

Did Jesus and God Know Judas Was the Betrayer???

“I have manifested Thy name unto the man which Thou gavest me.” The most complete illustration of Christ’s methods as a teacher is found in His training of the twelve first disciples. Upon these men were to rest weighty responsibilities. He had chosen them as men whom He could imbue with His Spirit, and who could be fitted to carry forward His work on earth when He should leave it. To them, above all others, He gave the advantage of His own companionship. Through personal association He impressed Himself upon these chosen collaborators “The Life was manifested,” says John the beloved, “and we have seen it, and bear witness.” 1 John 1:2. Only by such communion—the communion of mind with mind and heart with heart, of the human with the divine—can be communicated that vitalizing energy which it is the work of true education to impart. It is only life that begets life. In the training of His disciples the Saviour followed the system of education established at the beginning. The Twelve first chosen, with a few others who through ministry to their needs were from time to time connected with them, formed the family of Jesus.

They were with Him in the house, at the table, in the closet, in the field. They accompanied Him on His journeys, shared His trials and hardships, and, as much as in them was, entered His work. Sometimes He taught them as they sat together on the mountainside, sometimes beside the sea, or from the fisherman’s boat, sometimes as they walked by the way. Whenever He spoke to the multitude, the disciples formed the inner circle. They pressed close beside Him, that they might lose nothing of His instruction. They were attentive listeners, eager to understand the truths they were to teach in all lands and to all ages. The first pupils of Jesus were chosen from the ranks of the common people. They were humble, unlettered men, these fishers of Galilee; men unschooled in the learning and customs of the rabbis but trained by the stern discipline of toil and hardship. They were men of native ability and of teachable spirit; men who could be instructed and molded for the Saviour’s work. In the common walks of life there is many a toiler patiently treading the round of his daily tasks, unconscious of latent powers that, roused to action, would place him among the world’s great leaders. Such were the men who were called by the Saviour to be His collaborators. And they had the advantage of three years’ training by the greatest educator this world has ever known. In these first disciples was presented a marked diversity.

They were to be the world’s teachers, and they represented widely varied types of character. There were Levi Matthew the publican, called from a life of business activity, and subservience to Rome; the zealot Simon, the uncompromising foe of the imperial authority; the impulsive, self-sufficient, warmhearted Peter, with Andrew his brother; Judas the Judean, polished, capable, and mean-spirited; Philip and Thomas, faithful and earnest, yet slow of heart to believe; James the less and Jude, of less prominence among the brethren, but men of force, positive both in their faults and in their virtues; Nathanael, a child in sincerity and trust; and the ambitious, loving-hearted sons of Zebedee. In order successfully to carry forward the work to which they had been called, these disciples, differing so widely in natural characteristics, in training, and in habits of life, needed to come into unity of feeling, thought, and action. This unity it was Christ’s object to secure. To this end He sought to bring them into unity with Himself. The burden of His labor for them is expressed in His prayer to the Father, “that they all may be one; as Thou, Father, art in Me, and I in Thee,

that they also may be one in Us: ... that the world may know that Thou hast sent Me, and hast loved them, as Thou hast loved Me.” John 17:21-23. The Transforming Power of Christ Of the twelve disciples, four were to act a leading part, each in a distinct line. In preparation for this, Christ taught them, foreseeing all. James, destined to swift-coming death by the sword; John, longest of the brethren to follow his Master in labor and persecution; Peter, the pioneer in breaking through the barriers of ages, and teaching the heathen world; and Judas, in service capable of pre-eminence above his brethren, yet brooding in his soul purposes of whose ripening he little dreamed—these were the objects of Christ’s greatest solicitude and the recipients of His most frequent and careful instruction. Peter, James, and John sought every opportunity of coming into close contact with their Master, and their desire was granted. Of all the Twelve their relationship to Him was closest. John could be satisfied only with a still near intimacy, and this he obtained. At that first conference beside the Jordan, when Andrew, having heard Jesus, hurried away to call his brother, John sat silent, rapt in the contemplation of wondrous themes.

