

The Tale of Two Professions John 6:64-71

John 6:64–71 (NKJV)

⁶⁴ **But there are some of you who do not believe.**” For Jesus knew from the beginning who they were who did not believe, and who would betray Him. ⁶⁵ And He said, **“Therefore I have said to you that no one can come to Me unless it has been granted to him by My Father.”**

⁶⁶ From that *time* many of His disciples went back and walked with Him no more.

⁶⁷ Then Jesus said to the twelve, **“Do you also want to go away?”**

⁶⁸ But Simon Peter answered Him, “Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life. ⁶⁹ Also we have come to believe and know that You are the Christ, the Son of the living God.”

⁷⁰ Jesus answered them, **“Did I not choose you, the twelve, and one of you is a devil?”** ⁷¹ He spoke of Judas Iscariot, *the son* of Simon, for it was he who would betray Him, being one of the twelve.

Introduction

I would like to tell you a true story about two men. You know them very well. They both had the most unique privilege and opportunity ever given to a human being ever, never to be given to anyone before or since. Both were personally called by Jesus to follow Him. Both answered the call and followed Him 24/7 for three years, every day all day and every night all night, virtually. Both declared repeatedly to Him and to those around them their personal devotion to the Lord Jesus. Both were personally trained by Jesus for ministry. Both were students of Jesus; they were in that all-day-long classroom called discipleship. Both of them were being trained for ministry. Both of them were taught by Jesus. The unparalleled teacher, the most profound teacher that ever walked on earth. They were taught by Him by ways that they could understand that which was profound and unknown to the world. They were taught by precept, proposition, and they were taught by example to know the Word of God and to know the will of God and to know the truth concerning all things. They were given a divine worldview.

They were taught how to respond to the truth of God and live it out obediently. Both men saw the miracles of Jesus every day throughout the duration of His ministry. They saw His power over demons. They saw His power over disease. They saw His power over death. They saw His power over nature. They saw His intellectual power to deflect every assault on Him from His enemies that came verbally as they tried to catch Him in His words. They saw the mastery that He had of the language and of truth and thought.

Both men heard the Lord answer every important, penetrating, profound, theological question ever asked of Him. And they, no doubt, heard Him answer questions that no one asked, and the answers were always true and profound and clear. Both of them were daily confronted with their sinfulness. Both of them were daily reminded that they had fallen as the whole human race had and desperately needed forgiveness and salvation. They were very aware of that. Both of them understood that Jesus had come to proclaim good news to sinners.

Both of them received and used divine power, power from Jesus, and authority from Jesus was delegated to them so that both of them were enabled to do miracles and to exercise power and authority over demons. Eventually both of them were sent out to preach. Both of them became preachers, and they preached that the Messiah Jesus was the Savior and the Son of God and the King. And they shared all the experiences together for those amazing three years. They were exposed to the Lord Jesus Christ in exactly the same way, the same experiences, the same period of time.

There's more. They both were sinners and they knew it. They knew it well. They both felt profound guilt about their sin, overwhelming guilt about their sin. There's more. They both were taken over by Satan, both of them, to take up Satan's cause against the Lord Jesus. And in the end, they both betrayed Him, publicly, violently, strongly--openly they betrayed Him. And they did that at the end of that three years, just before He was crucified.

As a result of what they did, both were sad, sorry, in fact they agonized over their betrayals, both of them did. One was so agonized that he killed himself. The other was so agonized that he repented. Two men whose lives were side by side in the presence of the Son of God. One of them, in spite of his wicked betrayal of the Savior, is considered so honorable and so exalted a person that some of you are named after him. In fact, people have been named after him since the first century. And people will continue to be named after this betrayer. He is loved, his name is honored, and his name is Peter.

The word doesn't mean anything particularly important; it's the word for "stone." The other man is considered so dishonorable, the other betrayer is so despicable that no one has his name. You don't know anyone who has his name. You don't know anyone's dog who has his name. He is hated. He is reviled. He is rejected. He is Judas and his name means "praised." Such an elevated name for such a dishonorable man.

