

## James, son of Alphaeus, Simon the Zealot, Judas/Thaddaeus *Unknown Three Chosen of God*

### I. Background of the Unknown Three

A. We know next to nothing about these men

B. But they experienced the same as the other apostles

James, Simon, and Thaddaeus heard the Sermon on the Mount, the parables of the soils, ten virgins, and the good Samaritan. They saw the blind given sight, lame walk, the widow's son in Nain rise off his death cot, and Lazarus shuffle out of his grave. They observed the violent, demon-possessed become sane, Jesus and Peter walk on the water, pigs run into the sea, and great storms on the Sea of Galilee fall flat and calm. They felt the hateful glares from the hypocritical Pharisees, the loving joy of believing publicans and harlots, and the disbelief of thousands as they fed them from a little boy's simple lunch. James, Simon, and Thaddaeus possessed the power to heal and cast out devils, they went out and preached and assisted Jesus as He taught them! Christ washed their feet, ate with them, and slept nearby. They heard Him pray, and God the Father call back from heaven! These three meet Nicodemus, the woman at the well, Mary Magdalene, Mary the mother of Jesus, Zaccheus, Bartimeus, and probably all of them knew John the Baptist! These unknown men saw, heard, and were actively involved in Jesus' ministry from beginning to end! They asked questions, were confused, and didn't understand most of the time, but stayed with the One who had "the words of eternal life." They are unknown to us but were not unknown to God and became a vital part of the early church.

1. They were called out as apostles by Christ Jesus specifically chose these men to be part of His twelve.
2. They saw Jesus after His resurrection The three of them along with the other disciples saw Jesus several times in His resurrected body. We are not sure how many times, likely many, but we know of twice in Jerusalem and then at the ascension.
3. They were sent out by Christ in the great commission The disciples were still confused about Christ's plan moving forward after the resurrection. Perhaps they thought it was to be the catalyst for the establishment of the kingdom. But instead, Christ commissioned them to go to the world with the Gospel! Acts 1:6-11
4. They were esteemed by the early church As part of the eleven chosen apostles they were highly esteemed by the early church. Please realize, the enemies of Christ would also hound them their entire lives! Thirty-one times the word "apostle/apostles" appear in the book of Acts. These words are almost entirely speaking of the chosen twelve disciples. They having been chosen and taught by Christ, were vital in the establishment of the early church. Acts 2:37, 42-43; 4:35; 6:6; 15:2
5. They accomplished great things in a relatively brief time Within just a few short decades, the enemies of God would say, "These that have turned the world upside down are come hither also." (Acts 17:6) At their hand, the truth of the Gospel went to the then known world!

6. They will be honored by God in the New Jerusalem Rev. 21:10-14

## II. Life & Growth while traveling with Christ

### A. James, son of Alphaeus

1. Mentioned only in lists James the Less is another name for this man.
2. Could be Matthew's brother Mark 2:14 We know the influence of brothers was seen in the followers of Jesus! Andrew brought Peter; James and John

### B. Simon the Zealot

1. Zealots – a factious group of men in Israel who were fanatically opposed to Rome Many modern translations use the word Patriot instead of Zealot.
2. Being a Zealot tells us about his dedication and level of zeal toward the spiritual. Zealots were in constant danger of being found out. Not only would they be killed but the Roman government thought nothing of killing entire villages that harbored zealots. If Simon brought this dedication and zeal to his following Jesus, he would have been a very faithful disciple.
3. Christ's teaching opposed that of the Zealots Jesus taught to pay taxes (Matt. 22:21), live peaceably with all men, and love your enemies (Matt. 5:39-48). This would not be easy for a Jewish nationalists to agree with. Even when Christ's enemies looked for something to accuse Jesus, they could find nothing He said or did against Rome. Even Pilate interviewed Jesus and felt Jesus was not in violation of the Roman government.
4. Simon's zeal was now directed toward God not a cause This complete change in ideology and passion certainly speaks volumes about Simon. He had been committed to the extent of giving his life to reestablish the nation of Israel, and now He is committed to Jesus, the Messiah. Like the rest of the disciples, they were looking for Jesus to lead them into the physical Kingdom of God, putting down the Romans, but Simon eventually understood God's plan and became a faithful apostle to the ends of the world!

