



# Bible Student's Notebook™

## *The Herald of His Grace*

Presenting *every man* perfect in Christ Jesus. Colossians 1:28

Volume XVI  
Issue 384

## *The God of Judas Iscariot*

by — A.E. Knoch (1874-1965)

God is the real subject of divine revelation, rather than man. Whatever He has told us in His Word concerning any of His creatures is primarily a disclosure of Himself. The characters in the Bible receive all of their value from contact with the Deity, and reflect His glory, not their own.



This is not difficult to apprehend in the case of those whom the Great Potter uses as vessels of mercy. Our knowledge of God is put to its supreme test when we consider His connection with the vessels of indignation.

Perhaps no case of this kind is more typical than that of Judas Iscariot. God has told us much concerning him which ought to lead us into a better appreciation of Himself. To be sure, the subject is shunned, because it seems to cast a somber shadow across God's glory, and leads into distressing difficulties. But these arise from false teaching, from current superstitions and not from a knowledge of His Word.

### **JUDAS WAS ONE OF THE ELECT FOREORDAINED BY GOD**

Long before Judas was born, David, by the spirit of God, made several very definite predictions concerning him (Psalm 69:25; 109:8). He was to acquire a piece of property, but neither he nor others were to dwell in it. He was to have the place of a supervisor, but it was to be taken from him and given to another (Acts 1:16-20).

I doubt if Judas knew that these passages referred to him. Nevertheless, in all fairness, the question may be asked, "Was it possible for Judas to avoid fulfilling these Scriptures?" Could he have made void the Word of God?

If these passages referred to the reader of these lines, how would he feel about it? Is it right for God to bring a man into the world under such a handicap? *Centuries before he was born, Judas' fall was fixed.* It was inevitable. Not Judas himself, nor the whole nation of the Jews, which he represented, nor all the powers of earth or heaven could keep him from betraying His Lord, or from buying the Field of Blood, or from losing his place as an apostle. *God had spoken.* His doom was inevitable.

Judas was one of the "elect" in a very special sense. Our Lord said, "Do I not choose [elect] you, the twelve, and one of you is a slanderer?" (John 6:70). Christ knew from the beginning who would betray Him (John 6:64). Did He, therefore, warn Judas of his awful danger? Did He put him out of the apostleship? Did He do anything, so far as the record goes, to save him from his awful fate? Did He allow Judas to suspect what He thought of him?

At the very close, just before Judas went out, when the Slanderer had already put it into his heart to betray his Teacher (John 13:2), our Lord gave Judas the morsel with His Own hand. This act was usually considered a special token of esteem. By such a sign our Lord indicated to John who it was that was about to betray Him. Judas was not helped.

Can we not picture the scene? The eager disciples are altogether perplexed by their Master's assertion that one of them should turn traitor. Not one of them guessed that it was Judas. Does not this show that the betrayer had done nothing out of the way, so far as they could see?

(see *JUDAS*, page 3455) ↗

## **Bible Student's Notebook™**

*Paul Our Guide – Christ Our Goal*

ISSN: 1936-9360

Volume XVI, No. 384 – February 19, 2013

This free weekly electronic publication (52 times a year) is dedicated to:

- the proclamation of the riches of God's abundant, exceeding grace (Romans 5:20; 11:6; Ephesians 1:7);
- the affirmation of God's purpose to save all mankind through the death, burial, and resurrection of Christ (I Timothy 2:3, 4; 4:10; Titus 2:11);
- the "preaching of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the mystery, which was kept secret since the world began" (Romans 16:25);
- true freedom and liberty apart from law (Galatians 5:1);
- the organic nature of the church, the Body of Christ (I Corinthians 12);
- the distinct message and ministry of Paul, the apostle to the nations (Romans 11:13);
- the importance of receiving all whom Christ has received (Romans 14-15);
- the recovery of rich Biblical truth that has too long remained hidden under the veils of traditionalism, prejudice, misunderstanding, and fear (Mark 7:7, 13);
- the completeness of the believer in Christ (Colossians 2:10), with:
  - total freedom from sins (Colossians 1:14);
  - identity in His death, burial, and resurrection (Romans 6);
  - adult sonship position (Galatians 4).

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**JUDAS (continued from front page)**

Indeed, they had honored him by making him the treasurer of their little band. He was a thief (John 12:6), but outwardly he must have been rather exemplary to pass so long as one of the twelve apostles. Our Lord knew what he was about to do. What did He say to stop him?

