

John 13:1-35

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Overview

We now pass from the Lord's public ministry to a segment that begins and ends with his private time with the disciples (13-17; 20-21). In the middle (18-19) is his passion, which includes interactions with the world as well as with his disciples.

Today we begin 13-17, which is traditionally known as the Upper Room Discourse. It is usually understood to have taken place at the Last Supper.

This section is a chiasmic oscillation around three themes, all introduced in ch. 13.

- The loving unity of the Lord with his disciples, and their love and unity with one another; in 13:1-17, this is expressed through the footwashing. It is recapped in 13:34-35.
- The opposition that believers will have with the world; in 13:18-30, we see this in Judas' betrayal of the Lord. It is recapped in 13:33b.
- The Lord's coming return to the Father; he discusses this in 13:31-33a.

These are generated from an actantial structure similar to that in ch. 12, only now the believers are separated from the world and united with the Lord. See the handout for a graphic, and a tabular summary of the entire discourse.

1-17, Loving Service: The FootWashing

1, The Theme

Verse 1 sets the theme for the first action, and indeed for the rest of the book. The sentence is quite contorted, and you really have to diagram it to understand the flow. It consists of one core sentence, with three modifiers.

1 Now ... he loved them.--This is the core of the verse, the part that can stand by itself. When we turn from the temple courts to the Upper Room, John wants us to know one thing: He loved them. "Jesus loves me; this I know, for the Bible tells me so." The rest of the verse modifies this in three ways. It describes the *circumstances* under which he loved, them, the *stability* of his love, and its *certainty*.

The Circumstances: "When Jesus Knew"

John tells us two things about Jesus' knowledge here: the time at which he had this knowledge, and the contents of his knowledge.

Let's start first with the contents of his knowledge.

that his hour was come.--Throughout the gospel, the Lord has been waiting for "his hour." Cf. 2:4, when he said to Mary, "mine hour is not yet come." In our study on 12:23, we saw that the Lord's "hour" in John has two faces: his glorification, but at the same time his passion. Now his hour has come, and both faces show themselves.

that he should depart out of this world.--Here is the passion, the suffering and death that will tear him from his disciples.

unto the Father.--Yet that very departure brings him to the Father, and as we shall see repeatedly in this discourse, this is the occasion of his glorification.

before the feast of the passover.--This is when Jesus came to the knowledge here described. It was before the feast of the passover that the Father revealed to him that the time for his sacrifice had finally arrived.

It is right that we acknowledge and worship the Lord Jesus as truly divine. Yet sometimes we lose sight of the fact that as a man, he lived with all of our human limitations. In particular, he faced uncertainty, and the need to walk by faith when sight was unavailable. He has known throughout his ministry that his hour would come, but not when. Now, finally, the picture has come into focus, and he begins to prepare his disciples for that hour.

This is what we see in these chapters: how the Lord prepares his disciples for his departure. He now knows that he will soon leave them. Under such circumstances, "he loved them." He will not disappear suddenly, without preparing them. He will do his best to explain to them what is happening and how they can pass through the coming night into the full light of resurrection day.

There is an example here for us, in our dealings with one another. If we love one another, we will try to consider how our decisions and changes in our circumstances may affect them, and we will prepare them for those decisions and changes. We will not live for ourselves alone, but in every action will consider its consequences on those we love.

The Stability: "Having loved"

The Lord's love for them was not something new. It had been his preoccupation throughout his ministry. But he shows it in a different way now that he knows that his hour has come.

Those who are the objects of his love are described in two ways.

his own.--This title emphasizes a theme that we have seen repeatedly in John: that believers are the Lord's special possession.

6:37, All that the Father **giveth me** shall come to me

6:39 And this is the Father's will which hath sent me, that of **all which he hath given me** I should lose nothing, but should raise it up again at the last day.

10:27-29 My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me: 28 And I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any *man* pluck them out of my hand. 29 My Father, **which gave them me**, is greater than all; and no *man* is able to pluck *them* out of my Father's hand.

17:2 he should give eternal life to **as many as thou hast given him**.

17:6 I have manifested thy name unto the men **which thou gavest me** out of the world: thine they were, and thou gavest them me; and they have kept thy word.

17:9 I pray for them: I pray not for the world, but for them **which thou hast given me**; for they are thine.

17:11 Holy Father, keep through thine own name **those whom thou hast given me,**

In our front hall hangs a wall clock, in a cherry cabinet. It is very special to our family, because my father made it and gave it to us. If some day we have to move into smaller quarters and reduce our possessions, there are many things that we might sell, give away, or discard, But we would take very special care of that clock, because it was my father's gift to us.

This is the Savior's attitude toward you and me. We are his Father's gift to him, and because of that, his love toward us is constant and unchanging.

which were in the world.--This love persists even though our current circumstances do not show us in the best light. We are “in the world,” immersed in a cesspool of sin and godlessness. Though we are gifts of the Father to the Son, yet we are cumbered with the flesh and soiled by our daily contact with ungodliness. In spite of this, the Lord loves us.

The Certainty: “Unto the End”

unto the end.--His love not only continues from the past, but endures “unto the end.” John uses this expression as a bookmark for 19:30. “The end” is Greek *telos*, which is the same root as the verb “it is finished” in 19:30, *tetelestai*. This caring, nurturing love that the Lord has for us will carry him through the agonies of the next few chapters—the betrayal of Judas, the humiliation of the trial, the scourging, and the crucifixion. This is “the joy that was set before him” (Heb 12:2), “bringing many sons unto glory” (Heb 2:10).