He followed the Saviour, ever an eager, absorbed listener. Yet John’s was no faultless character. He was no gentle, dreamy enthusiast. He and his brother were called “the sons of thunder.” Mark 3:17. John was proud, ambitious, combative; but beneath all this the divine Teacher discerned the ardent, sincere, loving heart. Jesus rebuked his self-seeking, disappointed his ambitions, tested his faith. But He revealed to him that for which his soul longed—the beauty of holiness, His own transforming love. “Unto the men which Thou gavest Me out of the world,” He said to the Father, “I have manifested Thy name.” John 17:6. John’s was a nature that longed for love, for sympathy and companionship. He pressed close to Jesus, sat by His side, leaned upon His breast. As a flower drinks the sun and dew, so did he drink in the divine light and life.

In adoration and love he beheld the Saviour, until likeness to Christ and fellowship with Him became his one desire, and in his character was reflected the character of his Master. “Behold,” he said, “what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God: therefore, the world knoweth us not, because it knew Him not. Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when He shall appear, we shall be like Him; for we shall see Him as He is. And every man that hath this hope in Him purifieth himself, even as He is pure.” 1 John 3:1-3. From Weakness to strength The history of no one of the disciples better illustrates Christ’s method of training than does the history of Peter. Bold, aggressive, and self-confident, quick to perceive and forward to act, prompt in retaliation yet generous in forgiving, Peter often erred, and often received reproof. Nor were his warmhearted loyalty and devotion to Christ the less decidedly recognized and commended. Patiently, with discriminating love, the Saviour dealt with His impetuous disciple, seeking to check his self-confidence, and to teach him humility, obedience, and trust. But only in part was the lesson learned. Self-assurance was not uprooted.

Often Jesus, the burden heavy upon His own heart, sought to open to the disciples the scenes of His trial and suffering. But their eyes were holden. The knowledge was unwelcome, and they did not see. Self-pity, that shrank from fellowship with Christ in suffering, prompted Peter’s remonstrance, “Pity Thyself, Lord: this shall not be unto Thee.” Matthew 16:22, margin. His words expressed the thought and feeling of the Twelve. So they went on, the crisis drawing nearer; they, boastful, contentious, in anticipation apportioning regal honors, and dreaming not of the cross. For them all, Peter’s experience had a lesson. To self-trust, trial is defeat. The sure outworking of evil

still unforsaken, Christ could not prevent. But as His hand had been outstretched to save when the waves were about to sweep over Peter, so did His love reach out for his rescue when the deep waters swept over his soul. Over and over again, on the very verge of ruin, Peter's words of boasting brought him nearer and still nearer to the brink. Over and over again was given the warning, "Thou shalt ... deny that thou knowest Me." Luke 22:34. It was the grieved, loving heart of the disciple that spoke out in the avowal, "Lord, I am ready to go with Thee, both into prison, and to death" (Luke 22:33); and He who reads the heart gave to Peter the message, little valued then, but that in the swift-falling darkness would shed a ray of hope: "Simon, Simon, behold, Satan hath desired to have you, that he may sift you as wheat: but I have prayed for thee, that thy faith fail not: and when thou art converted, strengthen thy brethren." Luke 22:31, 32. When in the judgment hall the words of denial had been spoken; when Peter's love and loyalty, awakened under the Saviour's glance of pity and love and sorrow, had sent him forth to the garden where Christ had wept and prayed; when his tears of remorse dropped upon the sod that had been moistened with the blood drops of His agony—then the Saviour's words, "I have prayed for thee: ... when thou art converted, strengthen thy brethren," were a stay to his soul. Christ, though foreseeing his sin, had not abandoned him to despair.