*What you are doing, do more quickly* (John 13:27).

Does it not seem almost incredible that our Lord actually hastens him on to his dreadful deed?

**ALL POWERS OF EVIL WERE AGAINST JUDAS**

Foreordained by God, one would suppose that Judas was born with the evil urge in him which should lead to his downfall. But this was not the case. It was true that he was not clean, as the other apostles were clean (John 13:10-11). Nevertheless, the impulse to lift up his heel against the One Who fed him (John 13:18) and to betray Him to His enemies did not come from within, but from without. Let us be clear on this point. *Judas, by himself, would not have betrayed the Christ.* It was put into his heart by the Slanderer (John 13:2). Again the question arises, "Could he have helped himself?" It was because his heart was *not depraved enough* that the incentive had to come from without. The great Adversary could not trust him to do it of his own volition. Our Lord knew what was in his heart, but does not lift His finger to deter him from his awful deed. Rather, He hurries him in the doing of it.

It is a remarkable fact that Satan does not, as a rule, enter into, or "possess" human beings. Demons make a practice of doing this. It is a pity that "the devil" has been confused with "the devils" in English versions. Otherwise the fact that Satan entered into Judas would stand forth, as it should, as a most notable exception.

The facts are clear. Judas, by himself, would not have betrayed Christ. The arch enemy did not entrust the task of coercing Judas to the hands of evil spirits or demons, as would ordinarily be the case. He will employ such demon spirits at the time of the end to mobilize earth's kings for the great day of God Almighty (Revelation 16:14). Yet this most important task Satan did not leave to others. Contrary to all precedent, he himself entered into the apostle and transformed him into a traitor (Luke 22:3).

We do not wish to make out that Judas was a saint, or that he was not a sinner like other men. In fact, we wish to add this to the influences of which he was the victim. He was a thief. So we may well suppose that the money he received for his treachery had some weight in inducing him to transgress. The question is, whence came this tendency to covetousness? Did he acquire it after "the years of accountability," or was it born in him? Was it within his power to escape it? *Like every other man, he was a son of Adam and, without having any choice in the matter, he inherited mortality and sin and condemnation* (Romans 5:12, 18), *the common lot of all mankind.* If any reader of these lines has escaped this tendency to sin, let him cast the first stone (*cf.* John 8:7). Otherwise let him forbear.

Let us now count up the forces which were for Judas and those which were against him. He doubtless had a conscience, for, when he realized what he had done, he not only returned the money, but his regret was so overpowering that he took his own life. This should show us what Judas himself thought of his transgression. His own estimate of the sin that he had committed was that he had forfeited his right to live. *Had he been free to choose beforehand, would he have done this deed, which he regretted to the death?*

This regret seems to have come naturally out of his own heart, without exterior constraint. We are not told of any special visitation of God's spirit to bring on this change, to correspond to the entrance of the Slanderer, in order to make him sin. Judas himself, naturally, sinner though he was, had an utter abhorrence of his own treachery.

What of the forces against him? We have seen that his inheritance from Adam was not sufficiently bad to compel him to commit such a capital crime. So the Slanderer *cast it into his heart* (John 13:2). This is a very strong expression. It was no mere suggestion, which could be repelled. The heart is the very center and core of our being – out of it are the issues of life – but still stronger is the expression, "*Satan entered into Judas*" (Luke 22:3). Practically, the man was displaced. *He was not acting naturally or normally.* He was not doing what Judas would do, but what Satan would do. To be sure, if God's spirit had entered him first, then Satan could not have come; but God's spirit had not then been given (John 20:22). No mere man, by the power of his own spirit, can withstand the great prince of darkness. Judas was utterly powerless to ►

prevent his entrance. *He was an involuntary tool in the hands of one much mightier than himself.*

### ALL OF THE POWERS OF GOOD WERE ALSO AGAINST HIM

The only One Who could withstand Satan, and Who could have prevented his entrance into Judas, knew all about his plight, but did not make the slightest effort to rescue him. Our Lord had cast out many demons from strangers; but, now that one of His Own apostles is under the power of Satan himself, He makes no attempt to expel him. On the contrary, immediately after Satan had entered, He said,

*What you are doing, do more quickly* (John 13:27).

