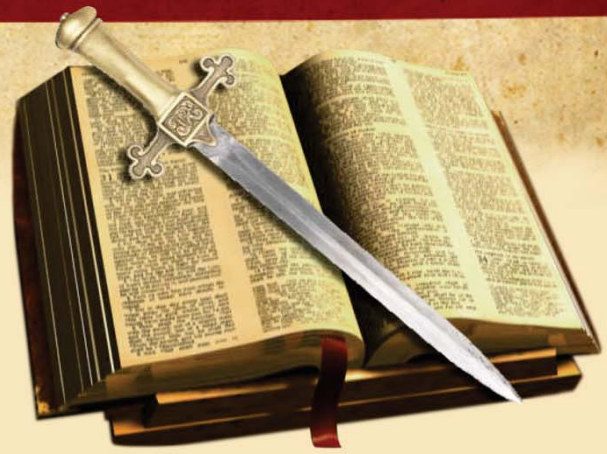


Setting Your Heart

on the

Kingdom



THE LIFE OF JESUS...HIS DEATH AND RESURRECTION

The Judas Spirit

(The Principle of Demonic Opportunities)

Matt. 26:14-16; 27:3-5

There he stood...a chosen disciple of Jesus, now shamed, disgraced and at the very brink of self-destruction. With a rope in his hand, he made his way to the old tree that stood outside the city. Hopeless and in utter despair, Judas tied the noose around his neck and stared from the darkness of his soul into the night. How had he come to this despicable end? He had walked with Jesus, heard Him speak with the wisdom of God, and seen His mighty works of power. Now he had betrayed His friend and His God. But listen to what Judas never knew. *Satan is an opportunist...always looking for vessels through whom he can oppose God's cause. And Judas, through the weakness of his flesh, became that vessel.*

Judas, chosen to be an apostle of God, perished in tragedy and guilt. *But he didn't start out as a vile and wicked man. He was just an ordinary person with a fallen nature.* But look at what brought him to his end. He was Critical...finding fault with one who gave her all in an undefiled gift of worship (*John 12:3-5*). Deceit became a justifying tactic...disguising his Covetous mind with a pretense of helping the poor. Greed coursed through his life...pilfering money that had been entrusted to him (*John 12:6*). Gradually becoming an abode of demons, his Controlling nature surfaced as Judas attempted to Manipulate his leader. In the infamous betrayal, he tried to press Jesus to unleash His power, overthrow Rome, and set up His Kingdom in Israel, over which Judas would be treasurer!

Dear heart, no one starts out to be a Judas. It's a gradual yielding to the fallen nature until Satan has free reign over the human soul. *And the shocking truth is this...there's a little Judas in each of our hearts.* Read again about his character traits. Don't ever allow these traits to work in you! And be particularly careful about control and manipulation, especially if you're close to leadership. If you become too calculating, you may find yourself like Judas, orchestrating your own demise! *"Be on the alert. Your adversary, the devil, prowls about like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour" (1 Pet. 5:8). Resist him, my friend. Don't give the devil an opportunity to use you (Eph. 4:27)!*

Next: The Kingdom of God in Acts... In the Midst of Your Storm

