



Numbered

Acts 1:16-19

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Acts 1:16-19 KJV Men and brethren, this scripture must needs have been fulfilled, which the Holy Ghost by the mouth of David spake before concerning Judas, which was guide to them that took Jesus. [17] For he was numbered with us, and had obtained part of this ministry. [18] Now this man purchased a field with the reward of iniquity; and falling headlong, he burst asunder in the midst, and all his bowels gushed out. [19] And it was known unto all the dwellers at Jerusalem; insomuch as that field is called in their proper tongue, Aceldama, that is to say, The field of blood.

I. INTRODUCTION—PUBLIC AND PRIVATE

-Because of the nature of man, he lives in two worlds. First, in a very public world that he is visible to all and there are some social responsibilities to live up to in this world. Second, there is a private world that can be a place of blessing and contentment or it can be a private hell of torture.

-But these two worlds are inextricably tied together because what counsel is in the heart will be played out in public. A man who lives in a private world of goodness and thoughtfulness and holiness will give himself to good outward deeds. On the other hand, the man whose heart is darkened by foolish counsel will absorb himself in something that may take years and then suddenly burst forth in some daring and usually dark deed.

-I have been working on this thought for several weeks now and just this past week the story of John Edwards began to dominate our news again. It works well to fit into this message.

When Albert Gore ran against George Bush in 2004, his choice for Vice-President was an accomplished looking attorney from North Carolina. He was from small town America and had the all-American looking family; model kids, cultured wife, and maybe a dog, I can't remember at this point. Although they lost the election in 2004, John Edwards appeared to be a possible contender for the White House in 2008.

As John Heilemann and Mark Halperin write in their new book, *Game Change*, it appeared that if he was not on track for the White House as President, he was a strong consideration for Vice President for Barack Obama. But all of that changed when his private life came back to haunt him. . . A wife battling cancer and during that time when she needed his support most, he strayed from the boundaries of his marriage with one of his campaign staffers. Now the apparent ambition of his life, politics, has now been totally destroyed because he left the door open for deception to enter.

-This was the very dilemma of the life of Judas, he carefully hid a secret sin but he cultivated a double life. With that growing gap between his public persona and his private self, Satan took advantage of and exploited this weakness.

-For a saint and for a preacher, public worship is important but private worship is even more important. Always remember that public anointing never rises higher than private anointing.

-Worship is a human response to divine revelation. The further away we get from the Cross the greater the liability for failure. By the same token, the closer we get to the Cross the greater the degree of revelation and love for God that

takes place.

II. THE STORY OF JUDAS

A. Numbered. . .

-In this single verse (1:17), one word sums up the tragedy of Judas. . . **Numbered**. . . He was numbered with the company but he was never a part of that company.

- Numbered but absent.
- Numbered but aloof.
- Numbered but distant.
- Numbered but not committed.
- Numbered but not restrained.
- Numbered but never discipled.
- Numbered but never taught.
- Numbered but unconsecrated.

-This word sums up one of the biggest liabilities of life. Our name can be listed on the roll but when we aren't really willing to sacrifice and be part of the enterprise. Outwardly, Judas looked like he fit in very well but inwardly he was in a slow state of rot . . . the corrupt process of decaying and dying.

W. R. Maltbie—Some people in church look like guests at a royal banquet, who couldn't afford to be left out, but have been forbidden by their doctor to eat anything.

There is an account in French history that when Napoleon escaped from the island of Elba, he started marching to Paris. The Bourbon monarch had already fled the capitol and while the palace attendants were awaiting the onslaught of Napoleon, they were preparing to turn their coats. They noticed the old monarch's coat of arrows sewn to the carpet. They ripped the insignia away only to discover that the previous monarch's coat of arms was already there. This was torn away too and in less than half an hour the carpet was turned to the coat of arms of Napoleon.

-Men can have emblems on their heart sewn on so lightly that they can be ripped off with the changing of fortunes or of kings. This is the state of life that Judas had been immersed in his entire existence. He was just numbered. . .

-How can you know if you are just “numbered”?

- Never prepared for the battle, encumbered with “stuff”.
- Never counting the cost.
- Content with all the loose ends of spiritual life.
- Content with all the little besetting sins in the heart.
- Content with infrequent interest in prayer.
- Not willing to make a concerted effort to get immersed in worship.
- An indifference to great spiritual truth.
- Willing to settle for a small understanding of the greatness of God.

-Luke, the writer of Acts, clearly establishes that Judas was “numbered.” There is some certain finality about that word. All of the promise of greatness that was once a reality has disappeared. He has reached a desert place of existence where there is no present or future . . . he can only live in the past.

B. Trapped In Past Tense

-What an epitaph! Trapped in the Past Tense. A sad place to finish out a meager existence of life. It is a place of unfulfilled promises. So much potential but it never found a place of growth and production.

An artist got lost in the world after a bitter battle with some of his colleagues. One biographer wrote of him that he remained an accomplished artist. He continued to be a charming citizen continuing to be driven by the academic pursuits that he held prior to his conflict. He still had some ambitions both socially and vocationally. But he was jealous of the other artists, Hunt, Leighton, and Whistler. Once had been numbered among the great but his conflict cancelled out all of his willingness and abilities to contribute anything lasting.

