

TALKS FOR GROWING CHRISTIANS TRANSCRIPT

John 13:18-30: The Lord Predicts that One of His Own Disciples Will Betray Him

"I do not speak concerning all of you. I know whom I have chosen; but that the Scripture may be fulfilled, 'He who eats bread with Me has lifted up his heel against Me.'¹⁹ Now I tell you before it comes, that when it does come to pass, you may believe that I am He.²⁰ Most assuredly, I say to you, he who receives whomever I send receives Me; and he who receives Me receives Him who sent Me."

²¹ When Jesus had said these things, He was troubled in spirit, and testified and said, "Most assuredly, I say to you, one of you will betray Me."²² Then the disciples looked at one another, perplexed about whom He spoke.

²³ Now there was leaning on Jesus' bosom one of His disciples, whom Jesus loved.²⁴ Simon Peter therefore motioned to him to ask who it was of whom He spoke.

²⁵ Then, leaning back on Jesus' breast, he said to Him, "Lord, who is it?"

²⁶ Jesus answered, "It is he to whom I shall give a piece of bread when I have dipped it." And having dipped the bread, He gave it to Judas Iscariot, the son of Simon.²⁷ Now after the piece of bread, Satan entered him. Then Jesus said to him, "What you do, do quickly."²⁸ But no one at the table knew for what reason He said this to him.²⁹ For some thought, because Judas had the money box, that Jesus had said to him, "Buy those things we need for the feast," or that he should give something to the poor.

³⁰ Having received the piece of bread, he then went out immediately. And it was night."

Background Notes

In order to reconstruct the scene in which Judas is identified as the "betrayers," we need to remember that in the 1st century they didn't sit at tables for meals, as we do. For special meals like the Passover, they reclined on low backless couches or divans, around a low table. (So Leonardo da Vinci's famous painting of the Last Supper, where the Lord is sitting on a chair at a table with six disciples on each side, is really not historically correct, is it?) As they reclined on the low couches, the people would lie on their sides or stomachs, and prop themselves up on their left elbows, leaving their right hands free for eating. And they didn't use silverware -- they used flat bread, like pita bread, to dip into the sauce or the meat dishes on the table. By the way, at the Passover meal the bread was unleavened.

Knowing this background is important for understanding how John was leaning on the chest of Jesus (v23), as well as how Judas received the morsel of bread (v26). In verse 23 we read, "Now there was leaning on Jesus' bosom one of His disciples, whom Jesus loved." We believe that this disciple was John. John's couch was arranged so that the head area of his couch was near the chest area of the Lord's couch. When the Lord said, "Most assuredly, I say to you, one of you will betray Me," Peter, whose couch was at another part of the table, gestured to John to ask Jesus who it is that is going to betray Him. So John leaned back against the Lord's chest and, in a quiet voice, asked the Lord, "Lord, who is it?"(v25). The Lord responded, again in a quiet voice that was not heard by the rest of the disciples, "It is he to whom I shall give a piece of bread when I have dipped it"(v26). The Lord then reached into a meat or sauce dish with a piece of bread and gave it to Judas, and said to Judas, "What you do, do quickly."

Judas then left the group. Even at this point, no one suspected Judas. The other disciples probably thought that Judas was going out to buy some last minute items or to give some Passover alms to the poor, because he was the treasurer of the group (v29). Now you don't make a questionable person the treasurer of a group, so on the surface it appeared that Judas was the least likely of the disciples to be the betrayer.

Doctrinal / teaching points

1. The betrayal by Judas was a fulfillment of Scripture.

"I do not speak concerning all of you. I know whom I have chosen; but that the Scripture may be fulfilled, 'He who eats bread with Me has lifted up his heel against Me'(v18). The Lord had just finished the foot washing, but He had indicated that they were not all clean: "He who is bathed needs only to wash his feet, but is completely clean; and you are clean, but not all of you."¹¹ For He knew who would betray Him; therefore He said, "You are not all clean"(v10-11). By this statement the Lord specifically indicated that one of His disciples would betray Him. "When Jesus had said these things, He was troubled in spirit, and testified and said, "Most assuredly, I say to you, one of you will betray Me"(v21).

As the Lord contemplated that betrayal by one of His own disciples, and as He contemplated the fate that awaited Judas, He was deeply disturbed in His human spirit. The Lord was not surprised – He knew all along that He would be betrayed. But the nearness of these events was weighing heavily on His human soul. Back in John 6:70-71 we read, *"Jesus answered them, "Did I not choose you, the twelve, and one of you is a devil?"⁷¹ He spoke of Judas Iscariot, the son of Simon, for it was he who would betray Him, being one of the twelve."*

In verse 19 we see our Lord's omniscience, which is proof of His deity, and he claims the title of God from the Old Testament. *"Now I tell you before it comes, that when it does come to pass, you may believe that I am He."* "You will know that **I am He**" -- notice in your Bibles that the word "He" is in italics, which means that it was not in the original text. "**I am**" is that title of deity that comes right from the Old Testament. Do you remember when the Lord revealed Himself to Moses at the burning bush, "I AM" is the divine title that was used? Here the Lord, once again, is claiming that title.

