

Scripture Standard

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Pleading for a total return to New Testament principles.

contend earnestly for the faith
Jude 1:3

IS JUDAS UNJUSTIFIABLY MALIGNED?

[Continued from previous issue]

ARE THE GOSPEL RECORDS RELIABLE?

But, it is protested, aren't the Gospel records biased and unreliable, being an accumulation of written and verbal traditions?

This is a subject in itself. However, as more and more external information comes to light, the historical reliability of the "Gospels" is constantly being verified. Also from internal evidence alone, the sceptic who wrote "Honest to God" - the late John A. T. Robinson - was obliged to re-date them pre-A.D.70.

There are no other manuscripts written in the lifetime of the apostles giving us detailed information on Judas Iscariot. If this sole source of contemporary information on Judas Iscariot is rejected there is nothing to discuss.

For more information vindicating the historical truth of the New Testament documents, you can consult the internet address:

<http://eusebos.eu/muqaddas/d4web4sm/muqaddas/sheet01.htm>

WHAT MOTIVATED JUDAS TO DO IT?

Was it greed?

In the last week preceding the crucifixion, the Lord Jesus and his apostles visited the house of Lazarus, Martha and Mary. (John 12:2 ff)

Mary spontaneously washed our Lord's feet with fragrant ointment worth 300 denarii - an average year's wage for a worker. I can understand the disciples' concern that this seemed to them to be ruinous waste (Matthew 26:8, Mark 14:4) The Authorised Version "ruin" is from the same Greek word as "perdition" in John 17:12, "son of perdition." No doubt they had genuine concern for the poor who could have benefited from the sale of the ointment. But how come they reacted so badly - showing "indignation"? Who took advantage of their mood and stirred it up. John's record fills the gap for us: Judas - the "son of ruinous waste" - the disruptive maligner - "cared not for the poor - he was a thief" - he stole from the communal money bag with which he had been entrusted (John 12:5-6).

Possibly stung into action by Jesus' observation "the poor you have always with you" (John 12:8) it was "then" that he consulted the chief priests (Matthew 26:14). His question to them was "What will you give me and I will deliver him to you?" (Matthew 26:15)

They set the price ("covenanted") - 30 Shekels - 4/10ths of a year's wage for a worker (Matthew 27:9). Not a trifling sum of money for a man who would most likely be taking what he considered to be undetectable amounts out of the communal bag.

A lot of money for a greedy man. A paltry sum for a human being - "the Son of man".

Greed causes men to slay the innocent and spare the lives of the guilty for a handful of barley and fragments of bread (Ezekiel 13:19) - to sell the righteous for silver and the poor for a pair of sandals (Amos 2:6).

WAS IT MEANNESS?

He had shared loaves of bread with the Lord only to lift up his heel against Him, John 13:18 (Psalm 41:9). Lest there be any confusion as to which person was the Lord, Judas proposed that the "kiss" of friendship be the signal. So that he himself wouldn't have problems he advised them to "lead him away safely" (Mark 14:43-44). Judas accepted a company of officers to carry out the arrest. As he "drew near to kiss Him" the Lord implored "Do you

betray the Son of Man with a kiss?" (Luke 22:47,48)

IT WAS BETRAYAL – HE HIMSELF RECOGNISED HIS GUILT

Judas - seeing the chief priests and elders decide on the death penalty - regretted what he had done and tried to return the money back to them saying: "I have betrayed the innocent blood". Having made no impression on them he committed suicide - plunged himself into "the awful unknown" (Matthew 27:1-5).

JUDGING JUDAS

When I think of Judas - seeing the Lord's sorrow over him - I feel sad for him.

Should we hate Judas for what he did? Is it for us to dictate the penalty?

The archangel Michael would not make any accusation even against the arch maligner - the devil himself - but said the Lord rebuke thee, Jude 9. Vengeance belongs unto the Lord. It is His prerogative (Romans 12:19).

Could there be a bit of disruptiveness, meanness, greed in each one of us? These evils put the Lord Jesus on the tree. Are we culpable? Yes - we are all guilty.

COULD HE HAVE BEEN FORGIVEN?

If Judas had gone and begged forgiveness of the Lord as He hung on the tree, would He who had washed his feet have said - "sorry - no chance - clear off "?

