

Acts Week 11

Was it Ignorance or fulfilling Prophecy?

17 “Yet now, brethren, I know that you did it in ignorance, as did also your rulers. **18** But those things which God foretold by the mouth of all His prophets, that the Christ would suffer, He has thus fulfilled. **19** Repent therefore and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, so that times of refreshing may come from the presence of the Lord, **20** and that He may send Jesus Christ, who was preached to you before, **21** whom heaven must receive until the times of restoration of all things, which God has spoken by the mouth of all His holy prophets since the world began. **22** For Moses truly said to the fathers, ‘The LORD your God will raise up for you a Prophet like me from your brethren. Him you shall hear in all things, whatever He says to you. **23** And it shall be that every soul who will not hear that Prophet shall be utterly destroyed from among the people.’ **24** Yes, and all the prophets, from Samuel and those who follow, as many as have spoken, have also foretold these days. **25** You are sons of the prophets, and of the covenant which God made with our fathers, saying to Abraham, ‘And in your seed all the families of the earth shall be blessed.’ **26** To you first, God, having raised up His Servant Jesus, sent Him to bless you, in turning away every one of you from your iniquities.”

Peter begins building a case for faith. He balances their denial and sin against God’s grace and salvation. Willaim McDonald outlines the peoples blindness in Believers Bible Commentary, page 1568.

“They delivered up Jesus (to the gentiles for trial)

They denied Him in the presence of Pilate, when he was determined to release Him.

They denied the Holy one and the just, and asked for the release of a murderer (Barabbas).

They killed the Prince (or offer of life)

Notice by contrast, God’s treatment of Jesus;

He raised Him from the dead (verse 15).

He glorified His Servant Jesus.”

You did in ignorance, ágnoia, ag'-noy-ah; from G50;. As used here it is not describing a lack of knowledge but instead of moral blindness. There is a distinct difference, one is a lack of general knowledge, people stumble in reasoning and understanding especially in biblical times as we are reading, there were major changes taking place in the lives of all who lived during these times. But this does not excuse moral blindness, no, for a religious people and those in charge of the law and teaching, to have a lack of morals in this case is unfathomably beyond understanding. The very people who have lived through the offerings and sacrificial system,

these to whom were given the law and the prophets, are now blind to the truth? To them who had Leviticus given to them, a written moral guide, have come now to a moral blindness so deceiving they begged a murderer go free and crucified Jesus.

All was committed without justification and carried out because of a despise due to His fame and power. However, Peter knows there was no moral blindness as he lays out his case before them and accuses them of what they have done. Peter gives them an out as he uses the term moral blindness as though it was a case of the flue. But this supposed blindness was an intentional attack from the leaders and teachers. Again we find the control of pride bringing about the destruction of a people.

We can ask ourselves, was this the manner in which it had to be? That all the actors had been predestined as individuals from the foundation of time? If so, could the prophets had warned people of what was to come upon them as individuals? If God directs man in all things, as many say, and man turns their back on God's moral foundation, who then is to blame. This again calls for us to look at freewill. Does man have freewill? Did God assemble all the misguided in place that the prophecy would be fulfilled, or did He choose people that would carry out what He needed done? Chapter one of Romans makes it very clear that man is without excuse for not believing, for not adhering to moral boundaries, he cannot claim ignorance. So when we view our verse again through the eyes of moral blindness, what then is Peter really saying to these he is addressing?

Peter says, **“Repent therefore and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out,** Peter is good in the way he structures his sermon, he does both, condemns them and in the next sentence tells them how to be saved. Brothers and sisters, let no-one tell you, you have no part in your salvation, that your life has been written and you are merely a puppet. **Deuteronomy 30:15, “See, I have set before you today life and good, death and evil,”** This goes on to warn the people what will become of them if they choose correctly or incorrectly, but a choice it is, and the people are told to choose. **30:19, “I call heaven and earth as witnesses today against you, that I have set before you life and death, blessing and cursing; therefore choose life, that both you and your descendants may live;”** Looking again at our verses we witness wrong decisions that should bring death, but God's offer of grace still exist.

It's not a stage play.

We often look at some of the individuals God chooses to fulfill prophecy and wonder did that person ever have a choice to violate God's commands or were they fore so chosen to do so? **John 17:12; While I was with them in the world, I kept them in Your name. Those whom You gave Me I have kept; and none of them is lost except the son of perdition, that the Scripture might be fulfilled.** How did Jesus go about keeping the disciples through His ministry on earth? Was it not the word? **John 6:63; “It is the Spirit who gives life; the flesh profits nothing. The words that I speak to you are spirit, and they are life.”** I believe God keeps the believer safe, the problem we have in our world right now is that many believe they are believers but their

lives fail to demonstrate such. Some think if Jesus' name rolls off their lips once and a while they are saved, these are those we need to be looking for and helping to understand the truth.

I was with them, I kept them in Your name. Two issues are going on here. First, none of the Pharisees taught in another's name, especially when it was a prideful achievement to have more students than the other teachers. Jesus makes it clear in what He does and says is nothing of His own but what He hears and sees the Father do. He says, **"in Your name."** Matthew verse 23:5-7 reminds us of when we looked at the Pharisee standing around with their large phylacteries, boastfulness and loud prayers to be seen and heard by all the public, Jesus on the other hand avoids popularity as He ministers to a lost world. So we have on one hand the pride of the Pharisees and on the other the humble servanthood of our Lord Jesus. Knowing who we are in Christ... and being able to understand all that implies... is the beginning of surrender. There can be no greater reward than that of the gift of faith and living for Christ, that we may obtain salvation.

