



Judas and Jesus: Two Faces of a Single Revelation

Jean-Yves Leloup

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A radical reinterpretation of the relationship of Judas and Jesus

- Reexamines the role and the purpose the key figure of Judas played in the crucifixion story
- Reveals how Judas was “betrayed” by Jesus, and how, taken to the limits of his humanity, he lost everything he most cherished on the path to his true self

The familiar story of Judas, betrayer of Jesus, is striking because of its incomprehensibility. Why would one of Christ’s disciples and companions of the heart deliver him up to his enemies and a barbarous, ignominious, and certain death for thirty pieces of silver? Jean-Yves Leloup’s careful investigation of the gospels, various apocryphal texts, and most importantly the Coptic codex known as the Gospel of Judas, leads him to conclude that there is more to the familiar story of Judas than a simple demonstration, viewed through one man, of humanity’s inherent failings.

The betrayal of Jesus to the Romans was Jesus’s idea, explains Leloup. Jesus persuaded Judas to play the role of “evil” in humankind by telling him that this enactment was crucial to God’s plan and would set Judas by Jesus’s side for eternity: “There where I am,” spoke Jesus to Judas, “is where I wish you, too, to be.”

But to get there, Judas--a metaphorical representation of the darker side present in all human beings and the “shadow” counterpart to his Messiah dying on the cross-- must first shed all his human qualities. His failings of greed, deceit, and cowardice--and even his faith and hope--are washed away in the despair that engulfs him. A parallel moment occurs for Jesus on the cross, when he comes to know the despair of separation from God. The moment Judas “loses” his life and all that gave it meaning--his God, his law, his justice, his Messiah--is the very moment he finds that which cannot be discarded--life eternal. Thus, in the moment of his ultimate extremity, Judas receives Jesus’s true message and his intended gift.

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