Forgiveness was available even for those who howled for His death (Acts 2:37-38). Forgiveness is available for us too, through trust, repentance and immersion, despite any of our past disruptiveness, meanness, greed or any other damnable sin. The apostle Paul saw himself as the chief of sinners and an example of God's readiness to forgive to the uttermost those who put their trust in Him (1 Timothy 1:15-16).

DON'T LET JUDAS BE OUR ROLE MODEL

We live in an age when our young are tempted to see vile pop

stars as role models. Judas is a warning to all of us what we should not be. We might finish up going to our "own place" (Acts 1:25).

HERE IS THE ONE AND ONLY ROLE MODEL FOR US

(Philippians 2:5ff)

The Lord of glory - in humility and love - washed even the feet of Judas - "knowing" he had determined to betray Him.

"Now before the feast of the Passover, when Jesus knew that his hour had come that he would depart out of this world to the Father, having loved his own which were in the world, he loved them to the end. And supper being ended, the devil having now put into the heart of Judas Iscariot, Simon's son, to betray him; Jesus knowing that the Father had given all things into his hands, and that he was come from God, and went to God; He rose from supper, put aside his garments, took a towel, girded himself, poured water into a basin, and then began to wash the disciples' feet, and to wipe them with the towel with which he was girded." (John 13:1-5).

Would any of us have washed the feet of Judas? Would any of us love such a one "to the end"?

ISSACHAR AND ZEBULUN

Jonathan Ashurst, Byron GA

At this point in our series, Jacob has had eight sons. Leah bore Reuben, Simeon, Levi, and Judah. Then Rachel's handmaid Bilhah bore Dan and Naphtali. Next Leah's handmaid Zilpah bore Gad and Asher. (Genesis 29:31-30:13)

After Reuben found some mandrake plants in the field, he gave them to his mother. These plants were believed to promote fertility. When Rachel asked for some, Leah at first refused. Though Leah had children and Rachel did not, Leah was upset that Rachel was favoured by Jacob. In the end, Leah gave Rachel

the plants in exchange for time with Jacob. (Genesis 30:14-16)

Even without the mandrakes, Leah was soon pregnant with another son. She named him Issachar, which means “wages,” since she felt God was rewarding her for giving Zilpah to Jacob. It was true that God had listened to Leah’s prayer, but doubtful that the child was a reward for this questionable behaviour. (Genesis 30:17-18)

After Leah bore yet another son, her sixth and Jacob’s tenth, she named him Zebulun, which means “dwelling.” Again she acknowledged God for giving her the son, while hoping that Zebulun’s birth would cause Jacob to “dwell” with her. (Genesis 30:19-20)

After a while, Leah gave birth to a daughter, Dinah. As we learned in the article about Simeon [see Sept. 2017 issue], Dinah would later be mistreated by the Canaanites but defended by her brothers. (Genesis 30:21, chapter 34)

Issachar and Zebulun experienced their father Jacob’s confrontation with Laban, his dramatic reunion with Esau, and his long journey home to Canaan. They witnessed Jacob’s grief at the death of Rachel and later of Isaac. They participated in the selling of their brother Joseph and later begged his forgiveness after discovering he had become a ruler in Egypt. By the time the family moved to Egypt, Issachar had four sons and Zebulun had three. (Genesis chapters 31-33, 35, 37, 42-45; 46:13-14)

When Jacob blessed his sons, he compared Issachar to a strong donkey. Playing on the meaning of Zebulun’s name, he prophesied the location where Zebulun’s tribe would “dwell.”

Zebulun shall dwell by the haven of the sea; He shall become a haven for ships, and his border shall adjoin Sidon. Issachar is a strong donkey, lying down between two burdens; He saw that rest was good, and that the land was pleasant; He bowed his shoulder to bear a burden and became a band of slaves.

Genesis 49:13-15, NKJV

Jacob's family grew into a mighty nation in Egypt and later suffered oppression. After leading the nation back to the land of Canaan, Moses blessed each tribe.

Rejoice, Zebulun, in your going out,
And Issachar in your tents!
They shall call the peoples to the mountain;
There they shall offer sacrifices of righteousness;
For they shall partake of the abundance of the seas
And of treasures hidden in the sand.

