

Judas; Once Saved, Forever Lost

Was Lucifer always the Devil? Was he not once a perfect anointed cherub of God who *fell* through the sin of pride (Isaiah 14:12–15; Ezekiel 28:11–19)? “The angels which kept not their first estate” (Jude 6) also *fell* from a perfect position. Did not they all possess eternal life in the present tense until it was forfeited? The same can be said of Adam and Eve. Did not they once possess eternal life (present tense) based conditionally upon their obedience? Yes, it is possible to lose eternal life of your *own free will*. Otherwise these would have never *lost* their eternal life. *How much* more are we accountable to God in our present condition of regeneration through the blood of Christ. “How shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation?” (Hebrews 2:3).

What about Judas Iscariot? Some say Judas was never a true apostle of our Lord Jesus Christ. They rightly consider his end but never truly consider what the Bible says about his beginning. Thus many believe he was a false apostle, though not one Scripture calls him a false apostle. He was an apostle who apostatized.

Apostle means one sent forth, while *apostate* means one going, or gone backward, as abandoning, forsaking one’s profession of faith and practices. As I have heard it termed so many times, only a believer can ever rightly be labeled a backslider. The world or unbeliever can’t apostatize (fall away or go backwards), because an unbeliever has never believed unto salvation in Christ. They can’t fall when they are already fallen. In order to fall you must have a position from which to fall.

Acts 1:16–26 tells of Peter and the disciples choosing another apostle to fill the vacancy left by Judas. Verse 16 speaks of the Scripture being fulfilled that was spoken by the Holy Ghost concerning Judas. Notice verse 17, “For he was *numbered* with us, and had *obtained part* of this *ministry*.” Also notice in verse 20, “And his *bishopric* [the charge of instructing and governing in spiritual concerns; office] let another take.” Concerning the choosing of a new apostle, verse 25 says, “That he may take part of this ministry and *apostleship* [the office or dignity of an apostle], from which Judas by transgression *fell*, that he might go to his own place.” How could Judas *fall* from a position appointed to him by our Lord Himself if he never really was an *apostle*? According to the scriptures a qualification for a bishop is one who is *blameless* (1 Timothy 3:2). If a bishop or elder of the church is to be blameless, how much more an apostle who would be a founder of churches. Do we really think Jesus would choose an officer of the church contrary to his Word? Men may, but not our Lord!

On certain occasions such as on the mount of transfiguration, the apostles were called by their specific names such as James, John, and Peter. Very often apostles were named specifically in certain settings of whom Judas was also named specifically and referred to as he who betrayed Jesus. When the Scripture says “his disciples,” “my disciples,” or “the twelve” *without* specific names, should not we believe that it includes Judas as being numbered with the twelve (Acts 1:17; Matthew 10:1; 11:1; Mark 4:10)? He *was part* of the ministry from the beginning. It is interesting to note that after Judas betrayed Christ and committed suicide, the Gospel writers refer to the

disciples collectively as “the eleven” (Matthew 28:16; Mark 16:14; Luke 24:9, 33). Henceforth all Scripture quotations in this tract that speak of “his disciples” and especially “the twelve,” include Judas.

In my personal study of Judas, the Lord wanted me, once a believer in unconditional eternal security (“Once Saved, Always Saved”), to see through *His Word* that Judas was once a believer who apostatized unto perdition. Through that study, the Spirit revealed about eighty-five other verses (not mentioned in this tract) which refer to “*his disciples*,” of whom Judas was a part. Also found in the four Gospels are eight references to “*thy disciples*,” nineteen references to “the disciples,” and twenty-one references to “*the twelve*.”

Psalm 41:9 says of Judas, “Yea, mine own familiar friend in whom I trusted which did eat of my bread, hath lifted up his heel against me.” Notice the expressions in this verse: *mine own*— double ownership; *familiar*—intimate, close, unreserved converse; *friend*—as Abraham was the friend of God; *I trusted*—the Lord trusted Judas! Jesus also called Judas his *friend* even after Judas betrayed Him with a kiss (Matthew 26:49–50). Jesus was wounded in the house of *His friends* (Zechariah 13:6). Jesus never called the Pharisees His friends.

Let us look at many other verses that give us undeniable proof that Judas was once saved. We find the following:

