

UNIVERSITY OF MALTA
Faculty of Theology

Edward Cassar

JUDAS ISCARIOT
AS A CHARACTER
IN THE GOSPEL OF JOHN

Dissertation presented
in part fulfillment of the requirements for the
Degree of Bachelor in Theology (Honours)

Malta
May 2012



University of Malta
L-Università ta' Malta

University of Malta Library – Electronic Theses & Dissertations (ETD) Repository

The copyright of this thesis/dissertation belongs to the author. The author's rights in respect of this work are as defined by the Copyright Act (Chapter 415) of the Laws of Malta or as modified by any successive legislation.

Users may access this full-text thesis/dissertation and can make use of the information contained in accordance with the Copyright Act provided that the author must be properly acknowledged. Further distribution or reproduction in any format is prohibited without the prior permission of the copyright holder.

ABSTRACT

This dissertation will deal with the character of “Judas Iscariot” as one of the main characters in the Gospel of John. I will present those episodes in which Judas features a representative of unbelief in this Gospel. the first chapter will thus deal with Jn 6 in which Jesus already announces the betrayal of Judas. The second chapter will concentrate on Jn 12 where Judas protested with Jesus against Mary, the sister of Lazarus. The third chapter will focus on Jn 13, namely the Last Supper, and Jn 18, which recounts the arrest of Jesus. In both episodes, Judas features prominently as an adversary of Jesus.

CONTENTS

ABSTRACT	2
CONTENTS	3
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS	5
DEDICATION	6
DECLARATION	7
INTRODUCTION	8
Chapter 1 – THE BETRAYAL	10
1.1 THE BETRAYAL OF JUDAS IN THE FOURTH GOSPEL	10
1.2 THE BETRAYAL OF JUDAS IN THE GOSPEL OF MATTHEW	11
1.3 THE BETRAYAL OF JUDAS IN THE GOSPEL OF LUKE	15
1.4 THE DEATH OF JUDAS IN THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES	17
1.5 THE ACCOUNT OF THE DEATH OF JUDAS IN MATTHEW	17
1.6 CONCLUSION	19
Chapter 2 – THE ANOINTING	20
2.1 THE ANOINTING IN THE FOURTH GOSPEL	21
2.2 MARY OF BETHANY	22
2.3 JUDAS AND THE ANOINTING IN JOHN COMPARED TO THE SYNOPTICS	23
2.4 THE EPISODE NARRATED IN JN 11	26
2.5 DISTINCTIVE FEATURES	29
2.6 CONCLUSION	31
CHAPTER 3 - THE LAST SUPPER	34
3.1 THE LAST SUPPER IN THE GOSPEL OF JOHN	34
3.2 THE LAST SUPPER IN THE GOSPEL OF MARK	38

3.3 THE LAST SUPPER IN THE GOSPEL OF MATTHEW	40
3.4 THE LAST SUPPER IN THE GOSPEL OF LUKE.....	41
3.5 THE ARREST IN THE FOURTH GOSPEL.....	41
3.6 THE ARREST IN THE GOSPEL OF LUKE	42
3.7 THE ARREST IN THE GOSPEL OF MATTHEW	43
3.8 THE ARREST IN THE GOSPEL OF MARK.....	44
3.9 CONCLUSION	44
CONCLUSION.....	46
BIBLIOGRAPHY.....	49

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I would like to thank Rev. Dr. Martin Micallef OFMCap. for helping me during these last months in my work and for enriching my interest in the Fourth Gospel. He has been helpful and truly accompanied the progress of my work.

Special thanks go to my wife that she has been so encouraging me to continue my course of studies and never to lose heart whatsoever. She has been my fortress during these last years.

I really appreciate the work that the Faculty of Theology is doing during these last years in encouraging more people to learn more about our faith and to live our lives according to the Gospels.

Lastly, I would like to thank the Heavenly Father for his goodness and grace.

DEDICATION

I would like to dedicate this work to my dear wife Miriam that I met during these years of study at the University of Malta.

DECLARATION

The undersigned, Edward Cassar, hereby declares that the research presented in this dissertation is my own and has never been submitted for any degree in any other institution.

INTRODUCTION

Judas Iscariot was one of the twelve apostles who served as treasurer of the itinerant group who accompanied Jesus during his ministry. He fulfilled his role as a betrayer and as a thief in the historical event of Jesus. He played his role so well that the world will continue to remember him as the one who betrayed Jesus. The Gospel tradition features Judas as a representative of unbelief, as an adversary of Jesus, who stands in the dark side in the event of Jesus, who makes part of darkness. He is associated with evil, and eventually represents the devil.

In this dissertation I will try to analyze the character and the role of Judas Iscariot in the several episodes of the Gospels. In the first chapter I will examine the actual betrayal of Judas. I will analyze the progressive development of the betrayal, by explaining his role as a disciple, in the way he is portrayed in the Gospels. Judas is the man who comes down through history as the villain of villains, the man who betrayed Jesus for the price of a slave. In this chapter I will give account of Judas' death. I will present the two accounts of Judas' death, the one narrated in the Gospel of Matthew and the other one in Acts. These accounts are quite interesting, since they give a different version of the same account. Our next task will be to identify the main reasons for the betrayal. I will give account of the main conversations of Judas with Jesus, by examining the concept of each and every sentence between Jesus and Judas. In the second chapter then I will give account of the episode of the anointing of Jesus. Mary of Bethany is one of the main characters configured as a real disciple with good intentions compared to Judas. Here again we find several different versions of this episode as given in the Synoptic Gospels and in the Fourth Gospel. The most important feature that I will put forward in this episode is the comparison between the discipleship of Mary and that of Judas. Judas is not only to care nothing for the poor but to take from them the little they do have¹. On the other hand, Mary recognizes poverty in all its elements, including the anointing of a body for burial. Mary's gesture surpasses the false dichotomy Judas seeks to establish between love of Jesus and of the poor. I will

¹ Jn 12, 7.

examine those distinctive features, in this episode of the anointing, as described in the Synoptic Gospels and those described in a different way in the Fourth Gospel.

In the third chapter I will deal with the episode of the Last Supper. Here I will examine this episode as given in the Synoptic Gospels and in the Fourth Gospel. In the Synoptic Gospels we have important themes, such as the institution of the Eucharist and the account of the avowal of abstinence. In the Fourth Gospel, we have emphasis on the story quality of Judas' betrayal. John's Last Super account centralizes the theme of Judas' betrayal and most of all Jesus' foreknowledge and participation in it. The Gospel of John concerns the fact that the betrayal is by one who eats at the same table as Jesus. This feature is included in the Synoptic Gospels, though not with any attempt to proof a Scriptural fulfillment.

The ultimate aim of this dissertation is to bring forward the main character and role of Judas as depicted in the Gospels. An important question to ask is what would have happened if this character did not fulfill his purpose? Would the resurrection of Jesus happen or not? We must also take into consideration the positive side of his role in the Jesus event. The character of Judas brought about the Jesus event, Judas was part of this event, an event that brought salvation to humanity. Judas Iscariot was an important figure in the Gospels, because he filled a necessary literary and theological role: he betrayed Jesus.

Chapter 1 – THE BETRAYAL

In this chapter I will analyze the actual betrayal, the account of the deal between Judas and the priests; we will also delve into the two versions of the death of Judas as found in Matthew² and in the Acts.³ The account of the deal with the priests is missing in the Gospel of John. It is also important to note that the story of the deal with the High priests is lacking in Mark's version. There is no mention of a price of thirty pieces of silver being agreed with the high Priests, nor is anything said about Judas being actually paid, only that payment was promised.⁴ Nothing is said either about Judas' repentance or about his death. After the scene in Gethsemane, we do not hear of Judas again. His character remains bare of individualizing traits. In this earliest surviving version of the Judas-story, the narrative remains rudimentary.

1.1 THE BETRAYAL OF JUDAS IN THE FOURTH GOSPEL

John in his Gospel speaks three times of Jesus being “troubled”, first beside the grave of Lazarus⁵, on “Palm Sunday” after the saying about the dying grain of wheat in a scene reminiscent of Gethsemane⁶, and finally here in the betrayal of Judas. These are moments where Jesus encounters the majesty of death and rubs against the might of darkness, which is his task to overcome. The prophecy of betrayal produces agitation and curiosity among the disciples:

One of his disciples, whom Jesus loved, was lying close to the breast of Jesus: so Simon Peter beckoned to him and said, ‘Tell us who it is of whom he speaks.’ So lying thus, close to the breast of Jesus, he said to him: Lord who is it?’ Jesus answered: ‘It is he to whom I shall give this morsel when I have dipped it’ (Jn 13, 23-26.)

Jesus’ answer is quite unambiguous, and yet the evangelist says that the disciples still did not understand whom he meant.⁷ We must assume that John retrospectively attributed clarity to Jesus’ answer that is lacked at the time for those present. Jn 13,18 brings us on the right track. Here Jesus says: “The Scripture must be fulfilled: ‘He who

² Mt 27, 3-10.

³ Acts 1, 15-22.

⁴ Mk 14, 10.

⁵ Jn 11, 33-38.

⁶ Jn 12, 24-27.

⁷ FRANCIS J. MOLONEY, *The Gospel of John* (=Sacra Pagina 4), Minnesota 1998, 383.

ate my bread has lifted his heel against me”⁸. Scripture here really describes the path Jesus is to tread. It is clear that Jesus will have to endure to the end and to the last detail the suffering of the just, for which the Psalms in particular provide many different expressions.⁹ Jesus must experience the incomprehension and the infidelity even of those within his innermost circle of friends and, in this way, “fulfill the Scripture”.

John does not offer any psychological interpretation of Judas’ conduct. The only clue he gives is a hint that Judas had helped himself to the contents of the disciples money box, of which he had charge¹⁰. In the context of chapter 13, the evangelist merely says laconically: “Then after the morsel, Satan entered into him.”¹¹ For John, what happened to Judas is beyond psychological explanation. He has come under the dominion of another, that is, Satan. Anyone who breaks off friendship with Jesus, casting off his “easy yoke”, does not attain liberty, does not become free, but succumbs to other powers. He betrays this friendship because he is in the grip of another power to which he has opened himself.

John concludes the passage about Judas with these dramatic words: “After receiving the morsel, he immediately went out; and it was night.”¹² Judas goes out in a deeper sense. He goes into the night, he moves out of light into darkness, the power of darkness has taken hold of him.

1.2 THE BETRAYAL OF JUDAS IN THE GOSPEL OF MATTHEW

In the Gospel of Matthew we have an account of the deal struck between Judas and the high priests:

Then one of the twelve, the one named Judas Iscariot, went to the chief priests and said, “What will you give me to betray him into your hands?” So they set out thirty silver coins for him. From that time on, Judas began looking for an opportunity to betray him. (Mt 26, 14-16.)

⁸ Ps 41, 9. Ps 55, 13.

⁹ MOLONEY, *The Gospel of John*, 384.

¹⁰ Jn 12, 6.