2-5, The Lord's Actions

This paragraph consists of a backbone of six main verbs that culminate in the washing of the disciples' feet. The entire sequence is modified by three clauses.

The Backbone

The action unfolds as the disciples would have experienced it—one step at a time, the objective not clear until the final verb. John does not write, “the Lord washed the disciples' feet, and here is how he did it: he rose, and laid aside his garments, and took a towel” Nor, apparently, did the Lord explain in advance what he was doing. Rather, he begins to execute this string of unusual events to engage their curiosity and impress the final action more firmly on their minds.

3 Jesus ... 4 riseth from supper.--They were at the table. Suddenly, the Lord arose. It was not the time for them to leave, and nothing he said indicated that they should rise. But this certainly got their attention.

and laid aside his garments.--That is, his outer garments, as though I should take off my suit coat and roll up my sleeves. He is preparing to do something that requires freedom of movement. What can it be?

and took a towel and girded himself.--Now that he has unencumbered himself of adorning garments, he takes up the implements of the work that he must do. He now appears to them as a servant, but what task will he undertake?

5 After that he poureth water into a bason.--They watch with amazement as he fills a bowl, about

two quarts in size (see Gill), with water. Now the various pieces come into focus for them. From time to time, as they have been received into private homes, a servant has approached them, girt with a towel and carrying a bason of water, to wash their feet. In these few brief actions, their Lord has been transformed before them into a servant. Peter, James, and John were privileged to see him glorified on the mount of Transfiguration, but now they all see him transformed in the other direction. Finally, he carries out the work for which he has prepared himself:

and began to wash ... and to wipe.--Recall that in the ancient world, people reclined at table, with their heads toward the table and their feet sticking out like the spokes of a wheel. He makes the rounds of the table, washing each disciple's feet in turn.

This was an act of great humility, the place of a servant. Recall the words of Abigail toward David in 1 Sam 25:41, "Behold, *let* thine handmaid *be* a servant to wash the feet of the servants of my lord."

Watching this scene unfold, and recalling what John has just said in v. 1 about the coming of the Lord's hour, we are compelled to see in his actions a dramatization of Phil 2:7, which describes how the Lord "emptied himself, and took upon him the form of a servant."

- See him lay aside his garments, and recall how he "emptied himself" (AV "made himself of no reputation") in leaving behind "the glory which [he] had with [the Father] before the world was" (17:5).
- See him gird himself with a towel, and pick up a foot-basin, and remember how he "took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men," as "the word was made flesh, and dwelt among us" (1:14).
- Watch him kneel at the feet of the disciples, and call to mind that "he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross."

By this simple but profound gesture he gives them a parable of his continuing love—how he loved them in the past by accepting the incarnation, and how he will love them unto the end in dying for them.

The Modifiers

Now we consider the three clauses that modify this series of actions.

2 supper being ended.--The AV suggests that this is after the events described in the synoptics, the sharing of the bread and the cup, and it might be. But the Greek verb need mean no more than that this took place at supper. We might translate, "supper having begun."

The significance of this phrase is that they were already at the table. He had sent his disciples out to arrange for the meal. Now the company has arrived at the upper room, and they have gone straight to the table. One detail for which the disciples had not arranged was for someone to wash the feet of the group as they came in. They might object that they were too poor to hire a servant for this task, but it never occurred to them that perhaps one of them should undertake this duty out of love toward the rest.

the devil having now put.--v.1 reminded us that the Lord loved his own, even while they were in the world. Here we see the extent of the world's influence. Judas had already resolved upon his wicked plan by the time the Lord washed his feet. The Lord knew this, and yet reached out to him in humility. His salvation is effective only for his own, and yet it is offered to "whosoever will." It is right for us to believe and teach that God sovereignly saves whom he will—but we dare not withhold our humble

service from someone because we have doubts about them.

John mentions Judas for a special reason. The Lord's treatment of Peter and Judas in the next few verses is an important example for us as we come to the Lord's table.

knowing.--Now John tells us three things that were in the Lord's mind as he washed the disciples' feet. All three of these emphasize that the Lord was secure in his knowledge of who he was. Those who cling most tenaciously to the emblems of position and prestige are the least secure in their own minds. The Lord could humble himself precisely because he knew of his standing before the Father.

- **the Father had given all things into his hands.**--He is the second Adam, of whom David wrote in Psa 8:6, "Thou madest him to have dominion over the works of thy hands; thou hast put all *things* under his feet." He is the promised Messiah, recipient of the promise of Psa 2:8, "Ask of me, and I shall give *thee* the heathen *for* thine inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth *for* thy possession." He is the one to whom the Father has promised to make his enemies his footstool, Psa 110:1.
- **he was come from God.**--He remembered the glory that he enjoyed in heaven, 17:5. He knew that he "came down from heaven," 3:13.
- **[he] went to God.**—He also recognized that he would soon depart to be with the Father. This is one of the three main themes of the discourse.

The lesson in this for us is that our status as children of the King ought to enable us to humble ourselves and serve one another. It doesn't matter what people think of us, so long as he owns us as his own.

