

Betrayal

David P. Stevens

Speaking of Judas, John by inspiration writes, “He then having received the sop went immediately out: and it was night” (John 13:30). The Scriptures are remarkable in the detail that they give concerning significant events. Judas left the light of the upper room where Jesus and the disciples were present, and went out into the darkness of the night. However, before he left the light for the darkness of that night, his soul was encompassed with darkness within. John records the condition of Judas’ heart: “And supper being ended, the devil having now put into the heart of Judas Iscariot, Simon’s son, to betray him” (John 13:2). The act of betrayal is a particular form of darkness. Betrayal takes place in the heart and reveals that it is in the grip of Satan. The darkness within is greater than the darkness without!

Betrayal has a sting to it. Betrayal has a negative connotation. It is a distasteful word. It causes us to shrink back. It denotes a certain horror. The English word *betray* is translated from the Greek word *paradidomi*. *Paradidomi* is found one hundred twenty-one times in the Greek New Testament. It is translated by several English words: deliver, betray, deliver up, give, give up, give over, commit and several other miscellaneous words. It is translated most often by the words *deliver* (fifty-three times) and *betray* (forty times). It is the word consistently used by all of the writers of the Gospel accounts of the betrayal of the Lord by Judas (see J. B. Smith, *Greek-English Concordance*, p. 274).

Renn states that the word *paradidomai* has the common meaning “deliver” in the sense of “hand over.” Judas makes a covenant with the chief priests to deliver (hand over) Jesus for the price of thirty pieces of silver (Matt. 26:15). *Paradidomai* is also translated “betray” --a more specific nuance of “deliver.” It indicates a “handing over” of someone to a terrible fate (Stephen

Renn, *Expository Dictionary of New Testament Words*, 261). Thayer adds this thought to the word, “to deliver up treacherously, i. e. by betrayal to cause one to be taken” (*Greek-English Lexicon*, 481). When Judas betrayed Jesus, he handed Him over to His enemies. Consequently, Jesus died a horrible death. What is involved in betrayal? Consider some of the more important aspects of this word.

Betrayal is the Work of Satan

Satan put into the heart of Judas Iscariot to betray the Lord (John 13:2). Satan is a tempter of the hearts of men. Satan cannot make us do anything that we do not choose to do as an act of our own will, but he tempts us. Every temptation involves an external as well as an internal aspect. The external aspect involves the presentation of sin (act or attitude). It may be a thought that stems from the sense of advantage. Judas was a thief (John 12:6). He was covetous. He had inordinate desires in his heart. No doubt, this sin played a part in the betrayal of Jesus. Judas was enticed by his own lusts (James 1:13, 14). This combination of external presentation and internal desires creates a dangerous situation. Judas gave in to these enticements and the sin that began in his heart played itself out in reprehensible actions. Satan is no man’s friend.

Betrayal Means to Forsake A Sacred Trust

Betrayal involves a breach of trust. We generally trust our friends. We trust those that we know and have been with over time. Jesus and Judas had such a relationship. Jesus trusted Judas and treated him as He did the other apostles. Jesus chose Judas. He worked closely with him. However, Judas failed Jesus. He failed to live up to Jesus’ expectation of him. In John 6:70, Jesus said, “Have not I chosen you twelve, and one of you is a devil?” Betrayal means to forsake a sacred trust.

Betrayal Means to Turn Against

Judas was a disciple of Jesus Christ. He was an apostle of Jesus Christ. He was part of an inner group that Jesus handpicked to accomplish the great work of evangelism. Jesus desired that each of His apostles serve Him faithfully and loyally. When Judas betrayed Jesus, a friend turned against another friend. Friends became enemies in that moment. Sin produces enmity between God and man. Sin produces enmity between human beings too. Guard your heart! Jesus did not deserve this treatment from Judas. Jesus was not the problem. Sin in the heart of Judas was the problem.

Betrayal Means to be Duplicitous

Whenever a person betrays another, he is guilty of hypocrisy. Judas manifests hypocrisy or duplicity in two ways. First, he betrayed Jesus with a kiss. A kiss is the sign of affection and friendship. Jesus called Judas “friend” (Matt. 26:50). Judas called Jesus “master” and kissed him. Judas’ heart was dark at the same time that he kissed Jesus. The outward sign of affection did not match the inner darkness of Judas’ soul. Second, Judas called Jesus “master” but, in reality, he was serving Satan at that very moment (Matt. 26:49). Jesus taught, “No man can serve two masters: for either he will hate the one, and love the other; or else he will hold to the one, and despise the other. Ye cannot serve God and mammon” (Matt. 6:24). When Judas betrayed Jesus, he manifested to the world that he did not love Him. Betrayal has no love in it.

Betrayal Means to Hand Over to a Terrible Fate

Betrayal never results in anything good. Think of the consequences of Judas’ betrayal. Whenever Judas betrayed Jesus, he turned Him over into the hands of His enemies to be put to death. The death Jesus suffered as a result of this betrayal is almost beyond description in its horror and suffering (Psalm 22). The enemies of the Lord abused Him verbally, physically, and

emotionally. How could Judas do such a thing whenever he knew what the consequences would be? The darkness in his soul made his heart cold and unfeeling.

Betrayal Is Destructive to Personal Character

Judas lost something precious in the moment he betrayed Jesus. He lost his good name. Solomon wrote these words, “A good name is rather to be chosen than great riches, and loving favour rather than silver and gold” (Proverbs 22:1). Judas lost his reputation and standing as a disciple of Jesus Christ. He lost his self-respect. Betrayal is self-destructive. All sin is self-destructive. Sin is meant to destroy someone else, but it results in destroying self by destroying character.

Betrayal is Damning to the Soul

What shall a man give in exchange for his soul? (Matt. 16:26). Thirty pieces of silver do not seem to match the value of a soul. The work of Satan is complete whenever he tempts and man succumbs. He brings the human soul to condemnation before God. Judas permitted this to happen. Satan rejoiced. Another soul was firmly in his grip. Judas was distraught. He felt the pain in his heart. He could not undo his treachery (Matt. 27:3, 4). He shamefully took his own life (Matt. 27:5). Sin culminates in a bitter end.

How should we conclude our thoughts on the subject of betrayal? Every Christian who forsakes the Lord betrays Him (Heb. 6:4-6)! Betrayal is a form of apostasy. Guard your heart!