

# JESUS' LAST CHANCE TO JUDAS: THE APPEAL TO A SINNER MARK 14:12–21

## *Introduction*

Jesus was forced to make secret arrangements for keeping the Passover. This is clear from the present passage. Judas had just plotted with the authorities to betray Jesus (Mk. 14:10-11). They wanted to arrest Him in a quiet spot where the people would not be present and rise to His defence. Judas was just waiting for the right place and time. The Upper Room would be an ideal place and time. Jesus knew this, so He made secret arrangements.

The point of the present passage is to show that Jesus knew about Judas' betrayal and to show how Jesus went about giving Judas a last chance to repent.

- I. The Passover was approaching (v. 12).
- II. Jesus knew about Judas' denial and betrayal (vv. 13-17).
- III. Jesus gave Judas every chance to repent (vv. 18-20).
- IV. Jesus gave Judas a last warning (v. 21).

## **I. *Mark 14:12 The Passover***

The Passover was approaching. Jerusalem was astir with excitement. Josephus, the notable Jewish historian of that day, estimated that between two and three million people flooded into the city to observe the Passover. Pilgrims by the teeming thousands came from all over the world. The mass of people and the necessary housing, food and commercial arrangements that had to be made — along with the commercial carnival atmosphere — can hardly be imagined.

Note that the disciples had to ask Jesus where they were to celebrate the Passover. He had not told them, not even given them a hint. The day of unleavened bread was at hand, and so far as they knew, no arrangement had been made to secure a place for them to observe the Passover.

Considering the housing shortage with the mass of pilgrims, such apparent oversight was most unusual. The disciples must have wondered and questioned why He had not shared His plans earlier.

**Thought 1.** Jesus worshipped and kept the feasts of the Jews. He did not neglect the meeting together with others. The disciples knew this.

*Heb 10:25 Let us not give up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but let us encourage one another — and all the more as you see the Day approaching.*

## **II. *Mark 14:13–17 The Denial and Betrayal by Judas***

Jesus knew about the denial and the betrayal of Judas. This seems to be the very point of what happened in these verses. Judas had just plotted with the chief priests against

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Jesus (Mk. 14:10-11). Judas was denying and betraying Jesus. Jesus knew this, so He had to keep His plans and movements quiet and secret. He could not let Judas know, lest Judas lead the authorities to arrest Him in the Upper Room before He had completed His mission with the disciples. Note the point of the passage.

1. Jesus had kept His plans and movements secret. The disciples did not know where He wished to celebrate the Passover. He could not reveal the plans to a sinful, fallen disciple who was denying and betraying Him. That disciple (Judas) would only interrupt what Jesus was trying to do with the faithful disciples in the Upper Room. He would only create havoc, cause disturbance, and hindering and hampering the work of Jesus.
2. Jesus could only share with His faithful and trusted disciples. Note that Jesus did have a plan, and He followed that plan even to the most minute detail. He had apparently pre-planned the arrangements. He sent two trusted disciples to carry out the arrangements. They followed His instructions exactly. But note how secretive the instructions were. Secret arrangements were necessary because Judas and the authorities were seeking to catch Jesus in a quiet place away from the people. The Upper Room would have been an ideal place to arrest Him.
  - a. There was a pre-planned sign: a man carrying a pitcher of water on his head. This was a most unusual sight. Women were usually the ones who carried pitchers on their heads. It was apparently a sign for the disciples to quietly follow.
  - b. Jesus did not name the homeowner or tell where the house was. He simply said to follow the man with the pitcher on his head and to tell the homeowner "The Teacher" requests the room.
3. Jesus kept His plans despite the betrayer and those who would stop Him. Note the courage and power of Jesus to control the circumstances and events.

**Thought 1.** Note several striking and convicting points.

- 1) Jesus knows about the denial and betrayal of any man, just as He knew about Judas.
- 2) Jesus does not reveal His plans or movements to the man who is denying and betraying Him. The man who denies Jesus knows this. He has no sense, no consciousness, no awareness of Jesus' presence. The Lord's plans are not known to him and the movements of God's Spirit are not felt or experienced.
- 3) Jesus shares His plans and movement only with faithful and trusted disciples.
- 4) Jesus' plans are sure; they are fixed. Just as they could not be stopped by Judas, so they cannot be stopped now, no matter the denial and betrayal. Jesus keeps His plans, working out whatever is necessary to fulfil them.