Can we imagine Judas' impressions? His Lord singles him out for special attention, and seals it with a dainty bit of food. Straightway he receives an irresistible urge to go out and arrange for His betrayal. Before his conscience can act, he hears the voice of His Lord. Surely He knows his heart and is about to expose his treachery! – but no, *Christ also urges him to go!*

Why was it that our Lord gave him no helping hand? How could He send him away at such a time for such a deed? Was He not, in effect, also against Judas? Did not Judas, as one of His chosen apostles, have a special claim on His favor? Under normal circumstances, would we not expect Him to guard these men who had cast in their lot with Him? That He did this is evident, especially in the case of Peter. Satan claimed the right to sift all of the apostles, as the grain is sifted from the chaff. Yet our Lord besought that Peter's faith should not be defaulting (Luke 22:31-32). As a consequence, Peter was not allowed to go as far as Judas, due alone to the intercession of Christ. In His marvelous prayer, our Lord avers,

*When I was with them in the world I kept those whom Thou hast given Me in Thy name, and I guard them, and not one of them was destroyed except the son of destruction, **that the Scripture may be fulfilled*** (John 17:12).

Here is the secret of our Lord's apparent callousness. His every act was conformed to God's written revelation. God had spoken. Not even pity could move Him to do anything to hinder the divine decree. That is why He rather hastened it. That is why He deliberately

chose a slanderer, and made no effort whatever to save him from his fate. But was our Lord really callous? Did He enjoy having such a character among those near and dear to Him?

Acquiescing in God's foreordination, He seldom spoke of it, for no one else knew about it and, of necessity, it could not be made known before the event. It was not at all ideal to have a man like Judas about. Christ suffered much from contact with outsiders, hard hearted scribes, hypocritical Pharisees, faithless Sadducees. Among His Own close companions and constant attendants, the only possible ideal would be unswerving loyalty, unstinted devotion.

We earnestly beg the reader to consider the facts we have presented and test them by the Scriptures. Many may be tempted to cry, "Blasphemy!" Many may insist that God could not do these things, no matter how clearly the Scriptures seem to certify to them. Yet these matters are so set forth that they cannot be misunderstood. The fact that they are shunned shows that it is not a question of understanding, but of believing. *These facts are in our Bible, and will stay there whether we accept them or not.* They should help us to see that there are depths in God which we have not fathomed. They should show us that there is something radically wrong with our theology when we cannot bear these "hard sayings" or do not exult in these "dark passages."

### THE BIRTH OF JUDAS WAS NOT IDEAL FOR THE SON OF MANKIND

Only once does our Lord bare His heart in relation to Judas, and that just at the crisis when Satan enters into Him, and he goes away to betray his Lord. Here again Christ falls back upon the fact that the Scriptures must be fulfilled. He says,

*The Son of Mankind is indeed going **according as it is written concerning Him**, yet woe to that man through whom the Son of Mankind is being betrayed! Ideal were it for Him if that man were not born* (Mark 14:21; Matthew 26:24)

Here He was, with the twelve, just before His sufferings, and He wished to pour out His heart to them. Alone with them in the upper room, the conditions seemed ideal; but His sensitive spirit knew that they were not ideal. One of the twelve hindered these sacred revelations. That one must be removed before He can speak freely. So Judas

is told to go. Then His heart is relieved. Fondly calling the eleven “*little children*” for the first time, He utters the wonderful words as we have them in the fourteenth to the seventeenth chapters of John’s evangel.

In all four of the accounts of our Lord’s life, the first mention of Judas Iscariot is accompanied by the statement that he is the betrayer. He was chosen with the rest of the twelve. We know the compassion of our Lord. How the very sight of Judas must have disturbed Him! Eleven true, trusting hearts. Why not unmask this one false intruder and remove him from his office? *It was written!* Evil, such as this, must be borne, or the Scriptures cannot be fulfilled. Yet the conditions certainly were not *ideal*. A potential traitor is no apostle. Christ no doubt rejoiced in the honors He would confer on His faithful band, in the kingdom; but He must also have shuddered at the prospect awaiting one of them. How much it would have saved Him if that man had not been born! If Matthias, who was also with them, had been in his place from the first His heart would not have been burdened by the state and fate of Judas Iscariot.

