

Matthew 7:1 (GO) 68683

Bible Treasury: Volume 16, Judas, the Tares, and Judge Not: Correction (7:1)

My dear Friend,

Your plea (which is not an uncommon one), that Judas Iscariot was present, and a partaker with the other apostles at the institution of the Lord's supper, is hardly based on adequate scripture testimony. Even if it were true, the plea would be pointless unless it were used to justify our tolerating known Judases, i.e. thieves and traitors to Christ, at the Lord's table. But it is so used, and this is why I trouble you with these few lines; and I appeal to conscience in a child of God whether such a plea is just and holy. Christ knew all then as now.

If you will read carefully John 13:1-29, I think you will perceive, that all that is there recorded took place at the paschal table, during that supper (ver. 2, R.V.), and not when it was "ended," as the Authorized Version says. Judas was evidently there, and the devil had already put it into his heart to betray the Lord (ver. 2). Afterward; when the Lord had given him the sop, Satan entered into him (ver. 27), thus exercising him to carry out his purpose—a fatal consequence of not at once repelling a first suggestion or form of evil (1 Thess. 5:22, R.V.). "He then having received the sop went immediately out;" and the dark and awful night of this sin-stricken world has continued ever since. The institution of the Lord's supper (Matt. 26:26; Mark 14:22; Luke 22:19, 20) took place after the paschal meal. The "all" in Matt. 26:27 and Mark 14:23 presents no difficulty. It means simply all the remaining disciples. If the order of Luke 22:21 were chronologic, the question would be decided; but who would affirm this?—

Again, as to the tares, you say that the wheat and the tares are to grow together in the church. The scriptures do teach, not this but, the very reverse. Even the passage which speaks of the wheat and the tares growing together, tells us expressly that "the field is" not the church, but emphatically "the world," and that the tares are the children of the wicked one. Are such to be knowingly allowed to participate in the most significant and precious and the holiest act of worship of the children of God? Scripture (1 Cor. 5:13) says even of a believer who had fallen into sin, "Put away from among yourselves that wicked person;" and when through grace he had repented, the saints were to confirm their love to him. Is this the unholy toleration of evil persons—tares—children of the wicked one in "the church which is His body," the complement of Him that filleth all in all? If you read the parable carefully again, you will surely see that it has nothing whatever to do with the toleration of evil persons in the church.

You condemn your own ecclesiastical system as strongly as it could be condemned, by identifying it with the world.

I am thankful to know that there are therein so many true believers in the Lord Jesus Christ. I love them with all my heart because they are dear to Him; but their identifying themselves with the world does not make it the church of God. You have in it heterodox teachers and infidel clergymen of every shade; and there is no power to act for God and for Christ by putting them away; and so in order to justify their being allowed to remain, you plead Judas and the tares! You should rather have mourned that such might be taken from among you (1 Cor. 5:2). Instead of this, you try to make out that others, who have at great cost left your state of things for the Lord's sake, are wrong for having done so, or are as bad as what they have left. I am sure we have sinned greatly against the greater light given to us; at least we do not excuse or justify ourselves, but judge ourselves for it before God. The divisions you reproach some of the Lord's people with, are largely the result of their faithfulness to the Lord and His truth in seeking to walk, according to His revealed mind, as much apart from the world's formalism as from its profaneness. The Lord has forewarned us that the effect of His coming and testimony (not its object) would be strife, dividing even the nearest and most precious natural relationships (Matt. 10:34-37).

But you say we must "not judge," and you quote Matt. 7:1, "Judge not that ye be not judged." This is an important word of the Lord's, but it is misused to cover our cowardice and want of zeal for the glory of the Lord in not judging sin in ourselves and others. But read on and in ver. 6 you will find we are directed not to give that which is holy unto the dogs, neither to cast our pearls before the swine. Is not that an injunction to judge? How can anyone act upon the word without judging? The fact is, my dear friend, there is carnal judging which is only the indulgence of an evil propensity at the expense of our neighbors, and there is a godly spiritual judging which is a duty we owe to the Lord and to each other, and which begins with ourselves. He knows which is which, if we do not.

Believe me, yours in Christ, G.O.

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