

Matthew 27:5

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And he cast down the pieces of silver in the temple, and departed, and went and hanged himself.

Analysis

And he cast down the pieces of silver in the temple (ἔρριψεν τὰ ἀργύρια)—Judas hurled (ἔρριψεν, eripsen, violent throwing) the thirty pieces of silver into the sanctuary (naos, the inner temple building, not merely the temple courts). This desperate act reveals the unbearable torment of a guilty conscience confronting the irreversibility of betrayal.

And went and hanged himself (ἀπήγξατο, apēnxato)—The middle voice suggests self-inflicted death. This is the only NT use of this verb for hanging. Acts 1:18 adds that he fell headlong and burst open—likely the rope broke after decomposition. Judas's suicide contrasts starkly with Peter's tears of repentance (Matthew 26:75). Both betrayed Christ, but Judas turned to self-destruction while Peter turned to restoration. His end fulfills Psalm 109:8 ('let another take his office') and echoes Ahithophel's suicide after betraying David (2 Samuel 17:23), the typological precursor to Christ.

Historical Context

Suicide was rare in Jewish culture and considered a grave sin, forbidden by the sixth commandment. Judas's act occurred during Passover week (c. AD 30-33), when Jerusalem was filled with pilgrims. His return to the temple—specifically the sanctuary where only priests could enter—shows his desperate attempt to undo his crime. The chief priests' refusal to take back the money (v. 6) left him without human recourse.

Related Passages

Romans 2:1 — Judging others

Matthew 25:31 — Final judgment

Study Questions

1. What distinguishes godly sorrow that leads to repentance (2 Corinthians 7:10) from worldly sorrow that leads to death, as seen in Judas?
2. How does Judas's tragic end illuminate the permanent consequences of betraying Christ, even when remorse follows?

Interlinear Text

καὶ	βίβας	τὰ	ἀργύρια	ἐν	τῷ	ναῷ
And	he cast down	G3588	the pieces of silver	in	G3588	the temple
G2532	G4496		G694		G1722	G3485
ἀνεχώρησεν	καὶ	ἀπελθὼν	ἀπήγξατο			
departed	And	went	and hanged himself			
G402	G2532	G565	G519			

Additional Cross-References

2 Samuel 17:23 (Parallel theme): And when Ahithophel saw that his counsel was not followed, he saddled his ass, and arose, and gat him home to his house, to his city, and put his household in order, and hanged himself, and died, and was buried in the sepulchre of his father.