### MISTRANSLATIONS STEM FROM BAD THEOLOGY

The usual translation, “*Good were it for that man if he had never been born,*” has no foundation in the original. In examining various translations, *we must always bear in mind that the tendency to translate in accord with accepted theology is so overwhelmingly strong that a very little evidence on the other side is practical proof of the correctness of any unpopular translation.* This is an excellent example. It is well known that the *Revised Version* margin is more dependable than the text, especially where the reading of the Greek is given. All will recognize how impossible it would be to get a two-thirds vote of the Revision Committee in favor of conforming this text to the original. Few men who would do such a thing would be chosen for such a task. Yet there were a few who were faithful, and these succeeded in putting the truth into the margin:

*Good were it for **Him**,<sup>1</sup> if that man had not been born.*

1. [editor:] Most versions do not capitalize personal pronouns for God or Jesus Christ. We do so here for clarification. According to Dean Hough of the Concordant Publishing Concern, the issue is one of using and understanding proper grammar “The real point is that the ‘him’ (whether with a capital letter or not) needs to be related to the former ‘him,’ and the ‘that man’ to the former ‘that man.’”

In such passages as these we can realize the benefits of an exact concordant version. What was *good* for the Son of Mankind, and what was *ideal*, are two distinct ideas. I have no doubt that, at bottom, it was good for Him to have Judas, if what we understand by “*good*” is that which will work out the most blessing in the end. The sphere of the word “*good*” is very wide, and its force here is difficult to define. However, the Greek word *kalos*, “*ideal*,” limits the thought to that which reaches our highest concept of perfection at the time.

Twelve faithful apostles would be the *ideal* for Christ, though one traitor was doubtless among the all things that worked together for good. Thus we may even be justified in saying that the birth of Judas was *good*, but not *ideal*, for the Son of Mankind.

Whatever may be our estimate of *Rotherham’s Emphasized Version*, we may be quite sure that the translator made little attempt to pander to public opinion. The character of his translation makes his testimony of special weight in a matter of this kind. He was not concerned about the language so much as the sense. He renders it,

*Well would it have been for **Him**,<sup>1</sup> if that man had not been born.*

Two translations used by Roman Catholics have this text correctly turned. The *Douay Version* of Matthew 26:24 reads,

*It were better for **Him**,<sup>1</sup> if that man had not been born.*

Dr. Leander Van Ess, in his German version, renders it,

*For **Him**<sup>1</sup> were it better, **such a human** were never born.*

Luther’s version, by itself, is proof that the *Concordant Version* rendering is right. Though the Greek is precisely the same in Matthew and Mark, he renders it correctly in the former and twists it in the latter. May we ask, if it really read, “*Good were it for Judas if he never had been born,*” would Luther, or any other translator, make it read, “*Good were it for the Lord, if Judas had not been born*”? Never! Yet Luther reads (literally), “*It were better for him that the same human never were born.*” In Mark 14:21 he renders the same words, “*It were better for the same human that he never were born.*”



In the context immediately preceding, the identity of those referred to is fixed beyond question. It may be set forth as follows:

<b>Him</b> (The Son of Mankind)	<b>that man</b> (Judas)
The Son of Mankind is indeed going away, according as it is written concerning <i>Him</i> .	Yet woe to <i>that man</i> through whom the Son of Mankind is being betrayed!

*Ideal were it for Him if that man were not born!*

If it had read "Ideal were it for *that man* if he had not been born" (as usually mistranslated), then both would refer to Judas. Yet no unprejudiced reader of the English or the Greek can possibly refer the *Him* to anyone but our Lord, Who is so termed in the preceding sentence.

If all of the translations ever made rendered the passage incorrectly, that would not prove anything except human fallibility – which is already proven. The original speaks of the Son of Mankind as "*Him*," and of Judas as "*that man*," and makes it clear that it were ideal for "*Him*" if "*that man*" was not born.

*The real cause of this mistranslation is the hardness of the human heart.* On the one hand, who has been concerned with the feelings of our Lord and His distress at having the traitor in His company? Even His saints seem utterly unable to sympathize with Him in this trial. On the other hand, they have allowed a just indignation at Judas' dreadful deed to degenerate into vindictiveness, and attribute to our Lord the harshness of their own hearts. In judging Judas they have condemned themselves.

### A VESSEL FOR DISHONOR

The Scriptures show the utter helplessness of Judas. *How could he flee from his fate?* Not only were the powers of evil against him, but the powers of good were just as determined to make him play his part. God Himself had determined the part he should play, and Christ, the only Savior, must act in accord with the divine decree.

I beg my readers not to evade the issue. Let them put themselves in Judas' place. What can a mortal do when Satan and Christ and God all force him to com-

mit a deed so awful in his own eyes that it drives him to desperation and death?

