

JUDAS

In the Roman Catholic Church the Judas we are presently studying is the patron saint of lost causes. Those who fall into that category are encouraged to pray the following prayer to him, “O most holy apostle, Saint Jude, faithful servant and friend of Jesus, the Church honoureth and invoceth thee universally, as the patron of hopeless cases, and of things almost despaired of. Pray for me, who am so miserable. ... I promise thee, O blessed Jude, to be ever mindful of this great favour, to always honour thee as my special and powerful patron, and to gratefully encourage devotion to thee. Amen.” ... In the Roman Catholic religion he is depicted with a flame above his head, representing his presence on the Day of Pentecost, and he has a medallion of the face of Christ around his neck ... and he carries a staff by which he is understood to guide the hopeless to the Truth.

In the Bible, however, we are presented with a sincere servant of God who had the unfortunate burden of sharing the same name with the betrayer of Jesus, Judas Iscariot.

The name ‘Judas’ actually has a beautiful meaning. It is the Greek for the Hebrew ‘Judah/*Yehudah*’ which translated means ‘God is praised’. What a beautiful name for a child ... but it has become hijacked, and no longer means what it had originally intended. ... It is the name Leah gave her fourth child to Jacob, [Gen. 29:35](#) And she conceived again, and bare a son: and she said, Now will I praise the LORD: therefore she called his name Judah. Literally, *Yehudah* is a noun which means ‘thanksgiving’ or ‘praise’, i.e. to thank/praise God.

So, when the mother and father had a little baby boy and they called him Judah, it meant they anticipated their little child would grow up to demonstrate thanksgiving and praise to God throughout his life. ... It was a common name and, in fact, Jesus had a half-brother called Judas.

There was *one* Judas, though, who went on to tarnish the name and left it as a byword for treachery, - to be a ‘Judas’ is synonymous with betrayal. That is not how it was originally ... but it is the reason the Judas we are presently studying is described the five times he is mentioned in five different ways so as to distinguish him from Judas Iscariot ...

[Mt. 10:3](#) Lebbeaus, whose surname was Thaddaeus

[Mk. 3:13](#) Thaddaeus

Lk. 6:16 And Judas the brother [*or son?*] of James [*Gk., Ἰούδαν Ἰακώβου, Judas of James ... the noun accusative masculine followed by the noun genitive masculine*]

Jn. 14:22 Judas saith unto him, not Iscariot

Acts 1:13 Judas the brother of James.

We don't want to get him confused with Judas Iscariot! ... And just as we noticed some of the other disciples had two names, - Simon Peter, James and John were the sons of thunder, Bartholomew/Nathanael, Matthew/Levi, - Judas also was known as Lebbaeus Thaddaeus.

Lebbaeus literally means, 'a man of heart', and it is associated with tenderness, sensitivity, and gentleness. It referred to a 'gentle man' ... So, on one hand you have Lebbaeus, - a 'gentle soul' ... and beside him in all four of the lists of disciples is Simon the Canaanite/Zealot ... two men at the 'opposite ends of the scale', and yet they are now so closely associated in their service for the Lord together. Two very different personalities with two very different backgrounds but Jesus had called them and moulded and united them in His work for the Kingdom. Far from cancelling each other out, the Lord worked with them so they would complement each other.

His surname emulated his first name for Thaddaeus means 'large-hearted and courageous' ... so together Judas Lebbaeus Thaddaeus describes a servant of Jesus, 'God is praised, a man of heart, large-hearted and courageous'. ... What an accolade ... and what a difference to the other Judas, Judas Iscariot!

Here is the picture of a quiet gentle disciple/apostle who served Christ with his whole heart courageously. ... He would not have been the type to have been 'up at the front' but he was nonetheless effective in the work of the Lord for his whole heart belonged to the Saviour. Every bone and every fibre was for the Master's service.

