

Alêtheia Christian Fellowship

March 14, 2021

“Preparing Passover, part 2”

Sunday school at 8:30, Service at 9:15, Service at 10:45 with King’s Kids.

NEWS

Wednesday Night Activities at 6:30 PM

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Judas was ἀγανακτέω (ä-gä-näk-tě-ō) over Mary’s extravagant display. It is to be deeply displeased by something seen as wrong - a reaction based upon a judgment.

Jesus rebuked them all, but Judas felt singled out. Embarrassment gave way to resentment and resentment to retaliation. Judas’ entire problem was that he wanted Jesus to be different than Jesus was.

If Jesus keeps failing to live up to your expectations, how long before it’s the final straw for you?

MATTHEW 26:14-16 ~

Judas was the son of Simon Iscariot. It is Greek Ἰούδας (ē-ü-däs), for Hebrew יהודה (yě-hü-dä), English Judah. Iscariot either relates to the town of Kerioth, or the radical Jewish group called the σικάρριος (sē-kä-řē-ōs), “Assassins” (Acts 22:38).

Fill out the other side, detach this part of the page, and place it in the offering plate or the prayer/suggestion box in the lobby or with an Elder or Deacon of the church.

God Bless You!

The price was 30 pieces of silver. From Zechariah chapter 11 we get the Biblical background. There God said of the 30 shekels, "That's the magnificent value they placed on Me." (Exodus 21:32 for the value of a slave).

MATTHEW 26:17-19 ~

This was the morning of Thursday, 14 Nisan. Yeast had to be removed and the Lambs had to be sacrificed and the meal had to be prepared in Jerusalem.

MATTHEW 26:20-25 ~

The 6-word phrase, "Jesus was reclining at the table," is one Greek word. The verb ἀνάκειμαι (ä-nä-kā-mī), which means to lie, as in lie down.

"One of you will betray Me." Can you imagine? They were all extremely distressed. Each one was introspective, thinking about themselves - whether they might be the betrayer.

Verse 23 refers to Psalm 41:9.

Judas asked the identical question the others had asked, with one major difference.

It is incongruous. Jesus had to be betrayed by Judas. Yet, he had the capacity to make other choices. Why did Judas betray Jesus?

The difference between Judas and the 11, was how strongly Judas held his expectations - how fiercely he held his opinions - how inflexible he was.

Write a brief note – detach and place in the offering, or the prayer box, or give it to a Deacon or Elder.

Name _____ Address _____

Phone _____ Email _____

Welcome Friends

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO
MATTHEW

A CLASH OF KINGDOMS

Alêtheia Christian Fellowship

1When Jesus had finished all these words, He said to His disciples, 2“You know that after two days the Passover is coming, and the Son of Man is to be handed over for crucifixion.” 3Then the chief priests and the elders of the people were gathered together in the court of the high priest, named Caiaphas; 4and they plotted together to seize Jesus by stealth and kill Him. 5But they were saying, “Not during the festival, otherwise a riot might occur among the people.” 6Now when Jesus was in Bethany, at the home of Simon the leper, 7a woman came to Him with an alabaster vial of very costly perfume, and she poured it on His head as He reclined at the table. 8But the disciples were indignant when they saw this, and said, “Why this waste? 9“For this perfume might have been sold for a high price and the money given to the poor.” 10But Jesus, aware of this, said to them, “Why do you bother the woman? For she has done a good deed to Me. 11“For you always have the poor with you; but you do not always have Me. 12“For when she poured this perfume on My body, she did it to prepare Me for burial. 13“Truly I say to you, wherever this gospel is preached in the whole world, what this woman has done will also be spoken of in memory of her.” 14Then one of the twelve, named Judas Iscariot, went to the chief priests 15and said, “What are you willing to give me to betray Him to you?” And they weighed out thirty pieces of silver to him. 16From then on he began looking for a good opportunity to betray Jesus. 17Now on the first day of Unleavened Bread the disciples came to Jesus and asked, “Where do You want us to prepare for You to eat the Passover?” 18And He said, “Go into the city to a certain man, and say to him, ‘The Teacher says, “My time is near; I am to keep the Passover at your house with My disciples.” ’ ” 19The disciples did as Jesus had directed them; and they prepared the Passover.

As a quick review... We're in a 19 verse-long subsection at the beginning of Matthew chapter 26.