¹¹ Jn 13, 27.

¹² Jn 13, 30.

Judas is given a definite motive for his betrayal, that is, a desire for money. Whereas in Mark¹³ the question of payment is raised by the priests, in Matthew¹⁴ the question comes from Judas. The amount is not left unspecified as in Mark¹⁵, but fixed at thirty silver pieces. Judas acts for money, the sum of thirty pieces of silver is not a great one. This amount of money was the average price of a slave¹⁶, and was enough to provide food for one person for about five months.¹⁷

The account of Matthew is actually based on that of Mark. The comparison of the Last Supper narratives certainly seems to confirm this. Matthew uses Mark's words, but characteristically makes some aspects more explicit. The below quotation illustrates Matthew's account of the actual betrayal:

While he was still speaking, Judas, one of the twelve, arrived. With him was a large crowd armed with swords and clubs, sent by the chief priests and elders of the people. Now the betrayer had given them a sign, saying, "The one I kiss is the man. Arrest him!" Immediately he went up to Jesus and said, "Greetings, Rabbi," and kissed him. Jesus said to him, "Friend, do what you are here to do." Then they came and took hold of Jesus and arrested him. (Mt26, 47-50.)

Here we have a few stylistic changes from Mark. The only substantial addition is that Jesus responds to Judas' greeting. As in Mark, no explanation is given to when Judas left the company. One should note that he is still with them until he appears with an armed crowd.¹⁸ Matthew substitutes an aorist for Mark's pluperfect, thus changing a previously arranged sign into one arranged on the spot. This has the effect of reducing Judas' activity as a plotter and collider with the authorities behind the scenes, while at the same time enhancing his role as active leader in the arrest. Now we come to the sign¹⁹, that should be necessary in order to point out so well-known a person as Jesus. It seems that while the narrative demands a traitor, the mechanism of his treachery remains vague. The motif of betrayal with a kiss emphasizes again that the traitor is a member of

¹³ Mk 14, 19.

¹⁴ Mt 26, 14.

¹⁵ Mk 14, 10.

¹⁶ Exod 21, 32.

¹⁷ HYAM MACCOBBY, *Judas Iscariot and the Myth of Jewish Evil*, New York 1992, 39.

¹⁸ Mk 14, 43.

¹⁹ Mt 26, 55.

Jesus' intimate circle, a point emphasized during the Last Supper²⁰ with the words; "One who has dipped his hand into this bowl with me will betray me."²¹ The emphasis here is on the treacherous kiss that brings death. The narrative justification, explaining how the kiss brings death, is flimsy in the extreme. If Jesus did need to be identified for some reason, Judas could presumably have simply pointed to him. But this would not have so epitomized the betrayal, as does a kiss and a reverent greeting.

Another important account found in Matthew but missing in Mark is that of what happened to Judas, mainly, his death:

Now when Judas, who had betrayed him, saw that Jesus had been condemned, he regretted what he had done and returned the thirty silver coins to the chief priests and the elders, saying, "I have sinned by betraying innocent blood!" But they said, "What is that to us? You take care of it yourself!" So Judas threw the silver coins into the temple and left. Then he went out and hanged himself. The chief priests took the silver and said, "It is not lawful to put this into the temple treasury, since it is blood money." After consulting together they bought the Potter's Field with it, as a burial place for foreigners. For this reason that field has been called the "Field of Blood" to this day. Then what was spoken by Jeremiah the prophet was fulfilled: "They took the thirty silver coins, the price of the one whose price had been set by the people of Israel, and they gave them for the potter's field, as the Lord commanded me." (Mt 27,3-10)

This is a proliferation of the story about the death of Judas, combined with attempts to ground the legend in prophecies in the Hebrew Bible. A very different story about the death of Judas is found in Acts.²² These two different continuations of the Judas-saga probably stemmed from different traditions. The Gospel of Mark, omitting all mention of the punishment or death of Judas, had left a narrative need, which was filled by speculations that quickly achieved the status of fact. Repeated emphasis is laid in the passage on the word "blood."²³ The thirty silver pieces are called "blood-money"²⁴, and the field bought with them is called "Blood Acre."²⁵ The underlying concept here is that of sacrifice. Jesus' blood has been shed in sacrifice, this is the atoning blood that brings salvation, but it is also the blood that cries for punishment of those who have shed it. Judas attempts to shift the guilt to the priests, and they stunt it back to him. He throws

²⁰ R.H. LIGHTFOOT, *The Lord as Life-giving Bread*, London 1956, 262.

²¹ Jn 13, 41.

²² Acts 1, 15-22.

²³ Mt 27,4.

²⁴ Mt 27, 6.

²⁵ Mt 27, 8.

the money into the Temple,²⁶ an ambiguous gesture, which says both that the Temple priests must take the blame, and also that the money deserves to be consecrated as having procured salvation.²⁷ The priests treat the money with the same mixture of attitudes. It cannot be used in the Temple, yet it can go towards another holy purpose, the burial of the dead, but only of strangers, not native-born, presumably because there was a stigma in being buried in such a place.

A strange element in this Matthean account, is that the removal of the word "potter" from the passage quoted from Zechariah. Instead of Zachariah's casting the thirty silver pieces to "the potter in the Temple", Matthew has Judas casting them down simply "in the temple".²⁸ Matthew would use the word "naos" (shrine) to mean "temple-treasury".²⁹ The shrine was the most sacred part of the Temple, entered only by priests.³⁰ The treasury was in a much less sacred part of the temple grounds, and Matthew always uses the word "hieron" for this wider area.³¹ Matthew seems to have meant that Judas flung the blood-money down in the innermost shrine of the Temple. This would have been impossible in practice, since Judas would not have been allowed to enter the shrine.³² Matthew's point however is really that the innermost sanctuary has been tainted by the complicity of the Jewish religious authorities in the death of Jesus. The entry of the blood-money into the heart of the Temple foreshadows the eventual destruction of the shrine. There is no compelling evidence of what Matthew's reading was in Zechariah 11,13, especially as his memory of the passage is so faulty. The appearance of the "potter" so close to the citation of the Zechariah passage, certainly suggest that he has been displaced by Matthew's desire to make a point about the shrine.³³

²⁶ Mt 27, 5.

²⁷ MACCOBBY, *Judas Iscariot and the Myth of Jewish Evil*, 45.

²⁸ Mt 27, 5.

²⁹ MACCOBBY, *Judas Iscariot and the Myth of Jewish Evil*, 48.

³⁰ Cf. R.B. HALAS, *Judas Iscariot. A Scriptural and Theological Study of his person, His Deeds and His Eternal Lot*, Washington 1946.

³¹ Cf. H.B. DICKEY, *Judas Iscariot*, New York 1970.

³² Cf. C.G. MONTEFIOR, *The Synoptic Gospels*, 2 vols. Macmillan, London 2, 1927.

³³ Ibid.

1.3 THE BETRAYAL OF JUDAS IN THE GOSPEL OF LUKE

In the Gospel of Luke we have an account of Judas's deal with the priests which contain exclusive material:

Then Satan entered Judas, the one called Iscariot, who was one of the twelve. He went away and discussed with the chief priests and officers of the temple guard how he might betray Jesus, handing him over to them. They were delighted and arranged to give him money. So Judas agreed and began looking for an opportunity to betray Jesus when no crowd was present. (Luke 22, 3-6).

As in Matthew's account, this scene is based on the brief passage taken from Mk 14,10-11. Luke shows evidence of growing elaborations in the oral tradition. Nothing was said about Satan in either Mark or Matthew, but now Judas is developing into a Satan-inspired character, whose betrayal thus becomes part of a cosmic conflict between good and evil³⁴. Luke is concerned with the plausibility of the story, and adds touches to indicate how Judas' betrayal functions. The problem of why is a betrayer necessary was not ignored by Mark and Matthew. Luke takes their solution further. The priests were reluctant to rouse the hostility of the Jewish masses by openly arresting Jesus. It was necessary to arrange a secret arrest, without collecting a crowd. The Jewish crowd, here portrayed as supporting Jesus, is elsewhere portrayed as opposing him. This is a difficulty for all the Gospel-writers, and Matthew and Luke have only added one slight dimension to it. The greed of Judas is rather less accented in Luke than in Matthew.³⁵ As in Mark³⁶, it is the priests, not Judas, who first suggest a money-payment, though in Luke this is by agreement with Judas, not by a simple unilateral promise as in Mark. Luke is clearly not building upon the text of Matthew, but making his own additions directly to the text of Mark.³⁷ Luke attributed Judas' betrayal to the intervention of Satan,³⁸ he is not so much concerned to explain Judas' motivation in terms of avarice. As a person possessed by evil, Judas does not require psychological motivation.³⁹ Again,

³⁴ LIGHTFOOT, *The Lord as Life-giving Bread*, 171.

³⁵ MACCOBBY, *Judas Iscariot and the Myth of Jewish Evil*, 53.

³⁶ Mk 14, 11.

³⁷ MACCOBBY, *Judas Iscariot and the Myth of Jewish Evil*, 53.

³⁸ Lk 22, 3.

³⁹ LIGHTFOOT, *The Lord as Life-giving Bread*, 171.

the problem of why a betrayer is necessary creates a dilemma which is intrinsic; the Judas-story exemplifies, and will merit further discussions.

In the following Luke's account we have the actual betrayal:

While he was still speaking, suddenly a crowd appeared, and the man named Judas, one of the twelve, was leading them. He walked up to Jesus to kiss him. But Jesus said to him, "Judas, would you betray the Son of Man with a kiss?" (Lk 22, 47-48.)

Like the other Synoptics, Luke has provided no mechanism for Judas' appearance, because we do not find accounts of when Judas separated from the other disciples. The "crowd"⁴⁰ which Judas is now leading contains the chief priests, the officers of the temple police and the elders⁴¹, instead of being merely sent by the chief priests, lawyers, and elders, as we find in Mk 14,43 and in Mt 26,47. It is not said plainly that the kiss is a pre-arranged signal by which Judas identifies Jesus, but this seems to be implied by Jesus remark, which is not found in Mark or in Matthew. Judas now leads the crowd, whereas before he was merely with them.⁴² Luke has abbreviated the account he found in Mark in some ways, and expanded it in others. Having increased the derogatory material about the disciples in the Last Supper, he decreases it in the account of the arrest, for he does not portray them as running away after their brief show of resistance. Luke does add touches, but not in the Judas story. His only significant alteration seems to be realistic detail that the arresting body contained officers of the temple police.⁴³ This may be derived from some source other than Mark, and does not seem to be invented, as there would be no obvious motive for such an invention.⁴⁴ It is thus likely to be historically true, whereas the inclusion of the chief priest and elders in the crowd is most implausible, since such exalted persons would not personally perform arrests.⁴⁵

⁴⁰ Lk 22, 47.

⁴¹ Lk 22, 52.

⁴² Cf. C.G. MONTEFIORE, *The Synoptic Gospels*, 39.

⁴³ Cf. Brandon, *The Trial of Jesus of Nazareth*, 45.