If the look that Jesus cast upon him had spoken condemnation instead of pity; if in foretelling the sin He had failed of speaking hope, how dense would have been the darkness that encompassed Peter! how reckless the despair of that tortured soul! In that hour of anguish and self-abhorrence, what could have held him back from the path trodden by Judas? He who could not spare His disciple the anguish, left him not alone to its bitterness. His is a love that fails not nor forsakes. Human beings, themselves given to evil, are prone to deal untenderly with the tempted and the erring. They cannot read the heart; they know not its struggle and pain. Of the rebuke that is love, of the blow that wounds to heal, of the warning that speaks hope, they have need to learn. It was not John, the one who watched with Him in the judgment hall, who stood beside His cross, and who of the Twelve was first at the tomb—it was not John, but Peter, that was mentioned by Christ after His resurrection. "Tell His disciples and Peter," the angel said, "that He goeth before you into Galilee: there shall ye see Him." Mark 16:7. At the last meeting of Christ with the disciples by the sea, Peter, tested by the thrice-given question, "Lovest thou Me?" was restored to his place among the Twelve. His work had appointed him; he was to feed the Lord's flock.

Then, as His last personal direction, Jesus bade him, "Follow thou Me." John 21:17, 22. Now he could appreciate the words. The lesson Christ had given when He set a little child in the midst of the disciples and bade them become like him, Peter could now better understand. Knowing more fully both his own weakness and Christ's power, he was ready to trust and to obey. In His strength he could follow his Master. And at the close of his experience of labor and sacrifice, the disciple once so unready to discern the cross, counted it a joy to yield up his life for the gospel, feeling only that, for him who had denied the Lord, to die in the same manner as his Master died was too great an honor. A miracle of divine tenderness was Peter's transformation. It is a life lesson to all who seek to follow in the steps of the Master Teacher. A Lesson in Love Jesus reproveth His disciples, He warned and cautioned them; but John and Peter and their brethren did not leave Him. Notwithstanding the reproofs, they chose to be with Jesus. And the Saviour did not, because of their errors, withdraw from them. He takes men as they are, with all their faults and weaknesses, and trains them for His service, if they will be disciplined and taught by Him. **But there was one of the Twelve to whom, until very near the close of His work, Christ spoke no word of direct**

reproof. With Judas an element of antagonism was introduced among the disciples. In connecting himself with Jesus he had responded to the attraction of His character and life. He had sincerely desired a change in himself, and had hoped to experience this through a union with Jesus. But this desire did not become predominant. That which ruled him was the hope of selfish benefit in the worldly kingdom which he expected Christ to establish. Though recognizing the divine power of the love of Christ, Judas did not yield to its supremacy. He continued to cherish his own judgment and opinions, his disposition to criticize and condemn. Christ's motives and movements, often so far above his comprehension, excited doubt and disapproval, and his own questionings and ambitions were insinuated to the disciples. Many of their contentions for supremacy, much of their dissatisfaction with Christ's methods, originated with Judas. Jesus, seeing that to antagonize was but to harden, refrained from direct conflict. The narrowing selfishness of Judas' life, Christ sought to heal through contact with His own self-sacrificing love. In His teaching He unfolded principles that struck at the root of the disciple's self-centered ambitions. Lesson after lesson was thus given, and many a time Judas realized that his character had been portrayed, and his sin pointed out; but he would not yield.

Mercy's pleading resisted, the impulse of evil bore final sway. Judas, angered at an implied rebuke and made desperate by the disappointment of his ambitious dreams, surrendered his soul to the demon of greed and determined upon the betrayal of his Master.