It may help if I confess that I once feared to face this issue. I tried to find a way for God to get out of this dilemma. The idea that He could make *vessels for dishonor* (Romans 9:21), and then punish them eternally was incredible. I was right. God could not do such a thing. My mistake was to disbelieve God's plain statement and all of the evidence which sustains it in the Scriptures, because I had accepted a false theology in regard to His future dealings with these vessels which He fits for destruction. Since I now know that God will not only deal justly with them, but lovingly, I am able to believe God, and glorify God, and exult in the God Who remains Love, even when He hardens and hates.

### THE FUTURE OF JUDAS

We have considered Judas' past, and now we will consider his future. All are agreed that Judas has committed a crime which can have few equals in the annals of mankind. Therefore he must be judged for his sins, more particularly for this supreme sin of his career. For the sake of simplicity we will focus our attention on this one act alone, for all else that he did sinks into insignificance compared with this. All are agreed that he must be judged for betraying his Lord, but all are not agreed as to when and how. At least four different answers have been given, which may be tersely stated thus: He must burn *on*, burn *out*, burn *up* and burn *through*. For him there is eternal torment, or purgatory, or annihilation, or he must go through severe judgment to ultimate reconciliation (Colossians 1:20).

### JUDAS TORTURED ETERNALLY?

According to the most popular view, Judas' full career would read something like this: Foredoomed by God, long before he was born, to betray the Messiah, chosen by Christ Himself to be the traitor, he proves too weak to perform his part, so Satan takes control of him until he has done the deed, and driven by remorse, he takes his own life. As punishment he has been suffering in the flames of hell ever since and will continue to do so until the judgment of the Great White Throne, more than a thousand years hence. Then he will be tried and condemned to anguish unspeakable, above all other men, for a never-ending eternity in the lake that burns with sulphur, miraculously kept alive to undergo his agony.

We have tried not to exaggerate. Yet the plain statement seems so fiendish, so utterly and horribly repulsive that one wonders how sane human beings can bear to think of it. The fact is that they do not consider it, or, rather *dare* not face it. If they did, they would lose all faith in a god who is such a hateful, hideous monster.

First he fixes Judas' fate, foretells it long before, then gives him a place among the apostles, with the brightest of prospects, then refuses to shield him from Satan, until the dastardly deed is done and he dies a self-inflicted death. I repeat, Judas could no more help himself than a piece of straw in a tornado. Not a person who reads these lines could have done differently, had he been in Judas' place.

Now, for doing what God forced him to do in one short hour he is to suffer woe utterly beyond human concept for all eternity! Such is the idol worshiped by Christendom. We have shuddered at the awful caricatures of the deity which men carve out of wood or stone, but none of them can compare with the revolting and hateful fiendishness which coerced Judas to do wrong and then expends infinite power in torturing him, and works an eternal miracle to sustain his life so that he is able to survive his sufferings.

*It is not Judas who suffers most from this terrible travesty of justice, but the God of Judas.* This is intensely practical. The apostasy of these days is largely the result of such terrible teaching. It has led to the practical repudiation of the deity of God, and of those passages which present Him as the great Potter, Who fashions vessels for dishonor, adapted to destruction (Romans 9:21-22). *The doctrine of eternal torment dethrones God.*

Only an inhuman fiend can really hold to His absolute sovereignty and torture everlastingly. *Acts speak louder than words.* If God deliberately creates to doom and damn, it is useless to insist that He is Love. Black is not white, nor darkness light, neither is hate love. Judas will NOT *burn on*.

### JUDAS IN PURGATORY?

I know but little of purgatory, but I remember, when I was in the Sistine Chapel in St. Peter's in Rome, that the guide explained that the worst offenders went right straight to hell, below purgatory, whence not even the pope could recall them. So I imagine that Ju-

das' sin could not be "burned out," and he does not come within this category. Judas will not *burn out*.

### JUDAS JUDGED AND ANNIHILATED?

The revolt against the awful injustice of eternal torment has led some to conclude that Judas is to suffer punishment, not punishing. That is, that death is unconsciousness, and that Judas, as a part of his penalty, will be cast into the second death, from which he will never emerge. This, evidently, is a great relief to anyone who has God's name at heart. Judas, according to this, knows nothing until he is roused from the dead at the Great White Throne. As a result of that judgment he will return to death in the lake of fire, and that is his end.

