

REFLECTION GUIDE

JOHN 13:18-30 | WHO IS JUDAS?

KEY TERMS

Judas - Judas Iscariot was one of the twelve disciples chosen by Jesus (Luke 6:16), and he served as the group's treasurer (John 12:6). Though he witnessed Jesus' miracles and teaching firsthand, Judas ultimately conspired with the religious leaders to betray Jesus to them (John 13:2, 27).

Satan - Satan, also called the devil or the adversary, is depicted throughout Scripture as the chief opponent of God and the deceiver of humanity (see Genesis 3, 1 Chronicles 2:1, Matthew 4:1-11, 1 Peter 5:8).

Originally one of God's created spiritual beings, he rebelled against God's authority and became the leader of the forces of darkness (see Isaiah 14:12-15, Revelation 12:7-9).

DID YOU KNOW?

In the ancient Near East, sharing a piece of bread from one's own hand symbolized intimacy, trust, and friendship. That Jesus extends this gesture to Judas (John 13:26) at the very moment of betrayal highlights both the depth of Jesus' love and of Judas' betrayal.

SYNOPSIS

After washing his disciples' feet at his final meal with them, John's Gospel turns the focus to Judas. Jesus states that his words are not directed at everyone and then quotes Psalm 41:9, which says *He who ate my bread has lifted his heel against me* (v. 18). In its original context, David is expressing lament to God about the painful experience of being mocked by his enemies. John sees Jesus fulfilling this verse not because he necessarily believes David was writing about Jesus, but because David serves as a "type" or model for the Messiah, whom John believes Jesus to be. Jesus then comes right out and says, *one of you will betray me*, leading to concern and uncertainty among the group (vv. 21-24). John—identified here as the one *Jesus loved*—asks Jesus, *Lord, who is it?* (v. 25); to which Jesus responds, *It is he to whom I will give this morsel of bread when I have dipped it* (v. 26). Jesus then proceeds to dip bread and give it to Judas, and John says that *Satan entered into him* (v. 27). There's still confusion for the disciples, however, with some thinking Jesus simply asked Judas to go purchase supplies for Passover (vv. 28-29). John, though, who knows the whole story at the time of writing, ends this section, saying *it was night* (v. 30).

GOING DEEPER

Read Ephesians 5:8-14 and 1 John 1:5-7. John 13:30 says, *And it was night*, immediately after Judas leaves. More than a time marker, this serves as a symbol of spiritual darkness. How do these passages help you reflect on the contrast between walking in the light and giving in to darkness? How is spiritual darkness a danger for all of us? What practices help you stay in the light of Christ when you face temptation or discouragement?

REFLECTION QUESTIONS

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LEARNING THE WORD

1. Read John 13:18-30. Make 3-5 quick observations. What emotions are present? What action takes place?
2. In this "last supper" with his disciples, what do you make of Jesus' actions toward Judas throughout, especially in his washing of Judas' feet and his offering Judas a morsel of his own bread (a sign of personal friendship in that culture)? Is Jesus' approach to Judas surprising in light of what Jesus knows about Judas' plans? Why or why not?
3. Read Matthew 26:14-15, Matthew 26:47-50, and Matthew 27:1-5. In these passages, what do we learn about Judas? What is the end result?

LIVING THE WORD

4. Is it surprising to you that Judas was one of the twelve throughout the three years of Jesus' public ministry, and yet the other eleven disciples did not suspect him at all? What does this tell us about our human ability to hide our sin and disguise our troubled hearts?
5. Read Genesis 4:7 and 1 Peter 5:8. Based on these verses, do you have a healthy and sober-minded view of the dangers of sin, evil, and Satan? Why or why not?
6. Read James 5:16 and 1 John 1:8-9 and consider the importance of confession in the life of a believer. What role does confession play in your spiritual life? How might confession be a healthy part of your spiritual friendships and community?
7. Although John doesn't address it in his gospel, we know from Matthew's account that this meal with the disciples was where Jesus instituted the ordinance that we call "The Lord's Supper." Matthew 27:26-28 reads, "Now as they were eating, Jesus took bread, and after blessing it broke it and gave it to the disciples, and said, 'Take, eat; this is my body.' And he took a cup, and when he had given thanks he gave it to them, saying, 'Drink of it, all of you, for this is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins.'"

What can we learn about Jesus' love and sacrifice for us from this entire scene? How does this deepen our understanding of the gospel and make the experience of taking communion even more meaningful?