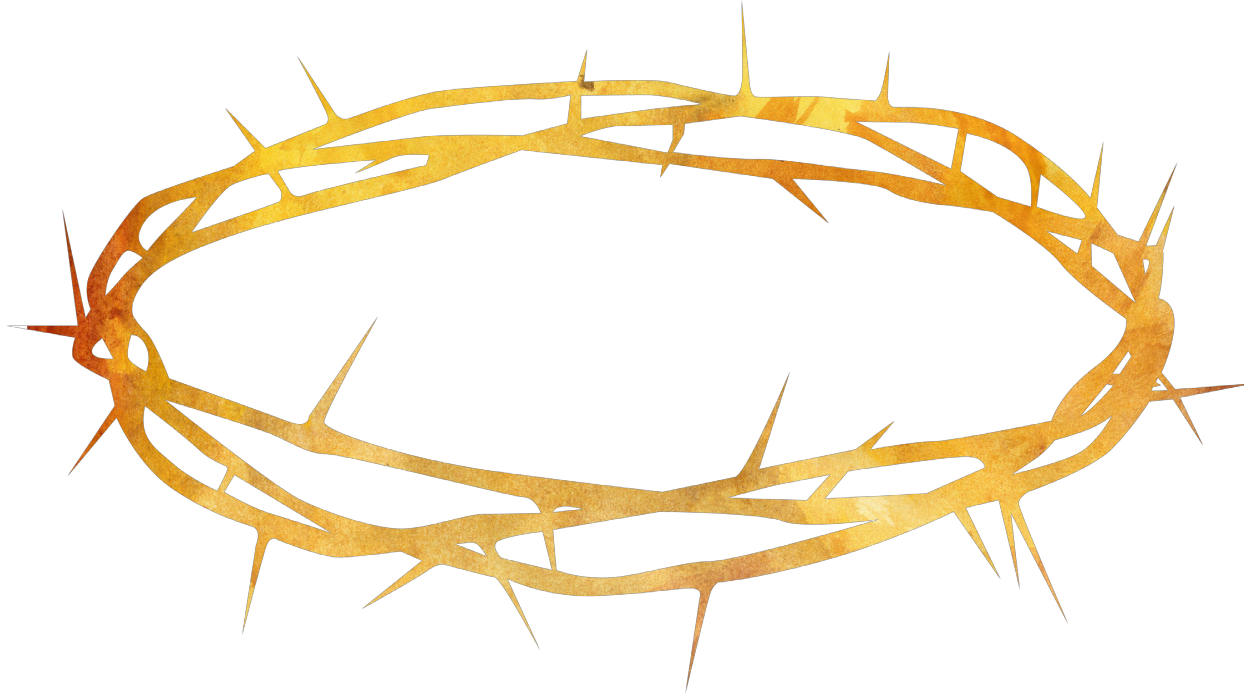


THE TWELVE VOICES OF  
**EASTER**



PRESENTED BY BACK TO THE BIBLE

## **JUDAS: VOICE OF BETRAYAL**

Matthew 26: 14-16 | Matthew 26: 47-50 | Matthew 27: 3-5

I stand at the edge of a cliff, a rope around my neck; the other end tied to a limb on that tree. Dark thoughts fill my mind. Wonder what's come over me.

I should have been a leader. I was named Judas after the great patriarch Judah, first among the 12 tribes of Israel. I should have been first among the 12, not Peter. But there is no other way. I have done unspeakable things. I betrayed my master. I am the voice of betrayal. I deserve to die. Yes, that will be the end.

At least then no one will be able to use me, ever again. I hate it when people use me. The religious leaders tried to use me. All they wanted was an opportunity to arrest Jesus without creating a riot. I gave them that opportunity. They used me. They paid me off.

I thought Jesus wanted to use me too. He wanted to use me to build His kingdom. And He wanted to change me. I could see it in His eyes every time the money box came up short. Jesus knew I was stealing. He knew all about me and should have hated me. I could fool everyone except Him. I grew to hate Him. This tree and this cliff will put an end to all of their plans. He wanted me, but only on His terms. I will not belong to another. I will not be the possession of anyone. Well, I shall be no use to Him now. No more errand boy. No more teacher's helper. No one can help Him now. They have Him.

It all came to me at the Passover meal. We gathered in an upper room with Jesus to celebrate the feast. I was overwhelmed with a sudden clarity of purpose; an amazing strength of resolve. I could see it all coming together. It would be easy. I knew what I had been made for.

It was all too perfect. The conversation around the table was about the week's festival. One or two had something to say about the interfering Romans. But most of the talk was about the faithfulness of God, who redeemed Israel from Egypt long ago. I was silent. Jesus caught my eye a few times, but I looked away.

Then Jesus interrupted the conversation by announcing that one of us would soon betray Him.

The room was instantly still. The faces around the table all showed stunned amazement. Of course, everyone had heard talk that the leaders of the council would pay for information leading to Jesus' arrest, but none of them imagined that anyone would ever betray the Master. One by one each disciple asked if he were the one. I asked, too, of course. Low voices ringed the table in worried discussion. The meal progressed. As I dipped my hand in the dish, Jesus said something to the two next to Him, Peter and John. They looked at me, wariness on their faces, and I knew He had told them. I don't know how He knew, but I had

already been to the chief priests and offered to betray Jesus. Somehow He must have known about it.

I had to get out of there. I stood and rushed out of the room. It was time. I expected them to go to the Garden in Gethsemane after dinner. Whenever we visited Jerusalem, that was His favorite place. He loved the solitude for prayer. I went straight to the chief priests and told them to hurry. If the other disciples guessed my plans, they might spoil everything. "We must act now," I said. They agreed. Some went to get the temple police. The rest of us went to the Roman garrison, where the priests requested a contingent of soldiers to accompany us.

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