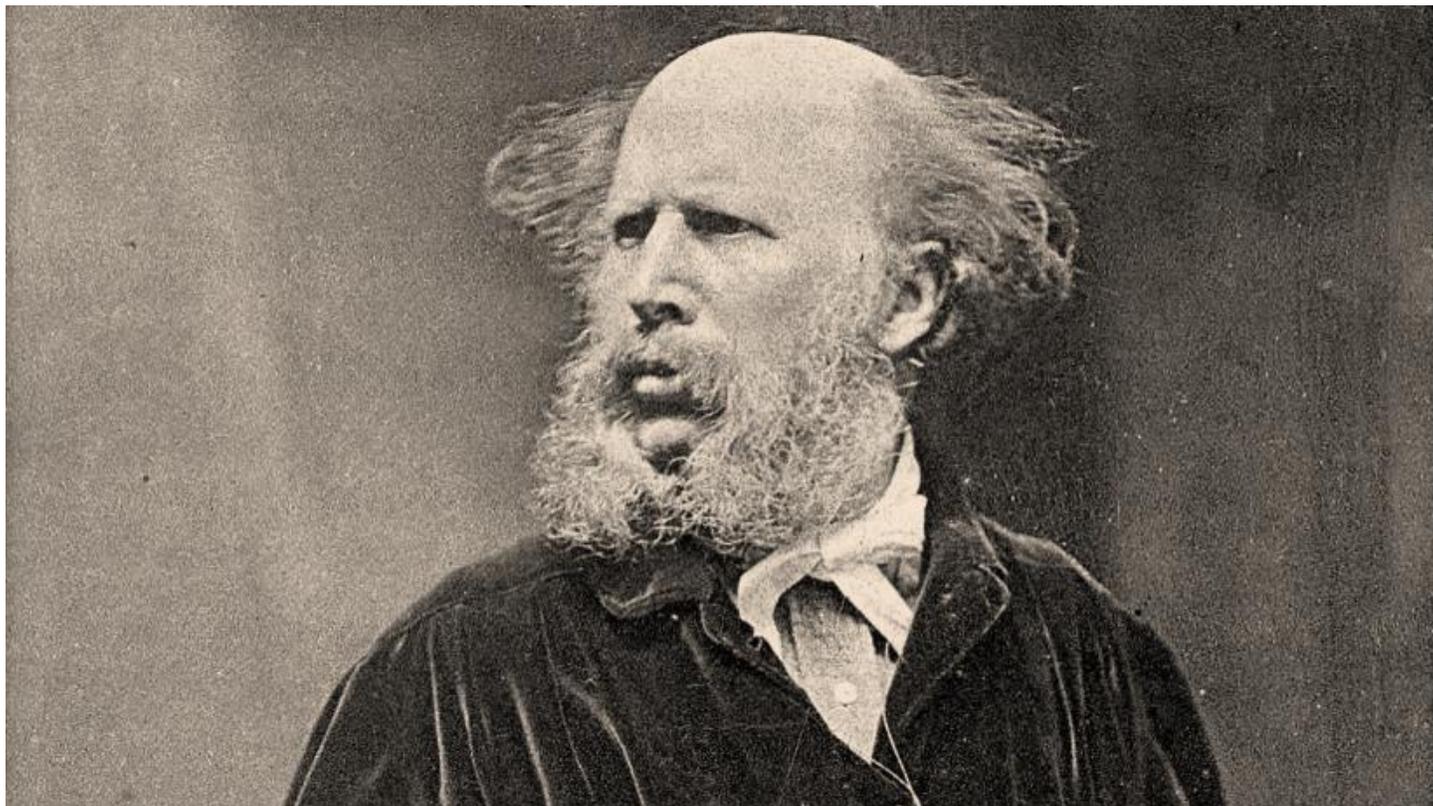
Transition to start. Main event in the middle, bracketed by the actions of the conspirators, then bracketed by Jesus' Passover preparations.



The central story was Mary's anointing of Jesus at a big shindig given in His honor.

Preceding that we had Jesus foretell His execution with specificity, or precision, but then we had His executioners plotting for something quite different than what Jesus predicted.

The incident at dinner created the series of events that would put the conspirators on the same timetable as the Lord's.



Judas Iscariot was indignant about Mary's extravagant display of devotion. It is ἀγανακτέω (ä-gä-näk-tě-ō), meaning to be deeply displeased by something seen as very wrong. It is to be incensed and annoyed, to be angry and indignant by what they believe is severely inappropriate, vexing, evil, or aberrant.