The apostle John gives us a glimpse into the life of Judas Lebbaeus Thaddaeus. The context relates to the occasion when Jesus was informing His disciples He was going to leave them but would send the Comforter, - the Holy Spirit, - in His place ... and Judas Lebbaeus Thaddaeus, - the 'quiet man', - was so moved to come out of his usual reticence and enquire, **Jn. 14:22** Judas saith unto him, not Iscariot, Lord, how is it that thou wilt manifest thyself unto us, and not unto the world? ... He wanted to know so much so that he felt

compelled to ask, “Lord, what do You mean when You say You are going to reveal Yourself to us, but not to the rest of the world?” ... That also shows us how seriously he received and believed every word of Jesus.

He was not prepared to ‘nod his head’ in some blank manner and miss out on what Jesus was speaking about, - as we say, he ‘hung’ on the Saviour’s every word. ... “More about Jesus ... Hearing His voice in every line, Making each faithful saying mine.” ... That is how Judas was! ... And he asked the question so gently, so passionately, so tenderly and yet emphatically for He did not want to miss anything the Lord Jesus said.

There is no doubt about it ... he loved the Lord, and he was following Jesus because the Saviour had captured his heart. Another hymn springs to mind, “I could not do without Thee, I cannot stand alone, I have no strength or goodness, No wisdom of my own; But Thou, beloved Saviour, Art all in all to me” ... Judas could have written those words!

And look at the equally tender, - yet powerful, - response he received from Jesus, **Jn. 14:23** Jesus answered and said unto him, If a man love [*ἀγαπάω*] me, he will keep [*τηρέω*, *attend to carefully, guard, treasure*] my words: and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him. ... If you love Me, you will keep My word ... and My Father and I will come and live with you, - not externally, but in your heart. ... And that was the answer Judas received from the Saviour. ... But, on the other side, the Lord continued, **24** He that loveth me not keepeth not my sayings: and the word which ye hear is not mine, but the Father's which sent me. In other words, this same Kingdom cannot be known by anyone who rejects God because they will not receive this knowledge.

That equally applies today when you hear people say, “I don’t understand the Gospel. I don’t understand about Jesus, therefore, I’m not interested” ... And it usually means they are not wanting to find out! They have no desire to love God, and out of idleness they cannot be bothered searching for Him and they end up rejecting Him ... and to reject Him is to reject His Kingdom also.

... And that is the subject of the only conversation recorded in Scripture between Jesus and Judas Lebbaeus Thaddaeus. And what an important issue it raised!

Apart from the fact he was with the disciples throughout the Gospels, that is really all we know about him from the Scriptures.

In church history tradition holds that he was a devoted missionary who preached the Gospel throughout Judea, Samaria, and into Idumea (Edom), Syria, Mesopotamia, and Libya. He and Simon the Zealot seemed to have worked together on occasions. For example, they are both said to have been martyred in Beirut, c. 65 AD ... Judas is often depicted as carrying an axe or a club, and it is said that was the way he was killed, i.e. beaten to death. ... Then, sometime after his death, the remains of his body were allegedly brought from Beirut to Rome where they are said to be kept today in the crypt underneath St. Peter's Basilica, along with the remains of Simon the Zealot.

So, that's Judas, *most definitely* not Iscariot ... Judas Lebbaeus Thaddaeus, son of James ... He was a gentle man and yet church history often identified him alongside Simon the Zealot ... Opposites attract, and even opposites can be good for each other for the Lord uses all kinds of people to further His purposes, as Paul wrote, **Eph. 4:2** With all lowliness and meekness, with longsuffering, forbearing one another in love; **3** Endeavouring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace ... **7** But unto every one of us is given grace according to the measure of the gift of Christ.

'Meekness' ... That's Jude ... 'meekness' not 'weakness' for Moses was described as 'very meek' (Num. 12:3), and he was not weak! ... The psalmist wrote, **Ps. 22:26** The meek shall eat and be satisfied: they shall praise the LORD that seek him, - that is what the name 'Judas' means, 'God is praised' ... and the meek praise Him. ... And the Lord Jesus, during His sermon on the mount, quoted from Ps. 37:11, **Mt. 5:5** Blessed are the meek: for they shall inherit the earth.

Once again, Jesus took a very ordinary man, - one you wouldn't have thought could have made much impact on the work, - and yet the Lord called Him and made him into a true and faithful servant ... It is yet another example of what God can do ... *even with any* of us! Amen.