

# The Betrayal of Jesus

## (John 13:18-30)

Expository Lessons from the Gospel of John

---

### I. Background and Context Related to the Other Three Gospels

- a. We have come to the last week of Jesus' life. He has entered Jerusalem riding on donkeys to great fanfare. It is just a few days before He is to be crucified.
- b. In the previous lesson, we looked at Jesus washing the feet of his disciples.
- c. In this lesson, Jesus identified Judas as the one who is going to betray Him.
- d. The Last Supper (eucharist, Jesus taking the bread and wine and saying "take and eat/ drink; this is my body/ blood) is discussed in **Matthew**, **Mark** and **Luke**, but not mentioned in **John**.
- e. If we lay the gospels side-by-side, it appears that what we are about to read in **John 13** takes place in association with the same evening meal as the Last Supper, which was a Passover meal Jesus shared with his disciples.
  - i. The incident of Judas taking the bread is common to all four gospels; and it takes place at the Last Supper in the other three gospels.
    1. **Matthew 26:20-25** "he who dips his hand with me in the dish"
    2. **Mark 14:17-20** (This is similar to the **Matthew 26** passage.)
    3. **Luke 22:20-22** Jesus speaks while presenting the cup of the new covenant in His blood: "the hand of my betrayer is with me on the table".
  - ii. Therefore, the events we are reading are assumed to take place in association with the Last Supper. Therefore, this takes place on Thursday the day before Jesus is crucified. (He was crucified on Friday, the day before the Sabbath).
  - iii. For those in interested in how the gospel of John might fit together with the accounts in the other three similar, often called "*synoptic*" (= seeing with one eye) gospels:
    1. Tatian, a student of Justin Martyr and an early Christian writer from Assyria (in the East) composed a harmony of the four gospels c. 170 AD. It is called *The Diatessaron* ("through the four" [gospels]), and is found in Ante-Nicene Fathers, vol. 9. Apparently, this harmonized account was widely used by early Christians in the East.

## II. Jesus Identifies Judas as the Betrayer

### a. Review **John 13:1-17**

- i. This takes place in connection with a supper, an evening meal with Jesus and His 12 disciples.
- ii. Jesus washes the feet of all of His disciples and wipes them with a towel.
- iii. First Peter does not want Jesus to wash his feet; then he asks Jesus to wash not only his feet, but his hands and head also!
- iv. Jesus responds, "He who is bathed needs only to wash his feet, but is completely clean; and you are clean, but not all of you.' For He knew who would betray Him; therefore, He said, 'You are not all clean.'" (**John 13:10-11**, NKJV)

1. Previously in this chapter it said, "And supper being ended, the devil having already put it into the heart of Judas Iscariot, Simon's son, to betray Him," (**John 13:2**, NKJV)

2. Although **John 13** includes the story of Jesus washing his disciples' feet, it appears that the main *action* in that chapter relates to Judas' betrayal of Jesus.

### b. **Questions:** Why is it important that Judas betrayed Jesus? Why do all four gospels mention this with such detail as to how he betrayed Jesus?

### c. Read **John 13:18-30**

#### i. Summary points of the story

1. Jesus quotes from **Psalm 41** (**Psalm 40** in the LXX), saying that it contained a prophecy that would be fulfilled.
2. Jesus said that after they saw that prophecy come to be fulfilled, they would *know* "that I am He".
3. The disciples were perplexed and did not know which of them Jesus was referring to.
4. Peter asks "the (disciple) whom Jesus loved" to ask the Lord of whom He spoke.
  - a. This is the first of several references in this gospel to "the disciple whom Jesus loved".
  - b. The last reference, in **John 21:20-24**, equates "the disciple Jesus loved" with the author of this gospel.

