

THE



# HARVESTER

"The harvest truly is great, but the laborers are few: pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest, that he would send forth laborers into his harvest." [Luke 10:2]

MARCH 1992

No. 075

## THE CHOICE OF JUDAS

The story of Judas Iscariot is a sad and tragic one! Here was a man specifically called by Jesus to be one of the Twelve Apostles (Matt. 10:1-4). He walked and talked and spent countless hours with the Saviour. He witnessed the love, the compassion, the obedience, the teachings, and the miracles of Jesus Christ. Judas was even given the responsibility of being the group's treasurer (John 12:6; 13:29). He had it all so it seemed. So why did Judas turn his back on Jesus? Why did he betray his Master?

The scriptures seem to indicate that Judas became a traitor mostly from a motive of

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greed. He was a thief and the one who objected to the pound of ointment that was used to anoint the feet of Jesus (John 12:3-6). Judas felt that the ointment was "wasted" on Jesus when it could have been added to the treasury instead. Perhaps Judas betrayed Christ because he was disappointed that the future kingdom of Israel was going to be spiritual and not a worldly one. Or maybe, he was jealous of the Master.

Whatever the reason, Judas made a sad choice indeed! He broke the bonds of friendship. He dishonored his position. He abused what faith and trust was placed in him. He gave up all that was good in his life in exchange for evil. He made a pact with the devil and sold his very own soul for thirty pieces of silver (Matt. 26:15). In short, Judas threw away the precious gift of eternal salvation. How especially depressing it is when we remember that at one time Judas was numbered with the twelve apostles and *"had obtained part of this ministry"* (Acts 1:17).

I still think of Judas everytime I hear about people who have "left the church". These are people who know the scriptures well. They know there is only *"one body, and one Spirit, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling; One Lord, one faith, one baptism, One God and Father of all"* (Eph. 4:4-6). But for some feeble reason, for thirty pieces of silver, they choose to turn their back on Jesus. No longer do they choose to *"come after"* the Lord, or to deny themselves (Matt. 16:24). All of a sudden they drop the cross of Christ they had been carrying and quit following Him.

They have not just forsaken the Lord's church; they have betrayed Christ, too! Like Judas, these people were numbered among the faithful disciples. They were called to be Christians.

Through God's Word they experienced the love, the compassion, the obedience, the teachings, and the miracles of Jesus Christ. They knew what was right and wrong. They learned what the reward would be for obedience and what the punishment would be for disobedience. They had it all so it seemed and now they have "left the church"???

What a tragedy when a person commits spiritual suicide like this. Not only is it sad, but the scriptures paint an ugly scene out of it, too. *"For if after they have escaped the pollutions of the world through the knowledge of the Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, they are again entangled therein, and overcome, the latter end is worse with them than the beginning. For it had been better for them not to have known the way of righteousness, than, after they have known it, to turn from the holy commandment delivered unto them. But it is happened unto them according to the true proverb, The dog is turned to his own vomit again; and the sow that was washed to her wallowing in the mire!"* (2 Pet. 2:20-22) Brethren, this may be one of the most sobering thoughts in the whole Bible, so we better take heed!

Let us remember the choice that Judas made and pray that we ourselves will not sell out to the devil. Remember the picture we just read in 2 Peter 2 and don't ever forget the blessings we now enjoy IN Jesus Christ. Our Saviour has already prepared a place in heaven for us (John 14:2). We are *"partakers of the Holy Ghost and have tasted the good word of God and the powers of the world to come"* (Heb. 6:5). Why would we want to throw all that away? Because the "grass looks greener on the other side of the fence"? Because we want to go where the crowds are, where we will be more popular, and make more money?

THE HARVESTER is a monthly publication mailed free of charge to anyone who wishes to receive it. Please submit name, address, and all correspondence to:

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And what about those who have already "left the church" and fallen away? According to Hebrews 6:4-6, there is nothing else we can do. What can we tell them that they don't already know? If they were once "*enlightened*", then they already know the way of righteousness and what is contained in the scriptures. It would be impossible for us to renew them again unto repentance. We may give them encouragement but if they refuse to listen to God's Word, what more can we do? Only they can convince themselves to change their ways before it is eternally too late. It is they who must answer for the choice they have made, just like Judas.

RAY McMANUS

## SEARCH THE SCRIPTURES

1. Who are the fathers of the only two sets of twins named in the Bible?
2. How many sons did Aaron the priest have?
3. God will forgive and cleanse a person if he does what?
4. What is the shortest verse in the Bible?
5. What type of oil was used in the lamps of the tabernacle?

ANSWERS NEXT MONTH . . .

and remember last month's questions?

