

04 – RED FLAGS & OFF-RAMPS

- ✓ We've been looking at Case Studies in Temptation. (So far, we've looked at Eve, Joseph and Peter.) Today we'll study another person who failed – Judas Iscariot.
- ✓ The main thing we learn from Judas is **the importance of dealing with our character flaws**. We all have them. The fact is, if we don't deal with them, they become things that Satan can use to trip us up. Judas had three glaring character flaws, and all three factored into his betrayal of Jesus.

Judas' Character Flaws

1.) Judas was a False Accuser

- ✓ You might miss this one, depending on which translation of the Bible you use. We'll look at it, first, in the King James Version. *John 6:70* – "Jesus answered them, 'Have not I chosen you twelve, and **one of you is a devil?**'"
- ✓ Wait, what? You mean Judas wasn't a man? He was a demon? No, certainly not. In John 6:71, he's called "the son of Simon". (So, Judas had parents, just like the rest of us.) And in Psalm 109:9, it refers to his wife and children. Clearly, Judas was a human being. So, why did Jesus call him a devil?
- ✓ The Greek word that Jesus used refers to a "false accuser" or a "traitor". (The Amplified Bible translates it that way.) Another translation (Goodspeed) calls him an "informer". So, that's his *first* character flaw. He falsely accused people. (I can picture a ten-year-old Judas on the playground accusing the other kids falsely.) By nature, he was a false accuser and an informer.

2.) Judas Was a Lover of Money

John 12:4-6 – (Perfume had just been poured on Jesus' feet.) "But Judas Iscariot, the disciple who would soon betray him, said, 'That perfume was worth a year's wages. It should have been sold and the money given to

the poor.' Not that he cared for the poor – **he was a thief. He was in charge of the disciples' money, and he often stole some for himself."**

- ✓ That's a *really* big flaw: Stealing money from Jesus! Judas had plenty of time to deal with this character flaw. But, at the end of Jesus' ministry, we see he's still doing it.

3.) Judas Was Easily Offended

- ✓ (Here's another time when perfume was poured out on Jesus. This is different than the event recorded in John 12. Perfume was poured on Jesus before *and* after the Triumphant entry. One was six days before Passover. This one is two days before Passover.)

Matt. 26:6-11,14-16 – "Meanwhile, Jesus was in Bethany at the home of Simon, a man who had previously had leprosy. While he was eating, a woman came in with a beautiful alabaster jar of expensive perfume and poured it over his head. The disciples were indignant when they saw this. 'What a waste!' they said. 'It could have been sold for a high price and the money given to the poor.'"

- ✓ This is just a side thought, but did you know that offense is contagious? The first time around, only Judas complained. This time, all the disciples were offended and complained.

"But Jesus, aware of this, replied, 'Why criticize this woman for doing such a good thing to me? You will always have the poor among you, but you will not always have me ... Then one of the twelve, called Judas Iscariot, went unto the chief priests ... (So, THAT'S what pushed it over the edge.) And said unto them, 'What will you give me if I deliver him unto you? And they agreed with him for thirty pieces of silver. (In case you're curious about what that would be today, the Amplified says, "\$21.60). And from that time he sought opportunity to betray him.'"

What Did Satan Do?

- ✓ He watched Judas *long* enough, and *closely* enough, to identify him as a potential betrayer. Judas was everything that Satan needed him to be. (Four things made Judas *perfect* for the job!)

- a.) His love of money likely meant “he could be bought”.
- b.) He wasn’t loyal. He had a history as an informer and a false accuser.
- c.) He was easily offended. (That alone, would have done it!)

2 Tim. 2:25 – “In meekness instructing those **that disagree with you and oppose you**, in the hope that God may grant [them] a change of heart and a turning to the truth, enabling them to escape **the devil’s trap, where they are caught and held captive, and forced to run his errands.**”

- ✓ Once you fall into offence, you’re blinded spiritually. You might *think* you’re doing the right thing. But, in reality, you become the devil’s errand-boy. Judas has fallen into the devil’s trap. He’s offended and he’s ripe to do Satan’s bidding.
- d.) Finally, Judas was on the inside. (He had inside information and was close enough to Jesus to do some real damage – John 18:2).
- ✓ All of Judas’ character flaws fit perfectly. (Satan knew he could use him as a betrayer.)

What Did Judas Do?

A.) He Never *Dealt* with His Character Flaws

- ✓ He had time and opportunity to fix his flaws, but he did nothing. And Satan was able to use those things to bring him down.