The word ἀγανακτέω only occurs 7 times. Twice in describing the incident we're talking about. Twice in describing the other Apostle's reaction to James, John,

and their mother, lobbying Jesus for the two top spots in the Kingdom. Once to describe the Jewish leadership's response to the children in Jerusalem shouting "Hosanna," to Jesus. Once when Jesus saw His guys preventing kids from coming to Him, and once to describe the Synagogue Official's reaction to Jesus' healing on the Sabbath - "There are 6 other days!"

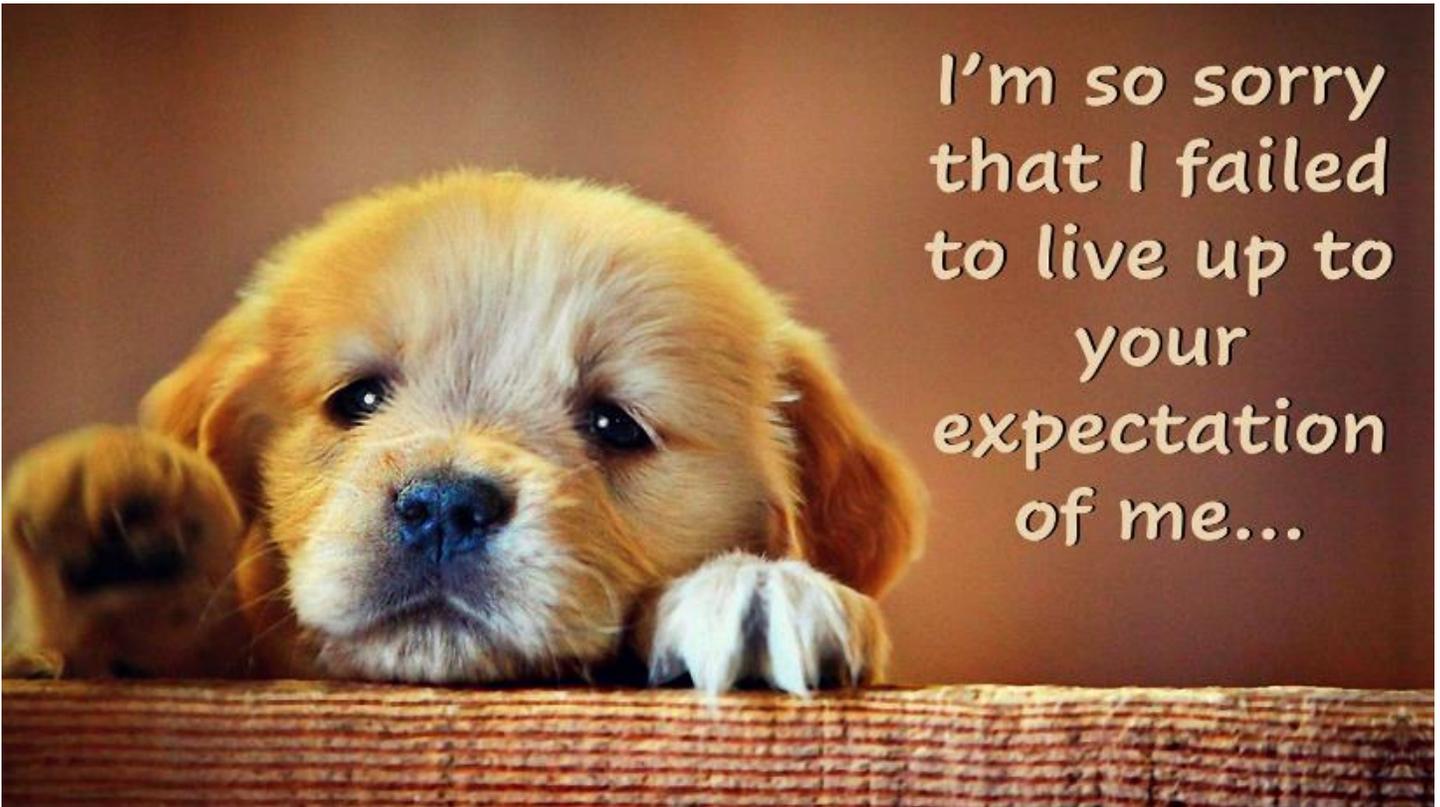
The first thing we must recognize is the reaction begins with a reaction. It is what the person sees as incredibly offensive. It, therefore, starts with a judgment. You judge the wrongness of a thing and then react to it viscerally. It is your strongly held opinion driving your negative response.