- c. From earliest times, Christians understood John the apostle, a fisherman and one of the sons of Zebedee (**Mark 1:19-20**).
- 5. Jesus tells the beloved disciple, who is leaning on His breast, that it is the one He shall give the piece of bread to, after He has dipped it.
- 6. Jesus then dips the bread and gives it to Judas.
- 7. Satan enters Judas. Jesus tells him, "What you do, do quickly."
- 8. Judas departs immediately, but those at the table misinterpret what Jesus said, and are unaware of the true reason for Judas leaving. It is night-time.
- ii. **Question:** When Jesus says in **John 13:18** "I do not speak concerning all of you", *what is He referring to?*
  - 1. Is He referring to His statement that He has just set an example (washing their feet) that He expects them to follow? (**John 13:15**)
  - 2. Or is He referring to His statement that *not all of them are clean?* (**John 13:10-11**)
  - 3. (In context of what follows, I assume he is referring to the earlier statement that one of them is not clean.)

### III. Jesus Quotes from Psalm 41 (Designated Psalm 40 in the LXX)

- a. Jesus says, "that the Scripture may be fulfilled". Then He quotes **Psalm 41:9** (**Psalm 40:10** in the LXX) and continues, "when it does come to pass, you may believe that I am He."
  - i. **Question:** Is this the only phrase in that psalm that is prophetic, or is there *even more prophecy to be fulfilled* in this psalm Jesus is pointing to?
    - 1. In the gospels we see instances where one small part of a major prophecy is quoted, with the statement that the prophecy was fulfilled; yet there was *much more within the full prophecy* that was fulfilled as well. In other words, the segment quoted was just "the tip of the iceberg". Such examples include:
      - a. "So the Scripture was fulfilled which says, 'And He was numbered with the transgressors.'" (**Mark 15:28**, NKJV)

- i. Here “He was numbered with the transgressors” is just one fragment of one verse (from **Isaiah 53:12**).
    - ii. However, it is within a major, detailed prophecy about the Suffering Servant that was fulfilled, from **Isaiah 52:13-53:12**.
  - b. “Then they crucified Him, and divided His garments, casting lots, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophet: “They divided My garments among them, And for My clothing they cast lots.”” (**Matthew 27:35**, NKJV)
    - i. In this case the passage quoted was one verse: **Psalms 22:18**.
    - ii. However, the detailed prophecy about the crucifixion of the Christ extends through essentially all of **Psalms 22**.
  - c. So, perhaps **Psalms 41** is the same; namely, that there is *more prophecy contained within this psalm* than the one verse discussed by Jesus!
- 2. Eusebius, who was bishop of the church in Caesarea, historian and apologist, writing (c. 320 AD) in *Proof of the Gospel*, book 10, explains the significance of this psalm in some detail. Let us read **Psalms 41** and consider what we see there, along with the insights from Eusebius. (The quotes from Eusebius that follow in this set of notes are all from that source.)
  - a. Eusebius begins his discussion of **Psalms 41** with the statement, “As it has been supposed by some that the **Book of Psalms** *merely consists of hymns to God and sacred songs, and that we shall look in vain in it for predictions and prophecies of the future*, let us realize distinctly that it contains many prophecies, far too many to be quoted now...”
    - i. It is amazing to me that so many Christians today see the **Psalms** in the same way as the people Eusebius spoke of, in his own day. Most of us see them mainly as inspiring devotional songs to God, with very little prophetic value.
    - ii. Yet, the **Book of Psalms** is *saturated* with prophecies about Jesus. We should be looking

there to strengthen our faith, and for powerful evidence to prove the faith to others.

1. “Then [Jesus] said to them, ‘These are the words which I spoke to you while I was still with you, that all things must be fulfilled which were written in the Law of Moses and the Prophets and the Psalms concerning Me.’ And He opened their understanding, that they might comprehend the Scriptures.” (**Luke 24:44-45**, NKJV)

b. Read **Psalm 41** (**Psalm 40** in the LXX)

- i. **Question:** Does this psalm (written 1000 years before Jesus) speak of David, or someone else?

ii. A man concerned with the poor is blessed. (**verse 1**)

1. Jesus read from the scroll, “The Spirit of the LORD is upon Me, because He has anointed Me to preach the gospel (= *good news*) to the poor; He has sent Me to heal the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives and recovery of sight to the blind, to set at liberty those who are oppressed....” (**Luke 4:18**, NKJV)

