

Grace Bible Church
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Tree of Life
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The sooner you find out and discover who you really are and what you are and why you are here, the sooner you are going to discover the real reason God created you and what is the purpose for the Lord doing such things as He does just for you.

Some people don't even want to talk about these things but until we do, we are not really going to discover who we are and why we are here and why have we been created. Those questions have answers which are found in the Word of God. We all should remember this principle that everyone is a genius, but if you judge a fish by its ability to climb a tree, it will live its whole life believing that it is stupid.

On the road to the Garden of Gethsemane in MAR 3:14-15 notice in the beginning of our Lord it states, **And He appointed twelve, that they might be with Him, and that He might send them out to preach, and to have authority to cast out the demons.**

You will notice that our Lord appointed the Twelve, including Judas Iscariot, who was an unbeliever. He was given the authority by our Lord to do some very powerful things such as:
Such as preaching the word; Counseling those in the Word. Even performing miracles.

We will see some of Satan's power manifested in the simplicity of the signs and the wonders which Satan will use to deceive the world and if

possible, deceive the very elect; MAT 24:22; MAR 13:20. Here's what the citizens in the world today are going to see and observe which is the deception that Satan uses which is really going to be nothing more than MAGIC.

REV 13:11-14, And I saw another beast coming up out of the earth; and he had two horns like a lamb, and he spoke as a dragon. And he exercises all the authority of the first beast in his presence. And he makes the earth and those who dwell in it to worship the first beast, whose fatal wound was healed. And he performs great signs, so that he even makes fire come down out of heaven to the earth in the presence of men. And he deceives those who dwell on the earth because of the signs which it was given him to perform in the presence of the beast, telling those who dwell on the earth to make an image to the beast who had the wound of the sword and has come to life.

What is the difference between miracles and magic? *Magic* and *miracles* might mean the same thing to some people, but there is actually a tremendous difference between the two terms. It is proper to say that Jesus worked miracles, but it would be wrong to attribute His works to magic. Basically, magic and miracles differ in their source: Magic has either a human or demonic source, but miracles are a supernatural work of GOD.

Remember that the Bible speaks of Satan using magic which is called lying wonders in **2TH 2:3-9, Let no one in any way deceive you, for it will not come unless the apostasy comes first, and the man of**

lawlessness is revealed, the son of destruction, who opposes and exalts himself above every so-called god or object of worship, so that he takes his seat in the temple of God, displaying himself as being God. Do you not remember that while I was still with you, I was telling you these things? And you know what restrains him now, so that in his time he may be revealed. For the mystery of lawlessness is already at work; only he who now restrains will do so until he is taken out of the way. And then that lawless one will be revealed whom the Lord will slay with the breath of His mouth and bring to an end by the appearance of His coming; that is, the one whose coming is in accord with “the activity of Satan, with all power and signs and false wonders,”

Miracles and magic sometimes look the same, but their goals are different. Magic and illusion (which is used by Satan) distract the eye from reality, while miracles draw the eye to reality. Miracles reveal; magic hides.

In our study of MAR 3:14-15, we have seen Judas who was given the power of God; and the authority of God; to preach and teach the “Word of God,” even though he was an unbeliever and not saved or born again. Now, it is true and easy to dismiss Judas as a villain or a victim, but in many ways, he was just like you and me. Judas was a follower of our Lord Jesus Christ and a preacher of the gospel, but there was a doublemindedness about him. In the end, as most of you know and realize, Judas abandoned the faith that he once professed.

Here are some things that are usually and easily overlooked in the story of Judas.

Of course commitment back in those days meant a lot more to them than it does for us since we are really lacking in what it takes to keep commitments which is not being a good person or living in morality. What is it then? What does it take to keep commitments? It takes character. It takes integrity! It takes virtue. It takes honesty. They will usually fall away from their commitment that they tried to keep but they didn't! Of course we know why?

It wasn't because they couldn't! It was because they wouldn't. It was because the only one that they truly desire to be really committed to is themselves. Oh, I know, you met a girl. And, you're going to try and convert her and you are so blinded by your love for her that you don't realize that she has programmed other wimpy men just like you any times before on the conversion table of Hell. And do you really want to know why?

I'll tell you, I have taught what I am about to say since 1991, and as a pastor or a friend I can tell you what I am about to say that comes directly from the throne of God and that is one of your major problems and here's the statement that I came up with when I was studying the book of Proverbs.

Your major problem is simple, so simple to overcome if you desire to, but the real problem is that: "You are bound in chains to the feminine idol." It is found in the interpretation of PRO 5:22 where David warns Solomon to be careful when he was around beautiful women. Because, as PRO 5:22 says about the man who is a sucker to the opposite sex.

PRO 5:22 is one of the many verses that deal with this problem which is found in the Word of God in PRO 5:22, speaking of the man who is being led around by the female because in **PRO 5:22, His own iniquities will capture the wicked, And he will be held with the cords of his sin.**

Now, in correlation with our study, there are a lot of individuals who are Christians who make commitments and then they could care less if they keep with the commitment. It doesn't matter to many of them, at all! They keep commitments but that is commitments to themselves. They simply do not care! They will make vows and commitments and then not keep them and the sad thing is they don't even try to keep them!

