

Two Apostles Who Failed

The Issue of "Repentance" vs. "Remorse"

Judas and Peter - Some Similarities, Some Differences

* <i>SIMILARITIES</i> *	Judas Iscariot	Simon Peter
<i>Both had respectable positions among the apostles.</i>	Judas had the privilege of being the group's treasurer. His reputation was good enough that, when Jesus told the apostles that he would be betrayed, and then gave Judas the bread and told him to leave, nobody thought there was any connection between the two events. (John 13:21, 26-30)	Peter was probably one of Jesus' three closest friends (along with James and John). They often spent time alone with Jesus and witnessed things not seen by the other nine apostles. (Example, the "Transfiguration" - Matthew 17:1-9) <i>Can You Find Other Examples?</i>
<i>Each, on various occasions, had to be rebuked or corrected by Jesus.</i> [This shows that Peter wasn't more "perfect" than Judas, as far as <i>visible</i> conduct was concerned. None of the other apostles were "perfect," either.]	Judas was reprovved for his complaint regarding the "wastefulness" of the woman, who poured expensive perfume over Jesus' feet. (John 12:7-8)	Peter had to be rebuked and corrected many times, for he was quite impulsive and often did or said things that he later regretted. On one such occasion he received the sternest rebuke recorded in Scripture, given to an apostle by Jesus. (Matthew 16:23) <i>Can You Find Other Examples?</i>
<i>They weren't perfect, but nobody would have expected them to fail the way they did.</i>	No one knew that Judas was a greedy thief (John 12:6) and would even be willing to "sell" someone for money.	No one believed that Peter would eventually claim that he didn't even know Jesus - and that he would do it three times.
<i>Jesus warned both about what they would do, before they did it.</i>	Jesus told Judas that he knew his intentions. (John 13:26-27) [An indirect warning, given much earlier, is found in John 6:70-71.] *	Jesus warned him; yet Peter claimed that he would never do such a thing! (Mark 14:30-31) [Jesus told the apostles that they would <i>all</i> abandon him, but none of them believed it - Mark 14:27, 31.]
<i>They did it anyway.</i>	Judas betrayed Jesus for 30 silver coins. (Matthew 26:14-16; 47-50)	When asked if he knew Jesus, Peter denied it. He did this three times, the last time very vehemently. (Matthew 26:69-74) [Also, the rest of the disciples abandoned Jesus - Mark 14:50.]

* [NOTE: Even just a few seconds before his betrayal, when Jesus called Judas "friend" (Matthew 26:50), he may have been offering Judas a final opportunity to change his mind about what he was going to do. If so, Judas completely ignored it.]

* DIFFERENCES *	Judas Iscariot	Simon Peter
<i>Each regretted his actions and was filled with sorrow.</i>	Judas went back to the religious leaders and claimed that Jesus was innocent. He threw down the money and left. (Matthew 27:3-5a)	Peter ran out of the court yard and wept bitterly. (Matthew 26:75)
<i>From this point on, they responded in opposite ways: One "quit," whereas the other "turned around" and kept going.</i>	Judas hanged himself. (Matthew 27:5b) [See Acts 1:18-19 for some gruesome events that apparently occurred when the rope either broke or was later cut (to take down the body).]	Peter returned to the remaining apostles, was visited by Jesus, and was "reinstated" with the task of taking care of Jesus' "sheep." (Luke 24:34 & John 21:15-22)
<i>Each experienced the ultimate consequences of his actions.</i>	Judas went to "where he belongs." (Acts 1:25b)	[Based on Peter's writings.] Peter looked forward to an imperishable "inheritance." (1 Peter 1:4 - he did this, just as do all who belong to God.) He was willing to suffer for Christ, and would therefore share in Christ's future glory. (1 Peter 5:1) *

* [NOTE: Jesus forewarned Peter that he would also die on a cross. (John 21:18-19) But Peter did not get pre-occupied with thoughts (and anxiety) about what he would eventually suffer. Instead, he accepted it, and then focused on doing things that would be of benefit to others - such as encouraging them in the way of salvation. (2 Peter 1:12-15)]

Godly Sorrow vs. Worldly Sorrow

Judas and Peter both had sorrow over what they had done. But there was a big difference in the nature of their sorrow: Judas had a sorrow that led only to regret (Matthew 27:3) and eventual despair. Peter had a sorrow that went beyond regret - all the way to a changed life.

Compare these two types of sorrow, as defined in 2 Corinthians 7:10.

Godly sorrow results in:

Worldly sorrow results in:

Repentance vs. Remorse

REPENTANCE - involves a change in the way we think and act. It results in a change in lifestyle.

God requires this change in us. (Acts 17:30) He also makes this change possible. (Romans 2:4)

Therefore...

1. We have no excuse, if we refuse to repent. (We know repentance is our obligation.)
2. We have no reason to boast, if we do repent. (Since God is the one who made it possible, our only proper response is to express gratitude and thanks to him for our repentance.)

REMORSE - may admit the wrongness of what was done, but does not necessarily imply any kind of change in heart attitude or lifestyle.

A Look at Peter after His Failure

Peter's life was changed. He became one of the prominent leaders of the church. Also, God used him to write two of the books in the New Testament.

Write down a few observations about Peter's changed life. (Some suggested places to look include the first few chapters in the book of Acts; Galatians 2:9; 1 & 2 Peter.)

This does not mean that he was sinless.

Example - Galatians 2:11-14

Lessons We Can Learn from Peter and Judas

1. Repentance - a change in our attitudes and actions - *must* occur. It is not merely one option among many. (We cannot be complacent about sin.)
2. An evil person may, for a while, look like he is saved, or has a good moral character. (This is one of the reasons why some people, who seem to be "Christian," eventually abandon the faith - 1 John 2:19.)
3. Lifestyle matters a lot - and it includes what others *don't* see (one's attitude and motives). [People apparently knew nothing about Judas' love for money until afterwards, but John 12:6 shows that it had become a lifestyle.]
4. Suicide does not solve one's problems; repentance and trust in God does.
5. Imperfection in our lives does *not* indicate that we have no hope of salvation. The issue is whether or not we are willing to repent and turn back to Jesus.
6. There is still hope for us, when we discover that we are not yet perfect!

What other lessons can you learn from the lives of Peter and Judas?

Something Else You Can Do (Optional)

- Look in the Scriptures for the failures of some of the other apostles. Consider these failures in the light of this fact: All of the apostles (except Judas) eventually became faithful servants of God, people who were willing to suffer and die for Jesus. Only John died a natural death. The rest were eventually killed by their opponents, because of their testimony for Jesus. And though they died, their testimony lived on. What started as a disorganized group of "nobodies" eventually changed the world!