Deuteronomy 33:18-19

When the tribes received their inheritance, both Zebulun and Issachar were located toward the north, close to the Mediterranean Sea westward and the Sea of Galilee and Jordan River eastward. (Joshua 19:10-23)

In the time of the judges, Zebulun failed to drive out all the peoples within their borders, instead subjecting them to forced labor. However, the tribes of Issachar and Zebulun did join Barak and Deborah in battle against Sisera. The men of Zebulun assisted Gideon against the Midianites. The judge Tola was from the tribe of Issachar, and the judge Elon was from the tribe of Zebulun. (Judges 1:30, 4:6-10, 5:14-18, 6:35, 10:1-2, 12:11-12)

When David was made king in Hebron, these tribes were amongst those who assisted him. Issachar provided "mighty men of valour" and "men who had understanding of the times, to know what Israel ought to do," while Zebulun produced "fifty thousand who went out to battle, expert in war with all weapons of war, stouthearted men who could keep ranks." These tribes traveled far to bring food and celebrate the special occasion. (I Chronicles 12:32-33 & vv.38-40)

After the northern tribes rebelled, Jereboam became their king. His son Nadab and the rest of Jereboam's house were killed by a man from Issachar named Baasha. However, because of his wickedness, Baasha's house was also later destroyed. (I Kings 15:25-16:13)

Years later, when Hezekiah was king of Judah, he sent couriers

to invite the people of the northern tribes to come to Jerusalem for the Passover feast. Most refused, but some did humble themselves and come, including some from Issachar and Zebulun. King Hezekiah prayed that God would overlook the unusual procedural circumstances: “May the good LORD provide atonement for everyone who prepares his heart to seek God, the LORD God of his fathers, though he is not cleansed according to the purification of the sanctuary.” The Lord honoured his request. (2 Chronicles 30:10-11,18-19)

Around that time period, Isaiah recalled the time that Zebulun helped Gideon defeat Midian, prophesying that one day the Messiah would walk in their midst. (Isaiah 9:1-7)

About seven hundred years later, Jesus fulfilled Isaiah’s mighty prophesy!

Jesus ...departed to Galilee. And leaving Nazareth, He came and dwelt in Capernaum, which is by the sea, in the regions of Zebulun and Naphtali, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by Isaiah the prophet, saying:

‘The land of Zebulun and the land of Naphtali, By the way of the sea, beyond the Jordan, Galilee of the Gentiles: The people who sat in darkness have seen a great light, And upon those who sat in the region and shadow of death Light has dawned.’

From that time Jesus began to preach and to say, ‘Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.’ (Matthew 4:12-17)

Ezekiel and Revelation also mention Issachar and Zebulun, affirming the part of these tribes in God’s redemptive plan. (Ezekiel 48, Revelation 7)

Though we know relatively little about these two tribes, we see they provided essential contributions at key points in the nation’s history.

BITTER BODDIES

Gretchen Ashurst, Stretford

Written 1996, Updated 1999

[The title is a pun on a local brew]

<http://simplychristians.eu/muqaddas/d4web4sm/muqaddas/bttrbods.htm>

A plea from the heart of a Christian nurse

All night they come - 365 nights a year - ambulances and police cars, and out stagger (if they're lucky) the drunks, men gasping for breath, kids 'high' on drugs, seeing weird and terrifying scenes, battered wives and little ones, the overdoses, frantic relatives, lives ruined by rape and abortions, over-worked policemen, beautiful girls scarred for life because someone smashed a glass and crushed it into the nearest face. Road traffic-accident victims, young and old folks - bruised and bleeding after being mugged. Aids sufferers staring death in the face - a heart-breaking stream of suffering. Inside Casualty the nurses face violence, verbal aggression, mindless laughter and taunts, stupid answers to important questions.

Exhausted doctors see the 'regulars' yet again - and send them to a short-stay ward, smelling of alcohol, vomit and dirty clothes. Into bed they fall, to sleep off the effects of the night out to wake to another day - smoking, drinking, stealing, begging. The injured go to wards where the nurses will try to ease the pain - or to theatre where the repair work begins. Some go to the mortuary.

Brethren, do you think this is an exaggeration of how this permissive society suffers? In twenty years of night nursing at a city hospital I've seen thousands of patients - many dying horrible deaths from cirrhosis of the liver, lung cancer, drug abuse, Aids, V.D., assaults and many diseases. I don't think any words can describe the real thing - it is no exaggeration.

You may wonder why I'm writing this. I have been horrified, saddened and extremely worried to hear that some Christians are smoking and drinking in their own homes. Is it right to bring

poison - which alcohol certainly is - (how often we see young men die after a 'celebration') within easy reach of our children and young members of the church and to give them the impression that it's harmless?

