

These five chapters (John 13-17) recount the ministry of Jesus to the disciples in the upper room, a ministry accompanied by a meal. <sup>4</sup>

**John 13:1** *Now before the Feast of the Passover, Jesus knowing that His hour had come that He would depart out of this world to the Father, having loved his own who were in the world, He loved them to the end.* <sup>1</sup>

Although Jesus allows Himself to be killed by a conspiracy of Roman and Jewish authorities, He is not at the mercy of those who want Him dead. They have power to put Him to death only insofar as it has been granted to them according to the divine plan and the divine schedule. Jesus lays down his life of His own accord; no one takes it from Him (John 10:18). <sup>2</sup>

**John 10:18** *"No one has taken it away from Me, but I lay it down on My own initiative. I have authority to lay it down, and I have authority to take it up again. This commandment I received from My Father."* <sup>1</sup>

The next point (John 13:1) indicates: 1) that Jesus loved His disciples until the end of His life; and 2) that He loved them to the fullest extent possible. <sup>2</sup>

These chapters are the Lord's "farewell message" to His beloved disciples, climaxing with His intercessory prayer for them and for us. <sup>3</sup>

**John 17:9** *"I ask on their behalf; I do not ask on behalf of the world, but of those whom You have given Me; for they are Yours;"* <sup>1</sup>

In His "high-priestly" prayer, Jesus specifically said (17:9) He was preparing to give an atonement not for the whole world but for His own, those whom the Father had given to Him. If the atonement were for the whole world, then everybody would be saved, but the Scriptures make it clear that this is not so. <sup>5</sup>

### The Foot Washing

This event took place before the Feast of the Passover, at an evening meal before the actual Passover meal. <sup>5</sup>

Foot washing was a common element of hospitality in a dusty country where people wore sandals. <sup>4</sup>

**John 13:4-5** *got up from supper, and laid aside His garments; and taking a towel, He girded Himself. Then He poured water into the basin, and began to wash the disciples' feet and to wipe them with the towel with which He was girded.* <sup>1</sup>

When a rabbi had disciples, they typically acted as his servants. However, they were never required to wash the rabbi's feet; this task was reserved for slaves. Within Israel, if a Jewish person had a Jewish slave, the slave owner

was not permitted to require that slave to wash his feet. Only a Gentile could be required to perform such a menial task. <sup>5</sup>

- Jesus was not instituting a sacrament that was to be repeated on a regular basis among the people of God. The central significance of Jesus' washing His disciples' feet has to do with baptism, which is the sacrament of the entrance into the new covenant. Baptism signifies many things, but at the very heart of the symbolism of baptism is the idea of cleansing. <sup>5</sup>

**John 13:8** *Peter said to Him, "Never shall You wash my feet!" Jesus answered him, "If I do not wash you, you have no part with Me."* <sup>1</sup>

If you have not been washed by Christ, you will have no part with Him in the Father's house. Jesus was preparing His disciples for that cleansing that would once and for all deliver them from their sin. <sup>5</sup>

Our Savior ... did not consider the vocation of servanthood incompatible with His leadership. Disciples of Christ must be willing to do what He was willing to do, including acts of service. <sup>2</sup>

**John 13:17** *"If you know these things, you are blessed if you do them."* <sup>1</sup>

Happiness is the by-product of a life that is lived in the will of God. The sequence is important: humbleness, holiness, then happiness. Real joy comes when we serve others in the name of Christ. Submit to the Father, keep your life clean, and serve others. This is God's formula for spiritual joy. <sup>3</sup>

### Christ Foretells the Betrayal

To eat a meal with someone was a sign of friendship and trust, so it was especially terrible for someone who sat at your table to betray you. <sup>2</sup>

**John 13:18** *"I do not speak of all of you. I know the ones I have chosen; but it is that the Scripture may be fulfilled, 'HE WHO EATS MY BREAD HAS LIFTED UP HIS HEEL AGAINST ME.'"* <sup>1</sup>

The quotation from Psalm 41:9 is a possible reference to the treason of Ahithophel against King David (2 Samuel 15:31). <sup>4</sup>

**John 13:20** *"Truly, truly, I say to you, he who receives whomever I send receives Me; and he who receives Me receives Him who sent Me."* <sup>1</sup>

**emissary n 1** : one sent on a mission as the agent of another

**John 13:21** When Jesus had said this, He became troubled in spirit, and testified, and said, *"Truly, truly, I say to you, that one of you will betray Me."* <sup>1</sup>

**Mark 14:19** *They began to be grieved and to say to Him one by one, "Surely not I?"*

Consider what the disciples would have thought when they heard that one of them would betray Christ. <sup>2</sup>

