

Matthew 27:3

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Then Judas, which had betrayed him, when he saw that he was condemned, repented himself, and brought again the thirty pieces of silver to the chief priests and elders,

Analysis

Then Judas, which had betrayed him, when he saw that he was condemned, repented himself (μεταμεληθείς, metameletheis)—critically, this is NOT metanoeo (true repentance), but metamellomai, meaning regret or remorse. Judas experienced emotional distress over consequences, not godly sorrow leading to life-change (2 Cor 7:10). He regretted what happened, not what he was.

The thirty pieces of silver (τὰ τριάκοντα ἀργύρια)—the price of a slave gored by an ox (Exodus 21:32), a contemptuous valuation. Zechariah 11:12-13 prophetically described this precise amount as the insulting wage paid to God's rejected shepherd. Judas's attempt to return blood money reveals conscience without conversion—the chief priests' refusal to reclaim it (v. 6) underscores their hypocrisy, scrupulous about ceremonial law while murdering the innocent.

Historical Context

This occurred during Passover morning after the Sanhedrin's condemnation and before Pilate's sentence. Judas's suicide (v. 5) happened while Jesus stood trial before Pilate. The thirty silver pieces (likely Tyrian shekels) represented about four months' wages—the betrayal price revealing both Judas's greed and the leaders' contempt for Jesus.

Related Passages

John 15:13 — Greatest form of love

1 Corinthians 13:4 — Characteristics of love

Study Questions

1. What distinguishes genuine repentance (metanoeo) from mere remorse (metamelomai), and why does only the former lead to salvation?
2. How does Judas's tragic end demonstrate that proximity to Jesus and religious activity do not guarantee transformation of heart?

Interlinear Text

Τότε	ἰδὼν	Ἰούδας	τοῖς	παραδιδούς	αὐτὸν	ὅτι
Then	when he saw	Judas	which	had betrayed	him	that
G5119	G1492	G2455	G3588	G3860	G846	G3754
κατεκρίθη	μεταμεληθεὶς	ἀπέστρεψεν	τοῖς	τριάκοντα		
he was condemned	repented himself	and brought again	which	the thirty		
G2632	G3338	G654	G3588	G5144		
ἀργύρια	τοῖς	ἀρχιερεῦσιν	καὶ	τοῖς	πρεσβυτέροις	
pieces of silver	which	to the chief priests	and	which	elders	
G694	G3588	G749	G2532	G3588	G4245	

Additional Cross-References

2 Corinthians 7:10 (Repentance): For godly sorrow worketh repentance to salvation not to be repented of: but the sorrow of the world worketh death.