

John Chapter Thirteen

Read **John 13:1-11** – Jesus Washes the Disciples Feet

v.1 “NOW BEFORE THE FEAST OF THE PASSOVER, WHEN JESUS KNEW THAT HIS HOUR WAS COME THAT HE SHOULD DEPART OUT OF THIS WORLD UNTO THE FATHER, HAVING LOVED HIS OWN WHICH WERE IN THE WORLD, HE LOVED THEM UNTO THE END.”

We have here the setting that the world has called the “Last Supper” for centuries. Jesus had already acknowledged that his time on this earth was very short. As we saw in:

John 12:23 “AND JESUS ANSWERED THEM SAYING, THE HOUR IS COME, THAT THE SON OF MAN SHOULD BE GLORIFIED.”

That wonderful love that God and His Son Jesus the Christ has for all mankind is about to bring the redemption of man from the stain of sin; Jesus did indeed love us “UNTO THE END”, giving his life that we might be redeemed.

v.2 “AND SUPPER BEING ENDED, THE DEVIL HAVING NOW PUT INTO THE HEART OF JUDAS ISCARIOT, SIMON’S *son*, TO BETRAY HIM.”

John plainly states that the devil “PUT INTO THE HEART” of Judas Iscariot “TO BETRAY” Jesus. Does Satan have any special powers over men to make them do his will? He can do only what God allows. He was allowed to bring all kinds of disasters against Job:

Job 1:12 “AND THE **LORD** SAID UNTO SATAN, BEHOLD, ALL THAT HE HATH *is* IN THY POWER; ONLY UPON HIMSELF PUT NOT FORTH THINE HAND. SO SATAN WENT FORTH FROM THE PRESENCE OF THE **LORD**.”

And later even that restriction was lifted and God told Satan only that he could not take Job’s life. Today, and at the time of Jesus, Satan was allowed to tempt, entice, deceive but exercised no control over anyone or over us if we choose not to believe his lies and to turn away his temptations. “We are not responsible for the evil thought suggested by the devil, but we are responsible for harboring it and acting upon it.” (Commentary on The Gospel of John by David Lipscomb, Gospel Advocate, 1939, page 205)

v.3 “JESUS KNOWING THAT THE FATHER HAD GIVEN ALL THINGS INTO HIS HANDS, AND THAT HE WAS COME FROM GOD, AND WENT TO GOD.”

Jesus knew his position in relationship to his disciples and the people of the world in general, He was the Son of God, He was God in the flesh and as the Son of God, He knew that God would indeed give him all power as he proclaimed:

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Matthew 28:18 “AND JESUS CAME AND SPAKE UNTO THEM, SAYING, ALL POWER IS GIVEN UNTO ME IN HEAVEN AND IN EARTH.”

Yet he humbly performs the act of a servant upon the twelve.

v.4 “HE RISETH FROM SUPPER, AND LAID ASIDE HIS GARMENTS AND TOOK A TOWEL, AND GIRDED HIMSELF.”

He makes his preparation for washing their feet. First he lays aside his outer garment, usually a mantle or robe, then he takes a towel and “GIRDED HIMSELF”, the very same thing a servant would do. Paul writes to the church at Philippi, that Jesus:

Philippians 2:7-8 “BUT MADE HIMSELF OF NO REPUTATION, AND TOOK UPON HIM THE FORM OF A SERVANT, AND WAS MADE IN THE LIKENESS OF MEN: AND BEING FOUND IN FASHION AS A MAN, HE HUMBLISHED HIMSELF, AND BECAME OBEDIENT UNTO DEATH, EVEN THE DEATH OF THE CROSS.”

This is but one occasion where we see plainly his humility and willingness to serve.

v.5 “AFTER THAT HE POURETH WATER INTO A BASIN, AND BEGAN TO WASH THE DISCIPLES' FEET, AND TO WIPE *them* WITH THE TOWEL WHEREWITH HE WAS GIRDED.”

In a land and time where the common mode of travel was walking, it was a custom and the duty of a host to provide water and/or wash the feet of the guests in the house. Usually this task was performed by a servant. In our study of I Samuel we saw that when David asked Abigail to become his wife, she claimed only to be worthy to be the servant of his servants.