Old volcanoes have this same propensity. They were once full of fire, heat, and light but now a deep nothingness.

-Judas did this with his life in his early years and he ended up wandering off into past tense.

-He lived his life looking back at the glory days before the Romans ruled. He lived on the past miracles and the past fervor of the initial calling. Far too many are living out their existence in the past tense.

- Some camp-meeting experience thirty years ago.
- Some past point in their life when their prayer was more vibrant.
- Some place in the past when they used to teach Bible studies.
- Some place in the past where they fought the devil off with a holy vehemence.
- Some place in the past when they were more involved in the Kingdom of God.
- Some place in the past when they fought for the mountains of conquest instead of being content in the valleys of apathy.
- Some place in the past when they fought a much more valiant fight than now.
- Some place in past tense that held victory.
- Some place in the past when their dreams for God were really big.
- Some place in the past when the manna fell for them daily.
- Some place in the past when the glory days were still experienced.

-People and churches fall into a place of danger when they begin to live in the past tense of spiritual life.

Weymouth Translation—He obtained the rank in this ministry. His claim was all staked out but it was never worked.

-Judas staked out a spiritual claim but never really worked it out.

Acts 1:18 KJV Now this man purchased a field with the reward of iniquity; and falling headlong, he burst asunder in the midst, and all his bowels gushed out.

-The villain in the plot was the real estate. Judas paid for a solid piece of ground with thirty-pieces of silver—and his soul. He traded his potential for thirty pieces of silver.

-The field was temporal compared to the eternal aims of the Lord. Judas made his final choice a piece of real estate. When real estate gets exalted it always results in a subtle distortion of values. This kind of thinking takes hold of the spirit and brings death to it.

-The wrong kind of real estate increases to dominate the mind and soul, the quest for spiritual things decline drastically.

-If you want to make a striking comparison, consider Acts 4:36-37.

Acts 4:36-37 KJV And Joses, who by the apostles was surnamed Barnabas, (which is, being interpreted, The son of

consolation,) a Levite, *and* of the country of Cyprus, [37] Having land, sold *it*, and brought the money, and laid *it* at the apostles' feet.

C. Not the Initial Intent

-I really don't think that Judas intended on betraying Jesus. In fact when one starts to trace out his background, it appears that Judas was motivated, educated, and came from a cultured background. He was the only one of the disciples who was not a Galilean. He was from a city called Kerioth in Judea.

-Perhaps his living in this kind of country brought a rugged determination to him as he was surrounded by the conditions of the wilderness. It brought out a certain amount of toughness perhaps strong manliness might be a good way to put it.

-Even his name rings of hope. Judah, or Judas, apparently was a common name in those times for parents to name their children. Perhaps parents had an eye on one Judas Maccabaeus who led a revolt for independence in 164 BC. He had inspired hope, bravery, and courage in the hearts of those Jews.

-Judas Iscariot gained his surname from his father and it could have referred to where he had grown up. Ishkeriot means "man of Kerioth." But maybe there is a deeper meaning in this word.

Acts 21:38 KJV Art not thou that Egyptian, which before these days madest an uproar, and leddest out into the wilderness four thousand men that were **murderers**?

-The word translated "murderers" is from the word σικαριος (sikarios). It means dagger man, freebooter as Strong defines it. But Thayer brings perhaps a greater window of understanding to us when he defines it as one who carries a dagger or short sword under his clothing that he may kill secretly and treacherously who he desires to kill. He is an assassin.

-There were a group of radical freedom fighters in existence in the days of Jesus and of Judas who thought nothing of assassinating Romans or anyone who was in collaboration with them. History does not tell anything of Judas being part of this group but his heritage suggests that he was looking for a leader who would once again bring freedom to Israel.

-Judas had most likely heard of the reputation of Jesus before he met him and when the day came that Jesus simply motioned for him to follow, that hope rose higher than it ever had before. The patriots were on the rise and this Jesus of Nazareth was going to save the day for the Jews.

-Judas was a zealous patriot and he was not alone. Also among the Twelve was Simon Zelotes who was also a zealot and had an unabashed desire to see the Jews rise to their greatest hour again.

(If you are curious as to where this history came from, it is from a little book entitled *Twelve Who Were Chosen* by William P. Barker, written in 1957, 53 years ago.)

-It was not long before Judas was immersed in the instruction that Jesus gave to all of His disciples. It was an amazing time for Judas.

- Never before had he heard such wisdom pour out of a man.
- He had never encountered a man who could speak, preach, or teach like Jesus.
- The miracles were bum-fuzzling to him and yet their power was astounding.
- All the healings of withered limbs, the opening of stony eyes and hard ears, but what was really amazing for Judas was the dead people that were called back from the grave.
- He watched the wrenching grief turn to astronomical joy when families watched their dead ones come back to them.

-The crowds were massive and the momentum that Jesus generated would serve Him well one day when He called on these followers to arms and become an army of champions to fight Rome.

