

Don't insult Judas!!

In my nearly 60 years in this world, I've had the misfortune of encountering various traitors—some of them major ones who came very close. All of them masquerading behind a mask of goodness—so-called friends, self-proclaimed Christians, some well-versed in the Bible—all claiming to be tormented by life and other melodramatic stories. And deep down, it was always the same: exploitation, usually of a financial nature. Like parasites pressing in to suck your blood, or little people lost within themselves—most of them narcissists with grandiose ideas about themselves but zero reality. Apologies and such things are long forgotten in their vocabulary. Once you discover them—and you will discover them, since at some point they lose their self-control in their quiet exploitation and reveal their true colors—they move on without remorse to their next victim. People call them Judases. And this is where I want to pause, because I think we're doing this figure—Judas—an injustice. Yes, Judas betrayed. He betrayed the purest soul who ever walked this earth. The One who chose him from among many others and placed him in the inner circle of the 12 disciples. The One who let him see Him raise the dead, open the eyes of those blind from birth, give lepers the skin of little children, and grant the joy of walking to the disabled. The One who gave him this power as well—and let him perform these miracles himself! Christ called Judas to be an apostle! But Judas betrayed Him—and he betrayed Him for money. Judas was a money-lover and a petty thief. Just like the various petty thieves I've known, who always approach people with a friendly facade. Did Judas love Christ? Certainly, he loved Him to an extent. But he also loved money. "What will you give me to hand him over?" he asked the high priests, who without hesitation agreed to 30 pieces of silver, which was quite a sum —half a year's wages at that time. He forgot the miracles, he forgot the ideas, he forgot his love for Christ. Or rather, he didn't forget it. He proved it to be false love. The thirty pieces of silver turned it into false love. These weighed more heavily on the scales.

The time will come when love for Christ is weighed. Something is placed on the other side—for Judas, it was thirty pieces of silver; for other, something else, whether financial or not. And then love for Christ proves to be lacking, light, false. “Mene, Tekel, Peres,” as the hand of God wrote to Belshazzar. “You have been weighed in the balance and found wanting” (Daniel 5:25) . So it is with the various traitors I have encountered. Perhaps they, too, do not know that they will betray. They may think they are your friends and friends of Christ. But when the thirty pieces of silver are revealed, they gladly tuck them into their bosoms and send you to the cross. But that’s where the comparison with Judas ends. Because as soon as Judas saw that Christ was being taken to be crucified, he lost it. He didn’t expect it. His conscience began to torment him. He realized what he had done. He ran to the temple and threw the silver coins right in the faces of the high priests! “I have sinned by betraying innocent blood!” he cried out (Matthew 27:4)!! Judas repented!! Scripture says so clearly, and yet everyone has set out to explain to us why “repentance” and “remorse” are different, they say. Perhaps, Judas’s remorse doesn’t fit into the narrative they’ve constructed. The traitor—like modern-day traitors—does not regret his actions. He doesn’t throw away the silver coins. He remains a traitor and a cynic to the very end. And that’s what many traitors do today. They stay traitors to the very end. They’ve nurtured their egos to such an extent that their conscience has become numb, nonexistent. Like insensitive animals, they move on to their next victim. But this is not what Judas did. Judas did not move on to the next victim. He reflected. He saw what had happened. He took steps toward repentance. He confessed his sin. “I have sinned,” he said. “I have betrayed innocent blood!” He took the money—the silver coins of betrayal—and threw them in their faces. Judas repented. But he could not bear what he had done, so he took a rope and hanged himself. Judas had a conscience. He willingly paid for his betrayal with his life. But it did no good. Was Judas saved, I wonder? The entire Christian literature has pounced on him focusing on the heinous act of betraying Christ. But God wants everyone to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth (1 Timothy 2:4). So we’ll see on that day what became of Judas. But he repented, and he

showed it not with words but with deeds. The pouch of silver coins wasn't in his bosom. He had returned it. Even his hanging was an act of atonement. To pay with his life for the evil he had done. So let us not compare Judas to the various unrepentant traitors who carry their silver coins in their bosoms, count them one by one every day, and smirk at their "achievements." Judas wouldn't even have thought of that. So they're much worse than him.

Now giving the havoc the meeting with a traitor brings into one's life, how did these traitors end up in my path—and perhaps in yours as well? By chance? Who knows. But Christ Himself chose Judas, a traitor. Did He know from the beginning that he would betray Him? You might say, "Doesn't God know everything?" Yes, He does, but He gives all people opportunities, and it is ultimately the person who decides which path to take. He chose Judas while He knew who he was and the wickedness of his heart, which would one day come to light. Yet He gave him the opportunity. It was not inevitable that Judas would betray Him. Christ did not want him to betray Him. They would have crucified Him even without Judas's betrayal. Someone else would have been found—someone not from the inner circle of those whom Christ had chosen one by one—and that person would have handed Him over. Christ personally chose Judas to be close to Him. He entrusted him with the money bag even though He knew he was stealing. And yet He said nothing to him. Perhaps He thought, "He might repent. Let me give him one more chance." He knew the deceitfulness of his heart; He knew his past—people don't become thieves overnight—but He took him close to Him. He recognized the love this man had for Him and perhaps hoped that this love would grow stronger and that the thirty pieces of silver would not be able to turn it upside down. That is why He gave him chances. And this is what Christ does for many traitors, and perhaps He did it through me and you: He gives them chances. Chances not to become traitors. Chances for love. Chances to leave their dark past behind. To make a fresh start. Some may take that chance. Others, however, remain faithful as long as the tempting allure—the 30 pieces of silver—has not appeared. As soon as that temptation appears, they grab the thirty

pieces of silver and sell their faith—or, to put it better, they turn it into a counterfeit. I hope that someday they will find repentance, even if they have already taken the thirty pieces of silver and cannot return them. God accepts all who repent. He will never close a door to a truly repented person. But eventually the sand in the hourglass runs out, and the end comes. And then there is no longer any room for repentance. As for those who have been betrayed, they should find consolation that they did God’s will—they acted faithfully with love and compassion, in accordance with their principles and the principles of the Gospel, even toward people who did not deserve it—and this will have much reward that Day, the Day for which it is written: „ And God will wipe away every tear from their eyes; there shall be no more death, nor sorrow, nor crying. There shall be no more pain, for the former things have passed away. “ (Revelation 21:4)