B.) He Pushed Past Every Red Flag

- ✓ We saw, in 1 Cor. 10:13, that God always makes a “way” of escape. The Greek paints an interesting picture. The word refers to a way out of a mountain pass. It depicts an army that’s surrounded by their enemy, then suddenly sees an escape route to safety (Barclay). I call it an “off-ramp” or a pathway out.

When We’re Tempted, We Have a Few Options

- ✓ Option 1 – (Do what Jesus did) – Take the Word and fight. (“It is written …) Run the *devil* off.

- ✓ Option 2 – (Do what Joseph did) – Run. Remove yourself from the situation. This isn’t less spiritual than the first option. Paul gave this advice on numerous occasions. “*Flee youthful lusts ...*” (2 Tim. 2:22). “*Flee fornication*: (1 Cor. 6:18). “*Flee idolatry*” (1 Cor.10:14).
- ✓ Option 3 – Find your “off-ramp”. This is different than running. When I run, I *physically* leave the room. An “off-ramp”, on the other hand, grabs my attention, and snaps me back into my right mind *long enough* that I have a chance to regain control and change direction. (I might not actually leave the room, but I’m back in control.)
- ✓ Judas was “flagged down” several times, but he blew past every off-ramp. (I’m sure he’s in hell, right now, regretting those missed opportunities.)

Judas’ Red Flags

- ✓ No single gospel includes all of these “red flags”. Each author adds details that the others gospel writers don’t. (So, I may not have the chronology exactly right. We do know, however, that every one of these events took place.)

FLAG #1 – Mt. 26:17-21 – “*On the first day of the Feast of Unleavened Bread, the disciples came to Jesus and asked, ‘Where do you want us to prepare the Passover meal for you?’ ‘As you go into the city,’ he told them, ‘You will see a certain man. Tell him, ‘The Master says: My time has come, and I will eat the Passover meal with my disciples at your house.’ So the disciples did as Jesus told them and prepared the Passover meal there. When it was evening, Jesus sat down at the table with the Twelve. While they were eating, he said, ‘I tell you the truth, **one of you will betray me.**’”*

- ✓ That’s flag number one. Jesus knows! (Up to now, Judas thought his plans were a secret. But it’s clear that Jesus knows a betrayal is coming!) That was an off-ramp! He’s been shaken. Right there, he could have fallen on his face and repented! But he didn’t. (“Jesus knows He’ll be betrayed. But maybe He doesn’t know it’s *me!*”) That brings us to ...

FLAG #2 – Matthew 26:24 – “For the Son of Man must die, as the Scriptures declared long ago. But how terrible it will be for the one who betrays him. *It would be far better for that man if he had never been born!*” (*That* should have moved Judas to repentance. But it didn’t.)

FLAG #3 – John 13:21-26 – “Now Jesus was deeply troubled, and he exclaimed, ‘I tell you the truth, one of you will betray me!’ The disciples looked at each other, wondering whom he could mean. The disciple Jesus loved was sitting next to Jesus at the table. Simon Peter motioned to him to ask, ‘Who’s he talking about?’ So that disciple leaned over to Jesus and asked, ‘Lord, who is it?’ Jesus responded, ‘I will dip this bread into the dish. The man I give it to is the one.’ *And when he had dipped it, he gave it to Judas.*”

- ✓ Put yourself in Judas’ shoes. (“He knows He’s going to be betrayed. He knows it’s me.”) Judas should have thrown down the sop and cried out for mercy. But he didn’t! Instead, he “received” the sop.

John 13:27 – “And after the sop *Satan entered into him*. (Not just a demon. Satan himself.) Then Jesus said to him, ‘What you do, do quickly.’ He then having received the sop went immediately out: and it was night.”

FLAG #4 – John 18:3-6 – “Judas, his betrayer, knew the place because Jesus and his disciples went there often. So Judas led the way to the garden, and the Roman soldiers and police sent by the high priests and Pharisees followed. They arrived there with lanterns and torches and swords. Jesus, knowing all that was about to happen, went out and met them. He said, ‘Who are you after?’ They answered, ‘Jesus the Nazarene.’ He said to them, ‘I am *he*.’ (Italics) Now Judas, the one who betrayed him, was also standing with them. When he said, ‘I Am’, they shrank back and fell to the ground.”

Lessons From Judas

- (i) Deal With Your Character Flaws,
- (ii) Take Off-Ramps When You Get Them.