

# Judas Iscariot, the Suicide of Satan, and the Salvation of the World

by John Piper

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*The death of Jesus was willed by God, and it is a demonstration of His sovereignty and love, leading to the salvation of sinners.*

**Duration:** 39:47

**Scripture:** Acts 4:27

**Topics:** "Gods Sovereignty", "Salvation Through Christ"

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## Description

This sermon delves into the profound truths surrounding the betrayal and crucifixion of Jesus Christ, highlighting the role of Satan, God's sovereignty over sin, and the ultimate purpose of Christ's sacrificial death for the salvation of sinners. It emphasizes the divine orchestration of events leading to the crucifixion, showcasing God's love and redemptive plan through the most heinous act in history.

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## Transcript

Let's pray together. We believe from your word that Satan is a liar and a murderer. And there have been certain points in his existence where he was suicidally insane.

As when he entered into Judas. And I praise you for your great work through Satan's insanity. And that I'm saved because what Judas did.

And I ask O God that you would protect us from Satan now who has been defanged and defeated. And will one day be cast into the lake of fire with all of those who do not trust Christ. And how we would love to be the instrument as a church of thousands escaping that judgment and coming into the enjoyment of everlasting pleasures at your right hand through faith in Jesus.

Would you use this message to that end and for the strengthening of your people I pray in Jesus name. Amen. This is the final message in the series entitled spectacular sins and their global purpose in the glory of Christ.

The aim of the series and this message has been to show that over and over in history the epic making sins that have turned the course of history have not nullified, but only fulfilled the purposes of God to glorify his son and save his people. And my prayer has been and is at this moment that as these great historical vistas of God's sovereignty over sin take place in your renewed mind they would have a

profoundly practical effect in making you strong in the face of breath-stopping sorrows and courageous in the face of dangerous opposition. Christ exalting strength in calamity, Christ exalting courage in conflict.

I pray that the Lord will weave cords of steel and silk into the fabric of your soul. The most spectacular sin that has ever happened in the history of the world was the brutal murder of Jesus Christ. We are at the apex of sin in this series, and we're at the apex of sovereignty in this series.

To murder the morally perfect, infinitely worthy, divine Son of God is an evil greater than which there is none. And perhaps the most despicable part of it was the betrayal of Jesus by one of his closest friends, Judas Iscariot. Judas was one of the twelve that Jesus had chosen, personally chosen, after an all-nighter of prayer.

He was with him during his entire public ministry at his side. He was entrusted with the money bag as the treasurer of the group. He was close enough at Jesus' side on the night in which he was betrayed to be dipping his bread in the same cup.

In verse 3 of chapter 22 of Luke says, Satan entered into Judas. He went away and conferred with the chief priests and officers how he might betray him, and they were glad and agreed to give him money. So he consented and sought an opportunity to betray him to them in the absence of a crowd, which he did with a kiss.

Now, three questions are raised in my mind by the statement that Satan entered into Judas. Number one, did Satan mess up an innocent man? Did he find this good disciple and mess him up? That's question number one. Number two, why would Satan do this? Doesn't he know this is suicide? Represented symbolically in Judas' own suicide, Satan is about to destroy himself.

Doesn't he know this? And there is evidence he did know it. Question number three, where in the world was God? That's the question most people ask when a horrific calamity happens. Where was God? What was his role or non-role in the most spectacular sin that ever was? So let's take those questions one at a time.

Number one, Luke chapter 22 verse 3, Satan entered into Judas. How are we to think about the will of Judas and the will of Satan? The power of Satan and the will of Judas. Judas was not an innocent bystander when Satan entered him.

The Apostle John, more clearly than others, makes very clear this man was Mary had just anointed Jesus with some very expensive ointment, and Judas complains that the money could have gone to the poor. And Jesus did not approve of that, and John comments, he said this not because he cared about the poor, but because he was a thief. In having the charge of the money bag, he used to help himself to what was put into it.

That's incredible. Almost. If he didn't have internet, it would be incredible.

If he didn't read the news about charlatans in the pulpit, it would be incredible. Another one now, \$39,000 spent on the wife's clothing at the same store. \$29,000 to fly the kids to the Bahamas in the name of evangelism.

A red Mercedes and a white Lexus. Thank you very much. Judas is not incredible anymore.

I just want to quit sometimes. So much reproach is brought on the ministry. I hate the prosperity gospel.

I hate the use of money. Sometimes I just want to strip myself bare of everything and be like Francis of Assisi and go naked into the wilderness. Lest there be any thought that I give a rip about what money means.

So pray for me in that regard. Not that I won't have my rear end showing someday, but that I won't fall. So I read that and I say, You can't walk with Jesus that long and do what you did, can you? And then I read the news.

