

Matthew 26

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Matthew 26

Question: Was Judas, who betrayed Jesus, a faithful man or a traitor?

Judas's betrayal of Jesus is described in the Bible as a betrayal, but whether he was a faithful man or a traitor depends on opinion and interpretation.

The reason why Judas betrayed Jesus

Lack of faith: Judas never acknowledged Jesus as God or Messiah as the other apostles did. He saw Jesus as a teacher, not a Savior. Judas is in charge of managing the team's finances, which shows that he has an interest in money. John 12:5-6 mentions that his greed for money was one reason for betraying Jesus. Judas may have hoped that Jesus would overthrow Roman rule and establish a new political order. When he discovers that Jesus will not do this, he may think that Jesus is not the real Messiah.

Was Judas a faithful or a traitor?

Adulterer: From the biblical description, Judas's betrayal of Jesus is seen as a betrayal, which is often associated with the image of an adulterer. He betrayed Jesus to the Roman authorities for thirty pieces of silver, an act that led to Jesus' crucifixion.

The Faithful: However, in the Gospel of Judas, Judas's motives for betraying Jesus are reinterpreted. Judas acted according to Jesus' instructions to help Jesus break free from the bondage of the flesh and release his divinity as soon as possible. This view portrays Judas as a faithful disciple who acted according to the will of Jesus. Whether Judas was a faithful man or a traitor depended on the interpretation of the Bible or other documents. The conventional wisdom sees him as a traitor, but another may be the view of a faithful person.

Judas did show signs of remorse and repentance after betraying Jesus, but these signs did not quite correspond to true repentance. According to the Bible, Judas felt deep remorse after seeing Jesus

sentenced, and tried to return the thirty pieces of silver he had received to the chief priests and elders, confessing that he had "betrayed innocent blood" (Matthew 27:3-4).

However, this remorse did not develop into true repentance. Instead of seeking God's forgiveness or reconciliation with Jesus, Judas chose despair and eventually committed suicide (Matthew 27:5). This behavior is seen as false repentance because true repentance requires a change of heart and return to God, which Judas failed to do. Thus, Judas did have a record of regret, but that regret did not translate into true repentance.

The betrayal of Jesus by Judas is a key part of the Crucifixion in the Bible, and the occurrence of this event did have a profound impact on the content of Matthew's gospel. Judas' betrayal of Jesus fulfills Old Testament prophecies, such as Zechariah 11:12-13, which emphasizes the coherence between prophecy and fulfillment in the Bible. Judas's betrayal marks the beginning of Jesus' crucifixion, which is a central part of the entire gospel about Jesus' death and resurrection. Judas's betrayal was part of God's plan, and this event enabled the death and resurrection of Jesus to be fulfilled, thus fulfilling the mission of redemption. Had it not been for Judas's betrayal of Jesus, Matthew's gospel might have lacked this crucial event, and the progress and theological significance of the whole story would have been very different. Judas's rebellion was not only a human betrayal, but also part of God's plan, which makes the Gospel of Matthew richer and more complete.

In the absence of Judas's betrayal, Jesus' arrest and crucifixion may need to be accomplished by other means. This may alter the development and theological interpretation of the whole story, for example: there may be other characters present to bring about the arrest of Jesus. Old Testament prophecies may need to be fulfilled in other ways. The theological and symbolic meaning of the whole story is subject to change.

However, these hypothetical scenarios are not recorded in the Bible, and Judas's betrayal remains an integral part of Matthew's gospel.

In the Gospel of Matthew, Peter denies Jesus three times and Judas betrays Jesus, with different motives and outcomes. Judas was motivated primarily by greed and disappointment in Jesus. He received thirty pieces of silver and was probably disappointed that Jesus had failed to fulfill his expectations of a political savior. Peter's motive was out of fear. Fearing arrest and persecution, he denied his relationship with Jesus in front of the crowd. Judas's betrayal led to Jesus' arrest and subsequent trial, scourging, and crucifixion. Judas felt remorse afterwards and eventually committed suicide. Peter's denial led to pain and remorse in his heart. He remembered Jesus' prophecy after the rooster crowed, and went out to weep bitterly, but after Jesus' resurrection, he was forgiven and born again. Judas's betrayal was part of God's plan, fulfilling Old Testament prophecy and showing human weakness and rebellion. Peter's denial shows the weakness of human nature, but it also shows the possibility of repentance and forgiveness. Peter's experience became a lesson that emphasized the importance of faith and the need to rely on God. Judas's actions were not forgiven, and his life ended in tragedy. Peter's denial was forgiven, and he stood again after Jesus' resurrection as one of the leaders of the early church.