### C. Judas/Thaddaeus/Lebbeus

1. Three names – different gospel writers used different names This is interesting; the gospel writers really work hard to always differentiate between Judas Iscariot and the other Judas. They don't want any reader to be confused! Judas seems to be the name most used though Mark does call him Thaddeus in his list. Matthew tells us his surname was Thaddeus.

**“He that hath my commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me: and he that loveth me shall be loved of my Father, and I will love him, and will manifest (Gk - reveal) myself to him. <sup>22</sup>Judas saith unto him, not Iscariot, Lord, how is it that thou wilt manifest thyself unto us, and not unto the world? <sup>23</sup>Jesus answered and said unto him, If a man love me, he will keep my words: and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him. <sup>24</sup>He that loveth me not keepeth not my sayings: and the word which ye hear is not mine, but the Father's which sent me. <sup>25</sup>These things have I spoken unto you, being yet present with you. <sup>26</sup>But the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach**

**you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you.”**  
**John 14:21-26**

2. Judas was recorded to speak once with Jesus’ amazing answer Judas questions Christ based on His statement that only believers will have the opportunity to have Christ show and demonstrate Himself to them. This is very different from the last three years of ministry! Judas asks simply, “What has happened?” The disciples still expected the establishment of the earthly Kingdom. (Acts 1:6) They thought soon Jesus will display to the world His power and glory. How and why was Christ to real Himself to them only? Jesus had told them during the Olivet Discourse the day will come when all will see Him, but now He is teaching that time is not now. (Matt. 24:30) Instead, Christ will make Himself known to only those who love Him and keep His commandments, other words, true believers! Notice how He said “we” will live within the believer. (v. 23) This is the Trinity, the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. The “abode” is not a kingdom but within those who love Him – this is the restoration of instant fellowship with God! This fellowship is continual, progressive, and forever! Saving faith with this indwelling is evidenced through works produced by God in the transforming, regenerating, indwelling power of the Holy Spirit. Jesus explains the works of God within the believer are expressions of love. This is God’s plan, Jesus said “and the word which ye hear is not mine, but the Father’s which sent me.” (v. 24) – Taken from Ladies Studying Jesus – Vol. 8 #7 Upper Room

### **III. Lessons from their lives**

God will not forget what we do to build His kingdom even though few people know who we are. No matter what people call us, our status in life, our family background our heritage, it is actually our obedience and faithfulness to God that are truly important in eternity! He wants to use our unique personalities to accomplish His work. Let’s quickly review these eleven disciples and what set them apart: Peter – tough-minded; James – ambitious; Andrew – serving attitude; John – sensitive; Philip – practical; Nathanael – honest; Matthew – worldly wise; Thomas – Pessimistic; Simon – zealous; Thaddaeus – thoughtful All these men were brought together by God, taught and shaped by Christ to be later sent out to give the Gospel to the world. This is God’s plan; He uses individuals with different strengths and backgrounds to build His church. (Eph. 4:15-16) It is wonderful to realize that even among Christ’s disciples there were those who were almost totally unknown! Their unique personalities and strengths are not known, their contributions and talents not remembered but realize, God does not forget! The same can be said throughout the ages and even with us today! But God does know us, He will remember us, and He will reward us! With that in mind, let’s run the race set before us faithfully, let’s be content to be a **faithful unknown**, and let’s make it a goal to see the pleased look of Jesus and to hear His words, “Well done, good and faithful servant; thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things: enter thou into the joy of thy Lord!” (Matthew 25) Finish by reading these passages: Heb. 6:10-12

## **Judas Iscariot**

### *Opportunist Loved by Christ*

#### **I. Background of Judas Iscariot**

- A. “Iscariot” - identifies his hometown – Kerioth A small village in southern Judea. Judas is the only disciple not from Galilee. Being an outsider and unknown from the rest may have fed his justification to betray Christ.

B. Father's name was Simon

**“For he was numbered with us, and had obtained part of this ministry.” Acts 1:17**

C. He was part of the twelve Jesus chose After a night of prayer, Jesus called those that followed Him and selected out the twelve apostles from that crowd! That day, Jesus picked Judas as part of the disciple group!

**“Then entered Satan into Judas surnamed Iscariot, being of the number of the twelve.” Luke 22:3** The thought that Judas was part of the chosen twelve was a point Luke emphasized in his writing. “numbered” with the twelve.

