



The DAILY JESUS NEWS #312 Friday... Day of Agony and Atonement

Jesus' Three-Phase Roman Trial

Judas Commits Suicide and a Field is Bought in His Name MT 27.3-10 (Parallel Text: Acts 1.18-19)

3 ^{MT}When Judas, who had betrayed him, saw that Jesus was condemned, he was seized with remorse and returned the thirty pieces of silver to the chief priests and the elders.

4 "I have sinned," he said, "for I have betrayed innocent blood."

"What is that to us?" they replied. "That's your responsibility."

5 So Judas threw the money into the temple and left. Then he went away and hanged himself. ^AThere he fell headlong, his body burst open, and all his intestines spilled out.

6 ^{MT}The chief priests picked up the coins and said, "It is against the law to put this into the treasury, since it is blood money." 7 They decided to use the money to buy the potter's field as a burial place for foreigners. ^ASo with the reward he got for his wickedness, Judas bought a field.

8 Everyone in Jerusalem heard about this, so they called that field in their language 'Akeldama,' which is "Field of Blood." ^{MT}That is why it has been called the Field of Blood to this day.

9 Then what was spoken by Jeremiah the prophet was fulfilled:

"THEY TOOK THE THIRTY PIECES OF SILVER, THE PRICE SET ON HIM BY THE PEOPLE OF ISRAEL, (10) AND THEY USED THEM TO BUY THE POTTER'S FIELD, AS THE LORD COMMANDED ME." (Zech 11.12-13; eJr. 18.2,11; 32.6-9)

NOTE: We use superscript identification of the source gospel in "blended texts" as follows: Matthew = ^{MT}, Mark = ^M, Luke = ^L, John = ^J, Acts = ^A. This "superscript ID" is inserted at the beginning of the quoted text, identifying that Bible book until a different superscript appears. In addition, *red italics identify the words of Jesus*. Old Testament quotations are CAPITALIZED.

CONTEXT DIGEST	
Location	Jerusalem
Timeline	Early April (Month 39)
Jesus' Life Context	Stage VIII: Passion Week
	E. Friday: Day of Agony and Atonement

	Jesus' Three-Phase Roman Trial
Title	Jesus Commits Suicide and a Field is Bought in His Name

The story of Jesus' trial and crucifixion takes another brief detour in today's reading, which describes Judas' suicide and what happened afterward. This is another great example of the benefits of blending two parallel texts, for it resolves the apparent contradictions between the accounts in a seamless way.

Matthew recorded Judas' suicide at this point in the Roman trials of Jesus because of it was the actual timing of his sad death. It is ironic that Judas ended up dying on the same day that Jesus did, probably around the same time. Jesus' death was necessary; Judas' was not.

We have seen Peter's denial of Jesus. Was Judas' betrayal of Jesus really that much worse? One thing is for sure. If Judas had repented and asked for Jesus' forgiveness, he would have received it, just as Peter did. Jesus had said "woe" to Judas because the Lord knew that Judas would never be able to forgive himself when he realized his betrayal would lead to Jesus' death, and suicide would be the result. Judas ended up destroying himself over what he did to Jesus. His remorse was all too real.

Judas did not expect Jesus to end up being crucified. He did not betray his Master so that he would die. It appears that Judas believed that by turning Jesus over to the authorities, he would speed up the coming of Jesus' kingdom. Judas expected Jesus to unleash his power against his enemies, as David had done, and set up his eternal kingdom by force.

Judas shared the common Messianic misconceptions of his countrymen, and his years with Jesus had not corrected his views. So, why not make some extra money along the way to kick-starting Jesus' kingdom reign? This deception, and greed for money is what Satan used to tempt Judas into his own self-destruction.

Once again we see the hypocrisy of the chief priests when Judas sought to return the 30 silver coins they had paid him. They could not accept "blood money" into the Temple coffers, but they could engage in all manner of evil in condemning Jesus to death under false pretenses, and abuse him unmercifully along the way? What about shedding Jesus' righteous blood? They had no concern for their role in Judas' overpowering sense of guilt for betraying Jesus to them. "What is that to us," they asked. These men are the "shepherds of Israel?"

So Judas went out and hanged himself. Luke wrote in Acts 1 that after Judas had died, his body fell down to the ground and burst open, and all his intestines came out. This sounds as if Judas' body had begun to bloat before the rope broke and his body fell to the ground. There is no contradiction between these two accounts.

After Judas had thrown the 30 pieces of silver into the Temple, the priests had gathered the money together and considered what to do with it. They went out and bought a potter's field with the money in Judas' name, probably before they heard that he had committed suicide. Therefore, the field was doubly the "field of blood," first because the 30 coins were the price of Jesus' betrayal, and ultimately his blood, and secondly because the coins also led to the outpoured blood of Judas himself, after he hanged himself and his body fell and broke open on the ground.

In the Semitic culture of Jesus day, the purchase of a piece of land with money that was "blood money" would be done "in Judas' name," as representing him. The priests certainly did not buy the land in their own names, or the name of the Temple. It was Judas' betrayal money, and therefore his land in their view. Luke's statement that "Judas bought a piece of land with the price of his wickedness" makes

perfect sense in these circumstances, and especially in Semitic culture. As Matthew pointed out, it all fulfilled the Scriptures.

APPLICATION:

We all make huge mistakes. We all deny Jesus in different ways, and we all betray his interests.

Peter and Judas were both crushed by their failures, and despaired of ever recovering. Judas gave in to his despair, did not trust in God's grace to forgive him, and committed suicide. Peter hung on in his searing pain long enough for Jesus to reach out to him after the resurrection, forgive him, and publicly restore him to leadership and responsibility in ministry.

The only difference between Judas and Peter was that Judas gave up on himself and on God; Peter held on to the threads of his hope.

When our circumstances are blackest, and our hope seems dead and long gone, there is only one thing to do: hang on. Jesus WILL rescue us from the depths of despair, as only he can do. He is our living hope, that can never die. We are just too beat down and weak to reach out toward him any more.

Not to worry. HE has a firm grip on us. HE will never let go, nor will he ever leave us or forsake us in our sin. All we have to do is wait—he will see us through in his time, and his own way.

Are you despairing? Just hang on. Jesus will see you through.

Do you know someone in deep despair? The best thing you can do is go be with them in silence, hanging on to them until Jesus brings them through.

Just hang on to them, and trust in God to do the rest.