

A Pharisee

It came as quite a surprise when that man, one of Jesus's friends, approached us offering to help our cause. We needed Jesus identified and removed; he'd become too big a risk and here was someone asking what we'd give him to do just what we wanted. He must have become pretty disillusioned, Judas, or maybe he'd just come to see Jesus for the rabble rousing blasphemer he was.

He settled for 30 pieces of silver which seemed little enough to us , a small price to pay to be rid of that troublesome man. And he delivered the goods. Judas, I think his name was, did exactly what he said he do - kissed Jesus in greeting so we knew, even in the dark, which one to go for. Not us of course but the soldiers.

No chief priest or Pharisee would soil his hands like that which is why no one would take the money back - blood money it had become when Judas had his state of remorse. Far too late by then. Apparently, he threw the money back - quite literally - into the temple and then, I've heard he went off and hanged himself.

Rumour has it that the money will be used to buy the Potter's field . We've had our eyes on that for a while. With a touch of irony, I think, it's likely to be used as a burial place for strangers and outsiders and what an outsider Judas made himself that day!

A disciple

What has this man done? How could he do it? Wasn't he one of us, chosen by Jesus to be part of his special work?

Mind you, he was the last to be chosen. But he was given the job of group treasurer , a position of great trust and responsibility. Although some of us suspected his accounting wasn't always accurate and we wondered, on occasions, whether he was lining his own pocket. Or maybe even sending a bit home somehow .

Money seemed to mean quite a lot to Judas. When Mary poured her wonderful scented ointment over Jesus' feet in such an extravagant gesture of love, it was Judas who questioned whether it would have been better to have sold the nard and given the money to the poor. It would certainly have raised a huge sum and gone a long way. And maybe Judas didn't like Jesus' response

about the poor being always among us. Maybe he was looking for a different kind of equality from the one that Jesus had in mind.

If I'm brutally honest, I can't imagine he was the only one to be thinking along those lines, but maybe he was the only one frank enough to say it aloud.

But for all his background made him different from us, he was part of the team, and shared the joy and excitement of the message we were taking to people, or so I thought.

Looking back, I wonder if he had a different vision of Jesus' role. His own people in the South had endured captivity and oppression in their past but God had restored them to their land. Just maybe, Judas thought that Jesus would be the one to get rid of Roman rule and overthrow the occupying forces here. Certainly, when Jesus talked about his death, we were confused and upset, but perhaps it was anger and disappointment that we saw in Judas's eyes.

Poor Jesus. It seems that, at our last meal together, he knew that Judas would let him down. He said something about giving bread to the one who would betray him and he gave it to Judas.

“What you are about to do, do quickly,” he said.

And that's when Judas left.

The rest, as they say, is history.

Mary, mother of Jesus

My son has been condemned to death. The child I nurtured and raised, watched, loved for 33 years has been arrested and sentenced to die.

My heart is heavy with grief but I am not the only woman worn down by sorrow now. Judas, the man who sold my son to the Romans, has been filled with remorse and taken his own life. How desperate his mother must feel. Her son known as a traitor. The betrayer of the best man who ever lived, who was more than just my son but the son of God.

She could never have imagined such an ignominious end for her boy. The awful events of the last few days must have come out of nowhere.

For me, I have known all along that my soul would be pierced by grief. Simeon, the old man in the Temple, who spoke to us at Jesus' presentation, recognised in my son the Redeemer of the people who would live and die to save us from our sins.

And in the last 3 years have begun to learn more about Jesus and his unique relationship with God. I remember that remarkable day at the wedding in Cana when he proved his power over the natural world by turning water into wine. I knew that things were changing ; that my world , that the whole world, would never be the same again.

I've always known the scriptures. And I began to recognise the ones that my boy was here to fulfil. Is it very wicked of me that sometimes I have wished Jesus had been born to an ordinary life?

I wonder if Judas' mother knows the scriptures as I do. Zachariah, one of her ancestors held captive in Babylon, foresaw that the son of God would be betrayed, sold for 30 pieces of silver. Judas' awful deed had to happen. Someone had to do what he did. The scriptures had to be fulfilled ; my son was born to die. Perhaps, one day, there may be comfort for me in this

And for his mother? Can there ever be comfort for her that her son, the boy she named Judas meaning 'God be praised' betrayed the son of God. So many questions. So much I cannot know or understand, but one thing I am sure of, Jesus taught us to forgive.

Judas' mother

Losing a son will always break a mother's heart. He was my boy, my baby and nothing can change the love that I had for him. I can hardly bear to imagine the guilt and sorrow he felt that led him to take his own life.

I barely saw him during the last three and half years. From the moment that man, Jesus, who had so inspired him, called him to be the final member of his team with 12, his time was spent in the North, a long way from our home village of Kerioth in the South. Rumours reached to me , of course, of the wonderful things he had done. My son was there when Jesus fed all those people from 2 loaves and a few fish. And I know that in the power of Jesus' name my boy performed miracles of healing and even cast out demons.

But I didn't get to see him, as I said. The rest of Jesus' special group were all from the North , Galileans, unlike our family roots. I envied them, I admit , when I heard how Jesus had been involved with their families - even a visitor at Simon Peter's house and healed his mother in law.

I wonder if it made a difference that our family line is traced back to Esau so we are not classed as proper Jews, sons and daughters of the promise, descended from the 11 true tribes of Israel.

I wonder if they treated him differently. I wonder if he felt a bit of an outsider.

I'll never know.

It's too late now.