2. Eusebius’ comments:

- a. “If these events were thus predicted and fulfilled, it is not surprising that in the same way the oracle quoted from **Psalm 40** (*LXX*) should announce what would happen in connection with the plot on our Savior, though not all men should understand, that He being the Word of God, Wisdom, Life, and the True Light, and possessing all the wealth of the good, for our sakes became poor, taking our flesh, and being made like in kind to mortal man and beggars, taking on Him the form of a slave and a poor man, and most of all when He fulfilled the Psalmist's prophecy. He that understands these sayings to refer to Himself, naturally is blessed at the beginning of the Psalm, as receiving the written promise.
- b. “So it proceeds in the rest to speak in the person of a poor man and a beggar, that is to say of our Savior Who for our sakes became poor (**2 Corinthians 8:9**): ‘I said,

Lord, have mercy on me.' And John, the Evangelist, is an independent witness that the words of this psalm are spoken in the Person of our Savior. For he records that 'Jesus once took a towel and girded himself, and washed the feet of his disciples and said, I know whom I have chosen. But that the Scripture may be fulfilled, He that eats with me, the same has lifted his heel against me.' **(John 13:3-18)"**

- c. "For He made it clear there that the Scripture referred to was the psalm before us, in which it is said: 'For the man of my peace, in whom I trusted, he that ate of my bread hath raised his heel against me.' (**Psalm 41:9**; designated **Psalm 40:10** in the LXX) He it is, then, Who says at the beginning: 'I said, Lord, have pity on me, heal my soul, for I have sinned against You,' (**Psalm 41:4**; designated **Psalm 40:5** in the LXX) and speaks through the whole psalm."
  3. In effect, Eusebius is saying that the whole psalm applies to the story of Jesus!
- iii. He is suffering on "a bed of pain". (**verse 4**)
  1. The man is described as being in sickness.
  2. Consider the suffering the Christ had to go through, prophesied in **Isaiah 53** and **Psalm 22**.
  3. "He was a man in suffering and knew how to bear sickness...we consider him to be in pain, suffering and ill-treatment...he became sick because of our sin" (from **Isaiah 53:3-5**, LXX)
- iv. "heal my soul for *I have sinned against you.*" (**Psalm 41:4**, or **Psalm 40:5** in the LXX)
  1. At first glance that did not strike me as referring to Jesus, *since He was without sin*. However, consider the following points.
  2. However, Eusebius makes the point that this passage also had been translated (by Symmachus, a translator of the Hebrew Scriptures who was well-known to the Jews at that time), "Heal my soul even if I have sinned against You".
    - a. This makes sense since later on in the psalm it discusses *his innocence* (see LXX rendering).

- i. “And because of my innocence, You supported me.” (**Psalm 40:13**, LXX, OSB).
  - ii. “But thou didst help me because of mine innocence, and hast established me before thee forever.” (**Psalm 40:12**, Brenton LXX)
  - iii. Parallel passage in the Masoretic Text says, “You uphold me in my integrity...” (**Psalm 41:12**, NKJV).
- 3. Eusebius also points to passages that speak of Christ taking on the sins of others.
  - a. “And He speaks thus, since He shares our sins. So, it is said: ‘And the Lord hath laid on him our iniquities, and he bears our sins.’ (**Isaiah 53:1-12**) Thus, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sins of the world (**John 1:29**) became a curse on our behalf: ‘Whom, though he knew no sin, God made sin for our sake, giving him as redemption for all, that we might become the righteousness of God in him.’ (**2 Corinthians 5:21**)
  - b. “But since being in the likeness of sinful flesh He condemned sin in the flesh, (**Romans 8:3**) the words quoted [“for I have sinned against you”] are rightly used. And in that He made our sins His own from His love and benevolence towards us, He says these words, adding further on in the same psalm: ‘You have protected me because of my innocence,’ (**Psalm 40:12-13**, LXX) clearly showing the impeccability of the Lamb of God.
  - c. “And how can He make our sins His own, and be said to bear our iniquities, except by our being regarded as His body, according to the apostle, who says: ‘Now you are the body of Christ, and severally members?’ And by the rule that ‘if one member suffer all the members suffer with it,’ (**1 Corinthians 12:26-27**) so when the many members suffer and sin, He too by the laws of sympathy (since the Word of God was pleased to take the form of a slave and to be knit into the common tabernacle of us all) takes into Himself the labors of the suffering members, and makes our sicknesses His, and suffers all our woes and labors by the laws of love.