6-11, Interchange with Peter

As the Lord works his way around the table, he arrives at Peter. We can imagine that all of the disciples are stunned at the Lord's actions. Peter, true to his character as spokesman for the group, gives expression to their bewilderment:

6 ... Lord, dost thou wash my feet?--The Greek word order makes the pronouns emphatic. "Is it you who washes my feet, even mine?" It is inconceivable to him that one whom he has recognized as "Christ, the son of the Living God," who alone has "the words of eternal life" (6:68-69), should stoop so low as to wash the feet of his own disciples. Whatever else we may think of Peter's words, they show that he has an accurate view both of the honor due to the Lord and of his own unworthiness.

It is interesting that while Peter, one of the Lord's closest friends, is so self-conscious about his sin, Judas, who has already formed plans to betray him, remains silent. An important lesson of this entire paragraph is the necessity of maintaining a tender conscience toward the Lord., being willing to confront our specific sins and appropriate the Lord's grace to deal with them. One sign of a true believer is a willingness to face one's sin and deal with it. It is the unbeliever, with no hope of forgiveness, who must protest innocence at every turn.

The three clauses in Lord's answer not only answer Peter, but form a wonderful word of encouragement for us.

7 ... What I do.--Responding to Peter's question, the pronoun is again emphatic. "Yes, it is indeed I who act. And because it is I, and no other, you should be willing to have faith in me." We confront many circumstances in our lives, circumstances that we do not understand. It is crucial for us to

remember in every such situation that our Lord is in control. He is the one who is doing. He works all things after the counsel of his own will (Eph 1:11), and causes all things to work together for good to those who love him (Rom 8:28).

thou knowest not now.--*oida*, absolute knowledge without reference to time or process (Porter p 282). How difficult it is to hear this from the Lord. In our pride, we want to understand everything:

It is the glory of God to conceal a thing: but the honour of kings is to search out a matter. (Prov 25:2)

We see through a glass, darkly. It is not always given us to know just what the Lord intends by the events he brings into our lives. Our place is that of obedience, not always of understanding.

thou shalt know hereafter.--*ginwskw*, process: "come to learn," i.e., by experience. Graciously, the Lord does not keep us in the dark indefinitely. In the end, we see "face to face" (1 Cor 13), and understand the reason for the things that the Lord has done in our lives.

Peter's objection thus far is natural, and the Lord has responded in a mild fashion. But Peter's next statement evokes a much harsher response.

8 Peter saith unto him, "Thou shalt never wash my feet."-- Now Peter moves from a question to a statement. As A.B. Bruce has observed, his statement rejects two attributes of the Lord.

First, he rejects the Lord's *humiliation*. Peter rightly reverences the Lord, but his reverence has led him to create a false Jesus. His view of the Lord is based on what he thinks the Lord ought to be, rather than on what the Lord has said; on theology rather than on exegesis. He reasons, "Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God," which is true. He knows from the OT that the Messiah will rule over all the nations, and receive their worship, which is also true. But then he concludes from this that such a person could never take the humble place of a servant, which is false, and which contradicts other texts (Psa 22; Isa 53 and others of the servant songs). His error is akin to that of the people in 12:34, who concluded from the teaching of Christ's eternal kingdom that he could never die.

Peter's error here ought to be a constant warning to us never to prefer theology over exegesis. Holding close to what God says ought to take priority over consistency with a theological scheme. Logical deductions from the words of Scripture are useful, but only so far as they are consistent with the rest of Scripture. Our minds are far too feeble to trust them over the explicit Word of God.

Second, he rejects the Lord's *lordship*. Clearly, the Lord intends to wash his feet. Peter presumes to place his will against the Savior's. His statement, "Thou shalt never wash my feet," is not a prediction but a prohibition. He is not saying, "I think you're out of water," but placing his will against the Lord's. He thinks that he knows better, and will act according to his own lights.

This is not the first, or the last, time that Peter exhibits these traits. The same two issues arise on two other occasions.

In Matt 16, Peter has confessed the Lord as "the Christ, the son of the living God" (v. 16). The Lord acknowledges that attribution, but then goes on (v. 21) to teach the disciples about his coming passion. Peter responds (v. 22), "Be it far from thee, Lord, this shall not be unto thee."

- Once again, we see Peter's unwillingness to give the Lord's explicit teaching (v. 21) priority over a consistent theological scheme based on his own confession.
- Once again, we see him place his will against the Lord: the emphatic negative *ou mh* used in Matt 16:22 is the same as in John 13:8 (though with an indicative verb rather than a

subjunctive), and may well reflect his resolve to oppose the Lord's passion: "I won't let this happen to you." We see him act out this resolve in the Garden, when he draws his sword to protect the Lord from the armed guard sent to apprehend him (John 18:10).

The Lord's rebuke on that occasion (Matt 16:23) was if anything more severe than it is here.

"Get thee behind me, Satan; thou art an offence unto me: for thou savourest not the things that be of God, but those that be of men.

Even after these two incidents, Peter's stubbornness persists. In Acts 10, in the vision of the sheet let down from heaven, the Lord commands him to eat of unclean animals. His response (v. 14) is "Not so, Lord." He refuses to accept the priority of direct revelation over Jewish tradition, and will not obey the command to "Arise, kill and eat." Dr. Fullerton used to love to point out the essential incompatibility of those two expressions. If we recognize Jesus as Lord, we cannot say to him, "Not so."