⁴⁴ Cf. R. BULTMANN, R., *History of the Synoptic Tradition*, Oxford 1958.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*,

1.4 THE DEATH OF JUDAS IN THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES

In Luke's Gospel, we find nothing more about Judas, but the author completes his version of the story in the first chapter of his sequel, the Acts of the Apostles. In the following of Acts we find another version of Judas' death:

In those days Peter stood up among the believers (a gathering of about one hundred and twenty people) and said, "Brothers, the scripture had to be fulfilled that the Holy Spirit foretold through David concerning Judas – who became the guide for those who arrested Jesus – for he was counted as one of us and received a share in this ministry." (Now this man Judas acquired a field with the reward of his unjust deed, and falling headfirst he burst open in the middle and all his intestines gushed out. This became known to all who lived in Jerusalem, so that in their own language they called that field Hakeldama, that is, "Field of Blood.") "For it is written in the book of Psalms, 'Let his house become deserted, and let there be no one to live in it,' and 'Let another take his position of responsibility.' Thus one of the men who have accompanied us during all the time the Lord Jesus associated with us, beginning from his baptism by John until the day he was taken up from us – one of these must become a witness of his resurrection together with us." (Acts 1, 15-22.)

1.5 THE ACCOUNT OF THE DEATH OF JUDAS IN MATTHEW

The other account of the death of Judas is found in the Gospel of Matthew⁴⁶. The two accounts are considerably different. In Matthew, Judas repents, returns the blood-money to the priests, and then hangs himself in some unspecified place. In Acts, Judas does not repent, buys "Blood Acre"⁴⁷ himself, and dies a horrible death, in this very field. The field is a burial-ground in Matthew, but not in Acts. In Matthew, the name "Blood Acre"⁴⁸ derives from the blood-money used for purchasing it, while in Acts it derives from Judas bloody death.⁴⁹ Matthew's designation of the field as previously a "potter's field" is missing in Luke, whose linkages with the Hebrew Bible are different. The only thing in common between the two accounts is the presence of a field in the story with the name "Blood Acre", though only Acts gives an Aramaic equivalent for this.

⁴⁶ Mt 27, 3-10.

⁴⁷ Acts 1, 15-22.

⁴⁸ Mt 27, 8.

⁴⁹ Cf. Harris, J.R., "Did Judas Really Commit Suicide?", in *Ashland Theological Journal*, IV (1900) 490-513.

The discrepancies between the two stories are so great as to tax the powers of even the most determined harmonizers, which are a monument of implausibility. The two stories of the death of Judas form a kind of psychological unity, regarding the question of: "What happened to the Betrayer?" There are three possible ways of Judas story subsequent to his betrayal. First, Judas' might have been overcome by his own guilt and commits suicide. Secondly, he might be unrepentant. Thirdly, he is banished and wanders bearing the guilt of his betrayal. Matthew and Acts explore only the first two possibilities. The third is explored in later Christianity in relation to the Jewish nation, whose exile and wanderings were regarded as a punishment for their part in the crucifixion of Jesus.⁵⁰

The first possibility found in Matthew, holds out the hope of forgiveness for Judas. His suicide has the appearance of a self-inflicted punishment, rather than an act of mere despair. He refuses to benefit by his treachery, and seeks to return the money he received. It is as if he has come to his senses after about of madness, and now cannot understand why he acted as he did. Matthew, unlike Luke, does not explicitly mention the Satanic possession to explain Judas conduct, but his denouncement of the Judas' story suggests such an explanation. The death of Judas in Acts is a far more complex story than in Matthew, and it is interesting to probe it for this sort of ambivalence. In this story, Judas is not just a criminal, he shows subtle indications of being himself a sacrificial figure. His death in a "field of blood", by the pouring out of his entrails, recalls the deaths of certain figures in pagan myth and sacrificial ritual, who fertilize the fields with their blood. The very death of Judas in a field deepens the mythological aspect by arousing associations with the agricultural rites of sacrifice that underlie all mystery religion. The "field of blood" in which he dies echoes, or parodies, the "place of a skull" in which Jesus died. When one considers the prominence of blood in the sacrificial imagery surrounding the death of Jesus, from the blood of the Communion to "the blood of the lamb", the graphic phrase "field of blood" cannot be without

⁵⁰Cf. DIRK GRUTZMACHER, *The "Betrayal" of Judas Iscariot: A study into the Origins of Christianity and Post- Temple Judaism*, Edinburgh: Thesis (M.Phil) University of Edinburgh, 1999.

resonance. It is a phrase that could as easily describe a place of sacrifice as a one of guilt and punishment.

In Acts, Judas dies by divine intervention⁵¹. In Matthew⁵², Judas dies by his own hands. We view the death of Judas as an historical event; we can see only contradictions in the evidence. Judas cannot have hanged himself if he died by a bursting of the entrails, he cannot have died in a field, and also somewhere else. The field cannot have been named "field of blood" both for the reason given in Matthew and for that given in Acts.

1.6 CONCLUSION

I may say that Judas was an isolated person, a person shut in and away from ordinary social contacts. He refused to confide in, or freely fraternize with, his fellow apostles. Judas also failed to increase in love and grow in spiritual grace. He had certain weaknesses that made him blind and unable to progress to the heavenly kingdom, of which he was one of the twelve consecrated ambassadors on earth. He was an isolated type of human being. He was highly individualistic and chose to grow into a confirmed "shut-in" and unsociable sort of person. But on the other hand, his character fulfilled the prophecy that of Jesus being crucified for the salvation of humanity. The betrayal of Judas constitutes a piece in a puzzle, that of Jesus' salvation towards humanity.

⁵¹ Acts 1, 15-22.

⁵² Mt 27, 3-10.

Chapter 2 – THE ANOINTING

We find two distinct stories of a woman anointing Jesus, in the Synoptic Gospels⁵³. These two accounts are very different; yet there are similarities between both of them and the account in Jn 12, 1-8. Important features in the Marcan account are that the time of the happening was two days before the Passover and the Feast of the Unleavened bread:

And while it was at Bethany in the house of Simon the leper, as he sat at table, a woman came with an alabaster flask of ointment of pure nard, very costly, and she broke the flask and poured it over his head. (Mk 14, 3.)

Certain disciples were angry and reproached the woman, since the perfume could have been sold for more than 300 denarii.⁵⁴ In Mark we see that 300 denarii would have been enough to provide a meal for 5,000 men.⁵⁵ Jesus defended the woman, telling them to leave her alone, on the grounds that they would have the destitute with them always but not him, that she had anointed his body beforehand for burial and that what she had done would be told in the whole world in memory of her. After this, Judas Iscariot went off to the high priests in order to betray Jesus⁵⁶.

In the other account, that of Luke, we have the account that happens during the Galilean ministry of Jesus in the house of Simon.⁵⁷ At this point in the account we note that the raising of the son of the widow of Nain occurs in the same section of this Gospel, with this we have a similarity with the order of events to John 11 and John 12, compared to the raising to life by Jesus, several events and dialogue, and then we have the meal at which Jesus is anointed. In the Gospel of Luke, a sinful and an unnamed woman with “an alabaster jar of ointment”⁵⁸ weeps on Jesus’ feet, dries them with her

⁵³ Mk 14, 3-9.

⁵⁴ Jn 12, 4.

⁵⁵ NEWMAN – NIDA, *A Handbook on the Gospel of John*, London 1980 390.

⁵⁶ Mk 14, 10-11.

⁵⁷ Lk 7, 36.

⁵⁸ Lk 7, 37.

hair and then anoints them with the ointment. With this Simon developed critical thoughts towards Jesus, because he has not realized she is a sinner, with this Jesus rebukes him and forgives the woman.

This relationship between the two Gospels, on the account of the anointing has prompted a variety of explanations that affected the story of the anointing in the Gospel of John. Legault proposed that two separate incidents had occurred. One in Galilea at the house of the Pharisee, which consisted of a penitent sinner entering and weeping in Jesus' presence, with tears falling on his feet that she hastily wipes away. No anointing with perfume occurred in this scene. This incident is the foundation on which the account of Luke is based. The second incident occurs in Bethany in the house of Simon the leper where a woman, namely Mary, uses her expensive ointment to anoint Jesus' head as an expression of love for him. The positing of two incidents had the advantage of respecting the totally different nature and purpose of the two scenes in Luke and Mark. This doublet of this type assumes that one incident underlies them all.⁵⁹

2.1 THE ANOINTING IN THE FOURTH GOSPEL

The story as given in the Gospel of John has distinctive points both of agreement with each of the other Synoptic Gospels. In the Gospel of John the story is closely connected with the passion, as in Matthew and Mark, but it is found before the triumphal entry. It is placed at Bethany, and there is no mention of the house of Simon the leper. Probably, the house is that of Lazarus and his sisters, since Lazarus is at the table with Jesus. Martha serves, and Mary anoints. Mary's gift is described as a pound of costly ointment of spikenard, and it is emphasized by repetition of the term⁶⁰, that it is Jesus' feet which she anoints and then dries with her hair. The house as a result being filled with the fragrance of the ointment. Objection to her act is raised, not by the disciples generally, as in Matthew⁶¹, but by one of them, Judas Iscariot, the future traitor, who values the ointment at the same sum, probably, as that in the original text of Mark, since the latter may not have included the word "above". The self-seeking attitude of Judas is the reverse of that of Mary. The story ends with Jesus' rebuke to Judas, consisting in a

⁵⁹ PHILIP F. ESLER – RONALD A. PIPER, *Lazarus, Mary&Martha*, London 2006, 53.

⁶⁰ Jn 11, 2.

⁶¹ Mt 26, 8.

defence of Mary's action, and a reference to the poor in the same form of words as is found in Matthew.⁶² In reply to Judas' charge of waste, he says that Mary is to be unmolested, her purpose was to keep the ointment for the day of His actual burial.⁶³

The story of the anointing is a connection with the account of Lazarus, Martha, and Mary.⁶⁴ In the Gospel of Mark, we have the woman which anoints Jesus' head⁶⁵, whereas Luke has her cleanse Jesus' feet⁶⁶, this making up for the deficient hospitality of Jesus' host. The Johannine version may have resulted from the confusion of two originally independent stories of Jesus being anointed. John specified the weight of oil used just as he will specify the quantity of spices used for Jesus' burial⁶⁷. The evangelist establishes Mary as the woman's name in his tradition, he almost certainly has cast Judas in the role of the one who protests. He identifies him as the betrayer and then explains he has no concern for the poor but is a thief.

2.2 MARY OF BETHANY

The scene of the anointing is dominated by two main characters, namely Mary of Bethany, already identified as a disciple who initiates an encounter with the Johannine Jesus, where her symbolic gesture is complemented by Jesus' verbal interpretation. The other character is Judas, who reacts to the anointing in such a way that the very words of Jesus in praising Mary become a criticism of him. The evangelist draws a precise contrast between a male and female character. The gesture of the anointing provides us to Jesus' imminent death and burial and interprets its meaning in advance.⁶⁸ In Jn 12, 7-8, we have a symbolic anticipation of the day of Jesus' burial, which give witness to the

⁶² Mt 26, 9.

