

ABC's of SALVATION

by

John J. Van Gorder

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CHAPTER EIGHT

HEART BLACK AS NIGHT

“He then having received the sop went immediately out; and it was night” (John 13:30).

THE above are the words of divine revelation concerning the man whose heart was as black as the night into which he had gone. And what a night!

Even the rays of the morning's sun over old Olivet brought no light to his darkened heart for it is recorded in Matthew 27:1-5:

When the morning was come, all the chief priests and elders of the people took counsel against Jesus to put him to death: And when they had bound him, they led him away, and delivered him to Pontius Pilate the governor. Then Judas, which had betrayed him, when he saw that he was condemned, repented himself, and brought again the thirty pieces of silver to the chief priests and elders, Saying, I have sinned in that I have betrayed the innocent blood. And they said, What is that to us? see thou to that. And he cast down the pieces of silver in the temple, and departed, and went and hanged himself.

Let us inquire into the life of this man whose deed stains the pages of human history as well as the pages of divine revelation.

I. His Privilege by Birth

There is an old adage, “Blood is thicker than water,” the meaning of which is that blood relationship has a tie that binds people together closer than mere acquaintance. Of the twelve who made up the cabinet of our Lord during His earthly ministry, only Judas was a member of the tribe of Judah from which our Lord came, according to the flesh.

It was the tribe of David, Solomon, and other illustrious kings.

In the olden days, this tribe pitched its tents just in front of the Tabernacle in the encampments and led the tribes in their march under the directing cloud of glory. By all human reasoning, it would seem if at all possible, that Judas should have been just a little closer to his Master than any of the other disciples.

II. His Privilege of Apostleship

Judas was one of the twelve chosen by the Lord (Matthew 10:4). This immediately brings up a series of questions, some real, others purely hypothetical. Few indeed have been the “question boxes” in which was not found the question, “Why did the Lord choose Judas if He knew Judas would betray Him?”

Suffice to answer this is Psalm 41:9, **“Yea, mine own familiar friend, in whom I trusted, which did eat of my bread, hath lifted up his heel against me.”** Of this, in Acts 1:16, it is written, **“The Holy Ghost by the mouth of David spake before concerning Judas.”**

Concerning Christ, it is written in John 2:24, 25, **“He knew all men, and needed not that any should testify of man: for he knew what was in man.”** The Lord Jesus Christ knew the Scriptures; He knew the writers; He knew Judas; He was not deceived. Nevertheless, the facts still remain true that Judas was one of the twelve and had the high and holy privilege of membership in the apostolate, for it is written in Acts 1:24, 25, of the disciples in the upper room in Jerusalem, that they prayed, **“Thou Lord, which knowest the hearts of all men, shew whether of these two thou hast chosen, That he may take part of this ministry and apostleship, from which Judas by transgression fell.”** If words mean anything, Judas had been an accredited apostle.

III. His Privilege of Power

In Matthew 10:5-8 it is written: **“These twelve Jesus sent forth, and commanded them, saying, Go not into the way of the Gentiles, and into any city of the Samaritans enter ye not; But go rather to the lost sheep of the house of Israel. And as ye go, preach, saying, The kingdom of heaven is at hand. Heal the sick, cleanse the lepers, raise the dead, cast out devils: freely ye have received, freely give.”**

There is not a word to indicate that Judas did not have equal share in this divine power, for had he not had this power he would have been suspected by the others. That he was not suspected by the others is shown by the fact that when the Lord announced His betrayal, they began to ask, **“Lord, is it I?”** (Matthew 26:22).

How sad to think that the one who had the power to cast out demons was entered by Satan himself! (John 13:27). How sad to think that the one who had been willing to go out without gold, silver, or brass, to preach the gospel of the kingdom, became so greedy for money that he sold his Master for thirty paltry pieces of silver! This shows the blackness of his heart!

IV. His Privilege of Association

For three years he had been associated with the One who had come **“out of the ivory palaces”** of glory.

He had listened to His three major discourses

- The first, in Matthew 5-7, in which He outlined the fundamental laws of His kingdom
- The second, in Matthew 13, in which He outlined the “mysteries” of the time of His rejection
- The third, in Matthew 24, in which He outlined the physical, political, and religious characteristics of the end of the age.

Judas left at the beginning of Christ’s fourth major discourse which begins with John 14 and closes with His great intercessory prayer. It was right that Judas should do this for this discourse had to do with Christ’s care for His own during the time of His absence, and Judas was not of His own.