I Samuel 25:41 “AND SHE AROSE, AND BOWED HERSELF ON *her* FACE TO THE EARTH, AND SAID, BEHOLD, *let* THINE HANDMAID *be* A SERVANT TO WASH THE FEET OF THE SERVANTS OF MY LORD.”

So Jesus performs this service for his disciples, but for a purpose.

v.6 “THEN COMETH HE TO SIMON PETER: AND PETER SAITH UNTO HIM, LORD, DOST THOU WASH MY FEET?”

Peter has the same reaction to Jesus as did John when Jesus came to him to be baptized:

Matthew 3:14 “BUT JOHN FORBADE HIM, SAYING, I HAVE NEED TO BE BAPTIZED OF THEE, AND COMEST THOU TO ME?”

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v.7 “JESUS ANSWERED AND SAID UNTO HIM, WHAT I DO THOU KNOWEST NOT NOW; BUT THOU SHALT KNOW HEREAFTER.”

Jesus simply tells Peter that he doesn't completely understand the purpose behind what he is doing. He was preparing to teach them a lesson in humility and service that they would need when they began carrying out their duties as apostles. Just as picture is worth a thousand words, an action such as this is much more effective than Jesus just telling them to be humble. This is a truth that we need to remember always, what we do speaks much louder than what we say.

v.8 “PETER SAITH UNTO HIM, THOU SHALT NEVER WASH MY FEET. JESUS ANSWERED HIM, IF I WASH THEE NOT, THOU HAST NO PART WITH ME.”

Jesus action here has a meaning that is deeper and stronger than men place upon his words. “IF I WASH THEE NOT, THOU HAST NO PART WITH ME”, what does he mean? He's talking about what Paul calls the “WASHING OF REGENERATION” in **Titus 3:5**. Paul writes to the church at Corinth:

I Corinthians 6:11 “AND SUCH WERE SOME OF YOU: BUT YE ARE WASHED, BUT YE ARE SANCTIFIED, BUT YE ARE JUSTIFIED IN THE NAME OF THE LORD JESUS, AND BY THE SPIRIT OF OUR GOD.”

As we study through our Bible correspondence courses with people from the denominations, the necessity of baptism for the remission of sins is always a subject that can become contentious. Even when faced with the necessity of being “WASHED” in order to be “SANCTIFIED”, most will deny it and some will become angry at the messenger.

v.9 “SIMON PETER SAITH UNTO HIM, LORD, NOT MY FEET ONLY, BUT ALSO *my* HANDS AND *my* HEAD.”

When Peter hears Jesus words, particularly that if he wasn't washed he would then have no part of the blessings of a relationship with Christ. He realized that his salvation was involved he reacted as Peter frequently does. He tells Jesus to wash his head and hands as well. In effect, he tells him to wash his entire body.

v.10 “JESUS SAITH TO HIM, HE THAT IS WASHED NEEDETH NOT SAVE TO WASH *his* FEET, BUT IS CLEAN EVERY WHIT: AND YE ARE CLEAN, BUT NOT ALL.”

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Many see this as a difficult passage and the commentators that I read don't all agree. However, when we compare the physical to the spiritual we can perhaps see Jesus' meaning. When the disciples prepared for the Passover supper, they washed and purified themselves so as to be clean in the presence of God. However, during their journey from their place of stay to the upper room their feet would have gotten dusty. Likewise when we are washed spiritually and our sins are removed we are clean. But as we walk the road of life, we can become spiritually dirty again from sin along the way.

Jesus goes on to tell his disciples that they are clean, "BUT NOT ALL". Jesus tells them later the same night:

John 15:3 "NOW YE ARE CLEAN THROUGH THE WORD WHICH I HAVE SPOKEN TO YOU."

But there was one, Judas Iscariot, who wasn't clean at this point because he had plotted to betray Jesus. He explains that in the next verse.

v.11 "FOR HE KNEW WHO SHOULD BETRAY HIM; THEREFORE SAID HE, YE ARE NOT ALL CLEAN."