Judas was indignant because he saw Mary's actions as a waste of a huge sum of money. He was a money-lover. He was greedy. He controlled the group's finances and while he did steal some of it for himself, he also just loved controlling a big account - the bigger the better. People like Judas love being in charge of huge sums of money because it makes them feel like they're rich and important... But far more than that, they love the power that comes from controlling the purse strings. It is extremely common for the

accountant to feel possessive about the company's money.



Jesus, slam danced his parade, publicly. Jesus rebuked them all, but I'm sure Judas felt singled out and he was profoundly embarrassed and offended. Jesus wasn't a Drill Instructor - it was actually far worse... Jesus was God made flesh. Even if Judas didn't believe that, I'm sure he felt worse than this recruit. He was mortified. Humiliation and embarrassment gave way to resentment and resentment gave way to retaliation. As I said last week, it was the final straw for him. Judas' entire problem was that he wanted Jesus to be different than Jesus was.



We could go into a whole study about it, but really, the bottom line, is Judas was repeatedly disappointed by Jesus. This is a critically important concept.

As an example, people who have chosen to leave our church after a year or more of regular attendance, never, we could say rarely, but really, it's never, they never leave for only one reason. It is always a culmination of things. It is always the last, in a series of disappointments, the final in a string of complaints. It always starts with an expectation that is unmet, and then another, and another, until it's just too much. That's really the nature of all divorce. No one leaves

spouse, or family, or friend, or church, or Jesus the very first time something doesn't go the way they expect it should.

Losing faith in Jesus as Judas did, should be seen as something that could happen to anyone - something that could happen to you. The best way to avoid a fate is to be humble enough to recognize that it could happen to you, and so, take the necessary steps to prevent it. The question you should ask yourself is do you believe in Jesus, or do you believe in a pseudo-Jesus of your own manufacture? How well do you know Him?

Will you trust, honor, obey, and serve Jesus for precisely Who He truly is, or will you continually be disappointed when He repeatedly fails to live up to your expectation?



If you're in the second boat, how long before it's the final straw for you and you betray Jesus' trust just like Judas did? I regularly see people who are disappointed in Jesus precisely because they thought that He was different than He turned out to be... Who do you think Jesus is?



We pick it up the action there... On the other side of the anointing with the actions of the conspirators. Matthew 26:14-16, 14Then one of the twelve, named Judas Iscariot, went to the chief priests 15and said, “What are you willing to give me to betray Him to you?” And they weighed out thirty pieces of silver to him. 16From then on he began looking for a good opportunity to betray Jesus.

God orchestrated the events to play out exactly how He had already determined and how Jesus had already described. The conspirator timetable was now in sync because Judas would give them the opportunity to arrest, try, convict, and hand over the Lord for

crucifixion before anyone knew what was happening and therefore, without the “Riot” they feared.

Judas was the son of Simon Iscariot (John 6:71, 13:26). The Iscariot bit isn't their last name it's a descriptive title. Like Simon the Leper, or like Bob, John's son, or Rufus the cart right, or Frank the baker. Descriptors became family names much later, but here Iscariot was just a description to specify which Judas. There were many with that name. Jesus' brother who wrote our Bible Book Jude and another of the Apostles known in John 14:22 as “Judas (not Iscariot).” It is Greek Ἰούδας (ē-ü-däs), the closest Greek can get to the Hebrew יהודה (yě-hü-dä), or in English Judah, as in the son of Jacob, the head of the royal tribe of Israel, by that name.



Iscaiot is less certain. Some scholars try to connect it to the town of Kerioth, about 30 miles south of Jerusalem. I'm more inclined to connect it to the radical Jewish group loosely associated with the Zealots, called the σικάριος (sē-kä-rē-ōs), which is translated as "Assassins," in Acts 22:38.

They used assassination and other terrorist tactics in an attempt to overthrow the anti-God Roman government and the anti-God Jewish leadership in Jerusalem. They are blamed for the revolt in 66 A.D. that brought the wrath of Nero down upon the Jews, and Christians as well. As far as Nero was concerned, Christians were just a Jewish cult. That war put an end

to a Jewish state for 19 centuries and an end to the Temple along with the Biblically required sacrifices of the Old Covenant, just as Jesus predicted.

