

3) Then Judas, the betrayer, seeing that He had been condemned, was remorseful and brought back the thirty pieces of silver to the chief priests and elders, 4) saying, "I have sinned by betraying innocent blood." And they said, "What is that to us? You see to it." 5) Then he threw down the pieces of silver in the sanctuary and departed, and went and hanged himself. 6) But the chief priests took the silver pieces and said, "It is not lawful to put them into the treasury, because they are the price of blood." 7) And they took counsel and bought with them the potter's field, to bury strangers in. 8) Therefore that field has been called the Field of Blood to this day. 9) Then was fulfilled what was spoken by Jeremiah the prophet, saying, "And they took the thirty pieces of silver, the value of Him who was priced, whom they of the children of Israel priced, 10) and gave them for the potter's field, as the Lord directed me."

INTRO: 1<sup>st</sup> week, owner of upper room; 2<sup>nd</sup> week a mob member in Gethsemane; 3<sup>rd</sup> week, a couple of false witnesses. Little people? This week, big shots; unnamed chief priests and elders to whom Judas returned the betrayal money; callous and hard hearted; poor examples of priests/pastors.

## I. THE CALLOUSNESS OF THE CHIEF PRIESTS AND ELDERS

### A. Their personal dealings with Judas

1. v.3 – seeing that He had been condemned...

- a. Judas had followed the events closely
- b. v.2 – had delivered Him bound to Pilate
- c. perhaps wasn't turning out as Judas had planned, hoped

2. v.3 – Judas...was remorseful...

- a. **meta noia** = change mind, repent: confess, believe, desire to amend
- b. **meta melaythais** = change will, wishes, desire; regret
- c. cp. v.5 – hanged himself (cf. Acts 1) not an act of repentance

3. v.3 – brought back the thirty pieces of silver

- a. previously tempting and desirable; now too hot to touch
- b. maybe thought he could buy his way out of a guilty conscience

4. v.4 – I have sinned in betraying innocent blood (mere statement of fact)

- a. rectifying a wrong, not confessing a sin (pastor must listen carefully)
- b. had been in Jesus' 12 disciples for 3 years; heard and saw much
- c. nowhere here confesses Jesus as Messiah, God Incarnate
- d. merely agreeing with Pilate's verdict: no fault in this Man

5. v.4 – chief priests and elders said, "So what?"

- a. had used Judas; now finished with him
- b. too callous to give Judas any absolution
- c. or to acknowledge Jesus as Innocent Messiah, Son of God

B. The chief priests' dealings with the thirty pieces of silver

1. Judas threw down the thirty pieces in the temple/sanctuary (**naos**; hieron)
  - a. God's house, symbol of God's presence
  - b. was it an attempt to atone for himself? (you see to it= pastoral advice)
2. v.6 – priests called it 'blood money' (but it came **from** the treasury!)
  - a. tacit acknowledgement of what they were doing
  - b. OK to use money to pay traitor, but not for temple upkeep
3. v.7 – took counsel
  - a. probably after Crucifixion; too busy now
  - b. suggests debate, formal vote of the full Sanhedrin
4. v.7 – bought the Potter's Field (Greek word root= 'clay')
  - a. formerly used as clay source
  - b. like worked out gravel/caliche pit; only worth 30 pcs. AG
5. v.7 – to bury strangers
  - a. poor out-of-towners or gentile converts
  - b. not worthy of burial beside 'good members'
  - c. this compassionate action makes it all right

II. SOME EXMPLES OF CALLOUSNESS TODAY

A. Refusing to accept the obvious evidence about Jesus

1. as did the chief priests and elders
  - a. Jesus fulfilled prophecy, performed miracles as 'signs'
  - b. Council didn't disprove any evidence about Jesus
2. stubborn hard headedness is eternally fatal
3. some people just won't listen to Jesus' words
  - a. Bible/Jesus' words = our 'evidence' today
  - b. lip service to God's Word; real basis in "What I think"
  - c. worship or Bible study? "What is that to us?"

B. stubbornly refusing to correct an obvious error

1. all signs pointed to a mistrial for Jesus
  - a. false witnesses; Judas' treachery and subsequent admission
  - b. Field of Blood, so called (Who called it that?)

2. unwillingness to be corrected
    - a. we should willingly hear and apply God's Word to selves
    - b. confess, apply absolution to self; desire to amend sinful life
  3. covering up with hypocrisy
    - a. adding sin upon sin
    - b. God knows (and so do a lot of other people)
- C. stubbornly refusing to grant forgiveness to others
1. chief priests and elders (though Judas' confession was suspect)
    - a. religious leaders should have pursued it, led him to repentance
    - b. similar failures occur today, even in Christ's church
  2. A summary of Christian doctrine:
    - a. do you believe self to be a sinner and that desires to forgive?
    - b. do you confess the innocent Man Jesus to be God and Savior?
    - c. can you say and pray 5<sup>th</sup> petition: Forgive us our trespasses as we...

CONCLUSION: The chief priests and elders who condemned Jesus were hard-hearted and hard-headed beyond imagination. They refused to admit their sin with respect to Jesus' death; refused to help Judas with his guilt; tried to cover up their evil deeds by buying a cemetery for the poor. What a shame; what a pity. They were so close to the Son of God Who was right there in the act of paying for their sins, and they callously rejected Him. Lent is for repentance. Lent is for forgiveness. Amen