

Habakkuk's Two Tables #23

PART TWO: LINE UPON LINE

JUDAS

“Notwithstanding the Saviour's own teaching, **Judas was continually advancing the idea that Christ would reign as king in Jerusalem.** At the feeding of the five thousand he tried to bring this about. On this occasion **Judas** assisted in distributing the food to the hungry multitude. He had an opportunity to see the benefit which it was in his power to impart to others. He felt the satisfaction that always comes in service to God. He helped to bring the sick and suffering from among the multitude to Christ. He saw what relief, what joy and gladness, come to human hearts through the healing power of the Restorer. He might have comprehended the methods of Christ. But he was blinded by his own selfish desires. **Judas was first to take advantage of the enthusiasm excited by the miracle of the loaves. It was he who set on foot the project to take Christ by force and make Him king. His hopes were high. His disappointment was bitter.**

“Christ's discourse in the synagogue concerning the bread of life was **the turning point in the history of Judas.** He heard the words, ‘Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of man, and drink His blood, ye have no life in you.’ **John 6:53.** He saw that Christ was offering spiritual rather than worldly good. He regarded himself as farsighted, and thought he could see that Jesus would have no honor, and that He could bestow no high position upon His followers. He determined not to unite himself so closely to Christ but that he could draw away. He would watch. And he did watch.

“From **that time** he expressed doubts that confused the disciples. He introduced controversies and misleading sentiments, repeating the arguments urged by the scribes and Pharisees against the claims of Christ. **All the little and large troubles and crosses, the difficulties and the apparent hindrances to the advancement of the gospel, Judas interpreted as evidences against its truthfulness.** He would introduce texts of Scripture that had no connection with the truths Christ was presenting. These texts, separated from their connection, perplexed the disciples, and increased the discouragement that was constantly pressing upon them. Yet all this was done by Judas in such a way as to make it appear that he was conscientious. And while the disciples were searching for evidence to confirm the words of the Great Teacher, Judas would lead them almost imperceptibly on another track. **Thus in a very religious, and apparently wise, way he was presenting matters in a different light from that in which Jesus had given them, and attaching to His words a meaning that He had not conveyed.** His suggestions were constantly exciting an ambitious desire for temporal preferment, and thus turning the disciples from the important things they should have considered. The dissension as to which of them should be greatest was generally excited by Judas.

“**When** Jesus presented to the rich young ruler the condition of discipleship, Judas was displeased. He thought that a mistake had been made. If such men as this ruler could be connected with the believers, they would help sustain Christ's cause. If Judas were only received as a counselor, he thought, **he could suggest many plans for the advantage of the little church.** His principles and methods would differ somewhat from Christ's, but in these things he thought himself wiser than Christ.

“In all that Christ said to His disciples, there was something with which, in heart, Judas disagreed. Under his influence **the leaven of disaffection** was fast doing its work. The disciples did not see the real agency in all this; but Jesus saw that Satan was communicating his attributes to Judas, and thus opening up a channel through which to influence the other disciples. This, a year before the betrayal, Christ declared. ‘Have not I chosen you twelve,’ He said, ‘and one of you is a devil?’ John 6:70.

“Yet Judas made no open opposition, nor seemed to question the Saviour’s lessons. He made no outward murmur **until the time of the feast in Simon’s house**. When Mary anointed the Saviour’s feet, Judas **manifested** his covetous disposition. At the reproof from Jesus his very spirit seemed turned to gall. Wounded pride and desire for revenge broke down the barriers, and the greed so long indulged held him in control. **This will be the experience of everyone who persists in tampering with sin**. The elements of depravity that are not resisted and overcome, respond to Satan’s temptation, and the soul is led captive at his will.

“But Judas was not yet wholly hardened. **Even after he had twice pledged himself to betray the Saviour, there was opportunity for repentance**. At the Passover supper Jesus proved His divinity by revealing the traitor’s purpose. He tenderly included Judas in the ministry to the disciples. But the last appeal of love was unheeded. **Then the case of Judas was decided**, and the feet that Jesus had washed went forth to the betrayer’s work.

“Judas reasoned that if Jesus was to be crucified, the event must come to pass. His own act in betraying the Saviour would not change the result. If Jesus was not to die, it would only force Him to deliver Himself. At all events, Judas would gain something by his treachery. He counted that he had made a sharp bargain in betraying his Lord.