All three cases highlight the same two challenges. We must yield two things to him: our **reason** and our **will**. We must accept the truth of his words over our own notion of consistent theology, and submit our obedience to the instructions he gives us.

Jesus answered him, If I wash thee not.--Note that the Lord speaks not of washing Peter's feet, but of washing him. The position of humility that the Lord illustrates in the footwashing is central to his overall redemptive work. John later describes the Lord as "him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood," Rev 1:5.

thou hast no part with me.--If Peter persists in his refusal to submit his reason and his will to the Lord, he cannot partake in this more complete washing, and be free from his sin.

Here is a paradox. Because the Lord is high and lifted up, sin is excluded from his presence:

Your iniquities have separated between you and your God, and your sins have hid *his* face from you, that he will not hear (Isa 59:2).

But the only way to be delivered from our sin is through his humiliation.

9 Simon Peter saith unto him, "Lord, not my feet only, but also *my hands and my head.*"--Faced with this choice, he submits to the Lord. It is tempting to see in the organs that he submits a reflection of the two dimensions of his rebellion. His hands reflect his will, agreeing to do what the Lord commands, while his head may reflect his reason, believing what the Lord tells him. (But recognize that in Hebrew thought, the heart, rather than the head, is the organ of reason and belief, Acts 8:37; Rom 10:9.)

10 Jesus saith to him.--The Lord's response begins to move the focus from Peter to the entire group ("ye" at the end of the verse). He deals with the difference between partial and complete cleansing, and distinguishes two dimensions of this distinction:

1. an individual can be partly or completely clean.
2. a company of people can be partially or completely clean.

It is likely (as tradition holds) that the Lord washes the disciples' feet at the Last Supper, when he instituted what we now celebrate each week as the Lord's Supper. So it is interesting that when Paul gives instruction in 1 Cor 11 for how to celebrate the supper, he gives two warnings against unworthy participation that correspond to these two dimensions of partial cleansing.

Recall the two warnings against unworthy participation in 1 Cor 11:27-29.

1. Dealing with personal defilement: “27 Wherefore whosoever shall eat this bread, and drink *this* cup of the Lord, unworthily, shall be guilty of the body and blood of the Lord. 28 But let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of *that* bread, and drink of *that* cup.”
2. Dealing with a mixed company: “29 For he that eateth and drinketh unworthily, eateth and drinketh damnation to himself, not discerning the Lord's body.”

It is also interesting that ch. 13 begins with a focus on two people: Peter (in the footwashing section) and Judas (in vv. 18-30). Peter's sense of unworthiness, though expressed rashly, is a good example of examining oneself, while the Lord's treatment of Judas is a good example of discerning the body.

We will consider each of these in connection with the Lord's words.

He that is washed needeth not save to wash *his* feet, but is clean every whit.--First, he considers an individual. Just as one can have bathed and yet have dirty feet, so a person can be washed from his sins and yet contract defilement from contact with the world. This sort of defilement does not constitute a major spiritual disaster, but is a constant part of daily life.

The solution for this problem is the self-examination that Paul enjoins in 1 Cor 11:27-28.

John himself expounds this process more fully in 1 John 1:8-9. It has two steps. First, we must acknowledge that we “have sin.” Second, we must confess our sin.

In John's usage, claiming to “have no sin” is claiming not to be conscious of sin in one's life;

- In 9:41, the Lord says to the Pharisees, “If ye were blind, ye should have no sin: but now ye say, We see; therefore your sin remaineth.” He is not saying that if they were blind they would be sinless, but only that their blindness would excuse them from the evidence of his miracles, and thus they would not be conscious of their sin.
- In 15:24, he says of the Jews, “If I had not done among them the works which none other man did, they had not had sin: but now have they both seen and hated both me and my Father.” Again, the lack of miracles would not render them sinless, but at least they would not be rebelling consciously against revelation, as they are now.

It is no shame to acknowledge that we have gotten our feet dirty walking in the world. It's impossible to walk in the world without contracting defilement. The first step in preparation for the Lord's table is to recognize our sin.

The second is to confess it. The verb means to agree with someone. When we confess our sin, we agree with what the Lord says about it, which requires us to reflect on the scriptural teachings that our sin violates. Compare the paraphrase of 1 John 1:9,

Father, in your word you state
That what I did is what you hate.
And since you hate it, I do too.
I totally agree with you.

Peter's sense of unworthiness shows the kind of attitude that we will have if we examine ourselves. Hopefully, we will not rashly conclude (as Peter began) that we have no place with the Lord, but will accept (as Peter finally did) the cleansing that he offers.

ye are clean, but not all.--The plural pronoun shows that the Lord is shifting from a private discussion

with Peter back to a general address to the twelve, transitioning to the explanation in 12-17.

Now the Lord turns from pollution of the individual to tares among the wheat. Israel, redeemed out of the slavery in Egypt, yet had a mixed multitude among them. Within the twelve disciples lurked Judas. The church in Ephesus had Hymenaeus and Alexander. The visible church should be a manifestation of the mystical body of Christ, but too often there are those in the visible church who have no part with the Lord.