Paul explains to us a little bit of how Satan and sin work together. Let me read you a passage that has been more illuminating to me than any other passage about how the influence of Satan and my own sin conspire. It's Ephesians 2. I'll just read it to you.

You can mark it down and look at it later. Ephesians 2, 1 to 3 goes like this. And you were dead, talking to me and you, you were dead in the trespasses and sins in which you once walked.

So our sins, our trespasses, we're doing this stuff. We're feeling this stuff, thinking this stuff. Following the course of this world, following the prince of the power of the air.

Notice the connection between my sin and his leadership. It's my sin and I'm following him. I may not even know I'm following him.

He's just beating the drum and everything in me likes that rhythm. The spirit that is now at work in the sons of disobedience, whom we all once, among whom we all once lived, in the passions of our flesh. There it is again.

That's me. That's not him. In the passions of our flesh, carrying out the desires of the body and of the mind.

And we're by nature children of wrath like the rest of mankind. So when you think about Satan coming into Judas, don't think, oh poor Judas. Dead in our sins, walking in passions of the flesh, fulfilling the desires of the body and therefore following the prince of the power of the air.

Satan does not take innocent people captive. There are no innocent people. Satan has power where sinful passions hold sway.

Judas was a lover of money, not Jesus. And he covered it. Be aware of this.

Oh, this is a warning to Bethlehem people in the world we live and because of who we are. He covered it with a phony external relationship with Jesus and then he sold him for 30 pieces of silver. And everybody watching Judas cast out demons thought he was saved.

He sent them all out two by two. They all came back, power in their hands. And Jesus looked at him and said, don't rejoice that you got power.

Rejoice that your names are in heaven. You wonder if he glanced at Judas. His name wasn't written there.

The son of destruction. So Bethlehem, how many of Judas' tribe are there still here today? Don't be one. I just beg of you.

Don't be one and don't be duped by one. Second question. Why would Satan do this? Doesn't he know this is suicide? Doesn't he know he's going to be undone? He's going to be destroyed.

The cross and the resurrection are the breaking of the back of Satan. They're the defanging of Satan. They are the decisive battle that enables him finally be thrown in the lake of fire.

Doesn't he know this? I think he knew it. Why do I think he knew it? I think he knew it for these couple of reasons. When you see Jesus come on the scene in the front end of the Gospels, he hits Satan immediately.

What is Satan's tactic immediately in the wilderness? Turn stones to bread. You're the son of God. Use your power to escape hunger.

Jump off the temple. Angels will catch you. Demonstrate your power.

You'll get a following. Bow down to me. You can rule the world.

Interpretation. Whatever you do, don't die. Whatever you do, don't suffer.

Whatever you do, don't use your power to lay your life down. That's the way Satan began to work. There's one other little clue.

You remember the time that Jesus predicted that he was going to be handed over to the elders and the chief priests and be killed and Peter, big mouth, shoot from the hip, ready, fire, aim, Peter, said, I'll just read it, far be it from you Lord. This will never happen to you. To which Jesus was not gentle.

And the words he used are very significant. He said, get behind me, Satan. Lighten up, right? He just, this is Peter.

It's his personality. No. You tell me, this will never happen to me, this death, get behind me, Satan.

That's what Satan wants. So what happened? What's going on in Luke 22 3? Satan enters into Judas. Well, the Bible does not tell us what happened.

Doesn't tell us. So I'm, I'm gonna guess, all right? This is Piper's attempt to draw some inferences from the data and may not be the case. I don't know what's going on in Satan's head.

I'm not real eager to get in there and find out. But I conclude that Satan saw his efforts to divert Jesus from the cross failing. Over and over again, Jesus sets his face like flint to die.

No matter what Satan does, Jesus is resolute and there comes a point where he knows, I can't stop this. Now, what would you do if you were the arch-evil person and your first strategy aborts? I can't stop this. Here's what I would do.

I think I'm a, like Satan in this regard. I'd try to make it as bad as possible. And I think that's what he's doing.

If I can't keep him from dying, I'll make his death. I'll make it through betrayal. I'll make it through abandonment of his disciples.

I'll make it through the denial of Peter. Do you remember, a little princess here. Remember in Luke 22, Jesus looks at Peter and says, Satan demanded to have you that he might sift you like wheat.

Peter, Satan meant to have you, Peter, but I prayed for you. When you turn, strengthen your brethren. Satan wanted Peter down.

He wanted all the disciples scattered. And he wanted that lash to be as hard as it could be and the nails to be as rusty as they could be and the death to be as slow as it could be. If he can't stop it, he'll make it horrible.

Emotionally horrible, relationally horrible, physically horrible. I think that probably is what happened. So that's my answer to the question, what's going on with Satan's reversal? This is insane and and just know, this is another little spin-off for your practical life.

