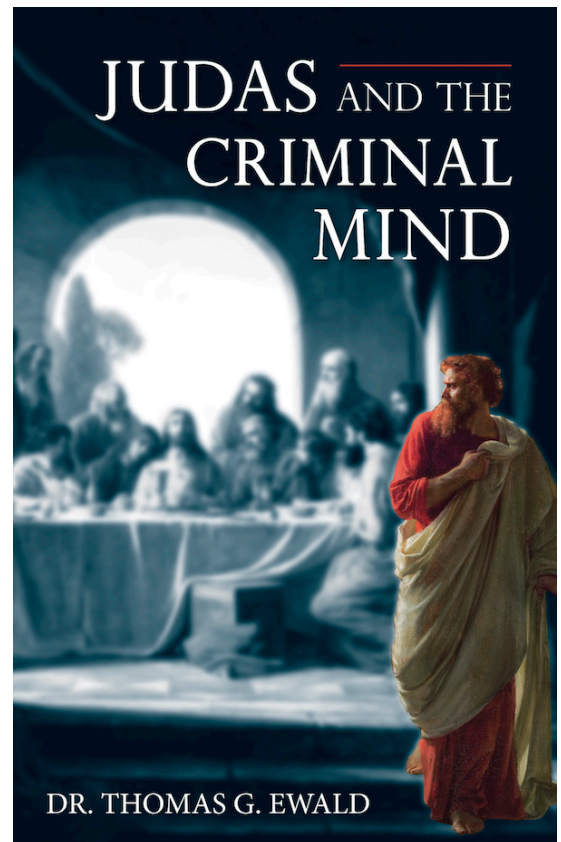


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JUDAS AND THE CRIMINAL MIND

Dr. Thomas G. Ewald

Why did Jesus choose Judas? Did he repent? Did he have a choice?



Everyone has been face-to-face with a Judas-type persona. Recognizing them could spare us considerable suffering. And like Judas, one in twenty-five individuals can be labeled a sociopath. This is an epidemic. These people have no conscience, or a severely damaged one. They commit crimes without guilt and leave shattered relationships in their wake. Antisocial individuals—such as Judas—lack any regard for the moral or legal standards of society. Charm and deception are their skills. The epidemic of crime in our culture cries out for help to identify and deal with the antisocial personalities that move among us.

In *Judas and the Criminal Mind*, Dr. Tom Ewald explains how the Bible gives three reasons for Judas's betrayal. All biblical passages referring to Judas Iscariot are examined, and tools of social science are applied. These accounts show how Judas could hide among Jesus' closest associates yet emerge to betray his master and commit high treason. The words of Jesus, other New Testament passages, and contemporary psychiatry provide ample support for an antisocial criminal diagnosis of Judas Iscariot. Ancient and contemporary works that treat Judas as a hero or as a well-intentioned but mistaken victim are also examined. His deception contributed to the death of Christ, but God's redemptive plan was unimpeded.

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About the Author

DR. THOMAS G. EWALD

For over forty years, Tom Ewald was a college and seminary professor of psychology, pastoral counseling, theology, and Bible survey. He was Dean of Students and chairman of the disciplinary committee of Lincoln Christian University for over thirty years. There he dealt with students fitting the description of antisocial personality but functioning in the Christian community. He has an MA in New Testament, an MS in educational and clinical psychology, an M.Div., and a D.Div. He has taught classes in Canada, Austria, Bradley University, Lincoln Correctional Center, Lincoln Christian University, and Christian colleges in several states. He is a university adjunct professor and a teaching elder at his local church. His hobbies include hiking, fishing, running (5 marathons), gardening, mountain climbing, photography, and carpentry.

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What Others Are Saying About

Judas and the Criminal Mind

Few books pique a reader's interest and challenge *a priori* beliefs like Tom Ewald's *Judas and the Criminal Mind*. It's a *tour de force* of anthropology, philosophy, psychology, theology, and criminology. Marshaling evidence from some of the greatest thinkers from antiquity to the present, Tom weaves together a clear and compelling case study of Judas, the Betrayer. In its pages, he asks was Judas delusional or antisocial; a villain or hero; predetermined or free; demonic or enlightened. Readers are afforded the opportunity to consider the evidence and decide for themselves. It's a must read for anyone who wishes to learn more about the nuances of criminal behavior and the complexities of the human condition.