- d. “And the Lamb of God not only did this, but was chastised on our behalf, and suffered a penalty He did not owe, but which we owed because of the multitude of our sins; and so He became the cause of the forgiveness of our sins, because He received death for us, and transferred to Himself the scourging, the insults, and the dishonor, which were due to us, and drew down on Himself the apportioned curse, being made a curse for us. (**Isaiah 53:4-11**) And what is that but the price of our souls? And so the oracle says in our person: ‘By his stripes we were healed,’ (**Isaiah 53:5**) and ‘The Lord delivered him for our sins,’ (**Romans 4:25**) with the result that uniting Himself to us and us to Himself, and appropriating our sufferings...”
- v. His enemies conspire against him. (**Psalms 41:7-8**, or **Psalms 40:8-9** in the LXX)
  1. “Why do the nations rage, and the people plot a vain thing? The kings of the earth set themselves, and the rulers take counsel together, against the LORD and against His Anointed (*in Greek = His Christ*) ...” (**Psalms 2:1-2**, NKJV)
  2. The Jewish high priest and religious leaders, King Herod and Pontius Pilate (the Roman governor) all worked together to bring the death sentence upon Jesus.
- vi. His enemies say, “He is asleep; will he rise again?” (**Psalms 41:8**, or **Psalms 40:9**)
  1. “Sleep” is used as a metaphor for death throughout the Scriptures. “Rising up” is likewise a metaphor for being resurrected from the dead.
    - a. **Genesis 49:9** “He bows down and slept as a lion and a cub; who shall rouse him? Also, **Numbers 24:9**.
    - b. **Daniel 12:2** “Then many who sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life and others to disgrace and everlasting shame.”
    - c. **John 11:11** Jesus said, “Our friend Lazarus sleeps, but I go that I may wake him up.”
    - d. **1 Corinthians 15:51** “Behold, I tell you a mystery: We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed”



- e. **Ephesians 5:14** “Therefore He says: ‘Awake, you who sleep, arise from the dead, and Christ will give you light.’”
  - f. In **Psalm 41**, the man’s enemies are saying, since he’s sleeping (*metaphor for dead*), he will not rise up (*metaphor for resurrected*). This is exactly what Jesus’ enemies thought: kill Jesus and we’ll be done with him! (They never imagined He would be raised from the dead.)
2. The Greek word used in the LXX for “to raise up” in **Psalm 40:9** and **Psalm 40:11** (ἀνίστημι) is one of the two words used most often in Scripture to refer to people being *raised up (resurrected) from the dead*. Examples from the New Testament where it is used in that sense include:
- a. **Matthew 12:41**
  - b. **Mark 8:31, 9:10, 9:31, 10:34**
  - c. **Luke 16:31, 18:33**
  - d. **John 6:39-54** (used multiple times), **11:23-24**
  - e. **Acts 2:24, 2:32, 3:26, 17:3, 26:23**
  - f. **1 Thessalonians 4:16**
- vii. The companion with whom he shared bread ended up deceiving him. (**Psalm 41:9**, or **Psalm 40:10** in the LXX)
- 1. This is the part quoted by Jesus in **John 13**, and the fact that Judas shared bread with Jesus on this occasion is mentioned in all four gospels.
  - 2. Eusebius commented, “For of a truth it is the lowest and most accursed of men who after sharing a master's table, and the nurture of his instruction, goes wrong and treats his benefactor in the opposite way to which he has been treated himself.”
- viii. The Lord will “raise him up” because of his innocence. (see **Psalm 40:11-13** in the LXX)
- 1. “whom God raised up, having loosed the pains of death, because it was not possible that He should be held by it.” (**Acts 2:24**, NKJV)