The solution to this problem is the discerning of the Lord's body that Paul enjoins in 1 Cor 11:29. The reference is not to the bread on the table, for then one must also discern the blood. Instead, Paul is anticipating the description of the church in ch. 12 as the body of Christ. "Discern" is the same Greek word as in v.31, "if we would judge ourselves," and refers to the responsibility of the assembly to recognize and deal with the mixed multitude, as the Lord is about to do with Judas here in John 12.

Again, John picks up this theme in his epistles. In 2:18-19, he writes,

18 Little children, it is the last time: and as ye have heard that antichrist shall come, even now are there many antichrists; whereby we know that it is the last time. 19 They went out from us, but they were not of us; for if they had been of us, they would *no doubt* have continued with us: but *they went out*, that they might be made manifest that they were not all of us.

And in 2 John 9-11, he warns against those whose teaching shows that they are not the Lord's:

9 Whosoever transgresseth, and abideth not in the doctrine of Christ, hath not God. He that abideth in the doctrine of Christ, he hath both the Father and the Son. 10 If there come any unto you, and bring not this doctrine, receive him not into *your* house, neither bid him God speed: 11 For he that biddeth him God speed is partaker of his evil deeds.

There is much confusion in modern Christendom on this point. Many confuse the evangelical role of the church with its role as the body of Christ. We must reach out to "whosoever will," and like the Savior, not be afraid to share the gospel with those of the worst repute. But when we gather to remember the Lord, it is as a redeemed people. We are to hold one another responsible for conduct consistent with our profession. The most loving thing we can do for someone who thinks he is a Christian but is not, is to call his inconsistency to his attention.

11 For he knew who should betray him.--It appears that he has known this since 6:70-71,

70 Jesus answered them, Have not I chosen you twelve, and one of you is a devil? 71 He spake of Judas Iscariot *the son* of Simon: for he it was that should betray him, being one of the twelve.

Just as Peter is an example of self-examination, Judas is an example of discerning the body. Judas does not acknowledge his own failing, so the Lord must recognize him and send him out, in vv. 18-30. Thus he sets an example for the disciples as to how they should deal with such situations.

12-17, The Explanation

The last few verses of his interchange with Peter turned from Peter's individual confusion to lessons for the disciples as a group (cf. the shift to "you" in v.10). Now this broader exposition continues.

12 after he had washed ... and had taken ... and was set down.--The Lord completed his task, then donned his outer garments and resumed his place at the table. Now he had their attention.

Know ye *ginwskete* what I have done to you?--He recalls the promise he made to Peter in v. 7, "thou

shalt know hereafter.” The verb “know” emphasizes the process of coming to knowledge. “Have you seen what I have done? Have you come to realize its importance?” Just in case they have not, he now proceeds to unfold it for them. His argument proceeds in three steps:

- 13, Their understanding of who he is and their relationship to him
- 14-15, The implications of that relationship for understanding what he has done.
- 16, A generalization of that principle.

13 Ye call me Master and Lord.--First, he clarifies his relationship with them. These words imply two different functions, addressing the two flaws we saw in Peter's character: the need to submit the reason and the will to Christ. They define two different roles for the disciples. Compare Matt 10:24, “The disciple is not above *his* master, nor the servant [lit. bonds slave] above his lord.”

- “Master” *didaskalos* means “teacher,” and corresponds to our role as “disciple,” “learner.” The point is not that he gives us orders to obey, but that he gives us instruction to absorb. It indicates the need to submit our reason to Jesus and accept the truth that he seeks to impart to us. Some of that truth is imparted by words that we should believe, but much, even most, is in the form of examples that we should imitate. Compare the modern use of “master” in the trades to indicate someone who can now take apprentices. We are apprentices to Christ, and carefully observe and imitate what he does in order to appropriate it ourselves. The disciples call Christ this (*didaskalos* vocative) 31x in the gospels.
- “Lord” *kurios* is much closer to our modern use of the word “master.” It corresponds to our role as “servant” in Matt. 10:24, a word that is better translated “bonds slave.” It indicates our need to submit our *will* to Jesus and obey his instructions. The vocative of this form appears 95x in the gospels, mostly toward Jesus.

Instead of the titles “Master and Lord,” we are more likely to think of Jesus as “Lord and Savior.” He does not say that they call him to be their “savior.” They have not yet come to this understanding. Indeed, the only ones in the gospels who call Jesus “Savior” are the angels in Luke 2:11 and the Samaritans in John 4:42. His followers did not understand that significance of his work until after the passion.

After Pentecost, things change dramatically. Jesus is frequently called *swthr* “savior” and *kurios* “Lord,” but never *didaskalos* “teacher, master.” That title is applied only to teachers in the church, who have taken over that role. But they do not take over the other two, and Peter warns against the temptation for elders to seek to “be lords over God's heritage” (1 Pet 5:3).

so I am.--The Lord accepts these two designations. This concludes the first step in his argument: they acknowledge him as master and Lord, teacher and commander.

Now, in the second step of his argument, he explains that they should follow his example. We have the instruction, with two motivations.

14 ... ye also ought to wash one another's feet.--This is the main sentence, the instruction. Let's try to understand its meaning, and then we'll study the motivations.

Some churches, ranging from very liturgical (the Roman Catholic church) to very informal (primitive baptists) make this verse the basis for a ceremonial foot-washing, usually in connection with the Lord's Supper. I have no quarrel with those who understand the verse in this way, but two things need to be kept in mind.