Would you ask a teenager to inject with heroin to see if he would become an addict? or suggest a glue sniffing session or an experiment with 'crack' because you might have a fantastic 'trip'? Of course you wouldn't! Alcohol causes more misery than drugs, glue and all the other addictions put together.

Our families visit each other and maybe your child will be offered a drink. How tragic if he or she becomes an alcoholic. No one knows until the first drink or the first cigarette whether they will be able to control the craving. It only takes one drink to start a life-time's agony. Please teach your families from the earliest days, both by words and example, that cigarettes, alcohol and drugs, are dangerous and painful.

On Monday I came home to find my daughter Carole and my very close friend in tears. Why? Because on Saturday evening my friend's youngest son, a fine, handsome, strong, clever 26 year-old man had gone to his home, written two notes, then committed suicide. His shattered dad found him dead. Dead - because for ten dreadful years he was an aggressive lonely alcoholic - drinking fifteen pints of strong beer some nights. His wife had said that day that they couldn't live together any more. Their beautiful baby was going out of his life, and the future without them was unbearable.

Brethren, please don't be guilty of causing any little ones to stumble. Our loving heavenly Father has given us advice which will save us from the misery of abuse if we take it.

Please read Proverbs 20:1; 23:20-21; 23:29-35; 26:9; 31:4-7 and Leviticus 10:8-10.

Surely we are the people who should be trying to denounce the vicious teaching given in magazines, on television and in the newspapers, that bad things are good and that we are the losers

by not trying them out. How clever the devil is!

We have the true vine - with the promise of love, joy and peace - harmony and happy family life and all the blessings we can think of. Let us enjoy and treasure these, and pray for the millions who suffer because they haven't been loved and taught that life can be full with Jesus, and care for those we know who need us so desperately. May our homes always be a safe haven and a place where hope can replace despair.

For Jesus' sake and in His love

http://simplychristians.eu/eusebos/printable_files/DOCUMENTS/m%20Morals/m1%20Bitter%20Boddies.pdf

GRETCHEN ASHURST

Obituary written by John Purcell



Our sister Gretchen Ashurst went to be with the Lord on the 20th September, 2018.

She was first and foremost a Christian. She gave hospitality to anyone who needed it. On more than one occasion, Allan and she were warned by the police about the type of person to whom they were giving hospitality. Some were convicted petty thieves, some

convicted for grievous bodily harm, some were travelers, some were rough sleepers, etc., but she saw the best in everyone and carried on regardless.

Many overseas students were very grateful for Gretchen's hospitality.

Gretchen was one of these rare people who always saw the best in everyone. If you criticised anyone she would always make an excuse for them no matter what they were like.

She didn't want possessions. She wanted people. She had no airs and graces. She just wanted to meet people and tell them about Jesus. Even towards the end she was still trying to get the nurses and some visitors in the hospital to read the Bible and when we had the Bible study at her house she was trying to get the carers to sit in.

She was an accomplished musician and was a Finalist in the First International Eisteddfod some 70 years ago. Her music style was taught to her by an aristocratic Russian émigré. His sister was a ballet teacher and it was while she was employed as a pianist for the ballet school that she met Allan in the town of Tunbridge Wells where he was training as an evangelist. They were married there in 1955.

In the book of James chapter 2 we are told that you have to show your faith by your works and that was exactly what she did. She was an example unto all of us.

The family has lost a wife, a mother, grandmother and great grandmother as well as a sister.

We have lost a very good friend and sister in Christ but it is a great comfort to us all to know that she will be with Jesus.

“Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved.”

Acts 4:12

GHANA APPEAL

The Church of Christ at Dennyloanhead is very grateful to all sister churches, individual brothers and sisters who contribute to the Ghana Appeal.

Please send donations to: Mrs. Christine Wood, 11 Albert Place, Stirling, FK8 2RE (Email: ctkwood@hotmail.com)

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Brother Frank Worgan is happy to receive Bible questions requiring urgent answers by letter or e-mail.

11 Stanier Road,
CORBY, NN17 1XP
Tel. 01536-206 848
E-mail: frankworgan@outlook.com

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Please contact the editor.

EDITOR:

Allan Ashurst, 60 Kenwood Road, Stretford, Manchester, M32 8PT

Send correspondence & articles to: ScriptureStandard@gmail.com

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