

Personal from. . .

Ronald L. Dart

What About Judas?

Judas remains an enigma. Did he have to betray Jesus? The question is not merely, did Judas have to do it, but did it even have to be done? Was it really necessary for one of Jesus' close disciples to betray Him? It is patently obvious when you read the Gospel accounts that the arrest of Jesus could have been affected without the aid of Judas. So why is he even in the picture?

The only possible answer is that he was deliberately written into the plan of Jesus' sacrifice. It was not merely the plan that someone would betray Jesus, it was the plan that *Judas* would betray Him. Very early in Jesus' ministry, Jesus looked around at His disciples and said, "But there are some of you that believe not." John explained this by saying: "For Jesus knew from the beginning who they were that believed not, and who should betray him" (John 6:64).

This presents us with the uncomfortable truth that Jesus selected Judas and appointed him

as an apostle *knowing* that he would betray Him. I call this an uncomfortable truth, because it presents us with the simple truth that Jesus could call and work with a man whom He knew was a traitor. We find ourselves in sympathy with the disciples at the last supper when Jesus looked around at them and said, "I tell you the truth, one of you will betray me." The disciples were thunderstruck and they all began to ask, "Lord, is it I" (Matthew 26:21-22).

We find ourselves strangely empathizing with Judas believing, as the others did, that we also might betray Christ in a pinch. Not one of those men, except Judas himself, was prepared to deny the accusation because each of them

knew his weaknesses all too well. They all could know that they had taken no steps to deny Jesus, but that wasn't the question. The question was not *had* they, but *would* they?

We also tend to empathize with Judas because in the end, he was sorry he did it. We would like to think that his repentance was real and deep and that he could be forgiven. It may be that Judas knew better than we do that what he did could not be forgiven. He was there at supper the night Jesus made His judgment about the man: "The Son of man goeth as it is written of him: but woe unto that man by whom the Son of man is betrayed! it had been good for that man if he had not been born" (Matthew 26:24).

But did Judas have no choice? Was it written from the foundation of the world that he and he alone would betray Jesus? I don't think so. That there would be a man who would betray Jesus was written. There can be no doubt because it

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Make a Difference!

If you're currently looking for new ministry opportunities, consider helping CEM and the *Born to Win* broadcast. Among our greatest financial challenges are large broadcasting expenses. Every dollar helps in getting the Gospel out. We invite you to share in this ministry. Your donations can make a real difference!

Fulfillment Department



Annie O'Neal

Have you been the recipient of one of the cassette tapes or videos of Mr. Dart's sermons? Each week an average of two thousand tapes and videos are reproduced and shipped out of our CEM office. You might ask, "Just how is this accomplished?"

Annie O'Neal has been our Audio/Video Technician for the past seven years. At a time when most women settle down to a leisurely life of retirement, Annie spends her days hard at work. As a part-time employee, her job is to duplicate the audio and video tapes, label, package, and make them ready for shipment all over the world. This is no easy task, and oftentimes requires the assistance of others working in the CEM office and outside helpers.

Annie is a widowed mother of two sons, and three daughters who have enriched her life with eight grandchildren and four great-grandchildren. Prior to working for CEM, Annie was a store manager. We jokingly say that she cracks the whip and keeps us all busy. When asked what she likes best about working for CEM, Annie says, "I like the friendly, Christian atmosphere."

Kim Marsh



Every office has a *Jack of All Trades*—CEM has Kim Marsh. Kim's responsibilities are as varied as they are essential. All CDs, both for fulfilling orders and those sent to the various radio stations carrying the *Born to Win* broadcasts are duplicated by Kim.

Mail is an essential part of our communication. Kim posts, sorts, and bundles all of our outgoing mail as well as picks up, opens, and sorts our incoming mail. She fills and ships all bookstore orders. Endless trips to the post office are required to accomplish her job.

Kim is also our accounts payable clerk—a job that makes use of her accounting abilities. Her previous experience as a church secretary, and her tireless efforts enable us to spread the Gospel message literally around the world.

Kim and husband, David, have been married for 23 years and are the parents of three active teenagers: Kendra, age 19, Amanda, age 17, and Bradley, age 12. Part of their early married life was spent in the Philippines while David fulfilled his military obligation. Kim says that she enjoys working for a "nice, small organization in a Christian atmosphere."