Judas's betrayal of Jesus and Peter's denial of Jesus are two events with different motives, consequences, and theological significance. Judas's betrayal was part of God's plan and led to a tragic end; Peter's denial shows the weakness of human nature, but it is also forgiven and born again.

We pray

Dear Lord,

Lord, whatever we say, do, or neglect our faults cast a shadow over our relationship with you. We know that only your love and forgiveness can free our hearts from the heavy shackles and give us true freedom. Help us to learn to forgive others as you do. When our hearts are filled with anger, resentment, or the pain of the past that we can't let go, may your love guide us to let go of those hurts, let go of our anger, and learn to forgive the wrongs of others. Because it is only when we are willing to forgive that we can truly feel your salvation from heaven. Lord, we cannot be freed from sin by our own strength, but in Your grace we are given hope and born again. Give us the strength to lead us on the path of righteousness and love, to live out your grace and truth wherever we go. Give us a humble, loving heart to help us pass on Your grace to others and be messengers of peace and love.

In the name of Jesus Christ we pray, Amen.

Matthew 26

Amplified Bible

The Plot to Kill Jesus

26 When Jesus had finished this ^[a]discourse, He said to His disciples, ²“You know that the Passover is coming in two days, and the Son of Man is to be betrayed *and* handed over for crucifixion.”

³ Then the chief priests and the elders of the people gathered in the courtyard of the [elegant home of the Jewish] high priest, whose name was ^[b]Caiaphas, ⁴ and plotted together to arrest Jesus by stealth and kill Him. ⁵ But they said, “It must not be during the festival (Passover), otherwise there might be a riot among the people.”

The Anointing in Bethany

⁶ Now when Jesus was [back] in Bethany, at the home of ^[c]Simon the leper, ⁷ a ^[d]woman came to Him with an alabaster vial of very expensive ^[e]perfume and she poured it on Jesus' head as He reclined *at the table*. ⁸ But when the ^[f]disciples saw it they were indignant *and* angry, saying, “Why all this waste [of money]? ⁹ For this *perfume* might have been sold at a high price and *the money* given to the poor.” ¹⁰ But Jesus, aware [of the malice] of this [remark], said to them, “Why are you bothering the woman? She has done a good thing to Me. ¹¹ For you always have the poor with you; but you will not always have Me. ¹² When she poured this perfume on My body, she did it to prepare Me for burial. ¹³ I assure you *and* most solemnly say to you, wherever this gospel [of salvation] is preached in the whole world, what this woman has done will also be told in memory of her [for her act of love and devotion].”

Judas' Bargain

¹⁴ Then one of the twelve [disciples], who was called Judas Iscariot, went to the chief priests ¹⁵ and said, “What are you willing to give me if I hand Jesus over to you?” And they weighed out ^[g]thirty pieces of silver. ¹⁶ And from that moment Judas *began* looking for an opportune time to betray Jesus.

¹⁷ Now on the first day of ^[h]Unleavened Bread (Passover Week) the disciples came to Jesus and asked, “Where do You want us to prepare for You to eat the Passover?” ¹⁸ He said, “Go into the city to ^[i]a certain man, and say to him, ‘The Teacher says, “My time [to suffer and atone for sin] is near; I *am to* keep the

Passover at your house with My disciples.””” 19 [Accordingly] the disciples did as Jesus had directed them, and they prepared the Passover.

The Last Passover

20 When evening came, Jesus was reclining *at the table* with the twelve disciples. 21 And as they were eating, He said, “I assure you *and* most solemnly say to you that one of you will betray Me.” 22 Being deeply grieved *and* extremely distressed, each one of them began to say to Him, “Surely not I, Lord?” 23 Jesus answered, “He who has dipped his hand in the bowl with Me [as a ^[i]pretense of friendship] will betray Me. 24 The Son of Man is to go [to the cross], just as it is written [in Scripture] of Him; but woe (judgment is coming) 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.” 25 And Judas, the betrayer, said, “Surely it is not I, Rabbi?” Jesus said to him, “^[k]You have said it yourself.”