Read **John 13:12-20** – Jesus Explains Their Washing

v.12 "SO AFTER HE HAD WASHED THEIR FEET, AND HAD TAKEN HIS GARMENTS, AND WAS SET DOWN AGAIN, HE SAID UNTO THEM, KNOW YE WHAT I HAVE DONE TO YOU?"

When Jesus completes his task he sits down and asks them if they understand the significance of what he had done.

v.13 "YE CALL ME MASTER AND LORD: AND YE SAY WELL; FOR SO I AM."

They called him "MASTER AND LORD" and he said that they do well because he is, just as Paul writes later:

I Corinthians 8:6 "BUT TO US *there is but* ONE GOD, THE FATHER, OF WHOM *are* ALL THINGS, AND WE IN HIM; AND ONE LORD JESUS CHRIST, BY WHOM *are* ALL THINGS, AND WE BY HIM."

v.14 "IF I THEN, *your* LORD AND MASTER, HAVE WASHED YOUR FEET; YE ALSO OUGHT TO WASH ONE ANOTHER'S FEET."

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He tells them he has washed their feet in order to impress upon them that they should "WASH ONE ANOTHER'S FEET", they should stand ready to serve each other.

In Luke's account we have a record of Jesus giving his explanation this way:

Luke 22:27 "FOR WHETHER *is* GREATER, HE THAT SITTETH AT MEAT, OR HE THAT SERVETH? *is* NOT HE THAT SITTETH AT MEAT? BUT I AM AMONG YOU AS HE THAT SERVETH."

He says that he knows that the one that is being served is greater than the servant doing the serving but he walks among them as a servant so that they will understand that we all should have the attitude of servants in this life. Paul writes:

Romans 12:10 "**Be** KINDLY AFFECTIONED ONE TO ANOTHER WITH BROTHERLY LOVE; IN HONOUR PREFERRING ONE ANOTHER;"

And to the church at Galatia:

Galatians 6:1-2 "BRETHREN, IF A MAN BE OVERTAKEN IN A FAULT, YE WHICH ARE SPIRITUAL, RESTORE SUCH A ONE IN THE SPIRIT OF MEEKNESS; CONSIDERING THYSELF, LEST THOU ALSO BE TEMPTED. BEAR YE ONE ANOTHER'S BURDENS, AND SO FULFIL THE LAW OF CHRIST."

And the Apostle Peter to all those who were "STRANGERS SCATTERED" throughout Gentile lands:

I Peter 5:5 "LIKEWISE, YE YOUNGER, SUBMIT YOURSELVES UNTO THE ELDER. YEA, ALL *of you* BE SUBJECT ONE TO ANOTHER, AND BE CLOTHED WITH HUMILITY: FOR GOD RESISTETH THE PROUD, AND GIVETH GRACE TO THE HUMBLE."

v.15 "FOR I HAVE GIVEN YOU AN EXAMPLE, THAT YE SHOULD DO AS I HAVE DONE TO YOU."

Jesus says he has done this as an example. This should bring to mind the words of the Apostle Peter:

I Peter 2:21 "FOR EVEN HEREUNTO WERE YE CALLED: BECAUSE CHRIST ALSO SUFFERED FOR US, LEAVING US AN EXAMPLE, THAT YE SHOULD FOLLOW HIS STEPS:"

v.16 "VERILY, VERILY, I SAY UNTO YOU, THE SERVANT IS NOT GREATER THAN HIS LORD; NEITHER HE THAT IS SENT GREATER THAN HE THAT SENT HIM."

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While Jesus is Master and Lord, he is still the servant of the Father in his time here on earth. Matthew records this same teaching from words of Jesus that were spoken at an earlier time in his ministry.

Matthew 10:24 "THE DISCIPLE IS NOT ABOVE *his* MASTER, NOR THE SERVANT ABOVE HIS LORD."

v.17 "IF YE KNOW THESE THINGS, HAPPY [blessed] ARE YE IF YE DO THEM."

