

Judas

I have to tell you what is in my heart. I only hope you can believe me. Can't anyone believe me? I DID NOT INTEND FOR IT TO TURN OUT THIS WAY. Oh, I guess I don't really know what I wanted or what hidden motivation was behind it all. But I swear to you that this is not what I thought would happen.

Since I was a boy, I have always been a patriot. I played David and the Philistines with my brothers. My hero was my namesake, Judas the Maccabee, who freed our people from the foreign oppressors. He was strong. He was brave. He was clever.

As a man, I found some who shared my zeal for the nation. We often met together and planned. The Romans were powerful and cruel. We would have to beat them by superior intelligence and guile, constantly on the alert for an opportunity, exploiting every chance occurrence.

Not all my comrades agreed with me. Some felt we should wait for God to fight for us. I argued that the Lord uses brave men, willing to risk their all in the fight against Gentile oppressors.

When I first heard about Jesus, there was talk that he might be the Messiah. This was obviously of interest to me and to the cause. I was intrigued enough to join his inner group. Some of his teachings were confusing, but he clearly had the mark of a prophet in his power to perform miracles.

Could this be the one prophesied, who would restore the throne to David and throw off the foreign yoke? It became increasingly clear to me that he was indeed the one. Why, with his miraculous powers he could feed an army with a few loaves. He could heal the sick and raise the dead. No force under his command could be defeated.

Yet although he showed occasional sparks of awareness of his magnificent destiny, and even began to challenge the corrupt and hypocritical Jewish leaders, for the most part, he spent his time with the misfits of society. In a most self abasing manner, he associated with the lower classes, the losers and those paralyzed with introspection.

When I tried to talk to him of strategy, he told me I did not understand him or his kingdom. Yet he clearly did not understand the way to build a successful movement. He belonged in the company of men of power and vision. His present course was building the wrong sort of reputation. But my efforts got me nowhere. I was an advisor without influence.

Yet I hoped. One of his remarkable powers was the ability to apparently read our thoughts. Surely he knew my goals and understood my strategy. And I had been chosen to be in his inner circle. I even managed the meager treasury. I would wait.

Then when he said that we were going to Jerusalem, it seemed that we were getting somewhere. No one with any awareness of the world could doubt that a showdown was near. He must be planning a confrontation, perhaps a series of flashy miracles at first time, to turn the mobs into an army and begin the revolution.

Yet there were also glimpses of his recurrent depression and talk of death. It seemed that I had a gifted but mentally unbalanced messiah on my hands. Victory was always very close but defeat hounded us constantly.

Finally, it became clear that Jesus would need some help. I was convinced that only if forced to fight would he actually reach his potential. I schemed the proper scenario. I cooked up a believable betrayal including money. I led the temple guard to a secluded spot where he could begin the fight with a smaller audience before taking that victory to the whole city.

He astounded me by not only refusing to fight, but by actually humiliating Simon Peter for trying to defend him. Perhaps, I thought, he is going to wait for a more opportune moment, letting his enemies be overcome with false confidence.

Yet I waited through one lost opportunity after another. I could not believe what I was seeing. It was a bad dream. The hope of Israel, humiliated and finally sentenced to a Roman cross. He was clearly not ready. I had miscalculated. Our one hope and I had destroyed it.

Right up to the last moment I hoped beyond hope that he would unleash his mighty power and begin the battle that would certainly have been victorious. Yet the very last moment passed and the opportunity was gone.

My life is also over. There is no hope for me. Yesterday my hope died with my best plans, and there is no tomorrow.

Matthew 26, 27, Mark 14,15, Luke 22,23, John 18