⁶³ Mt 26, 12.

⁶⁴ J.F. COAKLEY, *The Anointing at Bethany and the Priority of John*, in *Journal of Biblical Literature*(1988)107: 241-86.

⁶⁵ Mk 14, 3.

⁶⁶ Lk 7, 38.

⁶⁷ NEWMAN – NIDA, *A Handbook on the Gospel of John*, (=United Bible Societies Handbook Series) London 1993, 390.

⁶⁸ C. H. GILBIN, *Mary's Anointing for Jesus' Burial-Resurrection*, in *Biblica* 73 (1992) 560-64.

true nature of his kingship. This kingship is recognized by Mary of Bethany but is lost by Judas.

In anointing Jesus' feet, Mary of Bethany expresses an extravagance born of love. This is a service of love which she witnesses. The wiping of the feet with her hair,⁶⁹ is consistent with the intimate love of friendship which marks the disciple.⁷⁰ Proof of no sexual overtone is found in the parallel Lukan account: "what kind of woman is touching him, that she is a sinner"⁷¹. Another meaning of a mourning rite is a love expressed for a dead person⁷², an interpretation which points directly to Mary's intentions and affirmed by the Johannine Jesus.

2.3 JUDAS AND THE ANOINTING IN JOHN COMPARED TO THE SYNOPTICS

On the other side we have Judas who is portrayed as providing a negative foil for Jesus' self-revelation and a negative reinforcement of genuine faith and discipleship.⁷³ Judas fails to comprehend Mary's action, his criticism provides the Johannine Jesus with an opportunity to reveal the truth about his own imminent death. Mary's action speaks more loudly than anything she might have said, Judas misinterprets in self-righteous terms worth of the hypocrite that he is, and the Johannine Jesus refutes Judas' argument and adjudicates in Mary's favour. The saying about the poor, which is intended to be part of Jesus' prophecy of his imminent death, contains an irony with respect to Judas that borders on cynicism. The nature of a thief such as Judas is not only to care nothing for the poor but to take from them the little they do have⁷⁴. On the other hand, Mary recognizes poverty in all its elements, including the anointing of a body for burial. Mary's gesture surpasses the false dichotomy Judas seeks to establish between love of Jesus and of the poor

⁶⁹ Jn 12, 3.

⁷⁰ MARGARET M. BEIRNE, *Women and Men in the Fourth Gospel*, London 2003, 154.

⁷¹ Lk 7, 39.

⁷² Cf. F.F. SEGOVIA, *Love Relationships in Johannine Traditions*, Chico/CA 1982, 48.

⁷³ BEIRNE, *Women and Men in the Fourth Gospel*, 154.

⁷⁴ Jn 12, 7.

Judas at the end of chapter 12 is introduced by the evangelist as already set on a course that will mean his turning away from the person and belief in his word. Rejecting the gifts of the spirit and the life promised by the Johannine Jesus who alone is their source.⁷⁵

Now we will examine and compare this account to the Synoptics. The account is:

Then Mary took three quarters of a pound of expensive aromatic oil from pure nard and anointed the feet of Jesus. She then wiped his feet dry with her hair. (Now the house was filled with the fragrance of the perfumed oil.) But Judas Iscariot, one of his disciples (the one who was going to betray him) said, “Why wasn’t this oil sold for three hundred silver coins and the money given to the poor?” (Now Judas said this not because he was concerned about the poor, but because he was a thief. As keeper of the money box, he used to steal what was put into it.) (Jn 12, 3-6.)

This story seems to be a combination of two other stories found in the Gospels.⁷⁶ In the Gospel of Mark, the account takes also place in Bethany.⁷⁷ An unnamed woman pours precious ointment on Jesus’ head, and is reproved, not by Judas Iscariot, but by some of those present or as we find in the Gospel of Matthew by the disciples for wasting ointment that could have been sold to benefit the poor.⁷⁸ In the Gospel of Luke, this story is given an anti-Pharisee perspective. The grumbling of the Pharisee, however, is directed not against the waste of money, but against Jesus’ failure to distance himself from the woman,⁷⁹ whom Luke turns into a prostitute. Though, Luke does not identify this prostitute as Mary Magdalene, or even as Mary of Bethany. The second story found in the Gospel of Luke:

Now as they went on their way, Jesus entered a certain village where a woman named Martha welcomed him as a guest. She had a sister named Mary, who sat at the Lord’s feet and listened to what he said. But Martha was distracted with all the preparations she had to make, so she came up to him and said, “Lord, don’t you care that my sister has left me to do all the work alone? Tell her to help me.” But the Lord answered her, “Martha, Martha, you are worried and troubled about many things, but one thing is needed. Mary has chosen the best part; it will not be taken away from her.” (Lk 10, 38-42).

⁷⁵ Jn 13, 30.

⁷⁶ Cf. C.G. MONTEFIORE, *The Synoptic Gospels*, 2 vols. Macmillan, London² 1927, 57.

⁷⁷ Mk 14, 3.

⁷⁸ Mt 26, 8.

⁷⁹ Lk 7, 39.

This story concerns the two sisters Martha and Mary, who are situated in a certain village⁸⁰, not Bethany, nor does it refer to precious ointment. Mary sits at Jesus' feet listening to his words, while Martha does the serving, but Martha's complaint is rejected by Jesus. Judas Iscariot is not mentioned.

The episode of the ointment is an excellent example of the free imaginative development of stories. John's picture of Judas as the corrupt controller of the money-bag is constructed out of hints already present in the narrative. Judas' greed is suggested by the fact that he sells Jesus for thirty pieces of silver. That Judas is a thief⁸¹, is John's own contribution, a first adumbration of the increasingly unpleasant character which builds up in the subsequent history of the Judas personality. That the betrayer of Jesus must have been a wicked person from the first seems a natural deduction.

To make a more holistic detailed analysis of the perspective of the anointing, in Jn 12, 1-8, as in the Gospel of Mark, the meal takes place in Bethany. The house in which the scene takes place is not mentioned. In this scene we have Lazarus, Martha, and Mary. Similar in the Marcan account, a woman anoints Jesus with expensive perfume to the value of 300 denarii.⁸² Judas complains that the perfume could have been sold, but Jesus defends the woman, saying to Judas to leave the woman alone.⁸³ This act makes Judas angry, and there is an aside to the effect that he was the one to betray Jesus, were here we have a similarity with the Marcan detail of his departure immediately after the anointing to betray Jesus. Whilst in the Lukan account, the woman anoints Jesus' feet, not the head, and wipes his feet with her hair.⁸⁴

These similarities of the Synoptics with the Gospel of John, makes us conclude that there are common traditions being used by the various evangelists, which have influenced one another in some way or another. The similarities follow some connection

⁸⁰ Lk 10, 38.

⁸¹ Jn 12, 6.

⁸² Mk 14.

⁸³ Mk 14, 6.

⁸⁴ Lk 7, 38.

between the Johannine tradition on the one hand, and the Lucan and Marcan traditions on the other. John's use of any sources or traditions is far from slavish. This makes it difficult to reach actual decisions about his sources. The differences in John reveal his determination to reconstruct the memory of the group to serve the needs of his addressees in the present.

2.4 THE EPISODE NARRATED IN JN 11

At the beginning of Jn 11 we read,

Now a certain man named Lazarus was sick. He was from Bethany, the village where Mary and her sister Martha lived. (Now it was Mary who anointed the Lord with perfumed oil and wiped his feet dry with her hair, whose brother Lazarus was sick. (Jn 11, 1-2).

It is see clear that the evangelist is speaking here of the anointing by Mary, C. K. Barrett affirms that the Evandelist“is able to presuppose that his readers were already familiar with it, which implies that they were Christians and knew the Synoptic tradition.”⁸⁵ Jn 11,2 represents an audacious attempt by the evangelist to rework the collective memory of the Christ-movement. John achieves this by integrating his unique story of Lazarus, Martha, and Mary, a brother and his two sisters. This represents a congeries of pre-existing elements and Johannine creation for which there exists no precedent in the tradition. It is difficult to understate the significance of John taking the tradition of a woman, who nameless anointed Jesus before his death, and identifying this woman with Mary, sister of Martha and Lazarus. Most probably this connection was already known to his readers, and introduced it at 11,2 to pave the way for 12,1-9. This reflects a deliberate decision by the evangelist for the message he wished to convey in this section of the Gospel. John specifies Bethany as the village of Lazarus, Martha, and Mary⁸⁶. He may have chosen Bethany as the village of Lazarus because of its attachment to the story of the unnamed woman that we find in Mk 14,3-9, and because of being close to Jerusalem.⁸⁷ The significance of this selection should not be underestimated, because it involves supplanting Simon as the host of the meal in

⁸⁵ CHARLES KINGSLEY BARRETT, *The Gospel According to St John: An Introduction with Commentary and Notes on the Greek Text*, London 1978, 390.

⁸⁶ Jn 11, 1.

⁸⁷ NEWMAN – NIDA, *A Handbook on the Gospel of John*, 352.

Bethany shortly before Jesus' death where a woman anointed him, which is recorded in the Gospel of Mark.

Taking into consideration the character of the woman who anoints Jesus, we see that it is readily explicable. That is, to appreciate how a woman could passionately and dramatically demonstrate her love for Jesus by such an act. John saw the woman's anointing of Jesus as a powerful token of love that he could reuse for his own narrative purposes. He strengthens this aspect of the incident by combining both the express reference to the value of the perfume, and the very physical behavior of Mary in wiping his feet with her hair.⁸⁸ Quoting Tina Beattie we see that:

Manifests a forgetting of self and a profound sensitivity to another. She makes connections and has an awareness of the hidden meanings in the events around her. Sensing the darkness to come, she reaches out to Christ and wordlessly demonstrates her compassion and her understanding.⁸⁹

Beattie here demonstrates the true devotion, and true discipleship toward Christ, and compares this with Peter's initial refusal to let Jesus wash his feet. Beattie affirms that Peter's concern is for himself, nor for Christ.

John had Mary and not Martha do the anointing is explicable as reflecting the tradition where Martha was the more practical of the two sisters. That was Mary's role as witnessed in John 11, since Mary falls at Jesus' feet⁹⁰, but Martha does not⁹¹. It is possible that the reference to Mary sitting at the feet of Jesus in Lk 10,39 provided the crucial clue to later thinking that she must have been the one who anointed his feet, a connection not made by Luke but possible for anyone aware of these traditions. John shows that he was in both 11,32 and 12,3. Reflecting on the character of the act of the woman in anointing Jesus brings us to the second reason why John has brought the two incidents together. The significance that John gives to Mary's anointing of Jesus, with

⁸⁸ Jn 12,3.

⁸⁹ TINA BEATTIE, *A Discipleship of Love: Mary of Bethany and the Ministry of Women*, London 1997, 174.