Satanic temptation is irrational. We deal with people walking away from marriages, kids doing stuff, breaking their parents' heart, and you try to reason, it's totally unreasonable. There is no rationality.

They will look in your eyes like a deer in the headlights and speak gibberish when it comes to truth. Satan is irrational. He's insane.

If we just saw clearly, this is why truth is the main weapon in the Christian life. Satan's a deceiver. He's a liar.

And at the key points of his worst action, he's irrationally, insanely evil. Number three, the most important question of the whole sermon series. Where was God? Or let's be more precise.

I don't like that question. Where was God? It's just kind of a emotive reaction when horrible things happen. It doesn't have a very easy answer.

Like heaven wouldn't be a helpful answer. Here wouldn't be a helpful answer. Everywhere wouldn't be a helpful answer.

It's a question that it's just an emotional... It means, why didn't he do something? That's what it means. So I'm asking, what was God's role or non-role in the most spectacular sin that ever happened? The murder of Jesus. Now, caution.

To answer this question, I think we need to put our hands on our mouths and silence all philosophical speculation. Which we all... You don't think you're a philosopher, but you are. We all bring presuppositions, ideas, world views, assumptions, speculations, to questions like this.

We bring them. And I just want to say, let's just put our hands on our mouths and do our best to just let the Bible speak. And I'll try to get out of the way as much as I can in the next few minutes and let the Bible speak in answer to the question, what was his role in this sin of the murder of Jesus? The betrayal of Jesus, the abandonment of Jesus, the denial of Jesus, the crucifixion of Jesus, the mockery of Jesus.

What was his place? The first thing the Bible shows us is that the details surrounding the death of Jesus were prophesied amazingly in the Old Testament. So that there is no way we can think that they happened without God's awareness, at least. So the Scriptures prophesied that evil men will reject Jesus when he comes.

Have you never read in the Scriptures the stone which the builders rejected has become the cornerstone? This is the Lord's doing and it is marvelous in our eyes, Psalm 118. The Scriptures prophesied that Jesus must be hated. The word that is written in the law must be fulfilled. They hated me without a cause.

The Scriptures prophesied that the disciples would abandon Jesus. You will all fall away because of me for it is written I will strike the shepherd and the sheep of the sheep and the flock will be scattered. The Scriptures prophesied that Jesus will be pierced and not a bone will be broken.

One of the soldiers pierced his side with a spear for these things took place that the Scriptures might be fulfilled. Not one of his bones will be broken and again another Scripture. They will look on him whom they have pierced.

Scriptures prophesied that Jesus would be betrayed by a close friend for 30 pieces of silver. I am NOT speaking of all of you. I know whom I have chosen, but the Scripture will be fulfilled.

He who ate my bread has lifted his heel against me. The Son of Man goes as it was written of him, but woe to that man by whom the Son of Man is betrayed. Then was fulfilled that which was spoken by the prophet Jeremiah saying they took 30 pieces of silver the price of him on whom the price had been set by some of the sons of Israel and they gave them for the potter's field as the Lord directed me.

These things were fixed and had to be lest the Scripture be broken. And not only does the Scripture portray the prophecies Jesus himself prophesies down to the details. Remember these? See, we are going up to Jerusalem, Jesus says, and the Son of Man will be delivered over to the chief priests and the scribes and they will condemn him to death and deliver him over to the Gentiles and they will mock him and spit upon him and flog him and kill him and after three days he will rise.

That's pretty detailed prophecy coming out of the mouth of Jesus. That's gonna happen. That's gonna happen.

It's fixed. It's the plan. And then right up to the end, prophesying still, he looks at Peter and says, truly, I tell you this night before the rooster crows, you're gonna deny me three times.

I know this is going to happen. You will do this. I know it.

Now from these prophecies, Old Testament Jesus prophecies, we know that God foresaw and did not prevent and therefore included in his plan that the Son would be rejected, hated, abandoned, betrayed, denied, condemned, spit upon, flogged, mocked, pierced, and killed. And all of those are sin. No exceptions.

They are explicitly in the mind of God before they happen as things that he plans will happen to Jesus. These things did not just happen. They were foretold in the Word.

God knew they would happen. He did not plan to stop them. And in not planning to stop them, he planned to let them happen.

Which means he folded them in to his plan and they happened according to his sovereign will. And all of them were evil. They were sin.

It is sin to reject Jesus, hate, abandon, betray, deny, condemn, spit upon, flog, mock, and pierce, and kill the morally perfect, infinitely worthy, divine Son of God. It is, in fact, the most spectacular sin that ever

happened, willed by God. God brought them to pass.

And we don't have to even use any kind of inferring capacities of our mind to draw that conclusion because the Bible simply says it in Isaiah 53, 10. Verse 6, all we like sheep have gone astray. We have turned every one to his own way and the Lord has laid on him the iniquity of us all.