If we know these things we will be happy or blessed if we do them. This parallels the words of James:

James 1:25 "BUT WHOSO LOOKETH INTO THE PERFECT LAW OF LIBERTY, AND CONTINUETH *therein*, HE BEING NOT A FORGETFUL HEARER, BUT A DOER OF THE WORK, THIS MAN SHALL BE BLESSED IN HIS DEED."

v.18 "I SPEAK NOT OF YOU ALL: I KNOW WHOM I HAVE CHOSEN: BUT THAT THE SCRIPTURE MAY BE FULFILLED, HE THAT EATETH BREAD WITH ME HATH LIFTED UP HIS HEEL AGAINST ME."

Jesus now says that he's not speaking about all of them because he knows who he has chosen. He knows the hearts and minds of his disciples. Consequently he knows who is going to betray him. He also tells them that this is a fulfillment of prophecy and the quotes from a lament of David:

Psalms 41:9 "YEA, MINE OWN FAMILIAR FRIEND, IN WHOM I TRUSTED, WHICH DID EAT OF MY BREAD, HATH LIFTED UP *his* HEEL AGAINST ME."

v.19 "NOW I TELL YOU BEFORE IT COME, THAT, WHEN IT IS COME TO PASS, YE MAY BELIEVE THAT I AM *he*."

He's telling them this is going to happen to bolster their faith, to help them understand that the things that are going to happen shortly were purposed by God from the beginning.

v.20 "VERILY, VERILY, I SAY UNTO YOU, HE THAT RECEIVETH WHOMSOEVER I SEND RECEIVETH ME; AND HE THAT RECEIVETH ME RECEIVETH HIM THAT SENT ME."

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Again to reassure them Jesus tells them that whoever receives them, receives Him and whoever receives Him receives God the Father. He is again reminding them of an earlier lesson that he taught them before sending out the seventy to preach and to teach.

Luke 10:16 "HE THAT HEARETH YOU HEARETH ME; AND HE THAT DESPISETH YOU DESPISETH ME; AND HE THAT DESPISETH ME DESPISETH HIM THAT SENT ME."

Read **John 13:21-30** – Betrayal Announced

v.21 "WHEN JESUS HAD THUS SAID, HE WAS TROUBLED IN SPIRIT, AND TESTIFIED, AND SAID, VERILY, VERILY, I SAY UNTO YOU, THAT ONE OF YOU SHALL BETRAY ME."

As any man would be when the fact that one of his closest companions, one that he had called friend would betray him; it troubles Jesus.

v.22 "THEN THE DISCIPLES LOOKED ONE ON ANOTHER, DOUBTING OF WHOM HE SPAKE."

We can almost see Jesus disciples looking at one another, wondering, perhaps even whispering among themselves. They don't know anything about this, that is, except Judas. If the time line that I've seen is right Judas has already met with the representatives of the council and made all of his arrangements.

v.23 "NOW THERE WAS LEANING ON JESUS' BOSOM ONE OF HIS DISCIPLES, WHOM JESUS LOVED."

This disciple that Jesus loved is John the apostle, the one writing this book.

v.24 "SIMON PETER THEREFORE BECKONETH TO HIM, THAT HE SHOULD ASK WHO IT SHOULD BE OF WHOM HE SPAKE."

Impetuous Peter, always, if not the first, one of the first to respond, ask a question or make a comment about something now asks John to ask Jesus who he's talking about.

v.25 "HE THEN LYING ON JESUS' BREAST SAITH UNTO HIM, LORD, WHO IS IT?"

Who is it? The innocent parties, all but Judas, wanted to know just who it was that would betray Jesus.

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v.26 “JESUS ANSWERED, HE IT IS, TO WHOM I SHALL GIVE A SOP, WHEN I HAVE DIPPED *it*. AND WHEN HE HAD DIPPED THE SOP, HE GAVE *it* TO JUDAS ISCARIOT, *the son* OF SIMON.”

Jesus answered John; he apparently didn't speak loud enough for all of the twelve to hear because we told in verse 28 and 29 that they didn't know what Jesus said to Judas and that they didn't know why Judas left them and went out.

v.27 “AND AFTER THE SOP SATAN ENTERED INTO HIM. THEN SAID JESUS UNTO HIM, THAT THOU DOEST, DO QUICKLY.”