— **Gene Harker, MD, PhD, award-winning teacher, author of *Leadership Insight***

Tom Ewald's in-depth analysis of the criminal mind of Judas is a remarkable work. A subtitle could be "*Everything You Ever Wanted to Know about Judas but Were Afraid to Ask.*" Ewald's years of experience as a clinical psychologist provided examples in the book of the "Judas's in our midst." Dr. Ewald rightly warns of the difficulty of getting into the brain of a dead man with psychological analysis. He then takes us on a fascinating journey connecting the dots of traitors in the Old Testament to Judas. He raises and answers key questions about Judas, such as "Why did Jesus choose Judas as one of the twelve if he knew he was a traitor?" and "What were Judas's motives in betraying Christ?" This book is an extremely readable achievement providing insight into the criminal mind of Judas.

— **Dale G. Erickson, MD, MA (Bioethics); FACP (Fellow of American College of Physicians); nephrologist, Renal Medicine Associates; member, former chair of Presbyterian Hospital Ethics Committee; visiting lecturer, Department of Medicine, University of Zimbabwe School of Medicine**

In *Judas and the Criminal Mind*, Thomas G. Ewald shines the twin spotlights of sound biblical theology and psychological analysis on the life of Judas Iscariot, the Apostle who betrayed Jesus to the Jewish and Roman authorities to be crucified. His examination of the biblical texts and the criminal mind give plausible answers to questions that students of the Bible have

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asked for 2,000 years. The book is not superficial. You will come away with a deeper insight into who Judas really was and why he behaved as he did. I found it a fascinating read, and I think you will as well.

— **Dr. Wayne E. Shaw, dean emeritus, Lincoln Christian Seminary, Lincoln Christian University**

Dr. Ewald has written a unique mystery book. Everybody knows the end of the Judas story, but the “how” and “why” are mysteries. Ewald draws from his own eclectic background as scholar-theologian-psychologist (and amateur criminologist) to conduct an investigation that considers every reasonable theory, and even a few preposterous theories. Exercising the patient persistence of an archaeologist to examine possibilities, and forensic exegesis rooted in his deep appreciation of the biblical text, Ewald evokes images of Indiana Jones and Columbo in his dogged pursuit of the truth.

— **Dr. Paul Boatman, academic dean and professor, Lincoln Christian Seminary**

In twenty-first-century criminal courtrooms it is not an exaggeration to say that as many words are spoken about *why* the crime was committed as there are about *how* it happened. ... It is because our system has developed such a therapeutic aspect that Tom Ewald’s fascinating book is relevant to those that work in the system, as well as the millions who don’t—but find themselves fascinated by it. Ewald gives us an exhaustive look at the mind and motivations of one of history’s arch criminals. In applying the protocol of modern psychiatric diagnostic technique to the biblical record of the life of the turncoat apostle, Ewald not only argues persuasively for what may have motivated him, but also gives us insight into what drives much of the bad behavior that brings those into the criminal justice system today. Along the way he skillfully dispatches those that would make Judas a misunderstood hero and a true friend of the One he betrayed. Ewald’s writing is as passionate and pointed as is his speaking and teaching. His considerable skill as an exegete and his vast experience in addressing the needs of those under his tutelage as a Dean of Students are brought to bear on the subject, much to the reader’s benefit. This is a masterful, yet readable, work with much to recommend it. Anyone who works in the criminal justice system or who cares about why crime occurs would benefit from reading it.

— **Hon. Thomas W. Funk, associate circuit judge, Eleventh Judicial Circuit of Illinois**

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Suggested Interview Questions

For Tom Ewald, author of
Judas and the Criminal Mind

Q: What led you to write on this subject?

A: I taught abnormal psychology for college and seminary over 45 years. I was chairman of a Christian College and Seminary discipline committee for over 30 years. I encountered antisocial personalities aimed at using the Christian faith to mask devious and evil intentions. Some lied, some were thieves, and several committed acts of fraud and felony under my watch. Having taught psychology, counseling theories, Bible survey, and theology, I was struck with how Jesus had to deal with such a personality within his close circle. I saw how Jesus faced an intractable soul intent on deception and did not get him to redirect his course, just as I had experienced. My threats and warnings went unheeded. I used the example of Judas in classes along with case examples from my own file that dealt with antisocials. I saw that no one ever used the diagnostic tools of psychiatry and applied them to Judas while using the NT texts as trustworthy witnesses. I determined to try.

