

Judas Iscariot
Villain or Victim
By William Pierce

Throughout the years there has been no bigger villain than Judas Iscariot. He has been held responsible for betraying the most famous figure in history, Jesus Christ, resulting in his arrest and crucifixion. He has become the epitome of evil, and the accounts of his motive for betraying Jesus range from simple greed to all out demonic possession. The four gospels of the New Testament all agree in various ways with this, and at first glance you might tend to agree with them despite the irreconcilable differences contained in them. However, if you put in the necessary research and reading you may come to the conclusion that there may be more to the story than originally thought.

Several factors came into play when I made the conscious decision to doubt the accounts given by the authors of the first four gospels of the New Testament. My first concern was the actual proposed dates that the gospels were written; second, how the four gospels progressively get worse towards their portrayal of Judas in respect to their order of being written; and third, the fallibility of the human mind.

It is my goal to show you that there is an alternative to the beliefs and teachings of the traditional church. That maybe Judas Iscariot is instead a victim, not a villain. I don't claim to be an expert or to have some hidden insight, these are only my personal observations and opinions. I would also like to inform readers that I am aware of the Gospel of Judas but as I only recently have come to read it, I would prefer to keep any revelations from it separate from this article. This article is a culmination of my personal opinions tempered with a little research, all of which without taking the Gospel of Judas into consideration.

The first factor I had to take into account when considering the legitimacy of the content of the four gospels was the actual proposed dates they were written. The Gospel of Mark was not likely written until about thirty-five to forty years after the death of Jesus. Matthew and Luke were written about ten to fifteen years after that with the Gospel of John being written another ten years after them. I have listed the gospels here in the order they were written because I believe that the progression of their writing has a lot to do with their content.

This directly ties into the second reason I doubt the accounts given by the authors of the four gospels. Taken in the order of Mark, Matthew, Luke, and then John, the portrayal of Judas as a man gets progressively worse. In the Gospel of Mark there is no definitive motive for his betrayal of Jesus but there is a hint that it might have been for money: "And Judas Iscariot, one of the twelve, went out to the chief priests in order that he might betray him to them. Those who learned of it rejoiced and promised to give him money. So he was looking for an opportunity to betray him." (Mark 14:10-11) Next we go to the Gospel of Matthew which gives a definitive motive of greed: "Then one of the twelve who was called Judas Iscariot went to the chief priests and said 'What do you wish to give me, if I hand him over to you?' and they paid him thirty pieces of silver. And from then on he was

seeking an opportunity to hand him over." (Matthew 26:14-16) Now we have progressed from maybe for money to definitely for money, which leads us into the Gospel of Luke, which now claims that Judas Iscariot is possessed by Satan himself: "Then Satan entered into Judas called Iscariot, who was a member of the twelve; he went out and consulted with the chief priests and soldiers how he might betray him." (Luke 22:3-4) Now we have progressed from greed to full blown demonic possession. The final gospel of the New Testament, the Gospel of John, continues with the Satan theme: "And after the morsel then Satan entered into the latter (Judas Iscariot). Jesus, therefore, said to him: 'What you are doing get done more quickly.'" (John 13:27)

Now in order to bring all of this together you need to include the fallibility of the human mind. This in itself includes a couple different things: the authors actual message and intent for writing the gospel, and the authenticity of any research that they may have done. I don't claim that any of the authors of the gospels were wrong or lying, and please realize that there is a difference between the two. I am only trying to make the point that, as humans, we do things for our own agendas, and in doing so we may color things to better fit our point of view. If the authors of the gospels needed to portray Judas in a bad light to impress upon others their point of view, then they may have chosen to do so, and those who followed behind may have progressively made him worse. Another aspect we have to consider is the actual memories of those who had been present, or had been told of the happenings of thirty-five to sixty-five years prior. It could be that the "telephone" problem occurred. You may have played the game yourself in school. You tell one thing to a person who tells it to someone else and so on until at the end, a simple statement of 'I like pizza' has turned into 'baseball is boring'. Or maybe someone who did not have much of a liking for Judas Iscariot could have set out to demean his name, and has done a fantastic job of it. The point I am trying to make is that we have to take into account the reasons the authors wrote their gospels, and how portraying Judas as a villain may have helped them achieve their goal. Just as we have to question the actual memories that are being told, due to the length of time that has passed, as well as the number of times it has been retold and passed along.

