

Judas Iscariot

Judas Iscariot is typically remembered for one thing: his betrayal of Yahusha. He was one of the twelve (12) disciples who lived with and followed Yahusha for three (3) years. He witnessed Yahusha's ministry, His teaching, and His many miracles. He was the treasurer for the group and used this trusted position to steal from their resources. **John 12:6** Yahudah (Judea) did not say this because he cared about the poor, but because he was a thief. As keeper of the money bag, he used to take from what was put into it.

Yahudah (Judea) was a common name in that era, and there are several other Yahudah (Judea)'s mentioned in the Brit HaDashah (New Testament). One of the other disciples was named Judas (**John 14:22**), and so was one of Yahusha's own half-brothers (**Mark 6:3**). To differentiate, **John 6:71** and **John 13:26** refer to Yahusha's betrayer as "Yahudah (Judea), son of Simon Iscariot."

The name Judas is the Greek form of the Hebrew name Yahudah, in Hebrew יהודה (Strong's #3063). Most Hebrew dictionaries will define this name as "praise," but as this English word is an abstract word it falls short of its true Hebraic meaning. The parent root of this word is יד (*Yad*, Strong's #3027) meaning "hand". The root ידה (*Yadah*, Strong's #3034) is derived from *yad* and means "to throw or stretch out the hand" and is the base root in the name Yahudah. An example would be: If you were standing on the edge of the Grand Canyon for the first time and you threw your hands out and said "Wow, will you look at that". This is the Hebraic understanding of the expression "praise".

Scholars have several ideas about the meaning of the surname. One is that *Iscariot* refers to Kerioth, a region or town in Yahudah (Judea). Another idea is that it refers to the Sicarii, a cadre of assassins among the Hebrew rebels. The possible association with the Sicarii allows for interesting speculation about Yahudah (Judea)'s motives for his betrayal, but the fact that he made a conscious choice to betray Yahusha (**Luke 22:48**) remains the same. The surname Iscariot is useful, if for no other reason, in that it leaves no doubt about which Yahudah (Judas) is being referred to.

In the group of the Disciples, Yahudah (Judas) had the role of treasurer, that is, administrator of the money of the group. In the Gospel of John, it is emphasized that Yahudah (Judas) took advantage of the task, stealing from the common chest. In particular, his attachment to money is highlighted in the episode of the woman who breaks the jar of spikenard oil, of great value, to anoint Yahusha. Yahudah (Judas) becomes angry that the oil could be sold to make money for the poor, but Yahudah (Judas) was not interested in the poor but in money in the common chest.

Money was important to Yahudah (Judas). As already mentioned, he was a thief, and, according to **Matthew 26:13–15**, the chief priests paid him “thirty (30) silver coins” to betray Yahusha.

Yahusha knew from the very beginning what Yahudah (Judas) Iscariot would do. Yahusha told His disciples, “Have I not chosen you, the Twelve (20)? Yet one (1) of you is a devil!” (**John 6:70**). And at the Last Supper, Yahusha predicted His betrayal and identified the betrayer: “Yahusha answered, ‘It is the one to whom I will give this piece of bread when I have dipped it in the dish.’ Then, dipping the piece of bread, he gave it to Yahudah (Judas) Iscariot, son of Simon” (**John 13:26**).

Yahusha said that Yahudah (Judas) Iscariot was not “clean”; i.e., he had not been born again and was not forgiven of his sins (**John 13:10–11**) Yahusha said to him, “**The one who has bathed does not need to wash, except for his feet, but is completely clean. And you are clean, but not every one of you.**” **11** For he knew who was to betray him; that was why he said, “**Not all of you are clean.**”.

In fact, Yahudah (Judas) was empowered to do what he did by the devil himself: “As soon as Yahudah (Judas) took the bread [that Yahusha had given him], HaSatan entered into him” (**John 13:27**).

Whoever, therefore, eats the bread or drinks the cup of the Master in an unworthy manner will be guilty concerning the body and blood of the Master. **1 Corinthians 11:27**

The other disciples had no clue that Yahudah (Judas) Iscariot harbored treacherous thoughts. When Yahusha mentioned a betrayer in their midst, the other disciples worried that it was *they* who would prove disloyal (**John 13:22**). No one suspected Yahudah (Judas). He was a trusted member of

the Twelve (12). Even when Yahusha told Yahudah (Judas), "What you are about to do, do quickly," (**John 13:27**), and Yahudah (Judas) left the Last Supper, the others at the table simply thought Yahudah (Judas) had been sent to buy more food or to give something to charity (verses **28–29**).

The Betrayal

Through his craftiness Yahudah (Judas) concealed for a while his true nature from the rest of the disciples, and he now felt that his present source of income could not remain secure. The words of his Master regarding the day of his burial (**John 12:7; Matthew 26:12; Mark 14:8**) revealed to His betrayer that Yahusha already knew well the evil powers that were at work against Him; and it is significant that according to Matthew and Mark, who mention the anointing, Yahudah (Judas) departed immediately afterward and made his agreement with the chief priests (**Matthew 26:14,15; Mark 14:10,11; Luke 22:3-6**).