- ix. He will repay his enemies (**Psalm 41:10-11**. or **Psalm 40:11-12** in the LXX)
1. "The LORD said to my Lord, 'Sit at My right hand, Till I make Your enemies Your footstool.'" (**Psalm 110:1**, designated **Psalm 109:1** in the LXX; also quoted in **Acts 2:34-35**, NKJV)
  2. **Question:** Who were Jesus' enemies? **Answer:** Death, many of the Jews, and Satan
    - a. Eusebius wrote on this, "And it is quite clear how after His resurrection from the dead immediate judgment, that did not tarry, fell on the conspirators, so that death who was the enemy of His return to life was made ashamed, and they that mocked Him said, "O death, where is thy sting? O death, where is thy victory? "
    - b. "And those who have read the history of the times after our Savior's resurrection, in Josephus, will remember what troubles fell on the Jews and their rulers, involved in which they received the right reward for what they did to Him. All this, then, that fell upon them was the fulfilment of the prophecy: but our Savior's resurrection from the dead proved to all that in Him the Father was well pleased, as He tells us when He says: "Have mercy upon me, and raise me up, and I will reward them. By this I know thou hast favored me, because my enemy does not triumph over me."
  3. In the end, all of Jesus' enemies would be vanquished and repaid.
    - a. The Jewish nation that cried out, "Let his blood be upon us and our children" (**Matthew 27:25**) was destroyed by the Romans in AD70, as recorded by Josephus.
    - b. Death and the grave would be left empty and mocked, "Where, O death, is your victory?" (**Hosea 13:14, 1 Corinthians 15:54-57, Revelation 20:13-14**)
    - c. Satan would be crushed and defeated (**Genesis 3:15, Romans 16:20, Revelation 20:10**)
- x. He will be established before the Lord *forever*. (**Psalm 41:12**, or **Psalm 40:13** in the LXX)
1. Jesus (descended from David and fulfilling the promise made to him) will reign over God's kingdom forever (**Luke 1:33; 2**

**Samuel 7:13-16**, designated **2 Kingdoms 7:13-16** in the LXX;  
**1 Chronicles 17:12-14**)

2. Jesus will be a priest forever (**Hebrews 5:5; Psalm 110:4**, designated **Psalm 109:4** in the LXX)
- c. **Answer** (To the question of whether the prophecy Jesus quotes was just one line; or was just “the tip of the iceberg” indicating part of a much greater prophecy): It certainly appears that *essentially all of this psalm* consists of prophecies regarding the suffering, innocence, betrayal, death, resurrection and eternal reign of the Christ, the Messiah!
- d. **Psalm 41** offers a tremendous prophecy about Jesus, with many details and specifics. Let us use this to help bring others to faith and to increase our own faith as well!

#### IV. About the Heel

- a. **Question:** What is this about a “*heel* being lifted up”, in **Psalm 41:9**?
  - i. Jesus say “lifting up his heel” when citing the **Psalm 41:9** prophecy in **John 13:18**.
  - ii. However, some translations (such as OSB, based on the LXX) render the same passage in **Psalm 41:9-10** (designated **Psalm 40:9-10** in the LXX) as “(being) *deceived*” by someone.
  - iii. Comparing two translations, both based on the LXX:
    1. “For even the man of peace in whom I hoped, he who ate my bread, dealt deceptively with me.” (**Psalm 40:10**, OSB LXX)
    2. “For even the man of my peace, in whom I trusted, who ate my bread, lifted up his heel against me.” (**Psalm 40:9**, Brenton LXX)
  - iv. Actually, I believe both renderings are correct. The phrase can be understood literally as “lifted up his heel,” or can be understood figuratively as “dealt deceptively”. Consequently, neither translation is wrong here.
  - v. Similarly, in English we have figures of speech that involve parts of the body. Almost everyone *in our culture* understands what is meant when these expressions are used. Some examples:
    1. *Nose out of joint* (figurative meaning: upset)