One of these men we who belong to Christ will meet because that betrayer is in heaven. The other, you who reject Christ may meet because he's in hell. One of these preachers ended a suicide, hanging himself and not even doing that successfully--book of Acts tells us that his end came when he fell and was disemboweled on the rocks below. Whether the branch broke, the rope broke, or the knot was inadequate, he was a tragic suicide, eternally banished. The other ended his life a saint, crucified upside down and eternally blessed. Two men side by side for three

years, experiencing exactly the same thing in the presence of the glorious Son of God, together ended up as separated as two human beings can be, one in heaven and one in hell.

That separation may be portrayed a little bit in the listing of the apostles in the four places the apostles are listed in the New Testament. Peter is the first name and Judas is the last. Even there, they are separated as far as they can be. One highly honored in heaven, the other highly dishonored in hell--what an amazing contrast. And they both had the same experience with Jesus Christ. Their lives, in that sense, couldn't have been more similar, and their ends couldn't have been more dissimilar.

What made the difference? Why does Peter end up in heaven and Judas in hell? (JM)

Review

Lesson

I. The Reality of Judas

64 *But there are some of you who do not believe.*” For Jesus knew from the beginning who they were who did not believe, and who would betray Him

70 Jesus answered them, “**Did I not choose you, the twelve, and one of you is a devil?**” ⁷¹ He spoke of Judas Iscariot, *the son* of Simon, for it was he who would betray Him, being one of the twelve.

64 **But there are some of you who do not believe.**” For Jesus knew from the beginning who they were who did not believe, and who would betray Him

Jesus then said, “**But there are some of you who do not believe.**” As always with those who reject God’s offer of salvation, the issue was not a lack of information, but a lack of faith. The Lord held these false disciples personally responsible for rejecting Him, not because they could not understand, but because they would not believe.

While the Lord was certainly saddened by the false disciples’ unbelief, it did not take Him by surprise; **Jesus knew from the beginning who they were who did not believe.** He even knew all along **who it was that would betray Him**—Judas Iscariot, the supreme example of an unbelieving false disciple (see the discussion of vv. 70–71 below). Jesus’ parting words to the false disciples, “**For this reason I have said to you, that no one can come to Me unless it has been granted him from the Father,**”

reinforced His earlier teaching that God is absolutely sovereign in salvation (vv. 37, 39, 44–45). Verses 64 and 65 maintain the tension between divine sovereignty and human responsibility found throughout Scripture. On the one hand, unbelievers are condemned for their unbelief (v. 64); on the other hand, they are lost because the Father did not draw them (v. 65).

MacArthur, J. F., Jr. (2006). *John 1–11* (pp. 271–272). Chicago: Moody Press.

6:64. However great the revelation and the promises, some *do not believe*. If they do not combine the message with faith, it is of no value to them (Heb. 4:2). The pattern of unbelief came as no surprise to Jesus. He knew *from the beginning* (John means either ‘from the beginning’ of Jesus’ ministry or possibly, as in 1:1, ‘from the beginning’ absolutely) not only who did not believe (*cf.* notes on v. 61) but also the supreme example of unbelief, the betrayer himself. The final words of the verse anticipate vv. 70–71. The rather rare future participial construction (*ho paradōsōn auton*, ‘who would betray him’) depicts the speaker’s firm expectation (*cf.* Rob, p. 1118; Porter, p. 418). Jesus was going toward his God-appointed task with his eyes wide open.

Carson, D. A. (1991). *The Gospel according to John* (p. 302). Leicester, England; Grand Rapids, MI: Inter-Varsity Press; W.B. Eerdmans.

70 Jesus answered them, “Did I not choose you, the twelve, and one of you is a devil?”

71 He spoke of Judas Iscariot, *the son* of Simon, for it was he who would betray Him, being one of the twelve.

He is not here referring to election to salvation, but rather selection to apostleship. He chose twelve men, one of whom was to slander Him in the most unthinkable way. After Judas had been dismissed from the Upper Room the night of the Last Supper, then the Lord spoke to the remaining eleven as being chosen for salvation. As He said to them, “You did not choose Me but I chose you, and appointed you that you would go and bear fruit, and that your fruit would remain, so that whatever you ask of the Father in My name He may give to you” (15:16). His sovereign choice of them, both to salvation and apostleship, ruled out any pretentiousness or self-importance they may have otherwise felt.