But his absence was only temporary. He was present at the washing of the disciples' feet, there to be differentiated once more by Yahusha from the rest of the Twelve (12) ("You are clean, but not all" and "He that eats my bread lifted up his heel against me," **John 13:10,18**), but again without being named. It seemed as if Yahusha wished to give Yahudah (Judas) every opportunity, even at this late hour, to repent and make his confession. For the last time, when they had sat down to eat, Yahusha appealed to him thus with the words, "One of you shall betray me" (**Matthew 26:21; Mark 14:18; Luke 22:21; John 13:21**). And at the end, in answer to the anxious queries of His disciples, "Is it I?" He indicated his betrayer, not by name, but by a sign: **The Betrayal Kiss**

"He it is, for whom I shall dip the sop, and give it to him" (**John 13:26**). Immediately upon its reception, Yahudah (Judas) left the supper room; the opportunity which he sought for has come (**John 13:30; Matthew 26:16**). On his departure, Yahudah (Judas) made his way to the high priests and their followers, and coming upon Yahusha in the Garden of Gethsemane, he betrayed his Master with a kiss (**Matthew 26:47-50; Mark 14:43,44; Luke 22:47; John 18:2-5**).

The culminating event of Yahudah (Judas)'s betrayal is the kiss, used by Yahudah (Judas) to point out Yahusha to the high priests in Gethsemane. Yahudah (Judas) uses this sign of affection in a false and contradictory

way: what should express love, the “kiss” instead becomes an instrument of evil.

The story of the betrayal of Judas, like many of the episodes of the Gospel, became part of the popular tradition and common feeling. Even today the expression “being a Judas” is used to indicate someone as a traitor or thief.

Yahudah (Judas) Iscariot betrayed Yahusha with a death kiss, perfectly in keeping with his brazen duplicity (**Luke 22:47–48**). After committing his atrocious act, Yahudah (Judas) “was seized with remorse and returned the thirty (30) silver coins to the chief priests and the elders” (**Matthew 27:3**) When Judas, his betrayer saw that Yahusha was condemned, he was filled with remorse and brought back the thirty (30) pieces of silver to the chief priests and the elders. He said, 'I have sinned by betraying innocent blood. "But they said, 'What is that to us? See to it yourself.

Yahudah (Judas) Iscariot fulfilled the prophecy of **Psalms 41:9**, “Even my close friend, someone I trusted, one who shared my bread, has turned against me” (cf. **John 13:18**). Yet Yahudah (Judas) was fully responsible for his actions. Yahusha said, “The Son of Man will go just as it is written about him. But woe to that man who betrays the Son of Man! It would be better for him if he had not been born” (**Matthew 26:24**).

We see that remorse does not equal repentance—rather than make amends or seek forgiveness, “he went away and hanged himself” (**Matthew 27:5**).

Matthew 27:6–8 reports that the chief priests (Joseph ben Caiaphas) took the “blood money” from Yahudah (Judas) and bought a potter’s field as a place for burying foreigners (thus fulfilling the prophecy of **Zechariah 11:12–13**) Then I said to them, “If it seems good to you, give me my wages; but if not, keep them.” And they weighed out as my wages thirty (30) pieces of silver. **13** Then Yahuah said to me, “Throw it to the potter”— the magnificent price at which I was priced by them. So I took the thirty (30) pieces of silver and threw them into the house of Yahuah, to the potter.

The Gospels tell how Yahudah (Judas) agrees with the high priests (Joseph ben Caiaphas) to deliver Yahusha to them in exchange for thirty (30) silver coins, about \$3000 dollars today. This was the compensation that moved Yahudah (Judas) to conduct his betrayal, for which he regretted, prompting

him to return the money and ended his own life, as reported in the Gospel of Matthew and the Acts of the Apostles.

Given the fact of Yahudah (Judas)'s close proximity to Yahusha during three (3) years of ministry, it is hard to imagine how he could follow through on such a betrayal. Yahudah (Judas)'s story teaches us to guard against small, gradual failings that gain strength and power in our lives and that could open the door to more deadly influences. Yahudah (Judas) story is also a great reminder that appearances can be deceiving. Yahusha taught, "Many will say to me on that day, 'Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in your name and in your name drive out demons and in your name perform many miracles?' Then I will tell them plainly, 'I never knew you. Away from me, you evildoers!'" (**Matthew 7:22–23**).

The End of Yahudah (Judas)

Yahudah (Judas), when he saw the results of his betrayal, "having regretted [it]." (**Matthew 27:3-10**) He saw his sin in a new light, and "his conscience bounded into remorse."

He made ineffectual struggles to escape, by attempting to return the thirty (30) coins to the Pharisees, and when they would not receive it, he cast it down at their feet and left it. (**Matthew 27:5**) But, restitution of the silver did not undo the wrong; it was restored in a wrong spirit, a desire for relief rather than hatred of sin; he confessed to the wrong party, or rather to those who should have been secondary, and who could not grant forgiveness; "compunction is not conversion."

Foreordained to Be a Traitor?

Could it be that Yahudah (Judas) was foreordained to be the traitor and that Yahusha was conscious that He was to suffer death on the stake, and chose Yahudah (Judas) because He knew that he would betray Him and thus fulfill the Divine decrees (**Matthew 26:54**). Yahusha "knew all men"; **John 6:64**, "Yahusha knew from the beginning who should betray him," and **John 18:4**, John himself wrote after the event, but in the words of our Master there was, as we have seen, a growing clearness in the manner in which He foretold His betrayal.