Now, back to Judas again, before we leave him in the empty grave, Judas made a commitment to Jesus Christ our Lord. And there's no reason to think he was anything but sincere in his faith. Like the rest of the disciples, he left everything to follow our Lord. Judas was actively involved in ministry, and he was given remarkable spiritual gifts for that time.

Luke tells us that Jesus called “the twelve” together—that included Judas—and “gave them power and authority over all demons and to cure diseases, and he sent them out to proclaim the kingdom of God and to heal.”

LUK 9:1-6, And He called the twelve together, and gave them power and authority over all the demons, and to heal diseases. And He sent them out to proclaim the kingdom of God, and to perform healing. And He said to them, “Take nothing for your

journey, neither a staff, nor a bag, nor bread, nor money; and do not even have two tunics apiece. And whatever house you enter, stay there, and take your leave from there. And as for those who do not receive you, as you go out from that city, shake off the dust from your feet as a testimony against them. And departing, they began going about among the villages, preaching the gospel, and healing everywhere.

Judas Iscariot was a gospel preacher! Judas Iscariot was given the gift of healing for that dispensation which meant a specialize priesthood where only a few could have the power of the Spirit, and the Spirit was not in them but upon them. Judas exercised authority over demons and in a few days after that the demons were gone, Judas went back to join the twelve.

This shows us that active involvement in ministry is a good and wonderful thing; but it is not, in itself, a guarantee of spiritual life or health. You might be wondering if the Spirit could use an unbeliever. Well, again we must go right to the Word of God to get our answer. And this one is really a great passage to use if you ever have to deal with problems like this.

Now, I promise, we will be dealing with our subject of the Vine and the branches but until then - just go along for the ride and look at what our Lord says in this passage, especially because it gets right down to the nitty gritty.

I am going to read a few verses here that will reveal to us the principle of concerning how Judas was used in the plan of God.

MAT 7:13, “Enter by the narrow gate; for the gate is wide, and the way is broad that leads to destruction, and many are those who enter by it.”

We will see the message behind this passage is the fact the minority is going to be used by our Lord in a powerful way.

And then, this was one of the verses that I use to use because of the seriousness of what is said - so concentrate as I read in **MAT 7:14-15, “For the gate is small, and the way is narrow that leads to life, and few are those who find it. Beware of the false prophets, who come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly are ravenous wolves.”**

Here are the sneaky little snakes at work with sheep's clothing because they want to give the impression that they are holy and pure.

And so speaking of the fruit of the Vine that we are trying to begin with, look at **MAT 7:16-17, “You will know them by their fruits. Grapes are not gathered from thorn bushes, nor figs from thistles, are they? Even so, every good tree bears good fruit; but the bad tree bears bad fruit.”**

We will have a ball when we study this and see some of the humor of God with His creation.

MAT 7:18-20, “A good tree cannot produce bad fruit, nor can a bad tree produce good fruit. Every tree that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire. So then, you will know them by their fruits.”

Now, it gets a little more serious because of what the passage reveals.

MAT 7:21-22, “Not everyone who says to Me, 'Lord, Lord,' will enter the kingdom of heaven; but he who does the will of My Father who is in heaven. Many will say to Me on that day, 'Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in Your name, and in Your name cast out demons, and in Your name perform many miracles?’”

Now, in verse 23, notice how careful our Lord is in revealing these principles to us.

MAT 7:23 “And then I will declare to them, 'I never knew you; depart from Me, you who practice lawlessness.’”

Notice the Lord did not say anything about the works that one does but He said that He never knew them although they prophesied in His name, and in His name they cast out demons and performed many miracles?'

So, that is one of the principles that are usually and easily overlooked in the story of Judas. Look at the opportunities that our Lord gave Judas. Judas walked with our Lord for three years. Judas saw the greatest life ever lived up close and personal. You can't have a better model of faith than the Lord Jesus or a better environment for forming faith than Judas had in walking with the Savior.

Notice, what a privilege he has. Judas directly witnessed the miracles. When Jesus fed the 5,000, Judas was there. He took the bread and distributed it along with the other disciples. When our Lord calmed the storm, Judas was there. And Judas also was there when our Lord Jesus raised Lazarus from the dead. You can't have better evidence for faith than Judas had.

Judas heard all the teaching of Jesus our Lord, too. Judas heard the Sermon on the Mount, so he knew there is a narrow road that leads to life and a broad road that leads to destruction. Judas heard the warnings Jesus spoke to the Pharisees, so he knew there is a hell to reject and a heaven to gain. Judas heard the parable of the prodigal son, so he knew God is ready to welcome and forgive those who have wasted themselves in many sins, however, none like Judas. With Judas's own eyes, he saw the clearest evidence. With his own ears, he heard the finest teaching. With his own feet, he followed the greatest example. And yet this man still betrayed Jesus, our Lord.

The human heart is beyond understanding; Jer 17:9 and there is something incomprehensible about a person who abandons the faith they once professed.