The **devil** in their midst, of course, was **Judas the son of Simon Iscariot**. **Iscariot** derives from a Hebrew phrase meaning “man of Kerioth.” The reference was probably to the Judean village of Kerioth (Josh. 15:25), though there was also a Moabite town of the same name (Jer. 48:24, 41; Amos 2:2). Despite Judas Iscariot’s spiritual privilege, **one of the twelve**, the Lord knew that he **was** ultimately **going to betray Him**. (As the most notorious traitor in history, Judas is always introduced in the gospels as the betrayer of Jesus [cf. 12:4; 13:2; 18:2; Matt. 10:4; Mark 3:19; Luke 6:16].) *Diabolos* (**devil**) means “slanderer” (cf. 1 Tim. 3:11; 2 Tim. 3:3; Titus 2:3, where the plural form of the noun is rendered “malicious gossips”), or “false accuser.” It would accurately reflect the Lord’s intent here to render the phrase, “One of you is *the* devil.” Satan, the supreme adversary of God, used Judas as his tool in opposing the work of God (13:2, 27). As in the incident involving Peter’s presumptuous rebuke of Jesus

(Matt. 16:23), the Lord identified Satan as the source behind Judas.

That does not exonerate or excuse Judas for his heinous act. The New Testament places the responsibility for Jesus' betrayal squarely at Judas Iscariot's feet. In the chilling words of Jesus, "The Son of Man is to go, just as it is written of Him; but woe to that man by whom the Son of Man is betrayed! It would have been good for that man if he had not been born" (Matt. 26:24).

MacArthur, J. F., Jr. (2006). *John 1–11* (p. 273). Chicago: Moody Press.

and one of you is a devil?"

Indeed the Greek should probably not be rendered *one of you is a devil* but 'one of you is the devil'. The meaning is clear from 13:2, clearer yet from Mark 8:33 par., where Jesus addresses Peter as 'Satan'. The supreme adversary (Heb. *śāṭān*) of God so operates behind failing human beings that his malice becomes theirs. Jesus can discern the source, and labels it appropriately.

Carson, D. A. (1991). *The Gospel according to John* (p. 304). Leicester, England; Grand Rapids, MI: Inter-Varsity Press; W.B. Eerdmans.

And one of you is a devil (καὶ ἐξ ὑμῶν εἰς διαβολος ἐστὶν [*kai ex humōn heis diabolos estin*]). Jesus does not say that Judas was a devil when he chose him, but that he is one now. In 13:2 and 27 John speaks of the devil entering Judas. How soon the plan to betray Jesus first entered the heart of Judas we do not know (12:4). One wonders if the words of Jesus here did not cut Judas to the quick.

Robertson, A. T. (1933). *Word Pictures in the New Testament* (Jn 6:70). Nashville, TN: Broadman Press.

John 6:71

Of Simon Iscariot (Σιμωνος Ἰσκαριωτου [*Simōnos Iskariōtou*]). So his father was named Iscariot also, a man of Kerieth (possibly in Judah, Josh. 15:25, possibly in Moab, Jer. 48:24), not in Galilee. Judas was the only one of the twelve not a Galilean. The rest of the verse is like 12:4. **One of the twelve** (εἷς ἐκ των δωδεκα [*heis ek tōn dōdeka*]). The eternal horror of the thing.

Robertson, A. T. (1933). *Word Pictures in the New Testament* (Jn 6:71). Nashville, TN: Broadman Press.

II. The Response of Peter

66 From that *time* many of His disciples went back and walked with Him no more.

67 Then Jesus said to the twelve, “**Do you also want to go away?**”

68 But Simon Peter answered Him, “Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life.

69 Also we have come to believe and know that You are the Christ, the Son of the living God.”

66 From that *time* many of His disciples went back and walked with Him no more.

Sadly, but predictably, **as a result of this many of His disciples withdrew and were not walking with Him anymore.** Abandoning any further pretense of being His followers, they deserted Him and joined the scoffers who had rejected Jesus outright. *Ek toutou* (**as a result of this**) could also be translated “from this time.” Both translations are correct. The false disciples permanently abandoned Jesus after this point **as a result** of His teaching in the sermon in general (especially vv. 48–58), and His condemnation of their unbelief in particular (v. 64). “What they wanted, he would not give; what he offered, they would not receive” (F. F. Bruce, *The Gospel of John*

[Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1983], 164).