First, the message that the Lord is trying to communicate is concerned with humility and service, not hygiene. Whether or not we follow this as a church ritual, we must not miss the obligation that it teaches, to be willing to undertake the most menial service toward our brothers and sisters in Christ. In the ancient world, washing feet was a necessary but menial service, and it made sense to take the example literally. In our day, washing the feet of people who bathe daily, wear shoes instead of sandals, and walk on pavement and carpet instead of dirt roads has no intrinsic meaning. We should never think that if we do the ritual, we have followed the example. Following the Lord's example means doing the humblest duties out of love for one another.

Second, the rest of the NT shows that the early church practiced baptism (1 Cor 1) and the Lord's supper (1 Cor 11), and frequently reminds us of our duty to fulfill what foot washing symbolizes: e.g.,

- Gal. 5:13, “by love serve one another”;
- 2 Cor 4:5, “we preach not ourselves, but Christ Jesus the Lord; and ourselves your servants for Jesus' sake”;
- 2 Cor 12:15, “I will very gladly spend and be spent for you”;
- 1 John 3:16, “he laid down his life for us: and we ought to lay down *our* lives for the brethren.”

But it gives us no evidence that the churches ever practiced a ritual of foot washing. 1 Tim 5:10 commends a widow who has “washed the saints' feet,” but this is associated with bringing up children, lodging strangers, relieving the afflicted, and doing good works, not other church rituals, and so clearly refers to practical hospitality. So if we interpret the Lord's instructions in the light of how the early believers followed them, our emphasis will be on humble service, not another sacrament.

Now we turn our attention to the two motives that the Lord gives them.

If I then, *your* Lord and Master, have washed your feet.--The first motive is based on his position. None of the disciples undertook to wash the company's feet when they gathered—probably because of their concern for their image. Now that the one they respect as Lord and Master has washed their feet, this excuse is gone.

Note that he reverses the titles, and emphasizes his role as Lord. They were concerned with prestige. None can be higher than the one who commands, yet it was as Lord that he washed their feet.

15 For I have given you an example.--The second motive is his express desire, as their teacher, to give them an example. If this is his intent, they should follow it.

16 The servant ... he that is sent.--The third step of the Lord's argument is to generalize the idea that they should not expect higher honor or better treatment in this life than he experienced. Versions of this saying are repeated four times in the gospels, showing that it was a common theme in the Lord's teaching (compare “hate/lose your life to save it” from 12:25). The various instances build on different relations between the Lord and the disciples, and deal with different difficulties that the Lord faced.

Ref	Servant/Lord	Sent/Sender	Disciple/Master	Difficulty
John 13:16	X	X		Humble service to believers
John 15:20	X			Persecution by the world
Matt 10:24	X		X	Persecution by the world
Luke 6:40			X	(Transfers the principle to them and their pupils: do not expect them to rise above your capabilities)

16 The servant is not greater than his lord.--Here, the saying is applied to their need to be willing to serve one another. He repeats it two chapters later (15:20) to indicate their need to be willing to endure persecution by the world. Thus he applies this principle to two of the three themes of the upper room discourse—their love to one another, and their treatment by the world.

Yet at the same time, he will shortly change their title. In 15:15, he elevates them from slaves to friends. Thus he adds a version of the saying found only here:

neither he that is sent greater than he that sent him.--cf. 20:21, “as *my* Father hath sent me, even so send I you.” We should not expect to be more comfortable or treated with more honor as we carry out our mission, than he was, who has sent us forth.

17 If ye know these things, happy are ye if ye do them.--He began his explanation of the footwashing by reminding them of their role as slaves and students. He closes by focusing on the student aspect. What is the real point of learning from a gifted master? Consider three points in the saying.

If ye know these things.--We often think that the objective of learning is knowing. Compare the Jewish objective for a student to be like a well-plastered cistern, not losing a drop of what the teacher has imparted.

Indeed, effective learning will produce knowledge, but that is only the beginning. His purpose as a teacher will not be satisfied if all they do is learn facts. He wants something more for them.

Happy are ye.--“Happy” in modern English is too informal to convey the sense of the Greek word. If you check Strong's, you'll see that it is the word translated “blessed” in the beatitudes. The objective of the Lord's teaching is to make us the recipients of divine blessing.

And how does that blessing come to us?

Happy are ye if ye do them.--Knowledge can only bring blessing if it is translated into action. To return to the point of this episode, knowledge of the lowliness and humility of the Lord Jesus is only profitable to us if it leads us to a willingness to serve one another in humble, sacrificing love.

18-30, Opposition of the World: Judas

The URD is built around three themes, all introduced in ch. 13.

- The loving unity of the Lord with his disciples.
- The opposition that believers will have with the world.
- The Lord's coming return to the Father

In the Footwashing, we have seen the theme of love. Now we turn to the opposition of the world, exemplified in Judas.

18-21, The Lord's Announcement

18 I speak not of you all.--The last verse promised blessedness to those who follow the Lord's example of humble loving service to others. There are those who would offer this promise to anyone: just imitate Jesus, and you will be happy. This is the premise of Charles Sheldon's novel, *In His Steps*, published originally in 1896 but repopularized in the 1990's in connection with the slogan, “What

Would Jesus Do?"