2. *Twisted his arm* (figurative meaning: put undue pressure on someone to get them to do what you want)
  3. *Under-handed* (figurative meaning: lacking integrity)
  4. *Went behind his back* (figurative meaning: did something without letting the other person know)
  5. *Stabbed in the back* (figurative meaning: showing treachery)
  6. *Neck-and-neck* (figurative meaning: very close in a contest, presumably from horse racing)
- vi. Similarly, references to the heel, or to grabbing (or maybe biting) someone's heel had figurative meaning in the Biblical cultures.
1. Example: from the story of Jacob and Esau
    - a. When the twins were born to Rachel. "So when her days were fulfilled for her to give birth, indeed there were twins in her womb. And the first came out red. He was like a hairy garment all over; so they called his name Esau. Afterward his brother came out, and his hand took hold of Esau's heel; so his name was called Jacob. Isaac was sixty years old when she bore them." (**Genesis 25:24–26**, NKJV)
    - b. When Esau realizes that his brother Jacob deceptively stole the blessing intended for him. "Esau... cried with an exceedingly great and bitter cry, and said to his father, 'Bless me—me also, O my father!' But he said, 'Your brother came with deceit and has taken away your blessing.' And Esau said, 'Is he not rightly named Jacob? For he has supplanted me these two times. He took away my birthright, and now look, he has taken away my blessing!" (from **Genesis 27:34–36**, NKJV)
    - c. Where NKJV and KJV say "he has *supplanted me*", other translations render it "cheated me" (ESV), "outwitted me" (LES) or "taken me by the heel" (YLT).
    - d. We see from this story that the expression "to grasp someone's heel" means to cheat them, outwit them, deceive them; or we might say "to go behind their back" (as Jacob did twice to his brother Esau).
  2. One LXX Greek resource I checked (*Greek-English Lexicon of the Septuagint*, compiled by Lust et. al.) indicated that the verb

πτερνίζω (to grasp the heel) and the corresponding noun πτερνισμός (heel-grasping) means:

- a. To go behind someone's back;
  - b. To deceive;
  - c. Metaphorically, *to bite the heel* of somebody. Some have suggested that expression could represent an unethical move in a wrestling match.
  - d. A sense of the meaning of this Greek expression can be seen from its context in **Jeremiah 9:3** (LXX), where the passage is rendered, "every brother will *utterly deceive*".
- vii. Another "heel-related" passage is in **Genesis 3:15**. There it says that God's curse on Satan would entail the serpent's head being crushed or bruised by the offspring of the woman (pointing to Jesus, who was born of a virgin woman). In that passage the Lord tells Satan:
1. "... And you shall bruise His heel." (from **Genesis 3:15**, NKJV, based on the Masoretic Text); or
  2. "... And you shall be on guard for His heel" (from **Genesis 3:15**, OSB, based on the LXX)
- b. Taking all this together, when Jesus quoted **Psalm 41** regarding someone "lifting up his heel" against Him, everyone would have understood this reference as meaning someone close to Him would be a *deceptive, sneaky betrayer*.

#### V. More on the Betrayal of Jesus and Psalm 41 (Designated Psalm 40 in the LXX)

- a. One other early Christian writer who discussed the significance of the prophecies contained in **Psalm 41** was Tertullian, a Christian writer from Carthage, North Africa (c. 160-230 AD). He wrote the following to explain how even the manner of Jesus' betrayal and suffering were prophesied in Scripture:
  - i. "In like manner does He also know the very time it behooved Him to suffer, since the law prefigures His passion. Accordingly, of all the festal days of the Jews He chose the Passover. In this Moses had declared that there was a sacred mystery: 'It is the Lord's Passover.'
  1. (Note: When the Lord spoke to Moses and gave instructions regarding the Passover observance, He had said, "It is *the Lord's Passover*" in **Exodus 12:11** and **Exodus 12:27**.)