- He was a child of the bridechamber (Matthew 9:15).
- He was sent to the lost sheep of Israel. Jesus called unto Him His twelve disciples. (Matthew 10:1–13). See also Mark 6:7–13 and Luke 9:1–6.
- Jesus told His disciples that if anyone would reject them or their message from Him, they would receive severe judgment (Matthew 10:14–15).
- Judas was a sheep among wolves (Matthew 10:16).
- In Luke 12:32 Jesus says to His disciples, “Fear not, little flock; for it is your Father’s good pleasure to give you the kingdom.”
- He once *heard* and *followed* the Good Shepherd (John 10:27).
- “He that *receiveth* you *receiveth* me” (Matthew 10:40).
- He was part of Jesus’ family (Matthew 12:48–50).
- Jesus said that His heavenly Father was the disciples’ heavenly Father by using the terms *your*, *thy*, and *our* Father in relation to His disciples’ relationship with His Father (Matthew 10:20; 5:16, 45, 48; 6:1, 4, 6, 8, 9, 14, 15, 18, 26, 32; 7:11).
- Judas was given to *know* the mysteries of the Kingdom of heaven (Matthew 13:10–11).
- His eyes *saw* and his ears *heard*—he understood (Matthew 13:16).
- “Then *they* [Judas was there!] that were in the ship came and *worshipped* him, saying, Of a truth thou art the Son of God” (Matthew 14:33).
- Matthew 19:27–28 says, “Then answered Peter and said unto him, Behold, we have forsaken all, and followed thee; what shall we have therefore? And Jesus said unto them, Verily I say unto you, that ye [always plural in the Greek] which have followed me, in the regeneration when the Son of man shall sit in the throne of his glory, ye also shall sit upon *twelve thrones*, judging the *twelve tribes* of Israel.” Judas was not faithful unto the end;

therefore, he forfeited the promise of a throne in heaven. Judas' fall did not negate the fact that he was promised a throne. But that promise was conditional, like all God's promises.

- Judas partook of the Passover. Jesus said of it in Matthew 26:18 "I will keep the Passover at thy house with *my* disciples." "Now when the even was come, he sat down with *the twelve*" (Matthew 26:20). See Luke 14:25–35 for Jesus' definition of being His disciple (Love Him with all your heart, deny self, and take up your cross and follow Him, forsaking all else).

"And *supper being ended*, the devil having *now* put into the heart of Judas Iscariot, Simon's son, to betray him" (John 13:2). Not until after the washing of the disciples' feet did Satan *enter* into Judas to execute the betrayal of Jesus (John 13:26–27). This was the second time recorded that Satan entered into Judas. The first time was in Luke 22:3–4 when Judas conspired with the chief priests to betray Jesus. If Satan was *always* in Judas, why did he need to enter into him on two different occasions?

Judas was not the only one that Satan used so masterfully. What about Peter? When Jesus rebuked him saying, "Get thee behind me, Satan" (Matthew 16:23). Whether Satan entered in or not, he turned Peter so masterfully that Jesus had to address the devil as if Peter was not even there. Does that mean that Peter was not Jesus' disciple?

What about John 6:70? "Jesus answered them, Have not I chosen you twelve, and one of you *is* a devil?" This was a future prophecy not yet fulfilled at that time but recorded in the present tense as was Isaiah 9:6 ("For unto us a child *is* born . . ."). Compare also the terminology in Psalm 41:9 which refers to Jesus and Judas one thousand years later—spoken in the present tense.

In Matthew 17:22–23 Jesus foretells His betrayal. Verse 23 gives the disciples' response, "And *they* were exceeding sorry." Judas was exceeding sorry. He apparently did not know he would be the one to betray Jesus.

Judas was called, commissioned, chosen, and ordained an apostle of Christ by our Lord Himself. He preached repentance, healed the sick, cast out devils, and had the treasury bag. John 4:2 says he baptized others. Mark 9:35–41 says he belonged to Jesus. Note especially verse 35, "*the twelve*," and verse 41, "because *ye belong* to Christ." He *believed* on Jesus (John 2:11). John 12:4 says, "Then saith *one of his disciples*, Judas Iscariot, Simon's son, which should betray him." Both statements in this verse are true. He was a *disciple* who also then betrayed his Lord, became a devil (John 6:70), a thief (John 12:6), a murderer, and a traitor (someone who once belonged to a person or a cause but betrayed the cause). You can't betray what you never pledged allegiance to. Through covetousness he was drowned in destruction and perdition (1 Timothy 6:9–10), and through transgression he fell (Acts 1:25). He became lost and the son of perdition (John 17:12), and went to his own place (hell), whereas before his fall he was destined to go to heaven.

These points constitute ample evidence that Judas once belonged to Jesus. Yet he obviously *fell* from his first love. Many believe that the Scriptures that speak of the end of Judas' life mean he was always lost and destined for hell from the beginning. But if this is true, then does that mean that all the Scriptures that speak of his belonging to Christ mean he was always saved and went to heaven? Of course not! There is only one logical, Scriptural explanation: he was once saved and became lost.

If he had lived and not apostatized, he would have been called a Christian with the other disciples in Acts 11:26. The Bible teaches that throughout the entire Christian life, salvation is *conditional* and *present tense*. It also teaches that the saved always have a strong hope for the *final inheritance* of eternal life. It teaches that salvation comes by *faith* and *repentance* that *produces* good works of obedience through God's grace and our love for the Lord. We must persevere by God's power (His part), "through faith" (our part) (1 Peter 1:5). And we are preserved in Jesus Christ our Lord, living for Him (the Word). If we go back

to the world (forsaking the Word), we commit spiritual adultery. According to the Scriptures, if we die in this condition of sin, we cannot hope for heaven to be our eternal home. Let us continue to look "unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith" (Hebrews 12:2), lest we also fall away unto perdition.

—Dennis Conley

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