MacArthur, J. F., Jr. (2006). *John 1–11* (p. 272). Chicago: Moody Press.

6:66. *From this time* (or ‘For this reason’: *ek toutou* could mean either) *many of his disciples* (cf. notes on v. 60) abandoned him decisively. Doubtless these *many ... disciples* are those who found his earlier discourse intolerable (v. 60). Jesus’ additional remarks have done nothing to remove the offence they have found in his words; he did not expect it to be otherwise, and would not shape his comments to pander to their taste. ‘What they wanted, he would not give; what he offered, they would not receive’ (Bruce, p. 164). These Galileans thus joined the earlier Jerusalem followers who failed to pass the test of unqualified allegiance and perseverance grounded in grace-prompted faith.

Carson, D. A. (1991). *The Gospel according to John* (p. 303). Leicester, England; Grand Rapids, MI: Inter-Varsity Press; W.B. Eerdmans.

John 6:66

Upon this (ἐκ τούτου [*ek toutou*]). Same idiom in 19:12. “Out of this saying or circumstance.” Jesus drew the line of cleavage between the true and the false believers. **Went back** (ἀπηλθον εἰς τα ὀπισω [*apēlthon eis ta opisō*]). Aorist (ingressive) active indicative of ἀπερχομαι [*aperchomai*] with εἰς τα ὀπισω [*eis ta opisō*], “to the rear” (the behind things) as in 18:6. **Walked no more with him** (οὐκετι μετ’ αὐτου περιεπατουν [*ouketi met’ autou periepatoun*]). Imperfect active of περιπατεω [*peripateō*]. The crisis had come. These half-hearted seekers after the loaves and fishes and political power turned abruptly from Jesus, walked out of the synagogue with a deal of bluster and were walking with Jesus no more. Jesus had completely disillusioned these hungry camp-followers who did not care for spiritual manna that consisted in intimate appropriation of the life of Jesus as God’s Son.

Robertson, A. T. (1933). *Word Pictures in the New Testament* (Jn 6:66). Nashville, TN: Broadman Press.

67 Then Jesus said to the twelve, “Do you also want to go away?”

68 But Simon Peter answered Him, “Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life.

69 Also we have come to believe and know that You are the Christ, the Son of the living God.”

[New International Version](#)

We have come to believe and to know that you are the Holy One of God."

[English Standard Version](#)

and we have believed, and have come to know, that you are the Holy One of God."

As on so many other occasions, **Simon Peter** acted as the spokesman for the Twelve (cf. 13:36–37; Matt. 14:28; 15:15; 16:16, 22; 17:4; 18:21; 19:27; 26:33, 35; Mark 11:21; Luke 5:8; 8:45; 12:41). His declaration, "**Lord, to whom shall we go? You have words of eternal life. We have believed and have come to know that You are the Holy One of God,**" is reminiscent of his confession of Jesus as the Messiah in Caesarea Philippi (Matt. 16:16; cf. 14:33). While the crowd was only willing to accept Jesus as a kind of second Moses whom they hoped would supply their material needs, the Twelve saw Him for who He really is. There was no other teacher to whom they could turn, Peter said, for it was Christ alone who has the **words of eternal life** (cf. v. 63

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6:67. Jesus' question to the Twelve (here introduced as such for the first time; cf. Carson, *Matt*, pp. 236–240) opens with the interrogative *mē*. In non-rhetorical questions, this particle either demands the answer *No* or else puts the question in a hesitating, tentative fashion (M. 1. 193). Granted the certainty of Jesus' knowledge regarding those who are his, it is unlikely

the latter applies here. The question is not moody, glum, but a challenging ‘Surely *you* don’t want to go away too, do you?’ The question is asked more for their sake than his. They need to articulate a response more than he needs to hear it. One might guess from the flow of the narrative that the defection has been so substantial on this occasion that not many more than the Twelve actually remain.