⁹⁰ Jn 11,32.

⁹¹ Jn 11, 20-21.

Jesus himself relating the perfume she used to his coming burial, is reflected in a curious feature of Jn 11, that is, John does not tell anything about the anointing and burial of Lazarus. We are duly cautious of arguments from silence. There is no doubt that loving sisters like Martha and Mary would have anointed and wrapped the body of their brother Lazarus before seeing him laid in the tomb. Martha and Mary must have anointed and wrapped the body of their brother Lazarus and seen him laid in the tomb, proof of this, that is, the reference to the bondages he is wearing when he emerges from the tomb is given in Jn 11, 44. John is completely silent on their having done this. The evangelist has not wanted explicitly to describe the anointing of Lazarus. John omits the anointing of Lazarus by his sisters because he did not want to distract attention from the anointing that Mary was to perform on Jesus later in his Gospel. By doing this, John was given the way to emphasize the extent to which Mary became a prototype for the devotion of the Christ-follower to Jesus.⁹²

John established a connection between the account of the raising of Lazarus and the anointing of Jesus. With this connection John is given the power to solve problems. Knowing the identity and origin of the woman who anoints Jesus' feet, seeing a clear motivation for her doing so, and associating her with an immediately 'Lazarus' episode in his Gospel, John provides the preceding history that is lacking in earlier versions of the anointing story. Whilst in the Synoptics, the action of the unnamed woman who anoints Jesus comes out unexpectedly.⁹³

The Gospel of John has distinctive features regarding the portrayal of the anointing of Jesus. These distinctive features include the time reference to six days before Passover,⁹⁴ the reference to Mary having taken a pound of ointment rather than coming from outside with a solitary flask⁹⁵, her putting the ointment on Jesus' feet and wiping

⁹² Cf. FREDERICK W. BALTZ, *Understanding the Fourth Gospel Community* (= Mellen Biblical Press Series 37) London 1996.

⁹³ Cf. ROBERT TOMSON FORTNA, *The Gospel of Signs: A Reconstruction of the Narrative Source Underlying the Fourth Gospel* (=SNTS Monograph Series 11) Cambridge 1970, 45.

⁹⁴ Jn 12, 1.

⁹⁵ Jn 12, 3.

the feet with her hair⁹⁶, the house being filled with fragrance⁹⁷, the dispute with Judas and the specific reference to him as a thief, we have Jesus' defence of Mary⁹⁸, the omission of any reference to the woman's deed being known wherever the Gospel is preached in all the world.

2.5 DISTINCTIVE FEATURES

Our next task is to analyze each distinctive feature one by one. In the Synoptics, Jesus eats the Passover meal on the evening before he is crucified⁹⁹, the Synoptics Passover is on Thursday evening with Jesus being executed on the day of Passover itself. In the Gospels of Mark and Matthew, the meal at the house of Simon the Leper appears to occur two days before the Passover. In the Gospel of John, Jesus is executed on the afternoon before the Passover, at the time the Passover lambs were being slaughtered in preparation for the meal¹⁰⁰. The Johannine last supper is not a Passover meal.¹⁰¹ John differs from Mark and Matthew in his timing of the meal at which Jesus was anointed in Bethany.¹⁰² John locates the anointing six days before the Passover, not two days prior to it. This shows that the meal at which the anointing by Mary occurred took place on the first day of the week. Raymond Brown notes that the Sabbath must have come to an end; otherwise Martha would not have been able to wait on table¹⁰³.

John having set the anointing on the first day of the week, in contrast to the two days before the Passover noted in Mark and Matthew, is not clear. Raymond Brown suggested that the repetition of the phrase "the first day of the week" in Jn 20, 1 and 20, 9 is linked to the celebration of the Lord's Supper on the first day of the week.¹⁰⁴

⁹⁶ Ibid.

⁹⁷ Ibid.

⁹⁸ Jn 12, 6.

⁹⁹ Mt 26,19; Mk 14,16; Lk 22,13.

¹⁰⁰ Jn 19,14.

¹⁰¹ BRYAN T. HUIE – WAS THE “LAST SUPPER” THE PASSOVER MEAL ? (2010), in Here a Little, There a Little (on-line): http://www.herealittletherealittle.net/index.cfm?page_name=Last-Supper-Passover-Meal [22 August 1997]

¹⁰² NEWMAN – NIDA, *A Handbook on the Gospel of John*, 582.

¹⁰³ RAYMOND E. BROWN, *The Gospel according to John, (=The Anchor Bible II)*, London 1966, 447.

¹⁰⁴ Ibid.

The most important element in the account of the anointing is "Mary", in the Gospel of John we must consider two initial aspects that contrast with the description in Mark. The first aspect is that in Mark the perfume used is nard¹⁰⁵, whilst we consider that in John it is myrrh.¹⁰⁶ The second aspect is that Mark says that the woman brought in the perfume in an alabaster flask which she broke and then poured over his head. Here the perfume takes the form of a liquid. In the Lukan account we have the flask but, in line with his concern to avoid a conflict with this theology of poverty, eliminates any reference to the precious nature of the perfume.¹⁰⁷ In John then we have no reference to a flask, maybe that the perfume was more viscous.

The setting of the anointing in John is uniquely in the home of Lazarus, Martha, and Mary. The account gives the idea to the reader that there is no reason to think that this was all the perfume available. Mary may have taken the perfume from a larger supply in the house. This is the natural way to interpret this word in Jn 12,3. This is quite different from the Synoptic accounts, were the woman comes in from outside with an alabaster jar of perfume. With this understanding we will understand the reaction of Judas in the Johannine account.

The anointing brings us to Judas, who makes the question: "why the ointment was not sold for 300 denarii and the money given to beggars"¹⁰⁸. Judas was not concerned for the destitute. He was a thief who used to take what was put into the group's money box which he looked after¹⁰⁹. To understand this attitude of Judas, we must first analyze what Jesus replied to him; "Leave her alone, the destitute you always have with you, but you do not always have me"¹¹⁰. How could Mary keep for Jesus' burial ointment she

¹⁰⁵ Mk 14, 3.

¹⁰⁶ Jn 12, 3.

¹⁰⁷ Lk 7, 37.

¹⁰⁸ Jn 12, 4-5.

¹⁰⁹ Jn 12, 6.

¹¹⁰ Jn 12, 7-8.

had just poured on his feet.¹¹¹ Moreover, although Jesus is anointed in John's Gospel, this occurs at the hands of Joseph of Arimathea and Nicodemus, and not by Mary.¹¹²

It is quite a contradiction. Mary was not keeping the ointment for some future use but was keeping it until now to embalm Jesus. The account tells us that we should understand John to mean that more of the costly perfume was available to Mary elsewhere in the house. In the Synoptics, there is reference to an alabaster jar, which conveys a strong sense of the finite nature of the perfume used. The litra of perfume which John mentions, a measure, conveys no such finitude.¹¹³ Such an expression sits more comfortable in a context where what was taken formed only part of a larger stock. In the accounts of Mark and Matthew, the emphasis is on the loss¹¹⁴. A complaint about the loss involved in the woman's anointing makes good sense if there is no more of such perfume where that came from. In John, Judas makes no mention of "loss",¹¹⁵ which coheres with the existence of a larger supply from which the amount applied to Jesus was taken. Judas is described as the keeper of the valuables and as a "thief". If all the perfume has been used up, it will not benefit Judas at all to raise his objection. But if there is more perfume at hand, Judas' objection takes on another dimension. Judas is actually making a bid to be given at least a comparable amount of perfume to sell and give the proceeds to beggars. Here we affirm that Jesus commands that Mary be left alone so that she might keep it for his burial, he is in fact making Mary rather than Judas custodian of the amount that remains.

2.6 CONCLUSION

The Gospel of John does intend his audience to understand that Mary was custodian of a larger measure of ointment that she was keeping for the purpose of Jesus' burial. With this issue we come to another issue that none of the Synoptic Gospels mentions the body of Jesus ever of being anointed after his death. Mark describes how the women come to

¹¹¹ NEWMAN – NIDA, *A Handbook on the Gospel of John*, 390.

¹¹² Jn 19, 38-42.

¹¹³ PHILIP F. ESLER – RONALD A. PIPER, *Lazarus, Mary&Martha*, London 2006, 69.

¹¹⁴ Mt 26,8; Mk 14,4. [ἀπόλεια]

¹¹⁵ [ἀπόλεια]

anoint Jesus but are forestalled by his resurrection¹¹⁶. A frequent objection to Mark's account of the women going with the spices to the tomb is that it would be rather late to think of anointing the body of Jesus by the third day. Luke does not completely break with Mark here, since he retains the visit of the women to the tomb on Sunday morning¹¹⁷. Luke does have a preparation of the spices on the Friday¹¹⁸, this does little to soften the notion of bringing spices to the now-decomposing corpse. Matthew is the only Gospel who mentions the burial but neither anointing nor an attempt at anointing of Jesus' body¹¹⁹. It is likely that he omits the planned Sunday morning anointing because he is aware of this problem, a suspicion strengthened by the fact that he retains a visit to the tomb at this time by Mary Magdalene and the other Mary. This not for the purpose of anointing but so they can see it¹²⁰.

In the Gospels of Mark and Matthew the anointing of Jesus by the woman at Bethany is the only anointing Jesus receives and in each case this gives his statement that she has anointed his body for burial a particular relevance¹²¹. Luke lacks even this proleptic anointing for burial because of the way he completely recasts the incident to avoid Jesus seeming to be insouciant to the needs of the destitute¹²². John has a good story whereby Jesus' body is well prepared prior to burial¹²³ as is the burial custom of the Judeans. Only John specifies the amount - a mixture of myrrh and aloes, about a hundred pounds' weight. Myrrh and aloes were widely used as funeral spices. Myrrh is a spice John has in mind in Jn 12, 3, were he creates a unique verbal link back to the anointing story. We should not underestimate the force of this connection. These are the only two instances of the word "litra" in the New Testament and the word does not appear at all in the Septuagint. Mary's pound of myrrh prefigures the 100 pounds of myrrh and aloes. This issue however does not give us an explanation of why Mary is not mentioned in Jn 19 as the agent of Jesus' anointing. John follows the tradition that the

¹¹⁶ Mk 15, 42-47; Mk 16,1.

¹¹⁷ Lk 24,1.

¹¹⁸ Lk 23, 50-56.

¹¹⁹ Mt 27, 57-61.

¹²⁰ Mt 28,1.

¹²¹ Mt 26, 12; Mk 14, 8.

¹²² Lk 7, 36-50.

¹²³ Jn 19, 38-40.

body of Jesus was requested by Joseph of Arimathea and granted by Pilate¹²⁴. Joseph appears to be a known figure. John does not explain, as the Synoptic Gospels do, that Joseph was a respected member of the Sanhedrin, but he does mention that Joseph was "secretly" a disciple of Jesus.¹²⁵ This idea is not foreign to the Synoptics, which variously call him a 'disciple'¹²⁶ or one 'looking for the kingdom of God'¹²⁷.