This would indicate that perhaps Judas may have been hesitating; so Jesus basically tells him to get it done.

v.28 “NOW NO MAN AT THE TABLE KNEW FOR WHAT INTENT HE SPAKE THIS UNTO HIM.”

None of the rest of the disciples knew the purpose of what Jesus said to Judas but John or the significance of his words.

v.29 “FOR SOME *of them* THOUGHT, BECAUSE JUDAS HAD THE BAG, THAT JESUS HAD SAID UNTO HIM, BUY *those things* THAT WE HAVE NEED OF AGAINST THE FEAST; OR, THAT HE SHOULD GIVE SOMETHING TO THE POOR.”

Since they did not understand Jesus' words to Judas they did not know why he got up and left. If the timing of most of the scholars is correct this is not yet the night of the Passover feast itself, but rather the night before. Since Judas carried the bag that contained their money, they thought that Jesus has sent him on an errand related to that responsibility.

v.30 “HE WHEN HAVING RECEIVED THE SOP WENT IMMEDIATELY OUT: AND IT WAS NIGHT.”

Judas left immediately to carry out his mission and the Apostle John tells us that night had fallen. This is the same night that Jesus would be betrayed and taken by his enemies. Though I've have heard and read it explained I still am not convinced that Jesus was crucified on Friday since he could not have been in the grave three nights if crucified on Friday and resurrected on Sunday morning.

Matthew 12:40 “FOR AS JONAS WAS THREE DAYS AND THREE NIGHTS IN THE WHALE'S BELLY; SO SHALL THE SON OF MAN BE THREE DAYS AND THREE NIGHTS IN THE HEART OF THE EARTH.”

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Read **John 13:31-35** – Jesus Announces His Departure

v.31 “THEREFORE, WHEN HE WAS GONE OUT, JESUS SAID, NOW IS THE SON OF MAN GLORIFIED, AND GOD IS GLORIFIED IN HIM.”

When Judas is gone Jesus still has the events that will follow on his mind and says that the time has now come for the “SON OF MAN” and consequently God to be glorified. We see that he had said this earlier as well:

John 12:23 “AND JESUS ANSWERED THEM, SAYING, THE HOUR IS COME, THAT THE SON OF MAN SHOULD BE GLORIFIED.”

And when Jesus is glorified the God of heaven is glorified as well. Peter writes:

I Peter 4:11 “IF ANY MAN SPEAK, *let him speak* AS THE ORACLES OF GOD; IF ANY MAN MINISTER, *let him do it* AS OF THE ABILITY WHICH GOD GIVETH: THAT GOD IN ALL THINGS MAY BE GLORIFIED THROUGH JESUS CHRIST, TO WHOM BE PRAISE AND DOMINION FOR EVER AND EVER. AMEN.”

v.32 “IF GOD BE GLORIFIED IN HIM, GOD SHALL ALSO GLORIFY HIM IN HIMSELF, AND SHALL STRAIGHTWAY GLORIFY HIM.”

This glorification is mutual, when Christ is glorified, God is glorified, when God is glorified, then the Son of God is glorified as well.

v.33 “LITTLE CHILDREN, YET A LITTLE WHILE I AM WITH YOU. YE SHALL SEEK ME: AND AS I SAID UNTO THE JEWS, WHITHER I GO, YE CANNOT COME; SO NOW I SAY TO YOU.”

He now speaks to his disciples like little children. They are going to have a very difficult night, they are ignorant of what is going to take place. He had often told them that he must die, be buried and rise again the third day but they have never really understood the significance of his words.

They would seek him but they would not be able to follow him. He is going to the grave. They will be scattered and for a little while live in distress and doubt.

v.34 “A NEW COMMANDMENT I GIVE UNTO YOU, THAT YE LOVE ONE ANOTHER; AS I HAVE LOVED YOU, THAT YE ALSO LOVE ONE ANOTHER.”