D. Jesus knew all along that Judas would betray him - John 2:25; John 6:66-71; John 13:2, 27; Mark 8:33; Luke 22:3 Judas was not coerced into doing what he did. We will see him act freely, totally responsible for his own actions. God's plan and Judas' betrayal are not in contradiction. Judas did what was already in his evil heart. This is what God had foreordained. Luke 22:22; Acts 2:22-23; 4:27-28 This is what was prophesied in the Old Testament. Ps 41:9; 55:12-14; Zech. 11:12-13 Judas did it for evil but as with all evil, God means it for good!

## II. Life and Position while traveling with Jesus

**“Then took Mary a pound of ointment of spikenard, very costly, and anointed the feet of Jesus, and wiped his feet with her hair: and the house was filled with the odor of the ointment. <sup>4</sup> Then saith one of his disciples, Judas Iscariot, Simon's son, which should betray him, <sup>5</sup> Why was not this ointment sold for three hundred pence, and given to the poor? <sup>6</sup> This he said, not that he cared for the poor; but because he was a thief, and had the bag, and bare what was put therein.” John 12:3-6**

A. Judas the thief Judas stole from the common purse. The Greek at the end of verse 6 gives the meaning of taking secretly what was put in. He had worked himself into a place of trust among the other disciples and no one suspected his dishonestly.

**“Jesus answered them, Have not I chosen you twelve, and one of you is a devil?” John 6:70** Among English translations, the word “devil” is almost 100% of the time translated as “devil.”

B. Judas the deceiver - John 6:61-7 Judas followed Jesus, and even when pressures started to rise, Judas stayed with Jesus. It seems his objective was the benefits of wealth, prestige, and power an earthly kingdom of Jesus would bring. Please remember, all the disciples were looking for Jesus to sit on the throne of David at any time! They were looking for the overthrow of Rome and Israel to come to the forefront of world power once again! The Old Testament prophesied it and they believed it to be fulfilled by Christ very soon! Judas stayed when the others left. Unfortunately, he did not believe the strong words of faith of Peter that day, “Lord, to whom shall we go? Thou hast the words of eternal life. And we believe and are sure that thou art that Christ, the Son of the living God.”

**“When Jesus had thus said, he was troubled in spirit, and testified, and said, Verily, verily, I say unto you, that one of you shall betray me. <sup>22</sup> Then the disciples looked one on another, doubting of whom he spake.” John 13:21-22**

C. Judas the betrayer

1. Jesus' popularity was weakening and with it the money flow. About a year before the crucifixion Jesus started to be very clear that His intent was not to be the leader of an earthly kingdom at that time. The people wanted to force him to be their king after the feeding of the five thousand, but He would not allow it. (John 6:15) It was during Christ's teaching shortly afterward that He told them He was the bread of life, spiritual life, not one who would make them "loaves" so they could be filled! "From that time many of his disciples went back, and walked no more with him." John 6:66 With the people so went the constant flow of money gifts!

**"Then one of the twelve, called Judas Iscariot, went unto the chief priests, <sup>15</sup>And said unto them, What will ye give me, and I will deliver him unto you? And they covenanted with him for thirty pieces of silver. <sup>16</sup>And from that time he sought opportunity to betray him."**  
Matthew 26:14-16

2. Judas perhaps realized he could make a quick dollar, and slip away the richer Thirty pieces of silver was really pretty cheap for someone the Religious Leaders wanted so badly! The price of a common slave!

**"And while he yet spake, lo, Judas, one of the twelve, came, and with him a great multitude with swords and staves, from the chief priests and elders of the people. <sup>48</sup>Now he that betrayed him gave them a sign, saying, Whomsoever I shall kiss, that same is he: hold him fast. <sup>49</sup>And forthwith he came to Jesus, and said, Hail, master; and kissed him. <sup>50</sup>And Jesus said unto him, Friend, wherefore art thou come? Then came they, and laid hands on Jesus and took him."**  
Matthew 26:47-50

3. Guaranteed safety from Jesus' enemies. Not only did Judas put thirty pieces of silver in his money bag but also protected himself from whatever the Jews wanted to do to Jesus and His followers. He had openly changed sides from the persecuted to the persecutor.