The Lord’s Supper Instituted

26 Now as they were eating Jesus took bread, and after ^[l] blessing it, He broke it and gave it to the disciples, and said, “Take, eat; this is My body.” 27 And when He had taken a cup and ^[m] given thanks, He gave it to them, saying, “Drink from it, all of you; 28 for this is My blood of the [new and better] covenant, which [ratifies the agreement and] is being poured out for many [as a ^[n] substitutionary atonement] for the forgiveness of sins. 29 But I say to you, I will not drink of this fruit of the vine from now on until that day when I drink it new with you in My Father’s kingdom.”

30 After singing a ^[o] hymn, they went out to the Mount of Olives.

31 Then Jesus said to them, “You will all fall away because of Me this night [disillusioned about Me, confused, and some even ashamed of Me], for it is written [in the Scriptures], ‘I will strike the Shepherd, and the sheep of the flock will be scattered.’ 32 But after I am raised [to life], I will go ahead of you [leading the way] to Galilee.” 33 Peter replied to Him, “Though they all fall away because of You [and doubt and disown You], I will never fall away!” 34 Jesus said to him, “I assure you *and* most solemnly say to you, this night, before a rooster crows, you will [completely] deny Me three times.” 35 Peter said to Jesus, “Even if I have to die with You, I will not deny You!” And all the disciples said the same thing.

The Garden of Gethsemane

36 Then Jesus came with them to a place called ^[p] Gethsemane (olive-press), and He told His disciples, “Sit here while I go over there and pray.” 37 And taking with Him Peter and the two sons of Zebedee [James and John], He began to be grieved and greatly distressed. 38 Then He said to them, “My soul is deeply grieved, so that I am almost dying *of sorrow*. Stay here and stay awake *and* keep watch with Me.”

39 And after going a little farther, He fell face down and prayed, saying, “My Father, if it is possible [that is, consistent with Your will], let this cup ^[q] pass from Me; yet not as I will, but as You will.” 40 And He came to the disciples and found them sleeping, and said to Peter, “So, you *men* could not stay awake *and* keep watch with Me for one hour? 41 Keep *actively* watching and praying that you may not come into temptation; the spirit is willing, but the ^[r] body is weak.”

42 He went away a second time and prayed, saying, “My Father, if this cannot pass away unless I drink it, Your will be done.” 43 Again He came and found them sleeping, for their eyes were heavy. 44 So, leaving them again, He went away and prayed for the third time, saying the same words once more. 45 Then He returned to the disciples and said to them, “Are you still sleeping and resting? Listen, ^[s] the hour [of My

sacrifice] is at hand and the Son of Man is being betrayed into the hands of sinners [whose way and nature is to oppose God]. ⁴⁶ Get up, let us go. Look, My betrayer is near!”

Jesus' Betrayal and Arrest

⁴⁷ As Jesus was still speaking, Judas [Iscariot], one of the twelve [disciples], came up accompanied by a large crowd with swords and clubs, [who came as representatives] from the chief priests and elders of the people. ⁴⁸ Now the betrayer had given them a sign, saying, “Whomever I kiss, He is the one; seize Him.” ⁴⁹ Immediately Judas went to Jesus and said, “Greetings (rejoice), Rabbi!” And he ^[u]kissed Him [in a deliberate act of betrayal]. ⁵⁰ Jesus said to Judas, “Friend, do what you came for.” Then they came and seized Jesus and arrested Him.

⁵¹ And ^[u]one of those who were with Jesus reached out and drew his sword, and struck [Malchus] the slave of the high priest and cut off his ear. ⁵² Then Jesus said to him, “Put your sword back in its place; for all those who *habitually* draw the sword will die by the sword. ⁵³ Do you think that I cannot appeal to My Father, and He will immediately provide Me with more than twelve ^[v]legions of angels? ⁵⁴ How then will the Scriptures be fulfilled, that it must happen this way?”

⁵⁵ At that moment Jesus said to the crowds, “Have you come out with swords and clubs to arrest Me as *you would* against a robber? Day after day I used to sit in the porches *and* courts of the temple teaching, and you did not arrest Me. ⁵⁶ But all this has taken place so that the Scriptures of the prophets would be fulfilled.” Then all the disciples deserted Him and fled.

Jesus before Caiaphas

⁵⁷ Those who had seized Jesus led Him away to ^[w]Caiaphas, the high priest, where the scribes and the elders (Sanhedrin, Jewish High Court) had gathered ^[x]illegally together. ⁵⁸ But Peter followed Him at a distance as far as the courtyard of the [elegant home of the Jewish] high priest, and went inside, and sat with the ^[v]guards to see the outcome.

