



Hard Passages in the Bible

Gaining confidence for engaging the
biblical story

Judas Iscariot – 30 pieces of silver

- ¹⁰ Then Judas Iscariot, who was one of the twelve, went to the chief priests in order to betray him to them. ¹¹ When they heard it, they were greatly pleased, and promised to give him money. So he began to look for an opportunity to betray him.
 - Mk 14:10–11.
- (Matthew similar to Mark)
- ³ Then Satan entered into Judas called Iscariot, who was one of the twelve; ⁴ he went away and conferred with the chief priests and officers of the temple police about how he might betray him to them. ⁵ They were greatly pleased and agreed to give him money. ⁶ So he consented and began to look for an opportunity to betray him to them when no crowd was present.
 - Lk 22:3–6.

Judas Iscariot – Last supper

- ²⁰ When it was evening, he took his place with the twelve; ²¹ and while they were eating, he said, “Truly I tell you, one of you will betray me.”
²² And they became greatly distressed and began to say to him one after another, “Surely not I, Lord?” ²³ He answered, “The one who has dipped his hand into the bowl with me will betray me. ²⁴ The Son of Man goes as it is written of him, but woe to that one by whom the Son of Man is betrayed! It would have been better for that one not to have been born.” ²⁵ Judas, who betrayed him, said, “Surely not I, Rabbi?” He replied,

“You have said so.”

- Mt 26:20–25. Underline added to Mark’s account
- ²¹ But see, the one who betrays me is with me, and his hand is on the table.
²² For the Son of Man is going as it has been determined, but woe to that one by whom he is betrayed!” ²³ Then they began to ask one another which one of them it could be who would do this.
– Lk 22:21–23.

Judas Iscariot – Last supper in John

- ² The devil had already put it into the heart of Judas son of Simon Iscariot to betray him.
- (followed by account of footwashing)
- ²¹ After saying this Jesus was troubled in spirit, and declared, “Very truly, I tell you, one of you will betray me.” ²² The disciples looked at one another, uncertain of whom he was speaking. ²³ One of his disciples—the one whom Jesus loved—was reclining next to him; ²⁴ Simon Peter therefore motioned to him to ask Jesus of whom he was speaking. ²⁵ So while reclining next to Jesus, he asked him, “Lord, who is it?” ²⁶ Jesus answered, “It is the one to whom I give

this piece of bread when I have dipped it in the dish.” So when he had dipped the piece of bread, he gave it to Judas son of Simon Iscariot. ²⁷ After he received the piece of bread, Satan entered into him. Jesus said to him, “Do quickly what you are going to do.” ²⁸ Now no one at the table knew why he said this to him. ²⁹ Some thought that, because Judas had the common purse, Jesus was telling him, “Buy what we need for the festival”; or, that he should give something to the poor. ³⁰ So, after receiving the piece of bread, he immediately went out. And it was night.

– Jn 13:2, 21-20

Judas Iscariot – Arrest

- ⁴⁷ While he was still speaking, Judas, one of the twelve, arrived; with him was a large crowd with swords and clubs, from the chief priests and the elders of the people. ⁴⁸ Now the betrayer had given them a sign, saying, “The one I will kiss is the man; arrest him.” ⁴⁹ At once he came up to Jesus and said, “Greetings, Rabbi!” and kissed him. ⁵⁰ Jesus said to him, “Friend, do what you are here to do.” Then they came and laid hands on Jesus and arrested him. ⁵¹ Suddenly, one of those with Jesus put his hand on his sword, drew it, and struck the slave of the high priest, cutting off his

ear. ⁵² Then Jesus said to him, “Put your sword back into its place; for all who take the sword will perish by the sword. ⁵³ Do you think that I cannot appeal to my Father, and he will at once send me more than twelve legions of angels?”

– Mt 26:47–53. Underline unique to Matthew

Luke’s version: But Jesus said, “No more of this!” And he touched his ear and healed him.

Judas Iscariot – Arrest (John)

After Jesus had spoken these words, he went out with his disciples across the Kidron valley to a place where there was a garden, which he and his disciples entered. ² Now Judas, who betrayed him, also knew the place, because Jesus often met there with his disciples. ³ So Judas brought a detachment of soldiers together with police from the chief priests and the Pharisees, and they came there with lanterns and torches and weapons. ⁴ Then Jesus, knowing all that was to happen to him, came forward and asked them, “Whom are you looking for?” ⁵ They answered, “Jesus of

Nazareth.” Jesus replied, “I am he.”

¹⁰ Then Simon Peter, who had a sword, drew it, struck the high priest’s slave, and cut off his right ear. The slave’s name was Malchus. ¹¹ Jesus said to Peter, “Put your sword back into its sheath. Am I not to drink the cup that the Father has given me?”

– Jn 18:1-5, 10–11.

Judas Iscariot – death

- ³ When Judas, his betrayer, saw that Jesus was condemned, he repented and brought back the thirty pieces of silver to the chief priests and the elders. ⁴ He said, “I have sinned by betraying innocent blood.” But they said, “What is that to us? See to it yourself.” ⁵ **Throwing down the pieces of silver in the temple, he departed; and he went and hanged himself.** ⁶ But the chief priests, taking the pieces of silver, said, “It is not lawful to put them into the treasury, since they are blood money.” ⁷ After conferring together, they used them to buy the potter’s field as a place to bury foreigners. ⁸ For this reason that field has been called the Field of Blood to

this day.

– Mt 27:3–8.

- ¹⁸ (Now this man acquired a field with the reward of his wickedness; and falling headlong, **he burst open in the middle and all his bowels gushed out.** ¹⁹ This became known to all the residents of Jerusalem, so that the field was called in their language Hakeldama, that is, Field of Blood.)
– Ac 1:18–19.

Reaction to the readings

- What do you make of these accounts of Judas?
- What consistent themes do you hear in them?
- What are you confused or unclear about?
- What questions do they leave you with?

Other tidbits about Judas

- Iscariot is a last name that probably comes from Hebrew for “Man of Kerioth”
- The word used in the Gospels for “betray” (paradidomi) literally means “hand over” (to the authorities). To call it “betrayal” is a reasonable interpretation, but not what the text actually says.
- However, a related word “prodotes” does have the meaning of “traitor,” so betray may be appropriate

“Big” questions about Judas

- Can we assume that Judas was not forgiven?
- What was the difference between Judas’ betrayal and Peter’s? Or their responses afterwards?
- What was Judas’ motive?
- What are we supposed to learn from the story of Judas?
- Kris: “It is almost like there are two types of Christianity – those that only want a warrior Jesus, and those that eventually get that Jesus was a servant Leader.”