-As the days passed, Judas found himself being called upon to be the treasurer for the group. Who knows when the

difficulties began but obviously something started turning Judas' heart away from Jesus.

- Seeds of resentment were sown.
- The heart started listening to the wrong voices.
- Hope turned to disillusionment.
- Fellowship was replaced by distance.
- Conversation disappeared and cold calculation replaced it.

E. Disappointment with God

-Judas' real problem was that he got disappointed with God. He found himself committed to Jesus but there were a few strings attached to his commitment. Just enough commitment to get him moving but more than a lack of it to keep him distracted.

-Judas had some expectations of Jesus that He didn't live up to.

-If you serve God for any length of time, you are in for the discovery that there will be a large gap between what you expect from the faith and what you actually experience. I have known of more than one who walked away and backslid because of this dilemma . . . a God who did not live up to their preconceived conditions.

- I have watched preachers backslide because of the Judas syndrome.
- I have watched groups give up and quit because of this Judas element.
- I have listened almost in disbelief at the accusations that poured forth from the hearts of the disappointed.

-It can be deadly, spiritually for this to take place in one's life. More than anything, a man is going to have to take the Bible and immerse himself in the Scriptures to really see what God has to say about Himself and what the conditions are in serving Him.

-All you have to do is do an in-depth study on the life of Paul and look at his sufferings and realize that God gathered far more glory from his life because of his sufferings than from his deliverances.

F. The Dark Change

-All of this turned him into a thief. The bag became his focus. Little by little he started taking what he had previously put into the bag. What is curious about this matter is that he wanted to take someone's worship away to support his dark deeds.

-When Mary broke the alabaster box, his dark heart revolted and he accused, condemned, and ranted and amazingly the disciples were influenced by his reasoning. . . but not the Lord who spoke sharply to Judas. . .

-Even though Judas was numbered, things started to change for him. If you really want to make some comparisons, let me help you a bit. Notice the incredible contrasts between Mary's worship and Judas' covetousness.

- Judas had a money box and Mary had an alabaster box.
- Judas had ultimately had thirty pieces of silver and Mary had three hundred denarii.
- Judas had four months worth of money and Mary had a year's worth of salary.
- Judas had about \$950 and Mary had \$2850.
- Judas loved the money and Mary loved the Lord.
- Judas had a hypocritical concern for the poor and Mary had a noble desire for the Lord.

-How could he start thinking like this? He had become blind and did not even realize it.

1. Anton-Babinski Syndrome

Anton–Babinski Syndrome is a rare symptom of [brain damage](#) occurring in the [occipital lobe](#). People who suffer from it are "cortically [blind](#)", but affirm, often quite adamantly and in the face of clear evidence of their blindness, that they are capable of seeing. Failure to see is dismissed by the sufferer through [confabulation](#). It is named after [Gabriel Anton](#) and [Joseph Babinski](#).

It is well described by the neurologist Macdonald Critchley:

The sudden development of bilateral occipital dysfunction is likely to produce transient physical and psychological effects in which mental confusion may be prominent. It may be some days before the relatives, or the nursing staff, tumble to the fact that the patient has actually become sightless. This is not only because the patient ordinarily does not volunteer the information that he has become blind, but he furthermore misleads his entourage by behaving and talking as though he were seeing. Attention is aroused however when the patient is found to collide with pieces of furniture, to fall over objects, and to experience difficulty in finding his way around. He may try to walk through a wall or through a closed door on his way from one room to another. Suspicion is still further alerted when he begins to describe people and objects around him which, as a matter of fact, are not there at all. Thus we have the twin symptoms of a lack of awareness and confabulation, the latter affecting both speech and behavior.

-The patient is blind but convinces himself that he can still see. He resorts to lying about his condition until it soon becomes evident to all those around him that he is indeed without sight.

-This is the world that Judas lived in. He thought he had sight but was as blind to his condition as he could be. What a terrible situation to be in! The dark change took place in his own soul and he never realized it.

III. CONCLUSION—PREVENTING JUST BEING “NUMBERED”

-So the question that faces every one of us now is how do we keep from just being “numbered”? The sad reality is that after you have been at it a while, there is an awareness that there have been people who sat in this church, maybe even on the same pew where you are sitting that were nothing more than just “numbered” among us.

- Numbered but absent.
- Numbered but aloof.
- Numbered but distant.
- Numbered but not committed.
- Numbered but not restrained.
- Numbered but never disciplined.
- Numbered but never taught.
- Numbered but unconsecrated.

-I dare say that I am preaching to some tonight who are only “numbered” among us and given a year or two years. . . you will be lost. . .

-How do we keep from being in that category?

2 Timothy 4:5 KJV But watch thou in all things, endure afflictions, . . . make full proof of thy ministry.

- Make sure you are converted. . .
- Make sure you are filled with the Holy Ghost. . .
- Make sure you are striving to live a holy life. . .
- Take heed to yourself and your thought life and make sure it is crucified. . .
- Get involved and stay involved. . .
- Pursue a full spiritual life that pushes you toward a state of perpetual revival. . .