Scholars who favor the town connection do so mostly because they can't see Jesus having an assassin as an Apostle. It would have been his dad who was the assassin... not necessarily Judas himself. Yet, growing up with such a person would explain Judas' radical, impatient, let's get the ball rolling, streak that was obviously present in him.

Verse 15 is well translated literally, but loses its force in English. It's more of a demand for money, which is couched in a question. By the wording Judas shows that he is a money-grubbing thief who'd probably sell his own mother, if the price were right. It also shows his disdain and lack of respect for the official Jewish leaders. While he states his demand as a question, there's no doubt it is an ultimatum. Make me a great offer if you want my help. Finally, it shows that he was emotional, upset, angry and wanted to punish the One Who made him feel that way.



The price agreed upon was the now infamous 30 pieces of silver. It was actually already infamous from Zechariah chapter 11. There God uses a shepherd analogy. He puts a “Good shepherd,” over His wayward flock. The “Good Shepherd” is the prophet, but ultimately points to the Messiah, Jesus. The Flock represents, of course, the ever-rebellious Jews.

God says in verse 4, “Shepherd the flock doomed to slaughter.” Why are they doomed to slaughter? Because they follow leaders who are taking them to slaughter. Specifically, everyone is doing their own thing, all of them trying to get ahead by cheating each

other and none of them honoring God with their actions. Verses 8&9 says, “The flock detested me, and I grew weary of them.” As a consequence, he said, “I will not be your shepherd. Let the dying die, and the perishing perish. Let those who are left eat one another’s flesh.” So, the “Good Shepherd,” breaks his covenant to shepherd the flock and the flock seems happy about it - they’re good with getting rid of him.

Then the shepherd says to them in verse 12, “If it is good in your sight, give me my wages; but if not, never mind!” So they weighed out thirty shekels of silver as my wages. 13 Then the Lord said to me, “Throw it to the potter, that magnificent price at which I was valued by them.” So I took the thirty shekels of silver and threw them to the potter in the house of the Lord.”

There’s a lot going on there, but since this isn’t a study on Zechariah, let me just say that the gist is the flock was willing to spend 30 silver shekels to be done with God... God said, “That’s the magnificent value they placed on Me.” Reading Zechariah, you could easily think that you were reading a current report on the state of affairs in America.

From Exodus 21:32 that's the value of a slave accidentally killed... "Thirty shekels of silver." Judas was paid 30 silver shekel coins each worth four drachmae, or four denarii... A total of 120 denarii, or about 4 months wages. Using our calculations from last week, about \$12,000.

Verse 16 tells us that they didn't immediately set a date, because of the need to do this thing secretly... The betrayal, arrest and trial would need to be as duplicitous, deceitful, and devious as possible to catch Jesus unawares. Too late. He already told Judas what was going to happen. Jesus knew better than any of the conspirators how it would go. He went along with it because God was orchestrating everything perfectly. It was necessary to be killed as the Passover Lamb and to get that done, He had to be taken seemingly by surprise, in the middle of the night, by a betrayer receiving 30 silver shekels.



You need an opportunity? Well, here you go... Matthew 26:17-19, 17Now on the first day of Unleavened Bread the disciples came to Jesus and asked, “Where do You want us to prepare for You to eat the Passover?”

18And He said, “Go into the city to a certain man, and say to him, ‘The Teacher says, “My time is near; I am to keep the Passover at your house with My disciples.” ’ ”

19The disciples did as Jesus had directed them; and they prepared the Passover.

This was the morning of Thursday, 14 Nisan. Yeast had to be removed and the Lambs had to be sacrificed and the meal had to be prepared in order to be consumed that evening. According to Old Testament Law the

sacrifice had to be accomplished in the Temple and the meal eaten in Jerusalem.

The Bible explicitly tells us that in Mark 14:12, and in Luke 22:7, 7Then came the first day of Unleavened Bread on which the Passover lamb had to be sacrificed. 8And Jesus sent Peter and John, saying, “Go and prepare the Passover for us, so that we may eat it.”



This is a triple threat spot. In this building, on the second floor is the traditional site of the meal in the “Upper room,” that we’re talking about. The ground floor is the traditional tomb of King David. On the roof is

a holy site to Muslims. When Muslims conquered the city of Jerusalem in the 7th century, they coopted, or replaced, both Jewish and Christian sites, as holy sites to them... Including the Dome of the Rock where the Temple once stood.