**Rom 8:28** *And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose.*

**1 Cor 2:14** *The man without the Spirit does not accept the things that come from the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him, and he cannot understand them, because they are spiritually discerned.*

**John 12:35** *Then Jesus told them, "You are going to have the light just a little while longer. Walk while you have the light, before darkness overtakes you. The man who walks in the dark does not know where he is going."*

### III. **Mark 14:18–20** *Chances Given to Judas to Repent*

Jesus gave Judas every chance to repent.

1. The first chance was an attempt to stir conviction within Judas. Jesus said, "One of you will betray me — one who is eating with me." Judas was seated there. He heard the words of Jesus. What were his thoughts? He had tried to hide his sin and he had done a good job. In his mind no one knew about his sin (plot), not even the disciples who were his closest associates. But he was wondering, "Does Jesus know; or is Jesus stabbing in the dark, guessing, suspicious, aware that something is brewing, but not quite sure what?" Scripture is silent about the betrayer's thoughts, but one thing is known: Judas was not convicted of his sin, not enough to repent. But note what happened to the faithful and trusted disciples.
  - a. They were stirred with deep sadness (grieved) in their hearts. The word *sadness* (Iupeisthai) means to grieve, to sorrow with heaviness of heart. Their hearts were gripped with a real burden, a heavy weight of grieving.
  - b. They were stirred to examine their own hearts. They asked, "Surely not I?" Note how they had matured. They knew the weakness of the flesh (sinful nature), that it could so easily fail. Each one feared lest a great fall lay ahead of them. Note also how they did not look for the fault or weakness in others, but they looked at themselves. What a lesson for us all!

**Thought 1.** The man who should have been...

- convicted was not
- examining his own heart was not
- saddened was not
- grieving was not
- repenting was not

**Thought 2.** Two things are critical, even for the most faithful and trusted.

- 1) To know the weakness of the human flesh, the great danger of falling.
  - 2) To always be examining oneself and not others.
2. The second chance given to Judas left him without excuse if he refused to heed it. Jesus revealed that He knew about the *monstrous deception* (v. 20). "It is one of the twelve," one "who dips bread into the bowl with me." What deception! The sinner sat with Jesus, partaking of His Last Supper and being guilty of the most terrible sin.

Note that Judas was told that his sin was known. Yet, even after he was told, he still felt he could get away with it. He refused to repent. He lived on in his deception, rejecting chance after chance.

**Luke 13:3, 5** *“I tell you, no! But unless you repent, you too will all perish. I tell you, no! But unless you repent, you too will all perish.”*

**Acts 3:19** *Repent, then, and turn to God, so that your sins may be wiped out, that times of refreshing may come from the Lord.*

**Acts 8:22** *Repent of this wickedness and pray to the Lord. Perhaps he will forgive you for having such a thought in your heart.*

#### **IV. Mark 14:21 Last Warning Given to Judas**

Jesus gave Judas a last warning. He warned Judas of the terrible judgment that was to come. Jesus knew the destiny of the sinner, the terrible fate that awaited him. It would be better never to have been born than to deny and betray Christ.

**Thought 1.** Note the grace of God in warning the sinner of judgment.

- 1) The sinner is told in *advance*, before judgment ever comes or is ever pronounced. Judas was told. The sinner can still repent when he first hears about judgment. He can still be saved as long as he is living. It is God's grace that warns him of the consequences of his sin, of coming judgment.
- 2) The sinner is never compelled to repent of his denial or betrayal of Christ. Judas was not forced to turn from his evil; neither is any other sinner. It is God's grace that respects our will and desires. God loves and cares, warns and speaks frankly, but He never forces obedience.

**Mat 18:7-9** *“Woe to the world because of the things that cause people to sin! Such things must come, but woe to the man through whom they come! If your hand or your foot causes you to sin cut it off and throw it away. It is better for you to enter life maimed or crippled than to have two hands or two feet and be thrown into eternal fire. And if your eye causes you to sin, gouge it out and throw it away. It is better for you to enter life with one eye than to have two eyes and be thrown into the fire of hell.”*

**Rom 6:23** *For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.*

**Heb 2:3** *How shall we escape if we ignore such a great salvation? This salvation, which was first announced by the Lord, was confirmed to us by those who heard him.*

**Heb 9:27** *Just as man is destined to die once, and after that to face judgment.*

**Ezek 18:20** *The soul who sins is the one who will die. The son will not share the guilt of the father, nor will the father share the guilt of the son. The righteousness of the righteous man will be credited to him, and the wickedness of the wicked will be charged against him. ■*