Was Judas Guilty for Betraying Jesus, Even Though It Was Prophesied?

One of the commonly asked theological questions is:
“Was Judas really guilty of sin for betraying Jesus, considering his betrayal was foretold in prophecy?”

This question touches on the relationship between divine foreknowledge and human responsibility, a subject of great depth in Christian theology.

1. God’s Foreknowledge vs. Human Free Will

It is true that Scripture contains many prophecies—some concerning those who will be saved, and others about those who will be lost. But we must understand that God’s foreknowledge does not override human free will. The fact that something is foretold does not mean the person involved had no choice.

> *Isaiah 46:10* – “Declaring the end from the beginning, and from ancient times things that are not yet done, saying, ‘My

> counsel shall stand, and I will do all My pleasure.’”

God’s sovereignty allows Him to know all things in advance, but He still holds each individual accountable for their decisions. This includes Judas Iscariot.

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2. Prophecies Concerning the Saved and the Lost

Scripture speaks of two groups in the final judgment—those who will inherit eternal life and those who will face condemnation.

✦ The Saved:

> *Matthew 8:11* – “And I say to you that many will come from east and west, and sit down with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob in the kingdom of heaven.”

This prophecy refers to Gentiles who will enter the kingdom by faith, showing that salvation is open to all people groups.

✦ The Lost:

> *Matthew 7:22–23* – “Many will say to Me in that day, ‘Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in Your name…? And then I will declare to them, ‘I never knew you; depart from Me, you who practice lawlessness!’”

This demonstrates that not everyone who claims to follow Christ will be saved, especially those who live in disobedience to His Word.

Despite these prophecies, God does not predetermine individual names in Scripture. He never says, “This specific person will be lost,” or “That person will be saved.” Instead, the Bible reveals the types of people, their choices, and the outcomes of those choices.

> *2 Peter 3:9* – “The Lord is not slack concerning His promise… but is longsuffering toward us, not willing that any should perish but that all should come to repentance.”

Salvation is available to everyone. The decision rests with us.

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3. The Prophecy About the Betrayer

The betrayal of Jesus was prophesied, but again, no name was mentioned. The prophecy identified the character and actions of the betrayer, not his identity.

> *Psalm 41:9* – "Even my own familiar friend in whom I trusted, who ate my bread, has lifted up his heel against me."

Jesus quoted this prophecy in John 13:18, applying it to His betrayal. Yet, this prophecy could have been fulfilled by any of the twelve disciples—it depended on who would allow their heart to be corrupted by greed and disobedience.

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4. Judas's Choices and Moral Responsibility

Judas made conscious, repeated decisions that aligned with betrayal. He was the group's treasurer and misused his position.

> *John 12:6* – “...he was a thief, and had the money box; and he used to take what was put in it.”

Even when Jesus warned that one of them would betray Him, Judas didn’t turn back or seek forgiveness. This shows willful rebellion despite knowledge of the truth.

> *Matthew 26:24* – “The Son of Man indeed goes 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.”

These are not the words of a man who was merely playing out a role. Jesus declares severe judgment upon Judas, proving his personal guilt.

In the end, Judas acknowledged his own sin, but his repentance was filled with remorse, not transformation.

> *Matthew 27:4–5* – “I have sinned by betraying innocent blood... Then he threw down the pieces of silver in the temple and departed, and went and hanged himself.”

His story is a tragic example of a man who walked with Jesus, witnessed His miracles, heard His teachings—and yet chose darkness.

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5. Prophecy Concerning the End Times – Our Role Today

The story of Judas is a warning for us all. Judas is gone—but now the spotlight is on our generation. What role will we play in fulfilling prophecy?

Paul wrote about the character of people in the last days:

> *2 Timothy 3:1–5* –
> “But know this, that in the last days perilous times will come: For men will be lovers of themselves, lovers of money... traitors... lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God,

> having a form of godliness but denying its power."

The word "traitors" is particularly striking. Judas was one. But in the last days, many will fall into this category—people who claim to follow God outwardly, but whose hearts are far from Him.

If we live in pride, greed, lust, or hypocrisy, we become modern-day fulfillers of that prophecy. In that case, we are not better than Judas—we may even be worse.

> *Hebrews 10:26–27* –
> "For if we sin willfully after we have received the knowledge of the truth, there no longer remains a sacrifice for sins, but a certain fearful expectation of judgment..."

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6. A Final Call: Fulfill the Right Prophecy

So, which prophecy will you fulfill?

- Will you be counted among those who sit with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob in the kingdom of heaven?

- Or will you be among those who are told, “Depart from Me, I never knew you”?

The choice is yours. As with Judas, God will not force anyone. But He has given us everything we need for salvation through Christ Jesus.

> *Deuteronomy 30:19* – “I have set before you life and death, blessing and cursing; therefore choose life, that both you and your descendants may live.”

Judas was guilty because he chose betrayal, despite every opportunity to do what was right. The prophecy was fulfilled through him—not because of him. He was not a puppet; he was a

free agent.

Let his story serve as a solemn warning to each of us today. Let us not fulfill the prophecy of the wicked, but rather fulfill the prophecy of the righteous.

> *Revelation 2:10* – “Be faithful until death, and I will give you the crown of life.”

May the Lord Jesus Christ strengthen us to remain faithful, alert, and obedient until the end.

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