This is that upper room... It is not the actual room, as it has been destroyed and rebuilt multiple times over the centuries, but there is good evidence that this is where the room existed, and it may be that some of the stones are original.



Red = the original city. Blue = Siloam. Purple = Caiaphas' compound approximately. Green = Upper Room approximately.

The instructions given by Jesus are abbreviated in Matthew as is typical. You may remember us talking about how Matthew cuts out as many of the details as he can in order to keep the focus on Jesus.

Luke 22:10-13 is very specific... 10And He said to them, "When you have entered the city, a man will meet you carrying a pitcher of water; follow him into the house that he enters. 11"And you shall say to the owner of the house, 'The Teacher says to you, "Where

is the guest room in which I may eat the Passover with My disciples?” ’ 12“And he will show you a large, furnished upper room; prepare it there.” 13And they left and found everything just as He had told them; and they prepared the Passover.

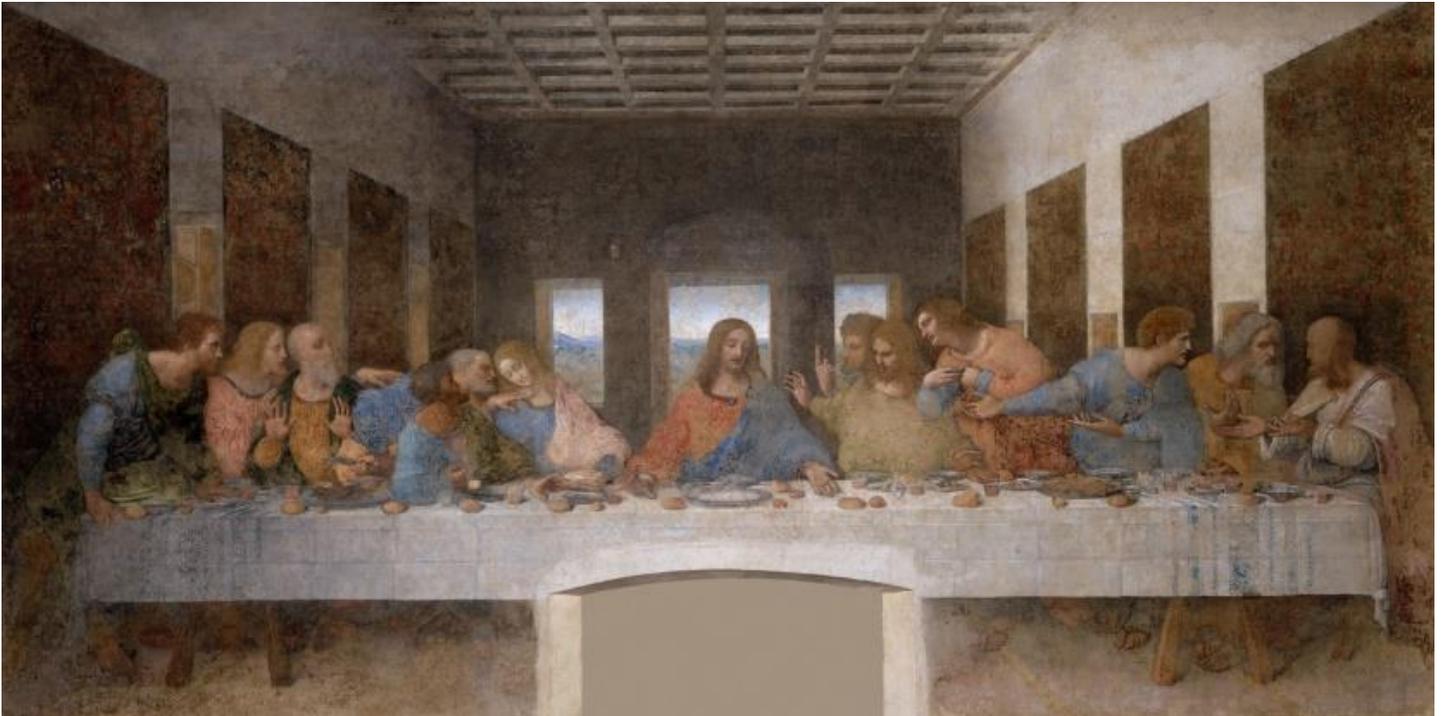
That ends the first subsection and so we move on to the second, which runs from verse 20 to verse 35. Two bookend pieces frame the main bit in verses 26-29.