**astonish** *vt* **1** : to strike with sudden fear **2** : to strike with sudden wonder or surprise

The disciples would have all been reclining on thin mats around the table, each leaning on his left arm, when Jesus washed their feet. <sup>2</sup>

**John 13:23** *There was reclining on Jesus' bosom one of His disciples, whom Jesus loved.* <sup>1</sup>

**whom Jesus loved.** This description has generally been understood to be a reference to John the son of Zebedee, the author of the gospel. The remark does not imply a lack of love for the other disciples, but indicates a special affection for John, who alone of the Twelve stood at the cross and to whom Jesus entrusted the care of His mother (19:26, 27). Then again, this self-description may be the evangelist's way of indicating not what distinguished him from the others but what they shared: nothing more needs to be said about him but that Jesus loved him, as He did so many others. <sup>4</sup>

In the ancient Near Eastern culture, the seat of honor was not at the host's right but at his left. John was at His right hand, but we're not told who was on Jesus' left. Most scholars conclude it wasn't Peter. The consensus is that the man who sat that night in the seat of honor, who was close enough for Jesus to simply reach over to him and give him a piece of bread, was Judas. <sup>5</sup>

**John 13:26-27** *Jesus then answered, "That is the one for whom I shall dip the morsel and give it to him." So when He had dipped the morsel, He took and gave it to Judas, the son of Simon Iscariot.* <sup>1</sup>

The passing of food to a specific person makes the betrayal of Jesus all the more heinous. Hosts of a meal typically did that for the guest of honor, so the one whom Jesus singles out to honor is the same man who hands Him over to death. A greater betrayal can hardly be imagined. <sup>2</sup>

**John 6:70** *Jesus answered them, "Did I Myself not choose you, the twelve, and yet one of you is a devil?"* <sup>1</sup>

"Christ says that none is lost but the son of perdition (John 17:12). Then, in another passage (John 6:70), where the Lord says, that he was elected with the apostles, reference is made only to the office. But when he speaks of election to salvation, he altogether excludes him from the number of the elect (John 13:18). Should any one confound the term election in the two passages, he will miserably entangle himself; whereas if he distinguish between them, nothing can be plainer." – John Calvin <sup>6</sup>

**John 17:12** *"While I was with them, I was keeping them in Your name which You have given Me; and I guarded them and not one of them perished but the son of perdition, so that the Scripture would be fulfilled."* <sup>1</sup>

### Christ Announces His Departure

When Judas was gone, Jesus spoke to the remaining eleven disciples.

**John 13:31-32** *Therefore when he had gone out, Jesus said, "Now is the Son of Man glorified, and God is glorified in Him; if God is glorified in Him, God will also glorify Him in Himself, and will glorify Him immediately."* <sup>1</sup>

**13:31, 32 glorified.** The verb is repeated five times. According to Paul's manner of speaking, Jesus is on the threshold of his deepest humiliation (Gal. 3:13). But the two apostles are not contradicting one another. John focuses on the revelation of God's glory through Christ so as to bring out the glory of God revealed especially in the cross, and Paul well understands that Jesus is finally glorified because of His obedience to His Father even unto death on the cross (Phil. 2:5-11). <sup>4</sup>

**Galatians 3:13** *Christ redeemed us from the curse of the Law, having become a curse for us – for it is written, "CURSED IS EVERYONE WHO HANGS ON A TREE" –* <sup>1</sup>

**John 13:34-35** *"A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another, even as I have loved you, that you also love one another. By this all men will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another."* <sup>1</sup>

There was nothing new about the commandment to love (cf. Lev. 19:18). The new element is the change from "neighbor" to "one another" and the change from "as yourself" to "as I have loved you". Christian love has Christ's sacrificial love as its model, and the community of believers as the primary (though by no means exclusive) place in which it is expressed. <sup>4</sup>

**Leviticus 19:18** *'You shall not take vengeance, nor bear any grudge against the sons of your people, but you shall love your neighbor as yourself; I am the LORD.'* <sup>1</sup>

Jesus asked His disciples to display steadfast love, love that stands up when push comes to shove. He demanded from His disciples and all who would follow Him a love that has no place for treason. <sup>5</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *New American Standard Bible*, Charles Caldwell Ryrie *study Bible*, 1995

<sup>2</sup> *Tabletalk* magazine, Robert Rothwell, July/August 2018 pp. 51-55/pp. 32-36

<sup>3</sup> *Be Transformed*, Warren W. Wiersbe, 1986, pp. 17-29

<sup>4</sup> *The Reformation Study Bible*, p. 1974-6

<sup>5</sup> *John (St. Andrew's Expository Commentary)*, R. C. Sproul, 2009, pp. 239-253

<sup>6</sup> *Institutes of the Christian Religion, Book Third, Ch. 24, Sect. 9*, Jean Calvin, 2008