4. Jesus loved Judas unconditionally - John 13:1 This opening verse to the Upper Room dinner, teaching, and activities, sums up the heart of Christ – love. He went into the last teaching opportunity with His twelve disciples with a heart full of unconditional love, compassion, and heaviness. Jesus realized what was ahead for them and Himself. But also He knew what was to become of Judas. v. 2, 21-30

**"Then Judas, which had betrayed him, when he saw that he was condemned, repented (Gk - a change of mind and feeling/remorse, regret) himself, and brought again the thirty pieces of silver to the chief priests and elders, <sup>4</sup>Saying, I have sinned in that I have betrayed the innocent blood. And they said, What is that to us? see thou to that. <sup>5</sup>And he cast down the pieces of silver in the temple, and departed, and went and hanged himself."** Matthew 27:3-5

5. Ends his life without seeking forgiveness. We are not exactly sure when Judas came to the Religious Leaders. But whenever it was, Judas saw that all hope for Jesus seemed lost and was angry with himself. Understand clearly, Judas was not feeling repentance which lead to New Testament salvation. He felt bad, cheated, and regretful! He must not have believed they would kill Jesus! Judas told them he didn't agree with the charges! If anyone would know Christ was innocent, Judas would! He had spent three years with Him! But we know the Religious Leaders already knew Jesus was innocent! They had

spent much of the night trying to find “false witnesses” or false testimony against Jesus! The statement of Judas was not a true confession of repentance! There is no evidence that Judas moved any further toward a relationship with Christ than regret and remorse. He recognized his sin---he was guilty of betrayal---but that is where it stopped! And the Religious Leaders said, “That’s your problem; you did it, what does that have to do with us!” The Religious Leaders didn’t give him any time! His pleas came too late! They had no use or compassion for him! Part of the ministry of these men was to help sinners come to God. Here we see them push a sinner away and drive Judas to despair. No love, no care, no mercy, no sympathy; just ridicule, rejection, and condemnation. Judas left them without hope. When the disciples gathered after the ascension, they selected a replacement for Judas to be numbered as a disciple. Peter will give further insight into the happenings of Judas’ death all found in Acts 1:16-19. When putting the events together it seems that Judas found himself away from the crowds of Jerusalem in this refuse area. This is where he sought to commit suicide. According to Peter, he fell down onto rocks, and using bold and graphic language that only Peter would do, he explained that Judas fell unto the rocks and “burst asunder in the midst, and all his bowels gushed out.” Whatever happened this ended his life with never the hope of forgiveness and restoration to God. *Taken from Ladies Studying Jesus Vol. 9*

### **III. Lesson from Judas Iscariot’s Life**

Jesus loved Judas unconditionally to the end. At any time Jesus would have gladly forgiven Judas and restored him to a useful position. No man or woman is too far gone for the grace of God not to be able to reach them and save them! Are you prepared to bring those in despair the truth of Christ’s unconditional love and forgiveness? It must be noted that Judas ultimately went to the wrong people. JV McGee felt strongly that Judas may have seen Jesus again that night. Even if he didn’t, he could have sought him out. Yet, Judas goes back to the Religious Leaders and said, “I have sinned in that I have betrayed the innocent blood.” He had to know that he was not going to talk them out of their plan to kill Christ! And what did he get from those Religious Leaders? Ridicule, rejection, condemnation...which drove him to hopeless despair! Oh, if he would have come to Jesus instead and cried out in repentance, “I have sinned in that I have betrayed the innocent blood?” We know Judas would have found compassion, mercy, and forgiveness.

We must be aware of those who suffer guilt, shame, and hopeless despair. Open sin is shamelessly practiced all around us, but as God tells us disobedience to His design comes with painful consequences in both body and soul! Ladies, as God gives opportunity, we must point these dear ones to Jesus Christ, the lover of their soul. We must be ready to give hope and that will take our time, our boldness, and our preparation! The Religious Leaders were in no position to help a sinner! They were the blind leading the blind! Yet, if we know Christ as our Savior, we do have the Light for the blind soul! Be ready, studied, and our heart prepared to help the despairing, guilt-ridden “Judas” that God may send your way! The third verse from the song “For the Sake of His Name” Chris Anderson wrote, “Love the unloved for the sake of His name; Like Christ, befriend those whose heads hang in shame. Jesus did not condemn but was condemned for them. Trust gospel power, for we once were the same.” (*Lesson from Judas Iscariot’s Life from Ladies Study Jesus Vol. 9*)