From the Passover chamber, the joy of Christ's presence, and the light of immortal hope, he went forth to his evil work—into the outer darkness, where hope was not. "Jesus knew from the beginning who they were that believed not, and who should betray Him." John 6:64. Yet, knowing all, He had withheld no pleading of mercy or gift of love. Seeing the danger of Judas, He had brought him close to Himself, within the inner circle of His chosen and trusted disciples. Day after day, when the burden lay heaviest upon His own heart, He had borne the pain of continual contact with that stubborn, suspicious, brooding spirit; He had witnessed and labored to counteract among His disciples that continuous, secret, and subtle antagonism. And all this that no possible saving influence might be lacking to that imperiled soul! "Many waters cannot quench love, neither can the floods drown it;" "For love is strong as death." Song of Solomon 8:7, 6. So far as Judas himself was concerned, Christ's work of love had been without avail. But not so as regards his fellow disciples. To them it was a lesson of lifelong influence. Ever would its example of tenderness and long-suffering mold their intercourse with the tempted and the erring. And it had other lessons. At the ordination of the Twelve the disciples had greatly desired that Judas should become one of their number, and they had counted his accession an event of much promise to the apostolic band. He had come more into contact with the world than they, he was a man of good address, of discernment and executive ability, and, having a high estimate of his own qualifications, he had led the disciples to hold him in the same regard. But the methods he desired to introduce into Christ's work were based upon worldly principles and were controlled by worldly policy. They looked to the securing of worldly recognition and honor—to the obtaining of the kingdom of this world.

The working out of these desires in the life of Judas, helped the disciples to understand the antagonism between the principle of self-aggrandizement and Christ's principle of humility and self-sacrifice—the principle of the spiritual kingdom. In the fate of Judas they saw the end to which self-serving tends. For these disciples the mission of Christ finally accomplished its purpose. Little

by little His example and His lessons of self-abnegation molded their characters. His death destroyed their hope of worldly greatness. The fall of Peter, the apostasy of Judas, their own failure in forsaking Christ in His anguish and peril, swept away their self-sufficiency. They saw their own weakness; they saw something of the greatness of the work committed to them; they felt their need of their Master's guidance at every step. They knew that His personal presence was no longer to be with them, and they recognized, as they had never recognized before, the value of the opportunities that had been theirs to walk and talk with the Scent of God. Many of His lessons, when spoken, they had not appreciated or understood; now they longed to recall these lessons, to hear again His words. With what joy now came back to them His assurance: "It is expedient for you that I go away; for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you; but if I depart, I will send Him." "All things that I have heard of My Father I have made known unto you." And "the Comforter, ... whom the Father will send in My name, He shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you." John 16:7; 15:15; 14:26. "All things that the Father hath are Mine." "When He, the Spirit of truth, is come, He will guide you into all truth.... He shall receive of Mine, and shall show it unto you." John 16:15, 13, 14. The disciples had seen Christ ascend from among them on the Mount of Olives.

And as the heavens received Him, there had come back to them His parting promise, "Lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world." Matthew 28:20. They knew that His sympathies were with them still. They knew that they had a representative, an advocate, at the throne of God. In the name of Jesus they presented their petitions, repeating His promise, "Whatsoever ye shall ask the Father in My name, He will give it you." John 16:23. Higher and higher they extended the hand of faith, with the mighty argument, "It is Christ that died, yea rather, that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us." Romans 8:34. Faithful to his promise, the Divine One, exalted in the heavenly courts, imparted of His fullness to His followers on earth. His enthronement at God's right hand was signalized by the outpouring of the Spirit upon His disciples. By the work of Christ these disciples had been led to feel their need of the Spirit; under the Spirit's teaching they received their final preparation and went forth to their lifework. No longer were they ignorant and uncultured. No longer were they a collection of independent units or of discordant and conflicting elements. No longer were their hopes set on worldly greatness. They were of "one accord," of one mind and one soul. Christ filled their thoughts. The advancement of His kingdom was their aim.

In mind and character, they had become like their Master; and men "took knowledge of them, that they had been with Jesus." Acts 4:13. Then was there such a revelation of the glory of Christ as had never been witnessed by mortal man. Multitudes who had reviled His name and despised His power confessed themselves disciples of the Crucified. Through the co-operation of the divine Spirit the labors of the humble men whom Christ had chosen stirred the world. To every nation under heaven was the gospel carried in a single generation. The same Spirit that in His stead was sent to be the instructor of His first co-workers, Christ has commissioned to be the instructor of His co-workers today. "Lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world" (Matthew 28:20), is His promise. The presence of the same guide in educational work today will produce the same results as of old. This is the end to which true education tends; this is the work that God designs it to accomplish. "Consider ... the wondrous works of Him which is perfect in knowledge."