The prophecy quoted in verse 18, *'He who eats bread with Me has lifted up his heel against Me,'* comes from the Messianic portion of Psalm 41:9. In Psalm 41 David was referring to Ahithophel, one of his trusted counselors. Ahithophel betrayed David and went over to Absalom's side when Absalom usurped the throne. When Absalom rejected Ahithophel's counsel, Ahithophel went out and hanged himself. You can read about those events in 2 Samuel 16 and 17. Ahithophel, then, in this typical Messianic Psalm is a picture of Judas who betrayed his Lord and then went out a hanged himself.

The fact that Judas betrayed the Lord in fulfillment of Scripture in no way relieves Judas of his sin in betraying the Lord. Acts 1 makes this quite clear. In Acts 1:16 we read, *"Men and brethren, this Scripture had to be fulfilled, which the Holy Spirit spoke before by the mouth of David concerning Judas, who became a guide to those who arrested Jesus..."* And in Acts 1:25 we read, *"to take part in this ministry and apostleship from which Judas by transgression fell, that he might go to his own place."* Judas was guilty of transgression – of sin. Judas was responsible for every single one of his actions, even though his betrayal of Jesus was a fulfillment of Scripture.

2. There is a difference between satanic possession and satanic influence.

"Now after the piece of bread, Satan entered him. Then Jesus said to him, "What you do, do quickly"(v27). Up until this point, Judas was not **possessed** by Satan -- he was **influenced** by Satan. Look back at verse 2: "And supper being ended, the devil having already put it into the heart of Judas Iscariot, Simon's son, to betray Him..." Satan put the idea to betray the Lord "into the heart of Judas" -- that is satanic influence, but not satanic possession. There is a difference. When the Lord had to rebuke Peter in Matthew 16, he said, "Get behind Me, Satan!" Peter was not possessed by Satan, but his ideas and statements about the Lord not having to go to the cross were greatly influenced by Satan -- they were "put into his heart" by Satan.

Here in John 13:27, the case Judas is very unique. Here is satanic possession: "And having dipped the bread, He gave it to Judas Iscariot, the son of Simon. ²⁷ Now after the piece of bread, Satan entered him." "Satan entered him"! Think of it -- a man possessed by **Satan himself!** Today there are occasions of **demonic** possession of unbelievers, but probably not **satanic** possession. Satan can only be in one place at one time; he is not omnipresent. Satan is waiting until the time the end when he will possess the leader referred to as "the beast" in Revelation 13. Today, there is much satanic influence and some demonic possession, but probably not satanic possession. Remember -- there is a difference between satanic influence and satanic possession.

Practical Applications

1. There is only night, if you turn from the Light!

"Having received the piece of bread, Judas went out immediately, and it was night"(v30). In this verse, "night" has a double meaning. It was not only after sundown, and dark outside -- it was **night** within the soul of Judas! I believe the spiritualization of Scripture here is legitimate, because the contrast between light and darkness is one of the themes of the Gospel of John. Jesus is the Light of the world. This world is in spiritual and moral darkness. If you turn away from the Light of the world, there is only the night of the world!

A number of years ago a student came to Emmaus for one year. At first he professed to be a Christian, but after one year he left Emmaus. The next time I saw him, he told me that he had given up the Christian faith and he was now seeking for the truth and happiness. To this day he is still searching, but he'll never find truth and happiness apart from Christ. He is further away from the Light now than he ever was; he is hardened and blinded. Why? Because there is **only night** if you turn from the **Light!**

2. Don't refuse your last chance for salvation.

The Lord gave Judas the morsel of bread dipped in meat and sauce. This was considered a gesture of kindness and honor extended to a friend. The Lord was not playing games with Judas -- the Lord loved Judas! The Lord had given Judas a chance to change when He washed Judas's feet. With the gesture of kindness, by giving Judas the bread, the Lord was giving him one last chance to change his mind and reverse his course of action. But Judas refused his last chance for salvation. The point of no return had been reached! Judas now was open to Satan. How tragic!

Maybe you are like Judas. You're a good, trustworthy type of person. You would be the logical person to choose to be the treasurer of a group or committee. You have been going along with the Christian faith. Maybe that's the way you were raised -- you had Christian parents, you went to Sunday School and church. But is it possible that you are considering going the other way now? Perhaps, like Judas, you never **really** became a **true** believer. Don't turn away, because a hardening process sets in. This may be your last chance for salvation. Don't refuse your last chance for salvation!