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A new commandment but not a new concept; they are to love one another. When we go back to the giving of the Mosaic Covenant we find that this precept has always been part of God's law for mankind.

Leviticus 19:18 "THOU SHALT NOT AVENGE, NOR BEAR ANY GRUDGE AGAINST THE CHILDREN OF THY PEOPLE, BUT THOU SHALT LOVE THY NEIGHBOUR AS THYSELF: I *am* THE LORD."

The Apostle Peter writes that because we have purified our souls we are to love our brother fervently:

I Peter 1:22 "SEEING YE HAVE PURIFIED YOUR SOULS IN OBEYING THE TRUTH THROUGH THE SPIRIT UNTO UNFEIGNED LOVE OF THE BRETHREN, *see that ye* LOVE ONE ANOTHER WITH A PURE HEART FERVENTLY:"

The word fervent means heated or vehement in spirit, with enthusiasm, feeling.

v.35 "BY THIS SHALL ALL *men* KNOW THAT YE ARE MY DISCIPLES, IF YE HAVE LOVE ONE TO ANOTHER."

It is through this display of brotherly love that men would know that we are disciples of Christ. The Apostle John writes in his first epistle concerning this same subject that this love confirms that we are in Him:

I John 2:5 "BUT WHOSO KEEPETH HIS WORD, IN HIM VERILY IS THE LOVE OF GOD PERFECTED: HEREBY KNOW WE THAT WE ARE IN HIM."

He also helps us understand that if we don't love each other then we cannot truthfully love God either:

I John 4:20 "IF A MAN SAY, I LOVE GOD, AND HATETH HIS BROTHER, HE IS A LIAR: FOR HE THAT LOVETH NOT HIS BROTHER WHOM HE HATH SEEN, HOW CAN HE LOVE GOD WHOM HE HATH NOT SEEN?"

Read **John 13:36-38** – Peter's Denial

v.36 "SIMON PETER SAID UNTO HIM, LORD, WHITHER GOEST THOU? JESUS ANSWERED HIM, WHITHER I GO, THOU CANST NOT FOLLOW ME NOW; BUT THOU SHALT FOLLOW ME AFTERWARDS."

Again Peter, usually the first to speak, wants to know where Jesus is going. Jesus answers that Peter can't go where he's going but that the day will come when Peter will follow him. Peter wrote that Jesus did show him the way:

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II Peter 1:14 “KNOWING THAT SHORTLY I MUST PUT OFF *this* MY TABERNACLE, EVEN AS OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST HATH SHOWED ME.”

v.37 “PETER SAID UNTO HIM, LORD, WHY CANNOT I FOLLOW THEE NOW? I WILL LAY DOWN MY LIFE FOR THY SAKE.”

Peter again protests Jesus words. Why can't I follow you; I would die for you and if you die I would die with you. This is very similar to the other three times that Peter declared he would never leave Jesus' side. We'll look at Matthew's record:

Matthew 26:33 “PETER ANSWERED AND SAID UNTO HIM, THOUGH ALL *men* SHALL BE OFFENDED BECAUSE OF THEE, *yet* WILL I NEVER BE OFFENDED.”

v.38 “JESUS ANSWERED HIM, WILT THOU LAY DOWN THY LIFE FOR MY SAKE? VERILY, VERILY, I SAY UNTO THEE, THE COCK SHALL NOT CROW, TILL THOU HAST DENIED ME THRICE.”

Jesus brings a dose of reality to Peter. He has claimed that he would die for Christ, but Jesus says that before the rooster crows the next morning, Peter would deny him three times. Luke's account is probably the most detailed of Jesus trial and Peters denial.

Luke 22:59-60 “AND ABOUT THE SPACE OF ONE HOUR AFTER ANOTHER CONFIDENTLY AFFIRMED, SAYING, OF A TRUTH THIS *fellow* ALSO WAS WITH HIM: FOR HE IS A GALILAEAN. AND PETER SAID, MAN, I KNOW NOT WHAT THOU SAYEST. AND IMMEDIATELY, WHILE HE YET SPAKE, THE COCK CREW.”