But this promise does not apply to everyone. It only applies to those whom the Lord has washed. Those who, like Judas, are not among the redeemed, cannot hope to find blessedness by serving others. They must first repent of their sin and receive the Lord. The Lord here makes clear that this offer of blessing is restricted to those who are his own.

I know whom I have chosen.--Some think that Judas was chosen on an equal footing with the others, and then, to the Lord's surprise turned away. But his betrayal was not a surprise to the Lord. The Lord knew each of the twelve, and chose them for their particular roles—including Judas for his place as the traitor. Paul may have this verse in mind in 2 Tim 2:19, "The Lord knoweth them that are his."

He that eateth bread with me hath lifted up his heel against me.--The quotation is from Psa 41:9, where it is one of a number of references to the treachery of Ahithophel against David at the time of Absalom's rebellion. In the Psalm, the verse contains three descriptions of Ahithophel. The Lord quotes the third, but not the first two.

- "mine own familiar friend," literally, "my peace-man," one who seeks my welfare, my close friend. David could describe Ahithophel this way because David was truly deceived concerning Ahithophel's motives. The Lord does not quote this phrase, because he was not deceived, and knew from the first of Judas' treachery.
- "in whom I trusted." Because David was deceived, he trusted in Ahithophel, but the Lord never trusted Judas. Cf. 2:24-25, "Jesus did not commit himself unto them, because he knew all *men*, 25 And needed not that any should testify of man: for he knew what was in man."
- "He that eateth bread with me." This phrase the Lord quotes. It was true, particularly in light of the last supper. And in ancient culture, it highlights Judas' treachery. Eating together was how people sealed a covenant. Thus it was particularly shameful to betray someone with whom one had eaten.

that the scripture may be fulfilled.--It's easy to misunderstand the grammar here. This is a purpose clause, giving the purpose for which something is done. What is that something?

Since the rest of the verse consists of the scripture verse, it's natural to think that it is in apposition to "the scripture," and try to find some other action to which this purpose clause refers. But none is apparent.

The easiest solution is to take the quotation from Psa 41:9 as the action as well as the citation. "He that eats bread with me has lifted up his heel against me, just as the scripture has said, in just so many words."

Let's think for a moment about the relation between the Psalm and this event in our Lord's life. As we saw when we considered the Psalm, its primary reference is to David, as v.4 makes clear,

I said, LORD, be merciful unto me: heal my soul; for I have sinned against thee.

Yet the Lord says that Judas' betrayal "fulfills" this scripture. The verse is not a prophecy *per se*. The main event of which it speaks had already taken place when David wrote it. So we are not to think of fulfillment in the same sense that (for example) Judas fulfills v. 21 when he carries out the betrayal, the execution of an event without which the promise remains incomplete.

But then, what does the Lord mean when he says that Judas fulfills the scripture of Ps 41:9? It is not just the words that Judas fulfilled—Ahithophel had already fulfilled them. Rather, the whole drama of

David and Ahithophel, of the divinely anointed king and the treacherous counsellor, was itself a prophecy. The Lord is conscious that he is David's descendant and heir to his throne, the one promised in 2 Sam 7, and recognizes in David's experience the pattern for his own.

To understand prophecy correctly, we need to keep in mind this notion that events as well as words can be fulfilled. Often a promise may have several intermediate fulfillments before the final one comes, each serving as another step in the prophecy. A standard example is the promise of a deliverer who would be born supernaturally, "the seed of the woman," Gen 3:15. One thinks of a line of deliverers born to barren couples: Isaac to Abraham and Sarah, Jacob to Isaac and Rebekah, Samuel to Elkanah and Hannah, Samson to Manoah and his wife. Each of these pointed on to the final fulfillment, the Lord Jesus.

Now notice the relation between the two clauses, "I know ... but he" Both emphasize the Lord's complete control over what is about to happen. The Lord knows who the true disciples are, and the one who is false is there for a purpose, to fulfill the OT prophecy.

19 Now I tell you before it come.--The Lord's logic here is drawn from Isaiah. The second half of the book is written to encourage the nation during the Babylonian captivity. The standard logic in the ancient world was that if one nation conquered another, the conqueror's gods were more powerful than those of the vanquished. Isaiah predicts that Babylon will conquer Judah, but goes on to insist that this defeat is under Yahweh's control, and the gods of Babylon are powerless. One of his main arguments is that Yahweh can predict the future (including the coming captivity), while the gods of Babylon cannot. Here are some of the relevant texts:

41:21-23 21 Produce your cause, saith the LORD; bring forth your strong *reasons*, saith the King of Jacob. 22 Let them bring *them* forth, and shew us what shall happen: let them shew the former things, what they *be*, that we may consider them, and know the latter end of them; **or declare us things for to come. 23 Shew the things that are to come hereafter, that we may know that ye are gods:**

42:9 9 Behold, the former things are come to pass, and new things do I declare: **before they spring forth I tell you of them.**

44:7 And **who, as I, shall call, and shall declare it**, and set it in order for me, since I appointed the ancient people? and **the things that are coming, and shall come, let them shew unto them.**

45:21 Tell ye, and bring *them* near; yea, let them take counsel together: **who hath declared this from ancient time? who hath told it from that time? have not I the LORD?** and *there is no God else beside me; a just God and a Saviour; there is none beside me.*

Isaiah 46:9 Remember the former things of old: for I *am* God, and *there is* none else; **I am God, and there is none like me, 10 Declaring the end from the beginning, and from ancient times the things that are not yet done**, saying, My counsel shall stand, and I will do all my pleasure:

Now the Lord offers the same encouragement to his disciples. Judah, captive in Babylon, might be tempted to think that their God was powerless. The disciples, seeing the Lord betrayed and hanging on the tree, might be tempted to think that he was powerless. Both Yahweh in Isaiah, and the Lord here in John, provide the same remedy: they predict the disaster before it occurs, showing that they are in control.