Again, I insist, I am not so much concerned for Judas as for Judas' God. If this solution is true, He will lose His reputation through His dealings with the betrayer. It will be just a sorry piece of business in which His great Name will suffer severely. It will take away the very foundations of His throne. Every righteous creature in the universe will agree with me that it is unjust of Him to place one of His creatures in a position where he must sin, and then not only punish him for it, but blot him out of existence. Judas will not gain. God will not gain. It will be a total loss, and God will be the prime loser. Moreover, God Himself has never said that this is His solution. It is only a reaction from eternal torment, a deduction of reasoning rather than a matter of faith in actual divine declarations. Judas will not *burn up*.

### JUDAS JUDGED AND RECONCILED

With hearts sickened by the contemplation of human injustice, as applied to Judas Iscariot, we turn with joy to God's Own righteous and loving revelation. With bowed heads we acknowledge Him as the Potter, the Deity Who does what He does, Who need not give account of any of His actions to His creatures. It was just and good of Him to doom Judas to be the betrayer of Christ, for this was necessary to reveal the depths of human depravity and the lengths to which mankind can be led when in the hands of the Adversary. This humbling knowledge needed to be set forth by a concrete example. So the Potter formed a vessel for dishonor, and destroyed it when its work was done. Such was Judas in the past.



## THE JUDGMENT OF JUDAS

What of his future? He is dead, and awaits the judgment day in utter oblivion. God is just, and does not hold Judas a prisoner for thousands of years before bringing him before the bar. *To his consciousness, the moment of his death will also be that of his resurrection, and his judgment will immediately follow.* Let us try to enter into his sensations. The last sight he has had of his Lord, was when Christ was *condemned* (Matthew 27:3), and was being bound to be led before Pilate. The first sight he will have of Him when he awakes will be as the *Judge* on the Great White Throne. What a tremendous contrast! Even before his death his regret had led him to return his ill-gotten gains and take his own life. Now that he stands before the august Judge, against Whom he has so grievously sinned, what more will be needed to convict him, or show him the heinousness of his sin? Will it not be unutterable anguish for his soul?

Recognizing the utter helplessness and irresponsibility of Judas, some may be tempted to deduce that he deserves no further infliction whatever. This is another extreme, as false as the first. We must always keep in view God's great purpose to reveal Himself and to bless His creatures. Judas is a public character, just as Pharaoh was, and all creation will judge of God<sup>2</sup> as He judges Judas. Simply to pass over the betrayal, or any sin, transgression or offense' would be false to His Own standard of justice and fatal for the future. All sin, and every evil deed, must be judged and condemned, and the appropriate penalty inflicted. The only escape lies in the deliverance which is in Christ Jesus, and this is only for believers, not for unbelievers who appear before the Great *White* Throne. Sin must be judged, not simply for the sinner's sake, but for God's.

### GOD'S JUDGMENTS BENEFICIAL

Sin must be *judged*. Men are so unjust, and their laws and tribunals so corrupt, that *we have lost the great truth of judgment*. As a consequence the word "judgment" has been practically replaced by *punishment*. Men imagine that the whole end and aim of God's dealings with them in the future is to make them suffer for their sins; but God has already done much in the way of judging, and invariably He has had an end in view. *His judgment eras have always been beneficial for the world.* The deluge washed the earth of its iniquity. The

2. *i.e.*, that they would make a judgment about Him. — Dean Hough

judgment period now impending will cleanse it for the kingdom. *The judgment of every creature is a necessary preliminary to its salvation and reconciliation.*

Some have supposed that judgment is intended to be a deterrent, so that those who have tasted the bitter fruit of sin will never offend again. This would be a very flimsy foundation for the future. It is contrary to human experience. A man who has served a sentence is not immune from temptation. He is more likely to fall than others who have never been behind the bars. *God's judgment is preliminary to a life in which there can be no sin.* Sin is due to death working in us (cf. Romans 5:12). *When there is no death and all are made alive, it will be impossible for them to sin. Sin and death go together. Life and incorruption go hand in hand. Judgment is not needed as a deterrent for the future – but it is a necessary preliminary to the glory of God and the bliss of His creatures.*

### JUDAS AT THE GREAT WHITE THRONE

The principles of God's judgment are given to us just where we should expect them – in the opening argument of the Roman epistle. He will be paying each according to his acts. There will be indignation and fury, affliction and distress on every human soul which is effecting evil (Romans 2:9). This agrees perfectly with the solemn announcement at the Great White Throne:

*The dead were judged by that which is written in the scrolls, in accord with their acts* (Revelation 20:12).

