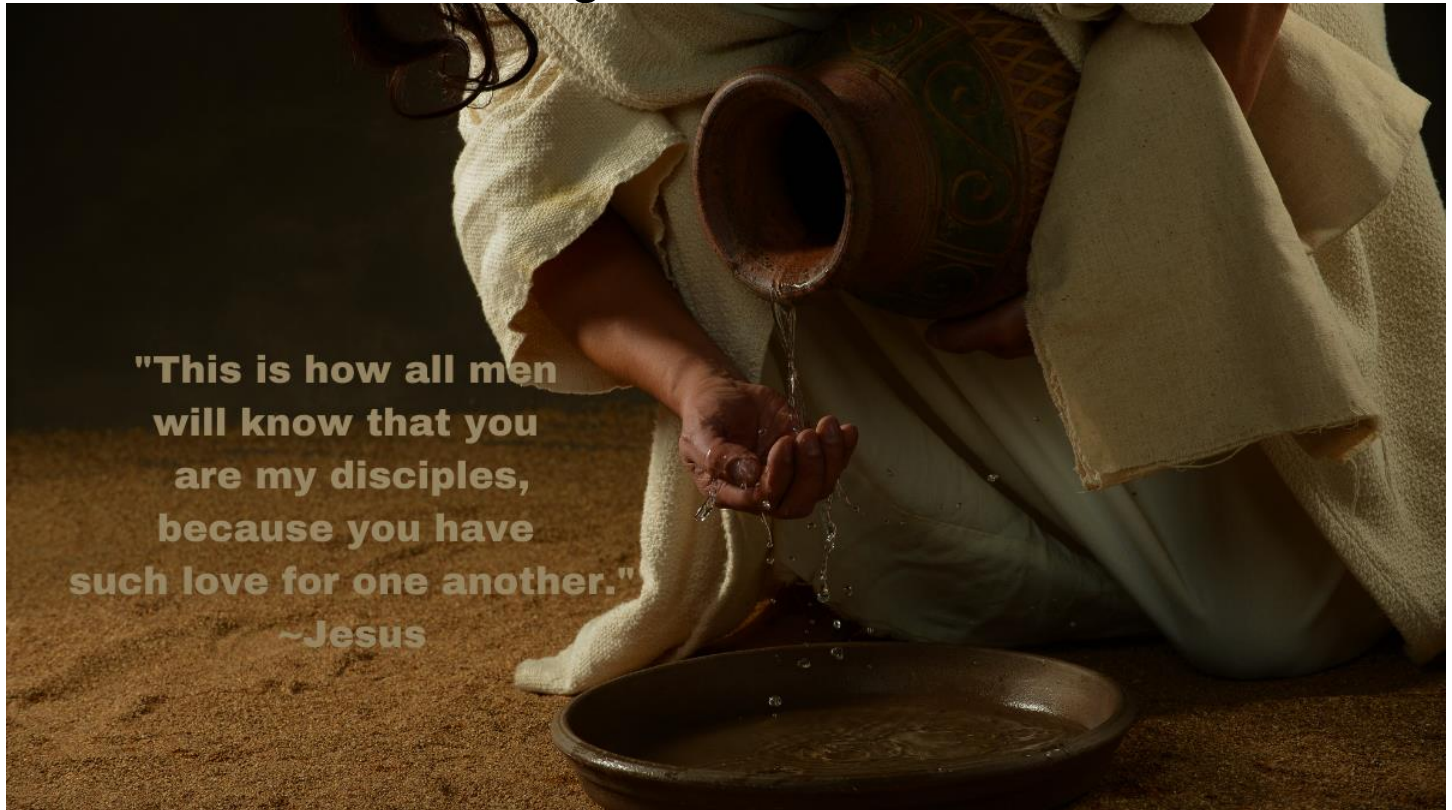
So, taking all three of my points together, we see that faith in Christ Jesus will always have a plausible deniability and that's why it is called faith. You chose to believe in Christ, or you choose to believe in someone else.



I would argue it takes less faith to believe in Christ. He is Truth, Life, Grace, Love, personified and as such He will pursue you with opportunities to either yield and love, or further harden your heart with dissatisfaction.

His incredible persevering love is so remarkably patient, but there comes a time when it is too late. The cautionary tale is that Judas believed that he was serving God. But Judas was already with the Light of

the World, and then he made, what was to him, just another choice, in a series of choices and all at once he found himself in the night. Judas desperately trying to build his own kingdom, believing that it was God's Kingdom, suddenly found himself in the eternal darkness of forever night.



We can examine ourselves as the Apostle Paul directed to see whether we are deceived and really serving ourselves instead of God, or truly serving Him by serving others in His name.

How can you be sure? Serving is love enacted. Do you love the ones you serve?



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Name _____ Address _____
Phone _____ Email _____