- ii. “How earnestly, therefore, does He manifest the bent of His soul: ‘With desire I have desired to eat this Passover with you before I suffer.’ (Luke 22:15) What a destroyer of the law was this, who actually *longed to keep its Passover!* Could it be that He was *so fond of Jewish lamb?*
    - 1. (Note: Tertullian obviously is being *sarcastic* here. The reason Jesus was so looking forward to this meal *certainly was not* based on His favoring the taste of a lamb dinner! Tertullian points out that this festival was *His Own* Passover [*“the Lord’s Passover”*], just as the God had announced to Moses over 1,000 years earlier.)
  - iii. “But was it not because He had to be ‘led like a lamb to the slaughter; and because, as a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so was He not to open His mouth,’ (Isaiah 53:7) that He so profoundly wished to accomplish the symbol of His own redeeming blood?”
  - iv. “He might also have been betrayed by any stranger, did I not find that even here too He fulfilled a psalm: ‘He who did eat bread with me hath lifted up his heel against me.’ (Psalm 41:9; designated Psalm 40:10 in the LXX) And without a price might He have been betrayed. For what need of a traitor was there in the case of one who offered Himself to the people openly, and might quite as easily have been captured by force as taken by treachery? This might no doubt have been well enough for another Christ; but would not have been suitable in One who was accomplishing prophecies.”
  - v. “For it was written, ‘The righteous one did they sell for silver.’ (Amos 2:6) The very amount and the destination of the money, which on Judas’ remorse was recalled from its first purpose of a fee, and appropriated to the purchase of a potter’s field, as narrated in the Gospel of Matthew, were clearly foretold by Jeremiah ‘And they took the thirty pieces of silver, the price of Him who was valued, and gave them for the potter’s field.’ When He so earnestly expressed His desire to eat the Passover, He considered it His own feast; for it would have been unworthy of God to desire to partake of what was not His own.”
  - vi. (Source: Tertullian, *The Five Books Against Marcion*, book 4, chapter 40; in Ante-Nicene Fathers vol. 3, pp. 417–418.)
    - 1. Tertullian makes the point that even the way in which Christ was to be betrayed was described in detail by prophecies contained in the Jewish Scriptures.
- b. **Question:** Are there *any other* prophecies that discuss Judas, the betrayer?

- i. In the passage from *Against Marcion* quoted above, Tertullian mentioned **Amos 2:6**, where it says that the righteous one would be sold for silver.
- ii. Tertullian also alluded to the account of Judas casting his “blood money” back into the temple (**Matthew 27:3-10**) being used to purchase a potter’s field. Matthew attributes that to a prophecy in Jeremiah. The question of which prophecy was in view here is still debated; some point to **Jeremiah 32:6-15** (equivalent to **Jeremiah 39:6-15** in the LXX); others point to **Zechariah 11:13**.
- iii. The apostle Peter spoke about prophecies concerning Judas in **Acts 1**, when the apostles were gathered together in Jerusalem and had to pick a successor to Judas.
  1. Read **Acts 1:15-26**.
  2. Peter said that the betrayal of Jesus by Judas, who had been one of their number and part of their ministry, was in fulfillment of prophecy which the Holy Spirit had spoken through the mouth of David (presumably Peter is referring to **Psalms 41**).
  3. Peter recounts that Judas had committed suicide after betraying Jesus (also discussed in **Matthew 27:5**).
  4. Peter quotes from **Psalms 69:25** (designated **Psalms 68:26** in the LXX), applying it to Judas: “Let his dwelling place be desolate, and let no one live in it”.
    - a. This psalm contains many well-known prophecies related to the crucifixion of Jesus, such as:
      - i. “The insults of those who disgraced you fell on me.” (This is quoted in **Romans 15:3**)
      - ii. “I looked for comforters but I found not one. They gave me gall for my food and they gave me vinegar for my drink.” (Compare **Matthew 27:34**.)
      - iii. “Let their table become a snare before them, and a recompense and a stumbling block.” (Also quoted in **Romans 11:9-11**)
  5. Peter also quotes from **Psalms 109:8** (designated **Psalms 108:8** in the LXX), “Let another take his *office*...”

- a. Peter makes the point that since Judas had vacated his position as one of the 12 apostles, this prophecy pointed to the fact that they needed to appoint another to replace him.
- b. Note that the word for “office” here is the same (Greek) word used for something a bishop (overseer) would oversee. The quote here follows the LXX very closely (as do most of the OT quotes found in the New Testament).
- c. Read the entire psalm, preferably from a translation based on the LXX (to see better what Peter and the other apostles would have understood here). (Read **Psalm 108** from the LXX, or **Psalm 109** from the MT). It speaks of:
  - i. A righteous man who is being falsely accused by a deceitful man.
  - ii. This righteous man continues in prayer, but is hated. He is repaid evil for good, and hatred for love.
  - iii. Regarding the wicked man, it says “set a sinner over him, and let the devil stand at his right hand, and when he is judged, may he go forth condemned”
  - iv. “Let his days be few, and may a different man receive his office (episcopate)”
    1. This is the line Peter is quoting in the second part of **Acts 1:20**, regarding the need to pick a successor to Judas.
    2. Clearly, according to Peter, Judas is the wicked man this psalm speaks of.
  - v. This wicked man is so sinful that even his descendants are cursed after his death.
  - vi. This psalm is rich with very specific prophecy that foretells the demise of Judas, the one who would betray Jesus. Judas was the false accuser who repaid evil for good; the devil was at his right hand. He was cursed and cut off; and another was appointed to take his place after he was gone.



