

The Spirit of Judas

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Six days before the last Passover our Lord would keep, he was anointed with costly ointment by Mary in Bethany (John 12:1-8). The context gives the record of how Judas began a murmuring campaign against her for such a waste, but John comments that his real interest was in getting his own hands on more money because he was a thief. Mark 14:6 reveals that Jesus sharply rebuked Judas and those who joined his complaint. Significantly, immediately after the administration of this rebuke, we have the record of Judas' making his contract with the chief priests to deliver the Lord to them (10-11).

While it is true that some of the apostles joined Judas in this complaint, they were very much unlike him in other ways. Their motivation for the complaint was apparently sincere, while that of Judas was a front for his covetous and dishonest heart. Another difference is seen in their response to the Lord's rebuke. They apparently humbly submitted to it, realizing their error. Not Judas. Filled with selfishness and egotism which could not bear reproof, even from the Son of God, he determined to avenge his wounded ego at whatever cost. He was blinded to the great principles of truth, righteousness, humility, and respect for authority that he had doubtless heard the Lord teach on many occasions. The case of Judas plainly demonstrates that it is not enough to merely be exposed to the Truth. If one's heart is not "honest and good" (Luke 8:15), it matters not how powerful the Message, or the messenger might be.

The spirit of Judas lives on. It is seen in those who cannot stand the application of authority over their lives. Many flout the laws of the land for this cause. Many in the church despise authority. They don't want elders to exercise any authority over their lives and when elders try to do their job of shepherding the flock as those who will give account for their souls, (Heb. 13:17) they hurl the ungodly epithet, "watchdogs," at them. Such cannot abide authoritative preaching of the Word of God nor those who preach it. The authority of God and his Son and their Word mean nothing to them. How dare anyone call any belief or practice of theirs into question or expose it as wrong. Instead of humbly submitting to God's Word, more and more are utterly rebelling, like Judas.

[**Note:** I wrote this article for and it was published in *The Edifier*, weekly bulletin of Pearl Street Church of Christ, Denton, TX, May 31, 1984, of which I was editor.]

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