⁵⁹ Now the chief priests and the whole Council (Sanhedrin, Jewish High Court) tried to get false witnesses to testify against Jesus, so that they might [have a reason to] put Him to death. ⁶⁰ They found none, even though many false witnesses came forward. At last two came forward, ⁶¹ and testified, “This man said, ^[z]I am able to ^[aa]tear down the temple of God and rebuild it in three days.” ⁶² The high priest stood up and said to Jesus, “Have You no answer to give? What is it that these men are testifying against You?” ⁶³ But Jesus kept silent. And the high priest said to Him, “I call on You to swear a binding oath by the living God, that you tell us whether You are the Christ, the Son of God.” ⁶⁴ Jesus said to him, “You have [in fact] said it; but more than that I tell you [regardless of what you do with Me now], in the future you will see [Me revealed as] the Son of Man seated at the ^[ab]right hand of Power, and coming on the clouds of heaven.”

⁶⁵ Then the high priest tore his ^[ac]robes [in mock horror] and exclaimed, “He has blasphemed [by making Himself God’s equal]! What further need have we of witnesses *or* evidence? See, you have now heard the blasphemy. ⁶⁶ What do you think?” They answered, ^[ad]“He deserves to be put to death.”

⁶⁷ Then they spat in His face and struck Him with their fists; and some slapped Him, ⁶⁸ saying, ^[ae]“Prophecy to us, You Christ (Messiah, Anointed); who was it that struck You?”

Peter's Denials

⁶⁹ Now Peter was sitting outside in the courtyard, and a servant-girl came up to him and said, “You too were with Jesus the Galilean.” ⁷⁰ But he denied it before them all, saying, “I do not know what you are

talking about.”⁷¹ And when he had gone out to the gateway, another *servant-girl* saw him and she said to the bystanders, “This man was with Jesus the Nazarene.”⁷² And again he denied it with an oath, “I do not know the man.”⁷³ After a little while the bystanders came up and said to Peter, “Surely you are one of them too; for even your [Galilean] accent gives you away.”⁷⁴ Then he began to curse [that is, to invoke God’s judgment on himself] and swear [an oath], “I do not know the man!” And at that moment a rooster crowed.⁷⁵ And Peter remembered the [prophetic] words of Jesus, when He had said, “Before a rooster crows, you will deny Me three times.” And he went outside and wept bitterly [in repentance].

Matthew 26 is a pivotal chapter in the Gospel of Matthew, marking the final days of Jesus’ life before His crucifixion. It focuses on several key events, including the plot to arrest Jesus, the anointing of Jesus, His Last Supper with the disciples, His agony in the garden of Gethsemane, His betrayal by Judas, and His arrest. The chapter is filled with significant spiritual themes, teachings, and moments that shape Christian faith.

Full Description of Matthew 26

1. Plot Against Jesus (Matthew 26:1-5)

The chapter begins with Jesus telling His disciples that His death is near, and the chief priests and elders of the people plot to arrest and kill Him. They decide not to arrest Him during the feast for fear of causing a riot among the people.

2. Anointing at Bethany (Matthew 26:6-13)

While in Bethany at the home of Simon the leper, a woman (traditionally identified as Mary, the sister of Martha and Lazarus) anoints Jesus' head with expensive perfume. The disciples rebuke her for wasting such a costly item, but Jesus defends her, stating that she has prepared Him for His burial. This action is seen as an expression of love and devotion to Jesus.

3. Judas Agrees to Betray Jesus (Matthew 26:14-16)

Judas Iscariot, one of Jesus' twelve disciples, goes to the chief priests and agrees to betray Jesus in exchange for thirty pieces of silver. From that moment, he looks for an opportunity to hand Jesus over to them.

4. The Last Supper (Matthew 26:17-30)

Jesus shares the Passover meal with His disciples. He institutes the sacrament of the Eucharist (Holy Communion), symbolizing His body and blood. During the meal, Jesus predicts that one of His disciples will betray Him, and each disciple questions whether it is them. Judas, after being told by Jesus, leaves to carry out his betrayal. Jesus also speaks of the new covenant and the coming of His kingdom.

5. Prediction of Peter’s Denial (Matthew 26:31-35)

Jesus foretells that all His disciples will abandon Him, but Peter boldly insists that he will never deny Jesus. Jesus tells Peter that he will deny Him three times before the rooster crows. Peter, confident in his loyalty, denies that he would ever do such a thing.