Hear what Jesus says before in Matthew,

Matthew 6:5-7; **"And when you pray, you shall not be like the hypocrites. For they love to pray standing in the synagogues and on the corners of the streets, that they may be seen by men. Assuredly, I say to you, they have their reward. "But you, when you pray, go into your room, and when you have shut your door, pray to your Father who is in the secret place; and your Father who sees in secret will reward you openly. "And when you pray, do not use vain repetitions as the heathen do. For they think that they will be heard for their many words."**

Vain repetitions – Hinduism, Mantras

sacred verbal formula repeated in prayer, meditation, or incantation, such as an invocation of a god, a magic spell, or a syllable or portion of scripture containing mystical potentialities.

A commonly repeated word or phrase, especially in advocacy or for motivation.

A concept or fact that is mentioned repeatedly, especially in advocacy.¹

Son of perdition, does this mean from the time of his being knitted in his mother's womb, Judas was predestined to commit this heinous offense? That he would have no chance to repent? When Judas came to the Pharisee and threw the money he had been paid to arrange the arrest of Jesus, he did not repent, he was merely remorseful of what he did. Peter on the other hand repented and returned to his Lord, while Judas took his own life. There is a power we can get only from God to fight off the evil that would have its way as it did with Judas. Judas had a moral blindness, but what was it that came first, his refusal of Jesus all the while pretending to be of the same heart of the other disciples. His need to rob the money box as a wolf in sheep's

¹ The American Heritage® Dictionary of the English Language, 5th Edition / <https://duckduckgo.com/?q=montra&atb=v342-1&ia=definition>

clothing? I believe the moral blindness in people comes from an attitude within the individual who looks at everything according to their own understanding and desires. **Proverbs 3:5; Trust in the LORD with all your heart, And lean not on your own understanding;**

So was Judas predestined before birth? There are those who believe in a predestination that all are predestined to heaven or hell, but this would nullify **2 Peter 3:9; “not willing that any should perish but that all should come to repentance.”** These words would be non-sensical if God predestined certain people for destruction. It is my understanding, and mine, not others, that we have the freedom to choose the path we will eventually walk. Some will choose salvation and others destruction. Once we choose after having received the invitation and accepting salvation we are eventually placed amongst a category, a group of believers or better yet, the body of Christ, 1 Corinthians 12:27. Those who do not accept are bound for destruction.

How then do we look at Judas? God chooses people to do certain acts according to their traits, but He will use all things to come together for the good of those who believe. Judas was chosen for the heart he possessed, he made his choice. Baker Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament, by Andreas J. Kostenberger writes on page 494, “This suggest that “son of destruction” labels Judas Iscariot as part of a typology of evil personages seeking to thwart God’s sovereign purposes across the sweep of salvation history.” This is a good understanding in regard to categories of believers and non-believers but I’m not sure that Judas was trying to destroy the message of salvation, I believe he was just a thief and looked out for himself. This is a large portion in our world today. There are those who care not for the things of God and so therefore they live according to their own desires and understanding. We have a class of people now called “NONES” for the do not acknowledge anything of God, therefore they do not even have an opinion, they just move on.

"Nones" on the Rise The number of Americans who do not identify with any religion continues to grow at a rapid pace. One-fifth of the U.S. public - and a third of adults under 30 - are religiously unaffiliated today, the highest percentages ever in Pew Research Center polling.”
<https://duckduckgo.com/?q=common+term+for+NONES&atb=v342-1&ia=web>

The type of man Judas was, **John 12:5-6; Judas says, “Why was this fragrant oil not sold for three hundred denarii and given to the poor?” This he said, not that he cared for the poor, but because he was a thief, and had the money box; and he used to take what was put in it.** Judas cared for no-one other than himself and God knew he would be the one to perform the necessary act that would soon lead to the cross and Jesus’ crucifixion. He was a thief.

It raises the question of us today, where are we placing our hearts? Is success the goal, if so what does your success look like? Is it in items collected, trophies on the wall? When we look at success through the bible we find there can be no greater achievement than salvation, and how do we achieve it, not by our works but by faith in our Lord Jesus, and faith alone which is a gift from God.

I believe this verse helps us to understand how God sees us, and I believe this is in part, part of Peter's road map in showing conviction and offering. Conviction that Jesus let it be known He knew their thoughts and their plots and confronted them. **Matthew 9:3-4; And at once some of the scribes said within themselves, "This Man blasphemes!" And Jesus knowing their thoughts said, "Why are you thinking evil in your hearts?** This is much the same manner in which Peter is teaching, he lets no-one go without addressing their violations but then says "repent," and there comes a light shining through the darkness with a word of promise.

Verse 22, 'The LORD your God will raise up for you a Prophet like me from your brethren.

What causes the blindness? How could they have taught and be taught and not recognized Jesus was this one promised so long ago, see Isaiah 9:6.

23 And it shall be that every soul who will not hear that Prophet shall be utterly destroyed from among the people.' This takes us back to that which God places before the people, which way they will choose and their fate will be. **24 Yes, and all the prophets, from Samuel and those who follow, as many as have spoken, have also foretold these days.**

25 You are sons of the prophets, and of the covenant which God made with our fathers, saying to Abraham, 'And in your seed all the families of the earth shall be blessed.' **26 To you first, God, having raised up His Servant Jesus, sent Him to bless you, in turning away every one of you from your iniquities."**

Peter addresses the covenant and the seed of all the families on earth being blessed through Abraham. "All" here is inclusive of gentiles, all nations and tongues. God sent the message first to Israel but we find later they rejected the word at first and so Peter and Paul went to preach to the gentiles, Peter, Acts 2:14-42, Paul, Acts 22:17-23:11.