Verse 10, it was the will of the Lord to crush him. He has put him to grief. So behind the spitting and flogging and mocking and killing is the invisible hand and plan of God, his Father, who loves him infinitely.

I say real carefully, hand and plan. This truth is too big, too big, too weighty, too controversial, too shocking to be imprecise about, or glib, or careless, or cocky, or combative. I choose the word hand and plan because those are the two words the most explicit text in the Bible uses concerning this.

And the text, it should be circled in red in your Bible, Acts chapter 4 verses 27 and 28 is the clearest, most explicit statement about God's hand and plan in the horrific, sinful crucifixion of his Son in the Bible. It goes like this, Acts 4 27, Truly in this city they were gathered together against your holy servant Jesus whom you anointed, both Herod and Pontius Pilate, along with the Gentiles and all the peoples of Israel, to do whatever your hand and your plan had predestined to take place. Herod, Pilate, Gentile soldiers, mobs crying crucify him, gathered to do what your hand and your plan predestined to take place.

Now, that's a very strange way of talking. We do not think of hands predestining anything. Hands don't predestine, do they? Plans, but hands? What's this? What your hand and plan predestined to take place.

That's a literal translation. I think what it means is this, the hand of God in the Bible represents his power, and not just abstract theoretical power, but practical exertions in the world bear your right arm, stretch forth your hand, means do something, and in connection with plan, then doesn't it mean what your hand and your plan predestined to take place means? Not just a plan that might abort, but a plan with a hand behind it, a plan with an almighty, sovereign, divine hand behind it. That's the way I think the church was thinking when they prayed that way.

Herod and Pilate and the soldiers and the mobs were gathered together to do what God's plan and his power behind the plan would most surely execute. That explains Isaiah 53 10. It was the will of the Lord to bruise him.

He has put him to grief. Or let me give you the literal translation from the King James Version, which happens in this case to be the most literal of Isaiah 53 10. It pleased the Lord to bruise him.

He hath put him to grief. So the Lord bruised his son behind Herod, Pilate, mobs, soldiers, Judas, Peter, abandoning disciples, was an invisible plan and hand, namely the plan of his father, who loved him infinitely and never stopped loving him. You remember that little text in Ephesians 4 where Paul says that the death of Jesus is a fragrant aroma to God.

So even when he was pouring his wrath upon his own son in our place, he was loving the son's obedience, loving the son's devotion. Now I step back and conclude this series by asking why should this matter to you? Why should this sermon and these seven sermons matter to you? Spectacular sins and their global purpose in the glory of Christ manifest in the salvation of sinners. Well, I just gave you the answer, didn't I? It should matter this for this reason.

If God were not the main actor in the death of Christ, then the death of Christ would not save us from our sins. And we would perish in hell forever. The reason the death of Christ is the heart of the gospel is because it was God's doing.

Romans 5 8. God shows his love for us. God shows his love for us in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died. God shows his love in that Christ died.

If you try to separate the activity of God and keep his hands clean from this murder, you have no gospel, and you have no love. Romans 8 3. Sending his own son in the likeness of sinful flesh and for sin, he condemned sin in the flesh. God condemned my sin in the flesh of Jesus when the the skin tore, it was my sin being punished.

This is love beyond degree. Galatians 3 13. Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law by becoming a curse for us.

God cursed Jesus so that the curse could be taken away from me. Second Corinthians 5 21. For our sake God made him to be sin who knew no sin so that in in him we might become the righteousness of God.

If you take God's activity out of the death of Jesus, we can't be justified by God. It wouldn't have anything to do with God. It would just be a tragic, circumstantial, historical event.

Isaiah 53 5. He was wounded for our transgressions. He was crushed for our iniquities. God wounded him.

God crushed him for you and for me, and we go free. The reason why this series of messages matters is this. If you embrace the biblical truth that God ordains spectacular sins for the global glory of his Son, without ever becoming whole unholy or unrighteous or sinful in any way in doing that, if you embrace that truth, you will not shrink back from the cross as a work of God.

And I don't want anybody to shrink back from the cross. As a work of God. You will not be among the number of those who in their arrogance call the most loving act that ever was divine child abuse.

You will not be among that number. And there are many in the Twin Cities who say that. You will come to the cross and fall on your face, and you will say, this is no mere human conspiracy.

This is the work of God. This is the love of God. You will receive it as your highest treasure, and you will be saved.

And Christ will be glorified, and I will not have preached in vain. I ask you, Lord, to draw unbelieving sinners to yourself now, at the South Campus and at the North Campus, now and here, downtown. Holy Spirit, don't leave us to our own resources.

When we sing grant that some would be singing this from a born-again heart, a faith-filled heart, a Christ-treasuring heart for the first time. Through Christ I ask it. Amen.

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