6. Agony in the Garden of Gethsemane (Matthew 26:36-46)

Jesus goes to the Garden of Gethsemane to pray, asking His disciples to stay awake and pray with Him. He experiences deep sorrow and anguish, praying to God that if it is possible, the "cup" of suffering may pass from Him. Yet, He submits to God’s will. The disciples fall asleep multiple times, and Jesus rebukes them for not staying awake.

7. **Judas Betrays Jesus (Matthew 26:47-56)**

Judas arrives with a crowd of armed men to arrest Jesus. He identifies Jesus with a kiss, and Jesus is arrested. The disciples attempt to defend Him, but Jesus tells them that this is the fulfillment of the Scriptures. He is bound and led away.

8. **Peter's Denial (Matthew 26:57-75)**

Peter follows Jesus at a distance to the high priest's courtyard. While there, he is recognized and asked if he is one of Jesus' disciples. Despite his earlier bold declaration, Peter denies Jesus three times before the rooster crows, fulfilling Jesus' prophecy. Peter then weeps bitterly in repentance.

Important Verses and Their Significance

1. **Matthew 26:26-28 – The Institution of the Lord's Supper**

"While they were eating, Jesus took bread, and when He had given thanks, He broke it and gave it to His disciples, saying, 'Take and eat; this is My body.' Then He took the cup, and when He had given thanks, He gave it to them, saying, 'Drink from it, all of you. This is My blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins.'"

Significance: This marks the institution of Holy Communion, a sacrament that Christians continue to observe in remembrance of Jesus' sacrifice. The bread and wine symbolize His body and blood, given for the forgiveness of sins and the establishment of a new covenant.

2. **Matthew 26:39 – Jesus' Prayer in Gethsemane**

"Going a little farther, He fell with His face to the ground and prayed, 'My Father, if it is possible, may this cup be taken from Me. Yet not as I will, but as You will.'"

Significance: This moment demonstrates Jesus' humanity as He expresses His deep sorrow and desire to avoid suffering, but ultimately submits to God's will. It's a powerful model of obedience and trust in God's plan, even in moments of distress.

3. **Matthew 26:52-54 – Jesus' Response to Violence**

"Put your sword back in its place... for all who draw the sword will die by the sword. Do you think I cannot call on My Father, and He will at once put at My disposal more than twelve legions of angels? But how then would the Scriptures be fulfilled that say it must happen in this way?"

Significance: Jesus' response to His arrest demonstrates His commitment to the fulfillment of God's will. Even though He could have called for divine intervention, He chooses to allow the events to unfold according to God's plan. This teaches Christians about the importance of surrendering to God's will, even when it's difficult.

4. **Matthew 26:75 – Peter's Denial and Repentance**

"Then Peter remembered the word Jesus had spoken: 'Before the rooster crows, you will disown Me three times.' And he went outside and wept bitterly."

Significance: Peter's repentance after his denial of Jesus is a powerful moment of humility. His weeping symbolizes genuine sorrow for sin, and it shows that even in our failures, there is hope for forgiveness through repentance.

Spiritual Influence of Matthew 26

- **The Call to Obedience:** Jesus' submission to God's will in the Garden of Gethsemane is an example of perfect obedience. Christians are encouraged to follow this model in their own lives, especially during moments of trial or suffering.
- **The Power of Forgiveness:** The institution of the Lord's Supper represents the sacrifice that brings forgiveness of sins. It serves as a reminder of God's grace and the new covenant that offers salvation to all who believe in Jesus Christ.
- **Repentance and Restoration:** Peter's denial and subsequent repentance illustrate the importance of repentance in the Christian faith. Even those who fail God can find restoration through sincere repentance and forgiveness.
- **Sacrifice and Love:** The anointing at Bethany underscores the theme of sacrificial love. The woman's act of anointing Jesus with expensive perfume is an expression of deep love and devotion, reflecting the sacrificial love that Jesus would soon demonstrate on the cross.
- **Endurance in the Face of Suffering:** Jesus' willingness to endure betrayal, suffering, and death teaches Christians about the importance of enduring hardship for the sake of God's will. Jesus' ultimate sacrifice on the cross becomes a source of strength and hope for believers facing their own trials.

In summary, Matthew 26 is a rich chapter that speaks to themes of betrayal, sacrifice, forgiveness, repentance, and obedience. These spiritual lessons continue to influence Christian theology and practice today, guiding believers in their walk with God.