Judas had witnessed His mighty miracles, had heard His admonitions. What associations he had enjoyed! Yet he went out into the blackness of night!

V. His Peevishness

Less than one week before his betrayal of his Master, his real character began to assert itself. He murmured at the loss of the ointment used by Mary on her blessed Lord (John 12:3-6). His heart was blind to the love that Mary had for the One who had restored her dead brother to the family circle. He was blind to the greater truth that Mary alone seemed to comprehend; namely, His coming death. His first overt act was that of murmuring. He murmured against the greatest deed ever done to our Lord while on earth (Matthew 26:13).

In a southern city some time ago, I was being entertained in a Christian home. Being told to occupy myself for a little while, I picked up a copy of *Peloubets Notes* on the Sunday school lessons for September 9, 1888. From this rare old issue, commenting upon a murmurer and his murmuring, I copied these words, “Murmuring is a sign and fruit of unbelief in God’s promises and goodness. A murmurer is on the highroad to rebellion. Murmuring is the deepening twilight of a rebellious spirit. There is no comfort, no joy, no sunlight in it. It abides in the lurid shadow of the pit. It is as useless as it is wretched. It removes no evils but intensifies them. It turns away from every source of help.” How applicable to Judas! But not to Judas only—it applies to all murmurers.

VI. His Plotting

Judas had heard every one of the eight woes that the Lord had pronounced upon the scribes and Pharisees in Matthew 23, yet the day came when he made these apostate leaders his partners in crime. He left the association of Christ to become a plotter with the apostates! History repeats itself often along these lines. Our Lord never spoke a greater truth than when He said, **“The servant is not greater than his lord. If they have persecuted me, they will also persecute you”** (John 15:20).

Few have been the God-fearing, Christ-serving pastors who have not felt the sting of a plotting Judas Iscariot. We have known them to sit on “official board” and listen to the planning for the church, then get up from that meeting and go out and consort with the enemies of the church, giving forth the information they were sent to secure.

We have known them to profess great friendship for the pastor and even accept the hospitality of the already over-burdened home, yet at the same time secretly spread abominable falsehoods against his ministry. To the maligned and persecuted pastor, whose eyes fall upon these words, we say, **“We have not a high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin”** (Hebrews 4:15).

The failure of some of the professed followers of Christ to heed the divine admonition in Psalm 105:15, **“Touch not mine anointed, and do my prophets no harm”**, has caused many a newly made grave in the cemeteries overlooking the cities where the plotting took place.

VII. His Pay Day

“Pay day some day” is a paraphrase of the scriptural injunction, **“Be not deceived; God is not mocked; for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap”** (Galatians 6:7).

The pay day for Judas came soon. Late one evening the chief priests and the elders handed to Judas thirty pieces of silver. The next morning they saw a man come in with staggering steps. His eyes looked like miniature flaming planets. He was wild with a demon-inflamed mind.

At every step he had taken since the evening before, the money, which he thought would bring him satisfaction, had jingled its mockery at him. It had talked to him until he wished he could have cushioned his pockets. Finally, when he had reached his objective, he threw the accursed stuff at the feet of those who gave it to him.

But pay day was not yet over. He rushed out, seized a rope and fastened it to a limb—there was a plunge, a broken and a frayed rope, but worse yet, at the bottom of a declivity a man disemboweled by the fall. A passer-by called for help and the broken body was buried in a potter’s field.

But pay day was not yet over. The plotter who had lived in that body now deposited in the potter’s field, had moved out to another world. If the angels of God carried Lazarus to Abraham’s bosom, then it is not presumption to say that the angels of Satan carried Judas to the regions of the doomed and the damned where he has been these nineteen centuries.

Pay day is not yet over. At the Great White Throne Judgment, that body in the potter’s field shall come forth in resurrection—the soul shall come forth from hades—soul and body shall again unite and be cast into the lake of fire where pay day shall continue for ever and for ever.

Of that broken body it may be said:

Wrapt in a Christless shroud,
He sleeps the Christless sleep;
Above him the eternal cloud,
Beneath the fiery deep.

Laid in a Christless tomb,
Where bound in felon's chain,
He awaits the terror of his doom,
The judgment and the pain.

O, Christless shroud, how cold!
How dark, O Christless tomb!
O, grief that never can grow cold!
O, endless, hopeless doom!

~ end of chapter 8 ~

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