

BEWARE OF AN UNBELIEVING HEART

(Selected Scriptures)

The life of Judas Iscariot should cause us to carefully heed the exhortation of Hebrews 3:12: "Beware brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil unbelieving heart, leading you to fall away from the living God." Judging from mere outward appearances, no one even among Christ's eleven disciples ever thought that Judas would be the betrayer of our Lord Jesus. He was perceived as a devout Christian and a zealous and committed follower of Jesus. The life of Judas is a classic illustration of the depths to which the human heart is capable of sinning. As we ponder upon the life of this man, we will consider three crucial admonitions concerning the heart of unbelief.

1. Beware of a _____ to Christ.

Judas is the supreme example of a false and hypocritical Christian whose commitment to Christ is superficial, shallow and self-serving. In His conversation with His twelve disciples, our Lord Jesus exposed the real condition of Judas' heart: unbelieving, treacherous and evil (John 6:64-71). A false Christian confesses with his mouth that he loves and follows Jesus but his life denies Christ. A false Christian is not a true lover of God. A false Christian, in the final analysis, is a user of God. He or she uses God in order to please oneself and indulge one's sinful desires.

2. Beware of the bondage to _____.

Judas betrayed our Lord Jesus for the price of thirty pieces of silver (Matt. 26:14-16; Exod. 21:32). In Judas' mind, all the three years he spent with Jesus was such a waste of time. In the greed and the wretchedness of his heart, he coveted as much financial compensation he could get. Judas' heart was gravely in bondage to greed and the love of money which drove him to commit the most heinous treason of all (John 12:1-6). This is why we are seriously admonished in the Scriptures that the love of money is a root of all kinds of evil (1 Tim. 6:10). Our Lord Jesus Himself exhorts us to be on guard against all kinds of greed (Luke 12:15).

3. Beware of _____ of Christ.

Judas betrayed our Lord with a kiss which is supposed to be a sign of warm affection and tender love (Matt. 26:48-49; Luke 22:48). The kiss of Judas is the kiss of a willful traitor who in the wickedness of his heart rejected and defied all the warnings and pleadings of Jesus to repent of his evil act of treason (John 13:10-11, 21, 26-27; Matt. 26:24; 27:3-5). Judas was handed over to Satan because sin has overtaken his heart. Judas was so consumed by the corruption and deceitfulness of sin that he became a willing instrument of Satan to betray our Lord. Against the darkness of Judas' treachery shines the beauty of the patient love and compassion of Jesus. Jesus' gracious warnings to Judas is a glorious testimony of the long-suffering, forbearing goodness and lovingkindness of God (Psalm 145:9; 2 Pet. 3:9).