Carson, D. A. (1991). *The Gospel according to John* (p. 303). Leicester, England; Grand Rapids, MI: Inter-Varsity Press; W.B. Eerdmans.

As usual, *Simon Peter* (*cf.* notes on 1:40, 42) speaks his mind. His response has certain similarities to the confession at Caesarea Philippi (Mk. 8:29 par.), though it is not at all clear that the two passages refer to the same incident. Here, Peter’s response is in two differentiable parts. (1) He asks, *Lord, to whom [else] shall we go? What alternatives are there, granted that You have the words of eternal life?* Peter may not have understood all that much of the preceding discourse, but he here picks up on v. 63: the words Jesus has spoken ‘are spirit and they are life’. (2) *We believe and know* [the Gk. perfects are properly stative, *i.e.* expressing the state of the disciples’ faith and knowledge: *cf.* Porter, pp. 251ff.] *that you are the Holy One of God*. The additional words found in the av (‘the Christ, the Son of the living God’) are not original, but are due to assimilation to Matthew 16:16. The verbs ‘to believe’ and ‘to know’ are extremely common in John, and are frequently roughly synonymous (*cf.* the parallelism in 17:8). There is one absolute distinction: Jesus himself is said to know God (7:29; 8:55; 10:15; 17:25), but never to believe in him. To believe apparently has overtones of dependence

appropriate to creatures, redeemed creatures, but not to the one who is both the agent of creation (1:3) and their redeemer. Knowledge in the Fourth Gospel is frequently personal (it is knowledge of God and of Jesus Christ that constitutes eternal life, 17:3), but no less frequently propositional (as here: the disciples know *that* Jesus is such and such).

The full title *the Holy One of God* occurs elsewhere in Mark 1:24 (= Luke 4:34) in the mouth of a demon. Probably it is a messianic title, though clear evidence of such usage is lacking. At the same time, the adjective ‘holy’ groups Jesus with his ‘Holy Father’ (17:11). Jesus is the one whom the Father has ‘set apart [lit. “sanctified”, same root as “holy”] as his very own’ (10:36). Indeed, Jesus sanctifies himself (17:19). He could not but be the Holy One if he was to deal effectively with ‘the sin of the world’ (1:29). Doubtless Peter and the other members of the Twelve entertained at that time a significantly muddier conception of what the expression meant than they did after Jesus’ resurrection and exaltation. It was enough that their first messianic hopes (1:41, 45) were being confirmed, that they saw in Jesus one who was greater than a prophet, greater than Moses, none less than ‘the Holy One of God’.

Carson, D. A. (1991). *The Gospel according to John* (pp. 303–304). Leicester, England; Grand Rapids, MI: Inter-Varsity Press; W.B. Eerdmans.

John 6:69

We have believed (ἡμεῖς πεπιστευκαμεν [*hēmeis pepisteukamen*]). Perfect active indicative of πιστευω [*pisteuō*], “We have come to believe and still believe” (verse 29). **And know** (καὶ ἐγνώκαμεν [*kai egnōkamen*]). Same

tense of γινωσκω [*ginōskō*], “We have come to know and still know.” **Thou art the Holy One of God** (σου εἶ ὁ ἅγιος του θεου [*su ei ho hagios tou theou*]).

Robertson, A. T. (1933). *Word Pictures in the New Testament* (Jn 6:69). Nashville, TN: Broadman Press.

III. The Reason for Both

64 But there are some of you who do not believe.” For Jesus knew from the beginning who they were who did not believe, and who would betray Him.

65 And He said, “Therefore I have said to you that no one can come to Me unless it has been granted to him by My Father.”

John 6:36–39 (NKJV)

36 But I said to you that you have seen Me and yet do not believe. **37** All that the Father gives Me will come to Me, and the one who comes to Me I will by no means cast out. **38** For I have come down from heaven, not to do My own will, but the will of Him who sent Me. **39** This is the will of the Father who sent Me, that of all He has given Me I should lose nothing, but should raise it up at the last day.