Meet Erin Puckett, CEM's Intern

For several years now, CEM has offered an internship program for qualified young people. Some of the requirements are a desire and passion to serve, and to learn how to more effectively use their gifts to the glory of God. CEM's goal is to provide a broad range of experiences. Interns gain knowledge of the many things CEM does to get the Gospel out and anchor people to Christ. They receive a wealth of experience working in the CEM office and with the YEA team. Internships are designed to help young people become more desirable employees and better equips them to serve at the Feast and in their local church.

Presently we are privileged to have Erin Puckett doing a three month internship. Erin is a 16 year old baptized high school graduate from Halfway, Missouri. Born in Roanoke, Virginia, Erin lived in Iowa for ten years before moving to Missouri in 2000. She lives on a 262 acre beef cattle ranch with her mother, Donna, stepfather, Robert, and little brother, Gabriel. Other siblings include brothers Joshua and Matthew, and sister Cassandra.

When at home, Erin stays busy writing a Christian monthly magazine for young adults and teens (*More Than That*: www.morethanthat.org), writing, drawing, reading, and web designing. She enjoys hiking and anything nature or animal related, along with good conversations!

To develop Erin's writing skill even further, she spends part of her week at CEM writing lessons for future YEA books. Her talents have been used to draw and paint scenery to be used in the YEA classes at the Feast. She's also been a great help in preparing other materials and crafts that will make this year's Feast classes fun and exciting. Other office skills Erin is developing are answering CEM's phone and taking orders, and transcribing dictation.

She says, "The experience I'm gaining and the wonderful memories I'm making here are everything and more than I'd hoped for. I am so thankful for the opportunity to serve a cause that I know is doing wonderful good. God has blessed me incredibly by allowing me to be here in Tyler, working for CEM."

Erin was an outstanding example in the Senior Teens YEA Feast class last year. She told her class how much she appreciated what CEM is doing for its youth and encouraged students in her class to be fully involved in the YEA program.

If you are interested, or if you know of anyone who would make a good intern for CEM, go to www.cemnetwork.com and check out the information that is linked from our website's front page. Then send your resume to Ronald L. Dart.

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is so firmly attested in the prophets. But precisely who that person would be was left for Jesus Himself to decide. And in looking over the men He met, men who believed in Him, there was one man with the unique combination of weakness and strength, belief and greed, ambition and covetousness, required to lead him to betray the Son of Man when the chips were down. Judas didn't have to do it. But Jesus knew that when given the chance, he would.

The other side of this puzzle is why anyone had to do it at all. There are two important issues here. One is that Jesus was to be tempted in all points as we are, yet without sin. He was to suffer all the indignities that we have to suffer and yet bear up under it. One terrible, recurring theme in human history is betrayal. And one cannot be betrayed by a known enemy. One can only be betrayed by one in whom trust has been placed.

The other issue was revealed at the last supper. Jesus told His disciples that one of those who dipped his bread in the same dish with everyone else would betray Him. Jesus told John quietly: "He it is, to whom I shall give a sop, when I have dipped it." He then dipped the bread and handed it to Judas. Then, John tells us this: "And after the sop Satan entered into him" (John 13:26).

There is a terrible symmetry in what happened here and what happened before the foundation of the world. God had placed His trust in a great angel called, in the King James Bible, Lucifer. It was Lucifer who betrayed God before, and now would do so again.

But the question remains: Didn't Judas repent? Wasn't he sorry for what he had done? Perhaps. But maybe the real answer to this question lies, not in what he said, but in what he did. He went straight out and hanged himself. This is not the act of a man who expects forgiveness.

What I have told you here is only the broadest outline of the story of Judas. I would like to send you a *FREE* tape cassette of a Bible study I did last Passover dealing with all the scriptures, Old and New Testament, that deal with this enigmatic figure. And yes, he is found in the Old Testament, most prominently in the Psalms. To receive a free cassette tape of that Bible study, just check the box on the enclosed card and send it back to us.

Yours, in the study of the Bible,

Ronald L. Dart

P.S. This tape, "What About Judas," is free of charge and with no obligation. But if you are able and willing, any contribution you send will be used faithfully to proclaim the message of the Bible to the world, to save as many as are willing.

Urgent Note to Parents, Grandparents, Aunts, and Uncles

Will your family be attending the CEM Feast Site this year? Do you have musically talented children and teens in your family? If you said yes to both questions, please, please encourage them to volunteer for special music on Youth Day. Young people just need encouragement to step out and get involved. They will be an important part of the Youth Day Service and will come away with enjoyable memories.

Please have your children and teens contact us ASAP: Richard and Jane Kisel, the Youth Day Team Leaders at 770-672-0398, or e-mail Richard-k@comcast.net.