The first bookend, Matthew 26:20-25, 20Now when evening came, Jesus was reclining at the table with the twelve disciples. 21As they were eating, He said, “Truly I say to you that one of you will betray Me.” 22Being

deeply grieved, they each one began to say to Him, “Surely not I, Lord?” 23And He answered, “He who dipped his hand with Me in the bowl is the one who will betray Me. 24“The Son of Man is to go, just as it is written of Him; but woe to that man by whom the Son of Man is betrayed! It would have been good for that man if he had not been born.” 25And Judas, who was betraying Him, said, “Surely it is not I, Rabbi?” Jesus said to him, “You have said it yourself.”

It is an announcement... “Truly I say to you that one of you will betray Me,” that goes together with the announcement in verse 34, “Truly I say to you that this very night, before the rooster crows, you will deny Me three times.” The middle bit framed by these two ends is the institution of Holy Communion.



Leonardo's painting is all wrong - on many levels, wrong. The entire 6-word phrase, "Jesus was reclining at the table," in verse 20, is one Greek word. The verb ἀνάκειμαι (ä-nä-kā-mī), which means to lie, as in lie down, as in a person will lie down to sleep.



Well, back then, people would also lie down to eat. The verb, as constructed, along with the context, gives us all the other words used in this translation. You can thank Alexander the Great for the change in the way Jews ate in the 1st century. It is probable that people ate standing, squatting, or in a seated position on the floor before the Greeks introduced the idea of lying on your side to eat.

So, Jesus was reclining on His side, propped up by one of His elbows at a bit of an angle to face a low table. Usually, there were three tables set up in a “U” shape, with couches of a sort, to lie upon. To us, it seems like a strange way to eat a meal, but I’m sure

that the way we do it, would have seemed weird to them.

As far as we know it was Jesus and the 12 and no one else. Since all four Gospels record this event, we can get a fuller picture of the evening. Several things preceded the meal, including the foot washing, and some final instructions, by Jesus.

Once they were all in place to eat, Jesus, as the host, would have “Given thanks to God,” for the meal and broken the bread. That signaled everyone to dig in. Each one would have leaned on their left elbow and used their right hand to pick up roasted vegetables and tear off individual pieces of bread, dipping them both into communal bowls of various sauces, as well as using pieces of bread to grab bite-sized chunks of lamb.

There were several ceremonial interruptions for the Passover meal, and this one was progressing as everyone would have expected. That is, until Jesus abruptly interjected a statement that rocked the Apostles to their core.

He started with His solemn “Amen,” as John records it, “Amen, amen, I say to you.” His next words will be important. “One of you will betray Me.” Can you imagine? Jesus had been telling them for some time that He was to be handed over, which would indicate that there would be some kind of betrayal, but none of them had ever even considered that it would be one of them. They were all extremely distressed, very sorrowful, “Deeply grieved.”



Each one of them immediately went introspective, proving that as Solomon said, “There is nothing new under the sun” (Ecclesiastes 1:9). Humans are so self-focused that given this announcement, instead of

thinking about the nature of betrayal, how it could be prevented, or how it all affects Jesus now and will affect Him later, they all think about themselves - whether they might be the betrayer. That's what occupies them.

There are several phrases in this little passage that are difficult to translate into English concisely. To get the flavor we need more words... Just like the 6 words we used to translate ἀνάκειμαι earlier. The question the Apostles ask expects a negative answer, but has a hint of potential to it, so it's like, "Please tell me that I'm not the one - it can't be me, right?" They can't believe that it would be them, but are not sure that they're right. They are deeply concerned and troubled - mostly for their own sake.

Judas, on the other hand, was probably more freaked out than any of them. Oh no, I'm a spy who has been caught.

Verse 23 is misunderstood. Many people try to come up with various theories about what it means, "He who dipped his hand with Me in the bowl." It is a reference that is similarly alluded to in Luke's account, "The hand of the one betraying Me is with Mine on the table." It's

made much more obvious in Mark's account "One who is eating with Me." And it is made explicit in John 13:18, where Jesus actually quotes the reference. "That the Scripture may be fulfilled, 'He who eats My bread has lifted up his heel against Me.'" It is Psalm 41:9, Even my close friend in whom I trusted, who ate my bread, has lifted his heel against me.