“Judas did not, however, believe that Christ would permit Himself to be arrested. In betraying Him, it was his purpose to teach Him a lesson. He intended to play a part that would make the Saviour careful thenceforth to treat him with due respect. But Judas knew not that he was giving Christ up to death. How often, as the Saviour taught in parables, the scribes and Pharisees had been carried away with His striking illustrations! How often they had pronounced judgment against themselves! Often when the truth was brought home to their hearts, they had been filled with rage, and had taken up stones to cast at Him; but again and again He had made His escape. Since He had escaped so many snares, thought Judas, He certainly would not now allow Himself to be taken.

“Judas decided to put the matter to the **test**. If Jesus really was the Messiah, the people, for whom He had done so much, would rally about Him, and would proclaim Him king. This would forever settle many minds that were now in uncertainty. **Judas would have the credit of having placed the king on David’s throne**. And this act would secure to him the first position, next to Christ, in the new kingdom.

“The false disciple acted his part in betraying Jesus. In the garden, when he said to the leaders of the mob, ‘Whomsoever I shall kiss, that same is He: hold Him fast’ (Matthew 26:48), he fully believed that Christ would escape out of their hands. Then if they should blame him, he could say, Did I not tell you to hold Him fast?

“Judas beheld the captors of Christ, acting upon his words, bind Him firmly. In amazement he saw that the Saviour suffered Himself to be led away. Anxiously he followed Him from the garden to the trial before the Jewish rulers. At every movement he looked for Him to surprise His enemies, by appearing before them as the Son of God, and setting at nought all their plots and power. But as hour after hour went by, and Jesus submitted to all the abuse heaped upon Him, a terrible fear came to the traitor that he had sold his Master to His death.

“As the trial drew to a close, Judas could endure the torture of his guilty conscience no longer. Suddenly a hoarse voice rang through the hall, sending a thrill of terror to all hearts: He is innocent; spare Him, O Caiaphas!

“The tall form of Judas was now seen pressing through the startled throng. His face was pale and haggard, and great drops of sweat stood on his forehead. Rushing to the throne of judgment, he threw down before the high priest the pieces of silver that had been the price of his Lord’s betrayal. Eagerly grasping the robe of Caiaphas, he implored him to release Jesus, declaring that He had done nothing worthy of death. Caiaphas angrily shook him off, but was confused, and knew not what to say. The perfidy of the priests was revealed. It was evident that they had bribed the disciple to betray his Master.

“‘I have sinned,’ again cried Judas, ‘in that I have betrayed the innocent blood.’ But the high priest, regaining his self-possession, answered with scorn, ‘What is that to us? see thou to that.’ Matthew 27:4. The priests had been willing to make Judas their tool; but they despised his baseness. When he turned to them with confession, they spurned him.

“Judas now cast himself at the feet of Jesus, acknowledging Him to be the Son of God, and entreating Him to deliver Himself. The Saviour did not reproach His betrayer. He knew that Judas did not repent; his confession was forced from his guilty soul by an awful sense of condemnation and a looking for of judgment, but he felt no deep, heartbreaking grief that he had betrayed the spotless Son of God, and denied the Holy One of Israel. Yet Jesus spoke no word of condemnation. He looked pityingly upon Judas, and said, **For this hour came I into the world.**

“A murmur of surprise ran through the assembly. With amazement they beheld the forbearance of Christ toward His betrayer. Again there swept over them the conviction that this Man was more than mortal. But if He was the Son of God, they questioned, why did He not free Himself from His bonds and triumph over His accusers?

“Judas saw that his entreaties were in vain, and he rushed from the hall exclaiming, It is too late! It is too late! He felt that he could not live to see Jesus crucified, and in despair went out and hanged himself.

“Later that same day, **on the road from Pilate’s hall to Calvary**, there came an interruption to the shouts and jeers of the wicked throng who were leading Jesus to the place of crucifixion. As they passed a retired spot, they saw at the foot of a lifeless tree, the body of Judas. It was a most revolting sight. His weight had broken the cord by which he had hanged himself to the tree. **In falling**, his body had been horribly mangled, and dogs were now devouring it. His remains were immediately buried out of sight; but there was less mockery among the throng, and many a pale face revealed the thoughts within. Retribution seemed already visiting those who were guilty of the blood of Jesus.” *The Desire of Ages*, 718–722.