John 6:43–44 (NKJV)

43 Jesus therefore answered and said to them, “Do not murmur among yourselves. **44** No one can come to Me

unless the Father who sent Me draws him; and I will raise him up at the last day.

John 10:16 (NKJV)

¹⁶ And other sheep I have which are not of this fold; them also I must bring, and they will hear My voice; and there will be one flock *and* one shepherd.

John 10:26–27 (NKJV)

²⁶ But you do not believe, because you are not of My sheep, as I said to you. ²⁷ My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me.

John 12:37–40 (NKJV)

³⁷ But although He had done so many signs before them, they did not believe in Him, ³⁸ that the word of Isaiah the prophet might be fulfilled, which he spoke:

“Lord, who has believed our report?
And to whom has the arm of the Lord been revealed?”

³⁹ Therefore they could not believe, because Isaiah said again:

⁴⁰ *“He has blinded their eyes and hardened their hearts,
Lest they should see with their eyes,
Lest they should understand with their hearts and turn,
So that I should heal them.”*

Philippians 1:29 (NKJV)

²⁹ For to you it has been granted on behalf of Christ, not only to believe in Him, but also to suffer for His sake,

Ephesians 2:8 (NKJV)

⁸ For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; *it is* the gift of God,

2 Timothy 2:24–25 (NKJV)

²⁴ And a servant of the Lord must not quarrel but be gentle to all, able to teach, patient, ²⁵ in humility correcting those who are in opposition, if God perhaps will grant them repentance, so that they may know the truth,

Hebrews 12:2 (NKJV)

² looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of *our* faith, who for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God.

James 1:17–18 (NKJV)

¹⁷ Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and comes down from the Father of lights, with whom there is no variation or shadow of turning. ¹⁸ Of His own will He brought us forth by the word of truth, that we might be a kind of first fruits of His creatures.

6:65. Jesus had taught that divine enablement was necessary for people to **come to** faith (v. 44). The

apostasy here (v. 66) should not be surprising. Believers who remain with Jesus evidence the Father's secret work. The unbelieving crowds are evidence that "the flesh counts for nothing" (v. 63).

Blum, E. A. (1985). John. In J. F. Walvoord & R. B. Zuck (Eds.), *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures* (Vol. 2, p. 298). Wheaton, IL: Victor Books.

John 6:65

Except it be given him of the Father (ἐὰν μὴ ἢ δεδομενον αὐτῷ ἐκ τοῦ πατρος [*ean mē ēi dedomenon autōi ek tou patros*]). Condition of third class with ἐὰν μὴ [*ean mē*] and periphrastic perfect passive subjunctive of δίδωμι [*didōmi*]. Precisely the same point as in verse 44 where we have ἐλκυσῆ [*helkusēi*] instead of ἢ δεδομενον [*ēi dedomenon*]. The impulse to faith comes from God. Jesus does not expect all to believe and seems to imply that Judas did not truly believe.

Robertson, A. T. (1933). *Word Pictures in the New Testament* (Jn 6:65). Nashville, TN: Broadman Press.

Charles Spurgeon

How then does the Father draw men? Arminian preachers generally say that God draws men by the preaching of the gospel. Very true; the preaching of the gospel is the instrument of drawing men, but there must be something more than this. Let me ask to whom did Christ address these words? Why, to the people of Capernaum, where He had often preached, where He had uttered mournfully and plaintively the woes of the Law and the invitations of the gospel. In that city He had done many mighty works and worked many miracles. In fact, such teaching and such

miraculous attestation had He given them, that He declared that Tyre and Sidon would have repented long ago in sackcloth and ashes if they had been blessed with such privileges.

Now, if the preaching of Christ Himself did not avail to the enabling these men to come to Christ, it cannot be possible that all that was intended by the drawing of the Father was simply preaching. No, brethren, you must note again, He does not say no man can come except the minister draw him, but except the Father draw him. Now there is such a thing as being drawn by the gospel, and drawn by the minister, without being drawn by God. Clearly, it is a divine drawing that is meant, a drawing by the Most High God—the First Person of the most glorious Trinity sending out the Third Person the Holy Spirit, to induce men to come to Christ.