1. Who begged for Jesus' body? JOSEPH OF ARIMATHAEA (Luke 23:50-52)
2. How many foxes did Samson tie tail to tail in pairs? 300 (Judges 15:4)
3. In the book of Revelation, what did the twenty four elders cast before the throne? THEIR CROWNS (Rev. 4:10)
4. What is the scripture reference for the longest verse in the Bible? ESTHER 8:9
5. What were the angels doing that Jacob saw in his dream? ASCENDING AND DESCENDING THE LADDER (Gen. 28:12)

### MURMUR NOT AMONG YOURSELVES

*"The Jews then murmured at him, because he said, I am the bread which came down from heaven. And they said, Is not this Jesus, the son of Joseph, whose father and mother we know? how is it then that he said, I came down from heaven? Jesus therefore answered and said unto them, Murmur not among yourselves." (John 6:41-43)*

In the passage above we find an instance of the Jews murmuring (complaining) against Jesus. Throughout the Bible we find many examples of complaining, especially in the Old Testament concerning the children of Israel. Friends, how often do you complain? And why do you complain? Is it necessary?

Do you complain when you see something that you disagree with? *"And Levi made him a great feast in his own house: and there was a great company of publicans and of others*

that sat down with them. But their scribes and Pharisees murmured against his disciples, saying, *Why do ye eat and drink with publicans and sinners?*" (Luke 5:29,30)

Do you complain when you get less than you think you deserve? *"So when even was come, the lord of the vineyard saith unto his steward, Call the labourers, and give them their hire, beginning from the last unto the first. And when they came that were hired about the eleventh hour, they received every man a penny. But when the first came, they supposed that they should have received more; and they likewise received every man a penny. And when they had received it, they murmured against the goodman of the house."* (Matt. 20:8-11)

Do you complain when you are doubted, when you are not satisfied, or when you are envious? Or do you complain to be heard, to get attention, or to let your troubles be known?

If so, then consider this: It is a fact that complaining annoys God. *"And when the people complained, it displeased the Lord: and the Lord heard it; and his anger was kindled; and the fire of the Lord burnt among them, and consumed them that were in the uttermost parts of the camp."* (Num. 11:1) Therefore we should control our tongues so that *"there be no complaining in our streets."* (Psa. 144:14)

It is another fact that our "complaining words" will be judged by God. *"Behold, the Lord cometh with ten thousands of his saints, To execute judgment upon all, and to convince all that are ungodly among them of all their ungodly deeds which they have ungodly committed, and of all their hard speeches which ungodly sinners have spoken against*

him. *These are murmurers, complainers, walking after their own lusts; and their mouth speaketh great swelling words, having men's persons in admiration because of advantage."* (Jude 14-16)

Finally, we are all commanded NOT to murmur. God's Word is very plain on this! *"Do all things without murmurings and disputings"* (Phil. 2:14) *"Neither murmur ye, as some of them also murmured, and were destroyed of the destroyer."* (I Cor. 10:10)

As Job once put it, *"If I say, I will forget my complaint, I will leave off my heaviness, and comfort myself"* (Job 9:27) So instead of complaining, let us all try to search out the good around us. Complaints show a pessimistic attitude. But a Christian is optimistic. He will have a happy attitude and will look at the bright side of life. Surely you can do no wrong if you obey the voice of Jesus: *"Murmur not among yourselves."*

RAY McMANUS

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August 1982

### FIVE TRUTHS

All Sinned.	Rom. 3:23
All Loved.	Jn. 3:16, Rom. 5:8
All Raised.	Jn. 5:28, 29
All Judged.	Rom. 14:10
All Bow.	Phil. 2:10

# GOSPEL MEETINGS

<u>Dates</u>	<u>Place &amp; Time</u>	<u>Speaker</u>
March 17	Jigger, LA	Wilbur Bass (Auburn, AL)
March 27-29	Freefield Church State Line, MS	James McDonald (Woodbury, TN)
April 3-5	Fairview Church Oxford, AL	James McDonald (Woodbury, TN)
April 5-10	West Broad Street Wedowee, AL	Wilbur Bass (Auburn, AL)

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## PLANT HAPPINESS THIS YEAR!

First plant five rows of peas:

Perseverance,  
Presence,  
Preparation,  
Promptness,  
Purity.

Next plant three rows of squash:

Squash gossip,  
Squash criticism and  
Squash indifference.

Then four rows of lettuce:

Let us be faithful to duty.  
Let us be unselfish and loyal.  
Let us be true to our own obligations.  
Let us love one another.

No garden is complete without turnips:

Turn up for important meetings.  
Turn up with a smile.  
Turn up with new ideas.  
Turn up with determination to make  
everything count for something  
good and worthwhile.

--Author Unknown--