We are also looking for adults to help in various ways, such as serving to oversee logistics for Youth Day. Tell us how you can help and we will put you in contact with the right team leader. Hope to hear from you very soon. Richard A. Kisel 770-672-0398.

Romania Mission

CEM's graphic designer resigned late last year. We advertized in the paper for her replacement and Aaron Lynch responded to that ad. While interviewing him, he said that working for a ministry was more important to him than the amount of money he made. He moved to Texas with his wife and daughter not long before this to help with Calvary Commission in Lindale. It was through this ministry that he was offered the opportunity to go on this trip to Romania. They needed him to better serve these people because he spoke Romania, which he had taught himself.

After an 18 hour journey of connecting flights, we landed in Romania's capital city of Bucharest, located in the southeastern part of the country. We then loaded in a van and started our six hour drive to Sibiu, a city located in the heart of the Transylvanian Alps. Our driver began to give us the narrated tour, but it wasn't the kind you would think. We would pass the massive, old buildings that looked completely abandoned, and he would say; "over here is where a Communist-ran state orphanage used to be". We would then hear the stories of how the kids were forced to go there, and most of them were raped and beaten almost daily. The dictator of that time, Nicolae Ceausescu, demanded that all children who had existing or who were born with any kind of disability or cosmetic abnormalities such as a hair lip, or a lazy eye, be taken from their parents and put in these institutions which eventually became known as madhouses.

We arrived in Sibiu, our first stop, where we stayed for four days. Our goal in coming here was to encourage and strengthen the local church that some of our missionaries had planted years earlier. I attended a pastors meeting one Saturday afternoon, where I saw 200 local pastors from every kind of background (Baptist, Methodist, Pentecostal) come together and form plans and strategies on how to reach their city for Christ. You would hear statements like; "We wanted to start a ministry to the Gypsy population in this community, but now that we have found out that our Methodist brothers

have a successful work already going, well then we will just give them our resources and workers we had planned to use, and they will work under them."

I began to see that at some point in our American thinking and our church communities, we have somehow missed it somewhere along the way. The Romanians had been persecuted for over 50 years. It didn't matter to them that they all had different backgrounds and different denominational name tags, they focused on the one thing that mattered, and that was winning their city for Christ and Him alone.

After our four days in Sibiu, we traveled on to our last stop- Timisoara, Romania. Timisoara is located in the southwestern part of the country, and is the city where the revolution began. It is a town of deep pride, and appreciation for their city, and if some of you have been here it's much like how Texas is in

the US. We ministered in the prisons, and held prison ministry training conferences. Overall we were able to speak more than 39 hours in Timisoara, at various engagements. Although I initially came to Romania to minister, more often I found myself being ministered to. What do you say to a people who have been persecuted for over a half century? Where in a lot of cases whole families were martyred for there faith. Yet their faith has not weakened and there commitment has not wavered. As I returned to Texas, I found myself somehow disoriented in my understanding of this modern thing we call "church" and what it really means. In most cases I felt our Romanian brothers and sisters somehow had gotten a hold of God in a way we have not yet corporately done. And to the Kingdom's benefit, they are seeing their country being transformed on a grand scale.

Radio Update

Dallas, TX	1630 AM	KKGM	10:30 am	Sun-Fri
Pace, FL	90.5 FM	WTGF	4:00 pm	Mon-Fri
Parkesburg, WV	1050 AM	WADC	11:30 am	Sun
Prescott, AR	1370 AM	KTPA	7:30 am	Sun
Hope, AR	1490 AM	KXAR	7:30 am	Sun
Columbus, MS	1400 AM	WJWF	9:00 am	Sun
Starkville, MS	980 AM	WKOR	9:00 am	Sun
Starkville, MS	1230 AM	WSSO	9:00 am	Sun
Burlington, NC	920 AM	WPCM	9:30 am	Sun
Indianapolis, IN	1500 AM	WBRI	6:00 pm	Mon-Fri

Calendar of Events

Terre Haute, IN - June 26, 27, 2004. Watch CEM's website and the next *Living to Win* for details. contact Jeff Osborn, (888) 526-5710.

Chicago, IL - July 17, 11 a.m. to 4 p.m. at the Avery Coonley School, 1400 Maple Ave, Downers Grove, Il. July 18, 9:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. at the Oak Park District Family Recreation Center, Rooms 4 and 5, 1450 Forest Gate Rd., Oakbrook, Il., contact Laureen Blissard, (630)416-7115.

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That the man of God may be proficient and equipped for every good work.