In the Gospel of John we find not only the foundation for the preparation of the body at Jesus' burial by way of the earlier story of the anointing, John has also alerted us to the source of the ointments eventually to be used.

¹²⁴ Jn 19,38.

¹²⁵ ESLER – PIPER, *Lazarus, Mary&Martha*, 72.

¹²⁶ Mt 27, 57.

¹²⁷ Mk15, 43; Lk 23,51.

CHAPTER 3 - THE LAST SUPPER

In the account of the Last Supper in John, Judas Iscariot is given a larger role than the other Evangelists, in the perception of the conception of Judas' destined and necessary role. In Jn 13, the evangelist presents us with a picture of the Last Supper in which Judas' betrayal is the central motive. This presents a contrast with the Synoptic accounts of the Last Supper. The Synoptic accounts pursue other important themes, such as, Jesus' institution of the Eucharist and the account of what is known as the "avowal of abstinence", which is Jesus' assertion that he will not drink wine with his disciples until the coming of the Kingdom of God. It is strange here in John that he omits altogether the theme of the Eucharist.¹²⁸ Even though, in Jn 6 Jesus is portrayed as flaunting the most provocative and apparently cannibalistic aspects of the Eucharist. John omits this element in the account of the Last Supper to make the theme of Judas' betrayal more central.¹²⁹

3.1 THE LAST SUPPER IN THE GOSPEL OF JOHN

John draws attention to the presence of a traitor at the Last Supper:

Just before the Passover feast, Jesus knew that his time had come to depart from this world to the Father. Having loved his own who were in the world, he now loved them to the very end. The evening meal was in progress, and the devil had already put into the heart of Judas Iscariot, Simon's son, that he should betray Jesus. Because Jesus knew that the Father had handed all things over to him, and that he had come from God and was going back to God, he got up from the meal, removed his outer clothes, took a towel and tied it around himself. He poured water into the washbasin and began to wash the disciples' feet and to dry them with the towel he had wrapped around himself. Then he came to Simon Peter. Peter said to him, "Lord, are you going to wash my feet?" Jesus replied, "You do not understand what I am doing now, but you will understand after these things." Peter said to him, "You will never wash my feet!" Jesus replied, "If I do not wash you, you have no share with me." Simon Peter said to him, "Lord, wash not only my feet, but also my hands and my head!" Jesus replied, "The one who has bathed needs only to wash his feet, but is completely clean. And you disciples are clean, but not every one of you." (For Jesus knew the one who was going to betray him. For this reason he said, "Not every one of you is clean.") (Jn 13, 1-11.)

¹²⁸ JOHN FENTON, *Finding the Way through John*, Oxford 1988, 28.

¹²⁹ MOODY D. SMITH, *The Theology of the Gospel of John*, Cambridge 1995, 37-38.

Jesus emphasis the element that they should all wash each others' feet in common allegiance to him:

“What I am saying does not refer to all of you. I know the ones I have chosen. But this is to fulfill the scripture, ‘The one who eats my bread has turned against me.’ I am telling you this now, before it happens, so that when it happens you may believe that I am he”. (Jn 13, 18-19.)

This incident is exclusive to John, the purpose here is not just to point a moral about service, but Jesus seems to be carrying out a ritual of purification, by which his disciples are cleansed of their sins in preparation for the great time of testing. Acceptance of this purification is the inclusion in the fellowship. Jesus declares his disciples to be clean, with one exception. Jesus makes it clear that the ceremony has not been efficacious for all. Jesus, already knows who will betray him, and that the suggestions of the Devil are already working in Judas' mind.¹³⁰ People like Judas have been selected for rescue from the evil, the prince of this world. They walk in this world, but belong to another. In our case, Judas, is not merely in the world but belongs irremediably to it, together with all those who reject Jesus' divinity.¹³¹

John goes beyond any other writer in depicting Jesus as actually designating Judas as his betrayer.¹³² He purposely chooses Judas as a disciple, knowing him to be a devil. Here we have an element of destiny as if the betrayal is part of God's plan.¹³³ John quotes the Psalm 41, 9, “Even my close friend whom I trusted, he who shared meals with me, has turned against me.”¹³⁴

John omits the first part of this verse. The evangelist seem that he wanted to show that the betrayal by Judas was fated and foretold, so here John twists and truncated the Psalmist's autobiographical remark into a prophecy.¹³⁵ If so then the purpose of John

¹³⁰ FRANCIS J. MOLONEY, *The Gospel of John*, Minnesota 1998, 380.

¹³¹ MACCOBBY, *Judas Iscariot and the Myth of Jewish Evil*, 69.

¹³² MOLONEY, *The Gospel of John*, 373.

¹³³ *Ibid.*, 384.

¹³⁴ Ps 41, 9.

¹³⁵ MACCOBBY, *Judas Iscariot and the Myth of Jewish Evil*, 70.

seems rather to enhance the story quality of Judas' betrayal. This is not just an individual act of treachery, but a cosmic event foretold in prophecy. John is the only Gospel-writer who finds an actual OT quotation purportedly prophesying the role of Judas.¹³⁶ The Synoptics have the saying: "The Son of Man goeth as it is written of him", followed by a curse on: "that man by whom the Son of Man is betrayed".¹³⁷ But this is no proof-text to support the assertion that these things are "as it is written". John's proof-text concerns the fact that the betrayal is by one who eats at the same table as Jesus. This element is included in the Synoptics, though not with any attempt to prove a Scriptural fulfillment. It is indeed a surprise that the Gospel of John does not contain the impressive saying included in all the Synoptics:

"The Son of man indeed goeth, as it is written of him: but woe to that man by whom the Son of man is betrayed! Good were it for that man if he had never been born". (Mk 14, 21).

The source for this saying is Mark, from whom both Matthew and Luke have taken it.

John does not use this classic formulation found in the Synoptics instead he develops his own story.¹³⁸ Which seems to be designed to show Jesus' foreknowledge of his betrayal and awareness of the identity of his betrayer:

When he had said these things, Jesus was greatly distressed in spirit, and testified, "I tell you the solemn truth, one of you will betray me." The disciples began to look at one another, worried and perplexed to know which of them he was talking about. One of his disciples, the one Jesus loved, was at the table to the right of Jesus in a place of honor. So Simon Peter gestured to this disciple to ask Jesus who it was he was referring to. Then the disciple whom Jesus loved leaned back against Jesus' chest and asked him, "Lord, who it is?" Jesus replied, "It is the one to whom I will give this piece of bread after I have dipped it in the dish." Then he dipped the piece of bread in the dish and gave it to Judas Iscariot, Simon's son. And after Judas took the piece of bread, Satan entered into him. Jesus said to him, "What you are about to do, do quickly." (Now none of those present at the table understood why Jesus said this to Judas. Some thought that, because Judas had the money box, Jesus was telling him to buy whatever they needed for the feast, or to give something to the poor.) Judas took the piece of bread and went out immediately. (Now it was night.) (Jn 13, 21-30).

¹³⁶ Ibid.,

¹³⁷ Mt26, 24, Mk14, 21, Lk22, 22.

¹³⁸ MOLONEY, *The Gospel of John*, 370-371.

The Last Supper narrative in the Fourth Gospel has an element of personal authenticity that is absent in the Synoptic Gospels. The account shows exactly what went on between Jesus and Judas at the Last Supper. The Synoptics only hint that Judas was designated to perform his evil mission, but John makes this explicit from personal knowledge. The complicity of Jesus is perfectly expressed in the detail that as soon as Jesus gave the sop to Judas, the latter was entered and possessed by Satan.¹³⁹ In the Synoptics, this "possession" took place before the Last Supper, and without any prompting from Jesus. This co-operation between Jesus and Satan is part of the logic of the story. Even though the betrayal is portrayed as evil, his victim is willing and co-operative. The two incompatible aims of human sacrifice are fulfilled, to ensure that it happens, and to disclaim responsibility. To kill the victim is evil, and must therefore be the work of Satan. The good consequences that flow from the death of the victim are so desirable that, in some way, the services of Satan must be enlisted. This paradox was developed in the thought of the Church in later times to produce the theory that Satan was duped into bringing about the salvation of mankind, which without this evil ministrations would never have occurred.¹⁴⁰

John's Last Supper account is that it centralizes the theme of Judas's betrayal and especially of Jesus' foreknowledge and even participation in it. The account of the Last Supper ends with the brief and expressive sentence: "It was night...", this sentence possesses a considerable symbolic force.¹⁴¹ Judas going out into the night, has become totally identified with the powers of darkness. From now on, Jesus will move towards inexorable death. He himself has fully acquiesced in this. In the course of his ensuing disquisition to his disciples, he says: "I shall not talk much longer with you, for the Prince of this world approaches"¹⁴². Only death and darkness can be envisaged, and the hope of resurrection is too remote to be mentioned. The Gospel of John displays this separation of emotions, as in the passion plays of all mystery cults, but the dualism that pervades this Gospel makes the separation even sharper. Jesus by his reference to the

¹³⁹ MOLONEY, *The Gospel of John*, 383.

¹⁴⁰ MACCOBBY, *Judas Iscariot and the Myth of Jewish Evil*, 73.

¹⁴¹ *Ibid.*, 75.

¹⁴² Jn 14, 30.

"Prince of this world"¹⁴³, shows that his death is the triumph of Satan. He must come under Satan's complete thrall in order to experience the total submission and defeat that must precede his resurrection and eventual victory.¹⁴⁴

3.2 THE LAST SUPPER IN THE GOSPEL OF MARK

In the account of the Last Supper in the Gospel of Mark we have a betrayal which is foreshadowed, even though Judas himself is not mentioned:

While they were at the table eating, Jesus said, "I tell you the truth, one of you eating with me will betray me." They were distressed, and one by one said to him, "Surely not I?" He said to them, "It is one of the twelve, one who dips his hand with me into the bowl. For the Son of Man will go as it is written about him, but woe to that man by whom the Son of Man is betrayed! It would be better for him if he had never been born." (Mk 14, 18-21).

Mark's Gospel presents the character of Judas Iscariot in the list of the disciples given in 3,14-19. This list contains only one Judas. The next mention of Judas Iscariot is in the scene of the betrayal. Then comes the account of the Last Supper, where the betrayal is foreshadowed, even though Judas Iscariot himself is not mentioned:

While they were at the table eating, Jesus said, "I tell you the truth, one of you eating with me will betray me." They were distressed, and one by one said to him, "Surely not I?" He said to them, "It is one of the twelve, one who dips his hand with me into the bowl For the Son of Man will go as it is written about him, but woe to that man by whom the Son of Man is betrayed! It would be better for him if he had never been born." (Mk 14, 18-21).

