

How Did Judas Iscariot Die?

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Abstract

Judas Iscariot is one of the most famous persons of the New Testament literature, but also a controversial figure in Christian history. Originally one of the twelve Apostles of Jesus Christ, he became very known for the kiss and betrayal of his Master to the Sanhedrin for thirty silver coins. His name is often invoked to accuse someone of betrayal, hypocrisy or affinity for money (argyrophilia). This article aims to understand how did Judas die: by hanging (Matthew 27, 5) or by falling and bursting open (Acts 1, 18); or because of his overweight and obesity (Papias of Hierapolis)? The conclusion is that, historically speaking, we have no certain traces of Judas' death. Nevertheless the two-three accounts known at the time related to this tragic event are not contradictory, but they are in fact different viewpoints of the same event, following the Midrash as a method of interpreting biblical stories. Each of these descriptions, given by different authors, acts on a goal which is not necessarily the answer to the question regarding Judas' death, but rather the reality of God's punishment for those who became selfish and insensitive to the real values of life and to the possibility of an authentic return to God: repentance and confession of sins.