It is not for us to judge Judas or to determine the severity of his afflictions. We may rest assured that the One Who sits on the throne will not mete out a mite more or less than what is right, not only in His Own eyes, but before the whole universe, and Judas himself. When did Christ, Who sits on the throne, ever do aught else? Let us rejoice that the judgment of Judas is in the hands of One Whom we all can trust. He knows Judas, and is able to sympathize as well as condemn. *Thank God that He is the Judge of all* (Genesis 18:25; Hebrews 12:23)!

Yet this is not the end of Judas. His name is not written in the book of life. Hence, once more, he will enter death – his second death – until the consummation comes. *There is no knowledge in the death state* (Ecclesiastes 9:5), hence, for Judas, *the period of the second death has no conscious existence.* Even as the moment





when he lost consciousness in the past will be followed by the moment of his resurrection, so also the second death will form no part of his experience. The whole of the long last eon, called “*the eon of the eons*” in the Scriptures, will pass without his knowledge.

How terribly men sin against the cross of Christ when they limit its power and discount its infinite value! To most of God’s saints it has been degraded to a despairing attempt to snatch a few from the utter and irretrievable ruin of God’s universe. Men make a pitiable spectacle of the great transaction on Golgotha when they deny its ability to cope with sin in its entirety and conquer every vestige of enmity in all creation. The blood of the cross makes peace, and, in God’s good time this will embrace all, whether on earth or in the heavens.

Is not the offense of the saints, who say they see, yet stubbornly minimize and belittle and depreciate and disparage the scope of His sacrifice and the efficacy of His blood – against the plain statements of God’s Holy Word – far worse than the sins of those who sit in darkness and know nothing of its power? May God give us grace to get His estimate of the infinite value and power of Christ’s cross!

### THE SALVATION OF JUDAS

God has declared that He is the Savior of all mankind, especially of those who believe (I Timothy 4:10). Up to this time in his career Judas has known nothing of God as his own Savior. He has been in His hands as the Potter, and was made a vessel for dishonor. As such he has been destroyed. He knew Christ as his Teacher, when he was one of the Twelve Apostles. Later, at the Great White Throne, he meets Him as Judge; but as Savior He is still unknown to Judas. Only a Savior is of any avail now. Judgment does not save the one judged. The afflictions he endures during his second life, between his resurrection and his second death, give him no claim on God or His blessing. Salvation is only of God, through Christ. God has lost Judas, and He alone can save him, on the basis of the blood shed on Golgotha.

Along with all of mankind, Judas has fallen into condemnation through Adam. Yet the God of Judas has made it clear that Adam’s one offense has its counterpart in the obedience of Christ. Just as he was condemned on account of Adam’s act, so will his life be justified on account of the sacrifice of Jesus Christ

(Romans 5:18). Up to the time of his second death Judas has not known God the Justifier.

God has declared that death shall be abolished (I Corinthians 15:26) – that, as in Adam all are dying, so in Christ all shall be made alive (I Corinthians 15:22). Judas died in Adam; but when he is in the second death, he has not yet been made alive in Christ. If he had been made alive in Christ he would not be in death at all. The God of Judas must not only become his Savior, but his Life (II Timothy 1:10).

Originally, Judas was created in the Son of God’s love (Colossians 1:16). He was created in Him long before he was in Adam. If his place in Adam brings him so much shame and condemnation, such a surplus of suffering and death, how much more will his earlier position in the Son of God’s love bring him salvation and life, justification and reconciliation! *What he received from Adam came to him without his consent. No faith was required. He did not need to make it his own. Neither will it be necessary for him to believe or accept or struggle for that which will come to him because he was in the Son of God’s love.* How can he do any of these things when he is in the second death?

### JUDAS AT THE CONSUMMATION

*God’s Word is true.* Death *shall* be abolished. All mankind shall be *saved* and justified and vivified. All creation *shall* be reconciled. Judas will not be left out. It is quite impossible for us to realize what this will mean to him, condemned, destroyed, alienated, twice dead. The God of Judas, at the consummation, will become his Savior, his Justifier, his Vivifier, and his Reconciler. Is it possible for us to imagine the relief, the joy, the ineffable exultation which will be his when he realizes that sin and enmity and death are all past forever?

When he sees that, though for a fleeting moment he was a public vessel for dishonor, God was not sealing his eternal doom but preparing him personally for a deep appreciation of His future gift, will he not worship and adore Him for it all?