Before I conclude this I would like to point out a few other things that helped me reach my final opinion. Throughout the four gospels, the mention of Judas Iscariot was always in context with the other disciples until the time came to vilify him. He was chosen by Christ and worked alongside the others even going so far as to work miracles and cast out demons. "So he summoned his twelve disciples and gave them authority over unclean spirits. In order to expel these and to cure every sort of disease and every sort of infirmity. The name of the twelve apostles are these: First Simon, the one called Peter, and Andrew his brother; and James the son of Zebedee and John his brother; Phillip the son of Alphaeus, and Thaddaeus; Simon the Cananaean, and Judas Iscariot, who later betrayed him." (Matthew 10:1-4) How is it that a man who was given control of demons and the ability

to cure every disease, ended up betraying the one responsible for his success in these areas for either a few pieces of silver or by becoming possessed himself by the very demons he was given control over. In the Gospel of Mark, Christ himself is accused of deriving his powers from Beelzebub and using them to expel demons: "Also the Scribes that came down from Jerusalem were saying: 'He has Beelzebub, and he expels the demons by means of the ruler of the demons.'" (Mark 3:22) However, Christ asks a question which to me, makes a very good point: "How can Satan expel Satan?" (Mark 3:23) You must also ask the question, "Did the other disciples know everything that Judas did?" You can place any twelve people in a class at the same time, learning the same subject, and yet everyone will actually know different things. Just as in Mark 8:21, "With that he (Jesus) said to them (Disciples): 'Do you not yet get the meaning?'" And in Mark 8:17, "Noting this he (Jesus) said to them (Disciples): 'Why do you argue over you having no loaves? Do you not yet perceive and get the meaning? Do you have your hearts dull of understanding? Though having eyes do you not see, and though having ears do you not hear? And do you not remember?'" It is clear that all of the disciples did not know or understand exactly what Christ intended. Yet what is there to say that at some point the disciple Judas did not reach a point of enlightenment and understanding, and knowing what must be done, handed over Jesus in accordance to the teachings that he had received, ensuring the inevitable arrest and crucifixion. Now is a good time to inform you about something which just recently came to my attention. It has to do with the Greek word for Betrayed 'paradidomi' and it literally means "to give or hand someone or something over to someone else." Now when you use this translation toward a lot of the text involving Judas' betrayal, it takes on a whole new connotation. Which brings me to my final point. That at no time does Christ condemn the one who is to be responsible for his death. He never claims the man to be sinning, or without a chance to attain salvation, or rest in heaven with his Father. The closest he ever came to it was in Mark 14:21, "Woe to that one whom the son of man is turned over. It would have been better for that one not to have been born." It is my opinion that this statement does not condemn Judas but simply foretells the way he will be villafied, if it is even referring to Judas at all.

In conclusion, It is my opinion that the Apostle Judas Iscariot has been a victim of both time and circumstance. Three main factors have led me to this conclusion; first, the actual proposed timeline in which the gospels were written; second, how the four gospels progressively get worse towards their portrayal of Judas Iscariot in respect to their order of being written; and third, the fallibility of the human mind. These three factors along with a myriad of smaller details and inconsistencies, leads me to believe that Judas Iscariot has been one of the most misrepresented men of the Bible. Unfortunately, there is no direct evidence of such in these four gospels. In the end, it may just be the Gnostic inside of me who wants to believe this to be true. Fortunately, we have been blessed with the recovery of the Gospel of Judas. Who knows what insights we may derive from that text.