- c. One very early Christian writer, Ignatius (c. 35-107 AD, bishop of Antioch who personally knew some of the apostles) also wrote about **Psalm 41**. While being taken to Rome where he was to be executed, he wrote letters explaining *why he was willing to die as a martyr*. These letters help us understand what gave him the faith to go to his death for Christ. From one of those letters, *Ignatius to the Trallians*, he wrote:
- i. “But if, as some that are without God, that is, the unbelieving, say, He became man in appearance [only], that He did not in reality take unto Him a body, that He died in appearance [merely], and did not in very deed suffer, then for what reason am I now in bonds, and long to be exposed to the wild beasts? In such a case, I die in vain, and am guilty of falsehood against the cross of the Lord. Then also does the prophet in vain declare, ‘They shall look on Him whom they have pierced; and mourn over themselves as over one beloved.’ (**Zechariah 12:10**)
  - ii. “...But as for me, I do not place my hopes in one who died for me in appearance, but in reality. For that which is false is quite abhorrent to the truth.
  - iii. “...He was baptized by John, really and not in appearance; and when He had preached the Gospel three years, and done signs and wonders, He who was Himself the Judge was judged by the Jews, falsely so called, and by Pilate the governor; was scourged, was smitten on the cheek, was spit upon; He wore a crown of thorns and a purple robe; He was condemned: He was crucified in reality, and not in appearance, not in imagination, not in deceit. He really died, and was buried, and rose from the dead, even as He prayed in a certain place, saying, ‘But do Thou, O Lord, raise me up again, and I shall recompense them.’
    1. (Note: here Ignatius is quoting from **Psalm 41:10**, the same psalm Jesus quoted regarding his betrayer sharing bread with Him. Ignatius sees in this psalm a prophecy regarding the resurrection, which was fulfilled; and also regarding His enemies being repaid. *The fulfillment of these prophecies gives Ignatius great confidence that these things really did happen.*)
  - iv. “And the Father, who always hears Him, answered and said, ‘Arise, O God, and judge the earth; for Thou shalt receive all the heathen for Thine inheritance.’ (**Psalm 82:8**) The Father, therefore, who raised Him up, will also raise us up through Him, apart from whom no one will attain to true life. For says He, ‘I am the life; he that believes in me, even though he die, shall live: and every one that lives and believes in me, even though he die, shall live forever.’ (**John 11:25-26**)”

1. (Source: Ignatius of Antioch, *Epistle of Ignatius to the Trallians*, chapter 10; in Ante-Nicene Fathers vol. 1, pp. 70-71.)

## VI. Conclusions

- a. The prophecies not only tell of the birth, kingdom, miracles, suffering, crucifixion, death and resurrection of the Christ. They also speak in detail about how he would be betrayed by one of those in his inner circle, with whom he shared bread.
- b. In **John 13:18** Jesus said, “He who eats bread with Me has lifted up his heel against Me.”
  - i. This was based on one line (**verse 9**) from **Psalm 41** (see **Psalm 40:10** in the LXX).
  - ii. The expression “lifting up his heel” was a figure of speech for acting deceptively.
  - iii. When we look carefully at the psalm mentioned by Jesus, an amazing detailed picture of Jesus emerges that speaks not only of his betrayal by a close friend (Judas) but also of his suffering, death, resurrection and innocence. It also points to him paying back his enemies and continuing with God forever.
- c. The psalms are a wonderful devotional treasury of songs to God. However, let us not forget that they also are filled with amazing, faith-building prophecies about all aspects of Jesus’ life.
- d. Detailed prophecies like these can strengthen our faith to equip us to withstand the challenges ahead, as they gave confidence to martyrs in the past like Ignatius, who was willing to die because he knew for sure that these things were true.