FIRST TEST REJECTED

“The look that Jesus cast upon the selfish Judas convinced him that the Master had penetrated his hypocrisy, and read his base, contemptible character. This was a more direct reproof than Judas had before received. He was provoked by it, and thus **a door was opened** through which Satan entered to control his thoughts. Instead of repenting, he planned revenge. Stung by the knowledge of his sin, and provoked to madness because his guilt was known, **he rose from the table, and went to the palace of the high priest, where he found the council assembled.** He was imbued with the spirit of Satan, and acted like one bereft of reason. The reward promised for the betrayal of his Master was thirty pieces of silver; and for a far less sum than the box of ointment cost he sold the Saviour.

“**In spirit and practice many resemble Judas.** As long as there is silence in regard to the plague-spot in their character, no open enmity is seen; but when they are reproved, bitterness fills their hearts.” *Youth Instructor*, July 12, 1900.

THE SECOND TEST

“Before the Passover Judas had met **a second time** with the priests and scribes, and had **closed the contract to deliver Jesus into their hands.** . . . Judas was now offended at Christ’s act in washing the feet of His disciples. If Jesus could so humble Himself, he thought, He could not be Israel’s king. All hope of worldly honor in a temporal kingdom was destroyed. Judas was satisfied that there was nothing to be gained by following Christ. After seeing Him degrade Himself, as he thought, he was confirmed in his purpose to disown Him, and confess himself deceived. **He was possessed by a demon, and he resolved to complete the work he had agreed to do in betraying his Lord.**” *The Desire of Ages*, 645.

THE FINAL DECISION

“In surprise and confusion at the exposure of his purpose, **Judas** rose hastily to leave the room. ‘Then said Jesus unto him, **That thou doest, do quickly.** . . . He then having received the sop went immediately out: and **it was night.**’ Night it was to the traitor as he turned away from Christ into the outer darkness.

“Until **this step was taken, Judas had not passed beyond the possibility of repentance.** But when he left the presence of his Lord and his fellow disciples, **the final decision** had been made. **He had passed the boundary line.**

“Wonderful had been the long-suffering of Jesus in His dealing with this tempted soul. Nothing that could be done to save Judas had been left undone. **After he had twice covenanted to betray his Lord, Jesus still gave him opportunity for repentance.** By reading the secret purpose of the traitor’s heart, Christ gave to Judas **the final, convincing evidence of His divinity.** This was to the false disciple **the last call to repentance.** No appeal that the divine-human heart of Christ could make had been spared. The waves of mercy, beaten back by stubborn pride, returned in a stronger tide of subduing love. But although surprised and alarmed at the discovery of his guilt, **Judas** became only the more determined. From the sacramental supper he went out to complete the work of betrayal.

“In pronouncing the woe upon Judas, Christ also had a purpose of mercy toward His disciples. He thus gave them **the crowning evidence of His Messiahship**. ‘**I tell you before it come,**’ He said, ‘**that, when it is come to pass, ye may believe that I AM.**’ Had Jesus remained silent, in apparent ignorance of what was to come upon Him, the disciples might have thought that their Master had not **divine foresight**, and had been surprised and betrayed into the hands of the murderous mob. **A year before, Jesus had told the disciples that He had chosen twelve, and that one was a devil.** Now His words to Judas, showing that his treachery was fully known to his Master, would strengthen the faith of Christ’s true followers during His humiliation. And when Judas should have come to his dreadful end, they would remember the woe that Jesus had pronounced upon the betrayer.” *The Desire of Ages*, 653–655.

THE MYSTERY OF INIQUITY DOTH ALREADY WORK

“But Judas had opened the door of his heart, the chambers of his mind, to the temptations of Satan. And the enemy sowed in his heart and mind **the seed which he communicated to his brethren**. The questioning doubts which were passed on to the minds of his brethren. This one man, professing to be a follower of Christ, while not bearing the precious fruit revealed in the life of Christ, would be **a channel of darkness to the other disciples in the time of test and trial that was soon to come**, and that was even then upon them. He presented so much accusation of his brethren that he was counterworking the lessons of Christ. This is why Jesus called **Judas a devil**.” *Review and Herald*, November 16, 1897.

