

- Rev. Grant Mangold, [www.RiversideChurchIowa.com](http://www.RiversideChurchIowa.com)

## JUDAS' VOTE

One of the most troubling aspects of John 13 involves Judas. Verse 21 even says Jesus was "**troubled in His spirit**" as he informed His disciples that one of them would betray Him. It was Judas. He would succumb to the temptations of the world, the flesh, and the devil.

**Judas put Jesus up for sale.** He was most likely one of the patriotic party of "Zealots" who longed for the Messiah to overthrow their Roman oppressors. Jesus apparently no longer fulfilled his expectations. Verse 27 says Satan entered into him, then he went to see the religious authorities who wanted to kill Jesus. They traded Judas thirty pieces of silver, the price of a slave - about half a year's wages. All because his pocketbook trumped every other principle and value in his life. Judas knew the lingo, but he was only going through the motions of being a disciple of Jesus.

**In the end, it was all about himself,** Judas. He followed the popular herd mentality of the day. As long as they could imagine Jesus filling their preferred role of conquering king, giving them what they wanted, the crowds promoted Jesus. But as soon as it became clear Jesus was here to do ALL of God's will and not just the bits people favored most, their fickle fidelity evaporated. Would Judas have fooled you? Was Judas among those who chose the rabble-rouser Barabbas instead of Jesus? Do you think an unprincipled candidate will abandon your dearly-held principles just as easily as a Judas voter does? Will you be fooled again by someone who enters the White House only to take the first left turn?

Christian voters should be the most informed, most principled, and most careful of all voters. Eternal values are at stake - God's principles, not mere earthly preferences. Of course we are not voting for a president as pastor. But Christian citizens rightly expect their leaders to agree with George Washington, "**Of all the dispositions and habits which lead to political prosperity, religion and morality are indispensable supports. It is impossible to rightly govern the world without God and the Bible.**"

**What about YOU** - and your vote? Will it be "my way" or "God's way" in your political decisions? What will BUY your vote this year? The issues are legion: compromised national security, depressed economy, skyrocketing national debt, unbridled immigration, and more. But these are symptomatic of things more basic and foundational. For example, if abortion had not claimed 58 million babies since 1973, think of the difference that would make in terms of immigration and economic activity. Selling baby parts? No way!

**The very freedoms** our Founding Fathers recognized as given by God have come under attack by the very government charged with preserving our liberties. In our day, both the Executive and Judicial branches flagrantly usurp the responsibilities of the Legislative branch. Indeed, the future of the Supreme Court illustrates why the foundational issues are most important. For example, religious freedom, Christian conscience, and the sanctity of human life goes to the heart of every political issue. But myriads of citizens and bureaucrats alike fail to understand liberty or life - from the womb to the tomb, from conception to natural death. No wonder they fail to make credible decisions for others. Do you really want people making your political choices from misleading polls about what government will "do for you" - instead of based on God's eternal principles of right and wrong? Listen and learn. Do your homework.

**It will likely be a "raucous caucus"** next Monday night. But YOU need to be there. Four years ago, more Iowans stayed home than met, and the contest was decided by eight votes. This year, arrive early to get registered. Then vote your values - your Christian conscience. Remember, at this basic caucus level, it's not about your guess who *COULD* win the general election, it's about declaring who SHOULD win. It's about WHO will represent YOU in our government. What sort of person will it be?

**God doesn't leave us to guess.** The Bible spells it out. For example, Exodus 18:21, "*you shall represent the people before God, warn them about the statutes and the laws and make them know the way in which they must walk and what they must do. Moreover, select capable men from all the people, who fear God, who hate dishonest gain, and appoint them as officials to oversee the people.*"

Back in the gospel of John 14:30, we see Satan again, just before the betrayal of Judas. And Jesus says, "**He has no claim on Me, but I do as the Father has commanded Me.**" And that's what Jesus declared to His disciples in verse 15, "**If you love Me you will keep My commandments.**" If you are a Christian, that's the guide for your votes. Join me in praying for God's will to be done on earth as it is in heaven.