Judas like the other disciples responds to Jesus, "Not I, surely?,"¹⁴⁵ while knowing that he himself was the traitor and that Jesus was aware of it. This poignant detail is not exploited. Jesus' comment puts a profound gloss on the matter. Jesus indicates that the betrayal is fated and necessary. There seems to be a bond of complicity between Jesus and Judas. Judas is shouldering the terrible sin of betrayal with the consent of Jesus. He is destined for the acceptance of its inevitability. But none of this is spelt out or consciously thought of. It is for the accounts in the later Gospels to make these matters more explanatory.¹⁴⁶

¹⁴³ Ibid.,

¹⁴⁴ MACCOBBY, *Judas Iscariot and the Myth of Jewish Evil*, 75.

¹⁴⁵ Ibid.

¹⁴⁶ MACCOBBY, *Judas Iscariot and the Myth of Jewish Evil*, 36-37.

The account of the Last Supper in the Gospel of Mark presents two themes, namely, Jesus' Eucharistic words and his so-called "vow of abstinence".¹⁴⁷ Here Jesus leads the disciples to the Mount of Olives, on the way to Gethsemane. Jesus prophesies the desertion of the disciples and the disloyalty of Peter. It is not mentioned that Judas has left the company of Jesus and the disciples. At Gethsemane Jesus prays, while the disciples fail him by falling asleep. He awakens and reproves them twice, but for the third time, he is resigned, saying:

He came a third time and said to them, "Are you still sleeping and resting? Enough of that! The hour has come. Look, the Son of Man is betrayed into the hands of sinners. Get up, let us go. Look! My betrayer is approaching!" Right away, while Jesus was still speaking, Judas, one of the twelve, arrived. With him came a crowd armed with swords and clubs, sent by the chief priests and experts in the law and elders. (Now the betrayer had given them a sign, saying, "The one I kiss is the man. Arrest him and lead him away under guard.") When Judas arrived, he went up to Jesus immediately and said, "Rabbi!" and kissed him. Then they took hold of him and arrested him. (Mk 14, 41-46).

Judas is identified as "one of the twelve", as if it were necessary to explain who he was. We conclude that in some earlier version this was the first introduction of Judas into the Gospel narrative.¹⁴⁸ This implies that the previous appearances of Judas in Mark's Gospel were not part of the earliest Judas story. Judas is introduced for the first time as traitor in Gethsemane, which is the origin from which the Markian stratum of elaborations of the Judas story was developed. There was not originally any section in the Last Supper story about Judas's imminent defection and Jesus' foreknowledge. The story of the Last Supper in the Gospel of Mark in its earliest source, has already undergone several modifications.¹⁴⁹ The sudden treachery of Judas in Gethsemane has already been felt to require some episodes leading up to it, which have been supplied, but without careful attention to the modifications logically required in the way of narrative links.¹⁵⁰

¹⁴⁷ RAYMOND E. BROWN S.S. – JOSEPH A. FITZMYER S.J. – RONALD E. MURPHY, *The New Jerome Biblical Commentary*, Bangalore 1991, 41:95, 626.

¹⁴⁸ MACCOBBY, *Judas Iscariot and the Myth of Jewish Evil*, New York 1992. 36.

¹⁴⁹ Cf. C.G. MONTEFIORE, *The Synoptic Gospels*², 1927, 52.

¹⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, 36-37.

3.3 THE LAST SUPPER IN THE GOSPEL OF MATTHEW

Next we come to the account of Judas in the Last Supper in the Gospel of Matthew:

When it was evening, he took his place at the table with the twelve. And while they were eating he said, "I tell you the truth, one of you will betray me." They became greatly distressed and each one began to say to him, "Surely not I, Lord?" He answered, "The one who has dipped his hand into the bowl with me will betray me. The Son of Man will go as it is written about him, but woe to that man by whom the Son of Man is betrayed! It would be better for him if he had never been born." Then Judas, the one who would betray him, said, "Surely not I, Rabbi?" Jesus replied, "You have said it yourself." (Mt 26, 20-25).

Beyond any doubt, this version is later than Mark's, because the story has plainly advanced.¹⁵¹ The conversation between Jesus and Judas that took place in Mark becomes explicit dialogue. Each of the disciples in turn poses the question to Jesus, and we are not told what Jesus replied. Only Judas' turn is highlighted, and Jesus' words of reply are given. When Jesus prophesies that one of the twelve will betray him, Mark makes them all ask, "Is it I?" In Matthew it is Judas alone who asks the question.¹⁵² These words may appear ambiguous, but they amount to an affirmative answer. Jesus knows that Judas will betray him. Mark leaves this vague and inexplicit, revealing only that Jesus knew he would be betrayed. Matthew has lost something of Mark's mysterious silence. Jesus knows in advance about Judas's treachery. Judas is described more as a man of fate. His treachery is predestined. The words pronounced by Jesus, already in Mark, become more fraught with meaning:

"The Son of Man is going the way appointed for him in the scriptures; but alas for that man by whom the Son of Man is betrayed! It would be better for that man if he had never been born." (Mt 26, 20-25.)

Judas is not merely fulfilling an individual decision. He is fulfilling a prophecy. It is also important in this Gospel that the death of Jesus is seen as a turning point in History and of destiny, as the writer Donald Senior explains: "a turning point of History, the

¹⁵¹ MACCOBBY, *Judas Iscariot and the Myth of Jewish Evil*, 38.

¹⁵² Cf. C.G. MONTEFIORE, *The Synoptic Gospels*², London 1927.

breakthrough of the New Age of salvation that anticipates the final moment of history when human destiny is determined”.¹⁵³

3.4 THE LAST SUPPER IN THE GOSPEL OF LUKE

Now we come to Luke's account of the Last Supper. Luke does not mention Judas by name, though his role as betrayer is strongly hinted at. After Jesus' apocalyptic and Eucharistic words, he announces:

“But look, the hand of the one who betrays me is with me on the table. For the Son of Man is to go just as it has been determined, but woe to that man by whom he is betrayed!” So they began to question one another as to which of them it could possibly be who would do this. (Lk 22, 21-23).

Luke has a distinctive approach to the matter of betrayal in this scene. Where Mark and Matthew refer to the disloyalty of the other disciples in deserting Jesus at Gethsemane, and especially to Peter's denials of his master at the High Priest's house, only Luke weaves this theme into his account of the Last Supper itself. In Mark and Matthew, Jesus waits until he reaches the Mount of Olives before prophesying the disciples' defection, Matthew and Peter's disloyalty. Also, in Mark and Matthew, the treachery of Judas alone is mentioned at the Last Supper, in such a way as to put him into a unique category. In Luke, however, it is not too much to say that Judas is only the extreme case of a general treachery. The impression given is of a disintegration of the disciples' morale as a whole. Again Luke puts this in Satanic terms, but it is not only Judas who is the target of Satan's campaign of corruption, but the whole body of disciples, as is shown by Jesus' statement, "Satan has been given leave to sift you all like wheat" (Lk 22,31). The fact that Luke does not mention Judas' name in the Last Supper account adds to the impression that his treachery is merely the outcrop of a general malaise.¹⁵⁴

3.5 THE ARREST IN THE FOURTH GOSPEL

Now we come to the episode of the Arrest of Jesus in the Gospel of John.

¹⁵³ DONALD SENIOR, *The Passion of Jesus in the Gospel of Matthew*, Minnesota 1990, 7.

¹⁵⁴ Cf. C.G. MONTEFIORE, *The Synoptic Gospels*², 64.

When he had said these things, Jesus went out with his disciples across the Kidron Valley. There was an orchard there, and he and his disciples went into it. (Now Judas, the one who betrayed him, knew the place too, because Jesus had met there many times with his disciples.) So Judas obtained a squad of soldiers and some officers of the chief priests and Pharisees. They came to the orchard with lanterns and torches and weapons. Then Jesus, because he knew everything that was going to happen to him, came and asked them, "Who are you looking for?" They replied, "Jesus the Nazarene." He told them, "I am he." Now Judas, the one who betrayed him, was standing there with them. (Jn 18, 1-5).

This is the last time that we hear of Judas in John's Gospel. Judas has become swallowed up in the power of darkness, and has lost all individuality. Judas performs his role of treachery, and disappears from life.¹⁵⁵

There are several features in the Gospel of John regarding the arrest of Jesus, and also some which are found in John, but are included also in the Synoptics. John has no account regarding with which Judas, according to the Synoptics, identified Jesus.¹⁵⁶ John has a more plausible account of why a traitor was required to find Jesus. The "garden" is a less public place than the vale of Gethsemane, on the Mount of Olives¹⁵⁷, where the Synoptics place the arrest, and would presumably need special knowledge to find. It is a knowledge which Judas, as an intimate of Jesus, could supply to the arresting authorities. An important element is that John involves the Romans¹⁵⁸ in Jesus' arrest, as the Synoptics do not.¹⁵⁹ Judas guides these Roman troops, together with Jewish troops to the garden, and stands by while the arrest takes place. The presence of the Roman troops in Jesus' arrest is a touch of real history which has survived in John's Gospel, and suppressed by the Synoptics. This is an important element since it goes back to earlier sources. It is inevitably that John, using independent sources, should preserve details suppressed by the Synoptics.¹⁶⁰

3.6 THE ARREST IN THE GOSPEL OF LUKE

The account of the arrest in Luke presents us with the crowd which was following Judas, one of the twelve, which was leading the crowd towards Jesus. Judas identifies Jesus

¹⁵⁵ Cf. GRIFFIN, *Judas Iscariot, the Author of the Fourth Gospel*, 35.

¹⁵⁶ MOLONEY, *The Gospel of John*, 483.

¹⁵⁷ BROWN, *The Gospel According to John*, 814.

¹⁵⁸ Ibid.,

¹⁵⁹ MOLONEY, *The Gospel of John*, 483.

¹⁶⁰ Ibid.

with a kiss, and Jesus told him that he is betraying the Son of Man with a kiss.¹⁶¹ With this the people around Jesus reacted with the swords, and one of them struck the high priest's slave, cutting off his right ear.¹⁶² But Jesus had enough and told them to stop. Jesus touched the man's ear and healed him. Jesus replied to the officers of the temple guard and the elders who had come to get him by: "Have you come out with swords and clubs like you would against an outlaw? Day after day when I was with you in the temple courts, you did not arrest me. But this is your hour, and that of the power of darkness!"¹⁶³

3.7 THE ARREST IN THE GOSPEL OF MATTHEW

The arrest in this gospel begins by the crowd which was led by Judas, identified as one of the twelve. But this time the crowd is armed with swords and clubs, sent by the chief priests and elders.¹⁶⁴ Again here we have the kiss of Judas, which was a sign given beforehand to the crowd, to identify Jesus. Jesus replied to Judas by the words: "Friend, do what you are here to do."¹⁶⁵ At that moment the crowd arrested Jesus, one of those with Jesus drew out his sword and cut off the high priest's slave.¹⁶⁶ This time Jesus replied by saying:

"Put your sword back in its place! For all who take hold of the sword will die by the sword. Or do you think that I cannot call on my Father, and that he would send me more than twelve legions of angels right now? How then would the scriptures that say it must happen this way be fulfilled?" (Mt 26, 52).