“Among the chosen disciples of Christ there was **a representative of Satan**. . . .

“**All the way along in the history of the third angel’s message** there have been found among the believers men who have done much harm to God’s cause. These men are spots in our feasts of charity; **tares among the wheat; wolves among the sheep**, ready to bite and devour. Delighting to bear false witness, they cruelly injure the reputation of others. Every such one will be rewarded ‘according to his works.’ God ‘hath appointed **a day**, in the which he will judge the world.’ Then will be made the separation between the wheat and the tares. In that day **it will be clearly revealed** that those who seek to destroy the reputation of God’s servants are hypocrites. By their own lips will be borne the testimony that will clear from suspicion those against whom they have reported evil.” *Review and Herald*, May 12, 1903.

“**Judas had had great light**; he had had many **opportunities** to understand what were the requirements of God. Numbered among the twelve, he had listened to the lessons of Christ; he had heard the truth, and he had no excuse for failing to form a character after the likeness of Christ. . . .

“**In this age**, if those who come under the precious influence of the truth do not become transformed in character, they will, **like Judas**, go from light to darkness; and how great will be their darkness.” *Signs of the Times*, July 18, 1895.

A FALLING AWAY FIRST

“But **Judas did not walk in the light so graciously permitted to shine upon him**. By indulgence in sin he invited the temptations of Satan. His evil traits of character became predominant. He yielded his mind to the control of the powers of darkness, he became angry when his faults were reprov'd, and thus he was led to commit the fearful crime of betraying his Master. So do all who cherish evil under a profession of godliness hate those who disturb their peace by condemning their course of sin. When a favorable opportunity is presented, **they will, like Judas**, betray those who for their good have sought to reprove them.” *The Great Controversy*, 43.

ACCUSER OF THE BRETHREN

“If Satan can employ professed believers to act as accusers of the brethren, he is justly pleased; **for those who do this are just as truly serving him as was Judas when he betrayed Christ**, although they may be doing it ignorantly. Satan is no less active now than in Christ’s day, and those who lend themselves to do his work will **manifest his spirit**.” *Testimonies to Ministers*, 504.

FALLING FROM THE PATH

“In the days of the apostle Paul, the Thessalonian brethren were laboring under the erroneous impression that the Lord would return in their day, and Paul wrote to correct this false impression, stating **what events must transpire before the advent could take place**. He declared: ‘Let no man deceive you by any means: for that day shall not come, except there come a falling away first, and that man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition; who opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God, or that is worshiped; so that he as God sitteth in the temple of God, showing himself that he is God.’ The man of sin was to arise, and do his work of exaltation and blasphemy, before the brethren could look for the coming of Christ. That great event was to be preceded by **a falling away. There would be revealed a form of Antichrist, and the leaven of apostasy was to work with increasing power to the end of time**. We are not to be surprised beyond measure to see the widespread declension of faith and piety. **I have been bearing my testimony for the last forty years, that there would be those who would fall away from the path cast up for the ransomed of the Lord to walk in**. God has been sending warnings, reproofs, and encouragements to his people. He has warned them that some would depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits.” *Review and Herald*, July 31, 1888.

REVEALED IN HIS TIME

‘And now ye know what withholdeth that he might be **revealed in his time**. For the mystery of iniquity doth already work: only he who now letteth *will let*, **until he be taken out of the way**. And then shall **that Wicked be revealed**, whom the Lord shall consume with the spirit of his mouth, and shall destroy with the brightness of his coming. 2 Thessalonians 2:6–8.

“The angelic host who watched the scenes in the betrayal and crucifixion of Christ, knew that it was **Satan who entered into Judas and led him to betray Christ into the hands of the murderous mob**; they knew, too, that it was he who impelled the throng to cry out, ‘Crucify him; crucify him;’ and ‘**release unto us Barabbas.**’ **Satan has now revealed his true character as a liar and a murderer.** It is seen that the very same spirit with which he ruled the children of men who were under his power, he would manifest if permitted to control the intelligences of heaven. The question is settled in all the worlds that there is no place for him in all their dominions.” *Review and Herald*, March 9, 1886.