Q: Where on the current scale of antisocial personality might Judas be located?

A: Judas may not fit the diagnosis of antisocial personality disorder but rather the antisocial style of behavior. These are high functioning in society and effective at hoodwinking. Bernie Madoff or the Enron thieves are examples. They think their devious plans are justified and will succeed. The impact on others is irrelevant and they ignore negative or undesirable consequences. Judas fits this category better than violent psychopathic serial killers.

Q: If Judas' betrayal was psychologically motivated, would psychotherapy have helped?

A: To diagnose antisocial personality one must determine whether a criminal act was the result of a mental disorder a moral lapse or both. If both, then psycho-

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therapy and discipline are indicated. If however evil were the driving force, then disciplinary penalty should be applied and be commensurate with the severity of the crime. Judas never evidenced any symptoms of mental illness. Antisocial personality is not a mental illness. The antisocial criminal will ignore moral rules, social norms, and the rights and feelings of others. When the justice system excuses criminal acts with psychological motives, the law-abiding community is compromised.

Q: How can we criminalize Judas if he did not break any Roman law?

A: His theft of the apostles' purse may have been punishable by death under Roman law. Since it was exclusively a Jewish issue, Rome had no interest. He broke the eighth commandment of the Mosaic code. In the realm of the kingdom, his betrayal was treason. It had supreme relevance in the alternate universe as high treason. No government has ever tolerated treason. Judas' duplicity involved deception, disloyalty, and fraud, which raises his betrayal to the level of criminal in most any legal code.

Q: Did Jesus ever try to redirect Judas away from his devious plan?

A: A year before his death, Jesus warned the twelve that one of them was satanic. He publicly rebuked Judas for faking concern for the poor to disguise his greed over the potential sale of Mary's anointing perfume. At the Passover, he warned that a betrayer among them intended treachery. These were appeals for each to self-examine and redirect his course if convicted. Judas was undeterred by stern warnings exposing the very plot he and Jesus knew he was nursing.

Q: Does Judas' "remorse" qualify as repentance?

A: The Greek vocabulary shows Judas remorse was not a change of mind and heart but mere regret. Repentance requires a change of mental and life direction absent in the Judas narrative. Many criminals have regrets and even remorse but do not redirect vocationally or spiritually.

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Q: How many and what reasons are given in the gospels for Judas' betrayal?

A: There are three basic reasons presented in the gospels. One, to fulfill scripture, another for a monetary payoff, and third he adopted Satan. Each is supported by specific passages. None provided him excuse or defense.

Q: The Old Testament predicted messianic betrayal; therefore, did Judas even have a choice?

A: The gospels condemn Judas and hold him responsible for his actions, which requires free choice. The Old Testament predicted a messianic follower would defect. He chose to be that person. Predicting an event does not necessarily cause it. Some psychologists teach a determinism denying free choice. Some theologians take the absolute sovereignty of God to that same deterministic degree. Jesus' severe words for Judas are out of order if he were not responsible or unable to prevent betrayal.

Q: What does the account of Judas teach about Jesus' humanity and divinity?

A: His humanness permitted Judas' betrayal, the arrest, and trial. He suffered wounds at the hands of Judas' co-conspirators. As human, he submitted to the physical weaknesses, pains, and tears of us all. He may have summoned an angelic army to rescue, yet he surrendered to human hands and forces. His divinity may be seen in his insight into Judas' devious intentions and of course his triumph at the Sunday morning sunrise.

Q: If Judas was compelled to betray, he was not responsible—then how could Jesus condemn him?

A: Judas was either free or determined to commit treason. If determined, then condemnation is inappropriate. Some outside influence must be responsible. But he admitted betrayal of "innocent blood," which acknowledges responsibility. He returned the silver attempting to absolve his responsibility. These acts are evidence that he knew he shouldered blame for the tragic outcome. Even though Roman officials and Jewish religious leaders had major roles in the crucifixion, Judas did not project blame beyond himself.

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