The God of Judas, Who hardens hearts, Who molds vessels to display His indignation, did not begin His work with Adam, neither does He end it at the Great White Throne. He commenced with Christ and He will conclude it at the consummation. Adam, with his black burden of condemnation and death, is only ►



a parenthesis in God's revelation. We must not judge God's work by it alone. *Adam is not the Alpha of God's ways, and we must not make him the Omega.* Judas was not only in Adam, in Eden, but in the Beloved Son in creation. He will not only be judged because of his inheritance from the first man, but also will be saved because of his earlier union with the Second.

God does not call Himself the God of Judas, because doom and judgment are His strange deeds. They are temporary and terminable activities. The time is coming when there will be no more doom (Revelation 22:3). Then it will no longer be necessary to harden a king's heart to resist God's will and thus reveal His power. Satan will never again enter a human being to turn him against God, as in the case of Judas. Evil exists only in the times of the eons, and doom is confined to the first four. It has no place in the last eon, when God tabernacles with mankind. Judas is, perhaps, the best example of doom that Scripture gives us. In considering his case we must emphasize the fact that God does not deal so with His creatures at all times. It would be difficult to justify His course if it was His normal and eternal procedure – it is exceptional and temporary, but its lesson is everlasting. *The temporary pain will lead to an eternal gain to the creatures of God's heart.*

### THE GLORY OF GOD

*No man is "responsible" for his own birth.* "To be or not to be" is not a problem for a creature. The Creator has kept such matters under His Own control. Hence He alone is "responsible." If it was good for Judas never to have been born, the only one to be blamed is the One Who alone could foresee his career and prevent his birth. Yet He, on the contrary, predicted his course and made his birth inevitable. God's Word would have been found untrue if Judas had never been born. *Hence it was good for God that Judas was born.* What glorifies God is always a blessing to His creatures. *It is good for us that Judas was born.* In view of God's glorious ultimate, we may be sure that Judas himself will praise and adore God for giving him birth. The words in our popular versions are utterly false. It would *not* be good for Judas if he had never been born.

*We have well nigh lost the true idea of Deity. We speak of God as "allowing" this and "permitting" that, as though He could not help Himself.* We have forgotten that He is Elohim, the great Arbiter, Who works all according to the counsel of His Own will (Ephesians

1:11). We refuse to believe that *all* is out of Him and the same *all* is for Him (Romans 11:36). As a result we are timid when called on to face the facts in the case of Judas, for we fear for the God of Judas. If Judas is eternally damned our fears are justified, for he will drag down with him the Deity Who predicted his career and doomed him before he had been born. Yet, if Judas is eventually saved, all of these fears are groundless, and we can look into the face of God unafraid, with holy awe, as we bow in submission and acquiescence to His will. Some day we will see that the terrible tragedy of the present will issue in the unspeakable glory of the future.

Leaving Judas' own fate out of the matter, what about the future of the God of Judas? Shall this man be an eternal eyesore in His universe? Shall God's glory be eclipsed forever by His dealings with the traitor? He claims to be Love. Is it love to doom and condemn the helpless? Justice is the foundation of His throne. But how can He justify His condemnation of Judas before he had even been born? His wisdom can cope with any problem. Then why did it fail in Judas' case?

*Every attribute that adorns the Deity is called into question if Judas is eternally lost. His is a test case. Declarations are empty unless accompanied by deeds.* If God's acts deny His words He will lose the confidence of all His creatures. It is not Judas' fate, but God's deity which is at stake.

### GOD WILL BE GLORIFIED: HIS WISE AND JUST LOVE IS LIMITLESS

*The love of God is wise.* The case of Judas will prove it, not deny it. By saving one who sinned so fearfully, God's affection for His creatures will be displayed, not eclipsed.

*The love of God is just.* In justifying one whose hands were reddened with the blood of the great Sacrifice, His righteousness will be revealed, not violated. Judas' dreadful deed was committed under the very shadow of the cross. *Who dares to limit the value of the blood of Golgotha, to confine the abiding efficacy of that august Sacrifice?* God has made it the basis of reconciliation with *all* (Colossians 1:20). He has the ability. He has the wisdom. He has the love. Adored be His holy Name!

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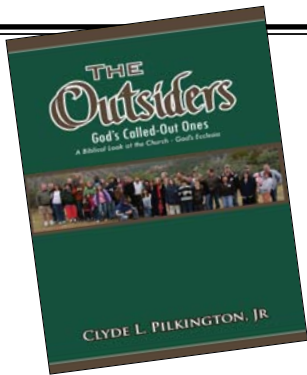


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