It wasn't a secret way for Jesus to reveal the identity of Judas... It was a way of indicating that God had a plan all along. None of the other 11, had a clue that it was Judas, until long after the meal was over, probably not before they saw him kiss Jesus in the Garden. If they had figured it out, Judas would have never made it out of the room. That's clear from John's account. Jesus sent Judas to do what he planned, and the other guys thought he sent him to pay the bill or give some money to the poor (John 13:24-30).

Jesus then gave us a key insight into God's sovereignty and man's choice. The beginning of verse 24, makes it clear that it had to go the way that it did. It was God's plan, and nothing would thwart God's plan, yet the second half of the verse makes it just as clear that Judas would be held individually, personally, responsible for his choice.



Judas, no doubt, thought that he was in the clear at this point. It seemed as though Jesus was just speculating, or perhaps had some knowledge of His betrayal, but not the details. Probably, in order to keep up appearances, Judas asked the identical question the others had asked, with one major difference. Each of the 11 had called Jesus Lord. "Surely not I, Lord?" Judas, on the other hand asked, "Surely not I, Rabbi?" Judas had tipped his hand by only acknowledging Jesus as a "Teacher," not as his Lord and Master. If Jesus is only a good man, a great prophet, a wise philosopher, a miraculous healer, a knowledgeable teacher... He cannot be a Savior.



Put another way, Jesus cannot be your Savior, if He is not your Lord. Biblically, there can be only one Lord in this sense and that is God. There is only one God. If Jesus is God, then He can Save the world through His substitutionary sacrifice and is therefore Lord. If Jesus is not God, we are blasphemers against God if we treat Him as Savior, because only God can Save... Or we are unsaved, like Judas if we treat him only as teacher, incapable of Saving even Himself. Jesus is either God made flesh, who saves us, and rules our hearts, or we need to run from Christianity as fast as we can.



**A false friend and a shadow
attend only while the sun shines.**

Jesus answered Judas with a pithy colloquial saying that He used often. Again, as a cultural idiomatic slang phrase it doesn't translate well. It is a play on Judas' own words. Later on, during his trials, Jesus will do it to the High Priest and to the Roman Governor. It turns their question into an answer. Technically, it doesn't work at all in English. He did it when He refused to be drawn into a futile discussion.

Look at verse 25 carefully. Judas asks, "Surely it is not I, Rabbi?" Jesus responds with just two words translated as, "You have said it yourself." Well, in English that means that Jesus confirmed Judas' words - that it wasn't him. Just the opposite of what

happened. We just can't do it justice in our language. If we make it clearer, we add so many words, we completely miss the quippy biting nature of the two words Jesus used and if we keep it short, even at 5 words we confuse the issue.

To give you a better idea it would be like Judas asking, "It's not me?" And Jesus responding, "Remove the word not." Judas, unlike the other dudes, knew in that instant that Jesus was fully aware of his duplicity. I'm sure Judas thought his life was over, but Jesus simply told him to get on with it. It's important to understand that if Jesus had wanted to avoid death at this point, He could have easily done that... He was on a mission.

It is incongruous. Jesus was going to be betrayed, and it had to be Judas. In a sense, it's like Judas was created to play that role. And if so, how could he be punished for doing what he was born to do? Yet, he had the capacity to make other choices. Just because God knows what you'll do, it doesn't change the fact that you're the one deciding to do it.

Like I say, it's incongruous... difficult for our mind to grasp... So, the better question is why. Why did Judas

betray Jesus? Not the specifics of why, but in general terms - in the terms that would apply to all people.

Judas, as we already saw, had an expectation of what Jesus was to be, but that's no different than the other 11 - they all had expectations. Judas' expectations were often unmet or disappointed, but, again, that's no different than the other 11 - they had been disappointed. What was the difference then?

I see it all the time and it is getting so much worse as time goes on... The difference is how strongly Judas held his expectations. It was about how fiercely he held his opinions. They all had opinions; they all judged that Jesus wasn't what their opinions said that He should be... The 11 were able to shrug it off and adapt, Judas couldn't.

I must tell you the most dangerous thing to your eternity is your strongly held opinions. You want to enter the Kingdom of Heaven? You better be flexible enough to let Jesus be Jesus. I promise you that if you follow Jesus long enough, He will disappoint you. It will be because you have assumed something about Him that isn't actually right and when He straightens you out... With a "Get behind me Satan," or a "How much

longer must I put up with you,” or a “Leave her alone,” rebuke... What will you do?

What will you do with Jesus when the sun isn't shining down on you?