“Unsanctified ministers are arraying themselves against God. **They are praising Christ and the god of this world in the same breath.** While professedly they receive Christ, they embrace Barabbas, and by their actions say, ‘Not this Man, but Barabbas.’ Let all who read these lines, take heed. Satan has made his boast of what he can do. He thinks to dissolve the unity which Christ prayed might exist in His church. He says, ‘I will go forth and be a lying spirit to deceive those that I can, to criticize, and condemn, and falsify.’ Let the son of deceit and false witness be entertained by **a church that has had great light, great evidence, and that church will discard the message the Lord has sent**, and receive the most unreasonable assertions and false suppositions and false theories. Satan laughs at their folly, for he knows what truth is.

“**Many will stand in our pulpits with the torch of false prophecy in their hands, kindled from the hellish torch of Satan.** If doubts and unbelief are cherished, **the faithful ministers will be removed from the people who think they know so much.** ‘If thou hadst known,’ said Christ, ‘even thou, at least in this thy day, the things which belong unto thy peace! but now they are hid from thine eyes.’” *Testimonies to Ministers*, 409.

SATAN’S REPRESENTATIVES

JUDAS

“Instead of walking in the light, Judas chose to retain his defects. Evil desires, revengeful passions, dark and sullen thoughts, were cherished, until Satan had full control of the man. **Judas became a representative of the enemy of Christ.**” *The Desire of Ages*, 295.

PAGAN ROME

“Thus while **the dragon, primarily, represents Satan**, it is, in a secondary sense, a symbol of **pagan Rome.**” *The Great Controversy*, 439.

BARABBAS

“The people of Israel had made their choice. Pointing to Jesus they had said, ‘Not this man, but Barabbas.’ Barabbas, the robber and murderer, was **the representative of Satan.** Christ was the representative of God. Christ had been rejected; Barabbas had been chosen. Barabbas they were to have. In making this choice they accepted him who from the beginning was a liar and a murderer. Satan was their leader. As a nation they would act out his dictation. His works they would do. His rule they must endure. That people

who chose Barabbas in the place of Christ were to feel the cruelty of Barabbas as long as time should last.” *The Desire of Ages*, 738.

THE BISHOP OF ROME

“To secure worldly gains and honors, the church was led to seek the favor and support of the great men of earth; and having thus rejected Christ, she was induced to yield allegiance to **the representative of Satan—the bishop of Rome.**” *The Great Controversy*, 50.

“And I saw that **there were some like Judas** among those who profess to be waiting for their Lord. **Satan controls them, but they know it not.**” *Early Writings*, 268.

TWO CLASSES OF WORSHIPPERS

“John and **Judas** are **representatives of those who profess to be Christ’s followers.** Both these disciples had the same opportunities to study and follow the divine Pattern. Both were closely associated with Jesus and were privileged to listen to His teaching. Each possessed serious defects of character; and each had access to the divine grace that transforms character. But while one in humility was learning of Jesus, the other revealed that he was not a doer of the word, but a hearer only. One, daily dying to self and overcoming sin, was sanctified through the truth; the other, resisting the transforming power of grace and indulging selfish desires, was brought into bondage to Satan.” *Acts of the Apostles*, 559.

JUDAS

“Jesus said in his prayer for his disciples, ‘Those that thou gavest me I have kept, and none of them is lost, but **the son of perdition.**’ The betrayer of Christ might have had eternal life if he had been a doer of the words of Christ and not a hearer only. Judas had the same opportunities, the same privileges, as had the other disciples. He listened to the same precious lessons, but he failed to practice the principles laid down by our Lord, and would not yield his opinions and ideas to receive the teaching of Heaven. The practice of the truth, which Christ required, was at variance with the purposes and desires of Judas. . . .

“**Lesson after lesson fell unheeded on the ears of Judas. How many today follow in his steps.** In the light of God’s law, selfish men see their evil characters, but fail to make the required reformation, and go on from one state of sin to another.

“**The lessons of Christ are applicable to our own time and generation.** He said, ‘Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on me through their word.’ **The same testimony is brought to us in these last days as was brought to Judas.** The **same lessons** which he failed to make practical in his life come to men who hear, and yet make a like failure, because they do not put away their sin.” *Review and Herald*, March 17, 1891.