Then Jesus replied to the crowd by saying:

"Have you come out with swords and clubs to arrest me like you would an outlaw? Day after day I sat teaching in the temple courts, yet you did not arrest me. 26:56 But this has happened so that the scriptures of the prophets would be fulfilled." Then all the disciples left him and fled. (Mt 26, 55).

¹⁶¹ Lk 22, 48.

¹⁶² Lk 22, 50.

¹⁶³ Lk 22, 52.

¹⁶⁴ Mt 26, 47.

¹⁶⁵ Mt 26, 50.

¹⁶⁶ Ibid.,

3.8 THE ARREST IN THE GOSPEL OF MARK

We come now to the account of Jesus' arrest in the Gospel of Mark. Of great interest is that Mark in the account of the arrest, involves the "lawyers and elders", contrary to evidence elsewhere. It was important that the whole Jewish establishment should be involved in the betrayal of Jesus, not merely the entourage of the high priest. The kiss of the traitor is a narrative theme that will require investigation in the light of comparative mythology and biblical precedent. It is important to note how much of the familiar story of Judas is lacking in Mark's version. There is no account of a price of thirty pieces of silver being agreed with the high priests, nor is anything said about Judas being actually paid, only that payment was promised. Nothing is said either about Judas' repentance, or about his death. After the scene in Gethsemane, we do not hear of Judas again. The character remains bare of individualizing traits.

As regarding the Gospel of Matthew, we have an account of the deal struck between Judas and the high priests:

Then one of the twelve, the one named Judas Iscariot, went to the chief priests and said, "What will you give me to betray him into your hands?" So they set out thirty silver coins for him. From that time on, Judas began looking for an opportunity to betray him. (Mt 26, 14-16).

Judas is given a definite motive for his betrayal, that is, a desire for money. Whereas in Mark the question of payment is raised by the priests, in Matthew the question comes from Judas. The amount is not left unspecified, as in Mark, but fixed at thirty silver pieces. Judas acts for money, the sum of thirty pieces of silver is not a great one.

3.9 CONCLUSION

As we have seen in the Synoptics¹⁶⁷ and in the Gospel of John¹⁶⁸ during the meal, Jesus predicted that one of his Apostles would betray him.¹⁶⁹ Jesus is described as reiterating, despite each Apostle's assertion that he would not betray Jesus, that the betrayer would

¹⁶⁷ Mt 26, 24-25. Mk 14, 18-21. Lk 22, 21-23.

¹⁶⁸ Jn 13, 21-30.

¹⁶⁹ STEVEN L. COX – KENDELL H. EASLEY, *Harmony of the Gospels*, United States of America 2007, 182.

be one of those who were present, and saying that there would be “woe to the man who betrays the Son of Man. It would be better for him if he had not been born”.¹⁷⁰ In Matthew 26:23-25 and John 13:26-27 Judas is specifically identified as the traitor.

¹⁷⁰ Mk 14, 20-21.

CONCLUSION

Judas was an isolated personality and lacked the social interaction within his own circle of influence. He was never intended to lose anything, which probably this was, one of the most important factors that brought him to betray Jesus. He felt remorse. He attempted to undo the harm he had done, he failed to seek forgiveness. Thinking it was too late, for him to be given salvation; he was desperate and ended his life in suicide. For Jesus it is never too late to come for his forgiveness and cleansing from sin. Judas, who was one of the twelve disciples in close fellowship with Jesus, completely missed the most important message of Jesus' ministry. On the other hand, Judas is seen from the human perspective as a representative of negativity. From the Gospels we can come to these conclusions: that he made a conscience choice to betray Jesus.¹⁷¹ He was a thief with greed in his heart.¹⁷² Jesus knew Judas and the intention that will be brought, his heart was set on evil and he would not repent.¹⁷³ A positive element that we see in the Gospels and in the Old Testament is that the event of Judas' and his betrayal were part of God's sovereign plan.¹⁷⁴

The character of Judas has got as an infamy that no other character is found in the Bible. His character is one of unbelief. We must consider that the treachery of the traitor is not the entire story. Judas the Iscariot has been explicitly figured as the traitor on the following events: he showed no more compassion for the poor.¹⁷⁵ In the scene of the anointing where we have Mary, Lazarus' sister, anointing Jesus' feet with a very precious ointment, Judas complained about it. He reasoned that that ointment could have been sold with the thought that the money would be given to the poor. In John we see that his protest had nothing to do with "care for the poor". The object of his interest was "poor Judas".¹⁷⁶ We have seen in the Gospel of John that his protest was powered by greed, for he was a thief, who took away what was deposited in the treasury box. Jesus

¹⁷¹ Lk 22, 48.

¹⁷² Jn 16, 6.

¹⁷³ Jn 6, 70.

¹⁷⁴ Ps 41, 9.

¹⁷⁵ 1 Jn 3, 17.

¹⁷⁶ Jn 12, 6.

indicated that he knew from the beginning who should betray him.¹⁷⁷ Jesus knew from the beginning that the traitor was Judas.

Judas was given the discipleship and accepted it because he believed that Jesus was the Messiah. He had a wrong impression about the Messiah, the impression that the Messiah will rule the Roma Empire from Jerusalem. He had no interest about who Jesus is, but he had other ends. Jesus was his means for other ends. These ends were wrong from the beginning. Judas was delighted at the idea that Jesus nominated him as treasurer. He was not delighted to the idea of responsibility and honour that such position required but he was delighted to the idea that as treasurer he could give him an advance on what was going to be his when Jesus was established as Messiah. Judas had a hidden sin from the beginning. Judas was fascinated by the miracles and wonders that Jesus performed, but like the other disciples he was confused as to why Jesus did not use his powers to become the Messiah.

At this point Judas realized that Jesus was not the Messiah he expected Him to be. The power that Judas so much wanted was collapsed. An important phase that Judas lost his heart was that in the episode of the Anointing at Bethany. The response of Jesus to Mary and the ointment underscored in his mind the fact that Jesus was not the Messiah he was expecting. Judas thought about his period that he dedicated to the discipleship as totally a waste of time following Jesus. Judas realized that there was nothing that he could acquire as ends through Jesus as his means. Judas decided to leave Jesus and seek fortune through other means. He decided to get something from Jesus. Eventually thought to betray Jesus and be compensated through the chief Priests. He thought to give Jesus into the hands of the chief Priests who hated him, make some money and start again. Judas blinded by his own greed and ambition, never thought that the chief Priests would press for Jesus' crucifixion. Judas had the idea that an humiliation of Jesus for not being the Messiah will be the punishment. Judas was terrified at the idea of the real intent of the Jewish leaders, that of crucifixion. He knew that Jesus was innocent and when he realized how far the Chief Priests were going he tried to undo his wrong but it was too late. At this point we see Judas moving from

¹⁷⁷ Jn 6, 64.

disciple to betrayer with hidden sins. At the terrifying idea of the intent of the Chief Priests Judas was not willing to come to the light to have his sin exposed and forgiven.

The story about Judas is a problem of evil, that of sin. No sin is small enough to live comfortably with. That was the case with Judas, hidden or secret sin must be dwelt with. In the case of Judas, in was brought into a trap which spring shut and his life was devastated. Sin makes part of the problem of evil. Evil does not happen without thoughts, words, and secret desires.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

BALTZ FREDERICK W., *Understanding the Fourth Gospel Community*. (=Mellen Biblical Press Series 37) London 1996.

BARRETT CHARLES KINGSLEY, *The Gospel According to St John: An Introduction with Commentary and Notes on the Greek Text*, London 1978.

BEATTIE TINA, *A Discipleship of Love: Mary of Bethany and the Ministry of Women*, London 1997.

BEIRNE MARGARET M., *Women and Men in the Fourth Gospel*, London 2003.

BROWN RAYMOND E., *The Gospel According to John*, II vols, (=Anchor Bible Series), New York 1970.

BROWN S.S RAYMOND E. – FITZMYER S.J. JOSEPH A. – MURPHY RONALD E., *The New Jerome Biblical Commentary*, Bangalore 1991.

BRANDON, S.G.F., *The Trial of Jesus of Nazareth*, London, 1968.

BULTMAN, RUDOLPH., *History of the Synoptic Tradition*, Oxford, 1958.

COAKLEY J.F. *The Anointing at Bethany and the Priority of John*, in *Journal of Biblical Literature* 1988.

COX STEVEN L. – EASLEY KENDELL H., *Harmony of the Gospels*, Nashville 2007.

ERIC J. NAFZIGER, *Death of Judas*, in *Learn the Bible* (on-line): <http://www.learnthebible.org/death-of-judas.html> [23 July 2011].

ESLER PHILIP F. – PIPER RONALD A., *Lazarus, Mary and Martha*, London 2006.

FENTON JOHN, *Finding the Way through John*, Oxford 1988.

FORTNA ROBERT TOMSON, *The Gospel of Signs: A Reconstruction of the Narrative Source Underlying the Fourth Gospel*. (=SNTS Monograph Series 11). Cambridge 1970.

GILBIN C. H., *Mary's Anointing for Jesus' Burial-Resurrection*, *Biblica* (1992).

GRIFFIN, C.S., *Judas Iscariot, the Author of the Fourth Gospel*, Boston 1892.

GRUTZMACHER, DIRK. *The "Betrayal" of Judas Iscariot: a study into the origins of Christianity and post- temple Judaism* Edinburgh: Thesis (M.Phil) University of Edinburgh, 1999.

HALAS, R.B., *Judas Iscariot. A Scriptural and Theological Study of his person, His Deeds and His Eternal Lot*, Washington, 1946.

H.B. Dickey, *Judas Iscariot*, New York 1970.

HARRIS, J.R., "Did Judas Really Commit Suicide?" in *Ashland Theological Journal* IV (1900) 358.

HUIE BRYAN T. – WAS THE "LAST SUPPER" THE PASSOVER MEAL ? (2010), in Here a Little, There a Little (on-line): http://www.herealittletherealittle.net/index.cfm?page_name=Last-Supper-Passover-Meal [22 August 1997]

KELBER WERNER H., *The Oral and the Written Gospel: The Hermeneutics of Speaking and Writing in the Synoptic Tradition, Mark, Paul and Q*. Philadelphia 1983.

LIGHTFOOT R.H., *The Lord as Life-giving Bread*, London 1956.

MACCOBBY HYAM, *Judas Iscariot and the Myth of Jewish Evil*, New York 1992.

MOLONEY FRANCIS J., *The Gospel of John* (= Sacra Pagina 4), Minnesota 1998.
MONTEFIORE, C.G., *The Synoptic Gospels*, 2 vols, London 1927.

NEWMAN – NIDA, *A Handbook on the Gospel of John*, (=United Bible Societies Handbook Series), London 1993.

SEGOVIA F.F., *Love Relationships in Johannine Traditions*, Chico/CA 1982.

SENIOR DONALD, *The Passion of Jesus in the Gospel of Matthew*, Minnesota 1990.

SMITH MOODY D., *The Theology of the Gospel of John*, Cambridge 1995.