In fact, the logic goes farther than that. In Isaiah, this logic argues that Yahweh alone is truly God. Cf. 41:23, 45:21, and 46:9. And that logic applies to the Lord Jesus as well. What is it that he asks them to believe on the strength of his ability to predict the future?

that ... ye may believe that I am he.--We studied the Lord's use of the title "I am" in 8:24, where he said to the Jews,

If ye believe not that I am he, ye shall die in your sins.

John uses this expression more than any other NT writer (24x; it appears only 24x in the rest of the NT, and no one else uses it more than 7x). It is part of the LXX's translation of the divine name in Exod 3:14, and a common translation for the Hebrew *ani hw'*, which always refers to the Lord when it appears (as here) without complement (Deut 32:39; Isa 41:4; 43:10,13; 46:4; 48:12; 52:6). In Isa 45:8, 18, the LXX uses the expression either to paraphrase or to replace the divine name YHWH. Thus it is part of the Lord's claim to be not just Messiah, but also God. If predicting a coming disaster proved the deity of Yahweh, so it proves that Jesus is the great "I am."

20 Verily, verily, I say unto you.--The Lord has been speaking of Judas' betrayal, and will return to this in v.21. In between, he makes a general statement about the ministry of the disciples. This statement links us to the Father in two steps:

- If we receive those whom the Lord has sent (his apostles), we receive the Lord.
- If we receive the Lord, we receive the Father, who sent him.

So the general principle is that if you receive a messenger, you receive the one who send him.

This is another of the Lord's widely repeated statements. He repeated versions of it on several other occasions:

- Matt 10:40, concluding the commissioning of the twelve; compare Luke 10:16, concluding the sending out of the 70
- John 12:44-48, the Lord's final public word at the temple
- Mark 9:37; Luke 9:48, of receiving little children

At first, the connection with the context is not clear, but our duty as expositors is always to try to trace the thread, not to assume that the Lord is rambling. And in fact, the first of the other occasions noted above may hold the clue. When the Lord first chose Judas, he uttered these words. Now, as he is about to send him out of the company, he repeats them. There are two possible connections, and we need not choose between them.

- Judas, recall the lofty position that I gave you, of being my representative, and ultimately the representative of the Father. This is what you are rejecting.
- Judas, consider the negative implications of what you are about to do. If receiving me means receiving the Father, then rejecting me means rejecting him. This is explicit in the version of the saying in Luke 10:16, "he that despiseth you despiseth me; and he that despiseth me despiseth him that sent me." Your sin is not only against me, but against the Father who sent me. Compare David's treatment of the children of Ammon when they mistreated his ambassadors in 2 Sam 10:1-14.

cf. the version in Luke 10:16, "he that despiseth you despiseth me; and he that despiseth me despiseth him that sent me."

21 he was troubled in spirit.--The word literally refers to water being shaken or stirred up, like the pool at Bethesda (5:3, 7), then more commonly used as a metaphor for emotional disturbance. Herod is troubled when he hears the report of the Wise Men (Matt 2:3), Zecharias when he saw the angel of the Lord (Luke 1:12), and the disciples when they saw the Lord walking to them on the water (Matt 14:16; Mark 6:50) or when he appeared to them in the upper room (Luke 24:38).

John uses the word distinctively, in two ways.

1. He is the only evangelist to report that Jesus was troubled. We saw this at the tomb of Lazarus anticipating the personal cost he would have to bear to raise him (11:33); when contemplating the cross (12:27), and now here, anticipating Judas' betrayal. Certainly, these are things that one might expect to be troubling.
2. Notably, he tells his disciples *not* to be troubled. 14:1, 27, "Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid."

He endures anguish and uncertainty so that we might have comfort and peace. He suffers so that we need not suffer. His stripes bring us healing, Isa 53.

and testified.--The distinctive character of testifying, as opposed to other forms of speech, is that it relies on personal observation:

1:32, John bare record, saying, **I saw** the Spirit descending from heaven like a dove

3:11 We speak that we do know, and testify **that we have seen**

3:32 **what he hath seen and heard**, that he testifieth

So here, Jesus' words, "one of you shall betray me," are a testimony of something of which the Lord has first-hand knowledge. This is unlikely to be the betrayal, which has not happened yet. More probably, he is bearing witness to his troubled state of mind.

22-25, The Disciples' Question

22 Then the disciples looked one on another.--The Lord's announcement led to some consternation on the part of the Twelve. Luke (22:23) tells us that they began to discuss among themselves who he meant, and Matthew (26:22) and Mark (14:19) report that they each asked him, "Is it I?"

23 leaning on Jesus' bosom.--That is, reclining before him, and able to lean back to speak with him. See the figures, above from

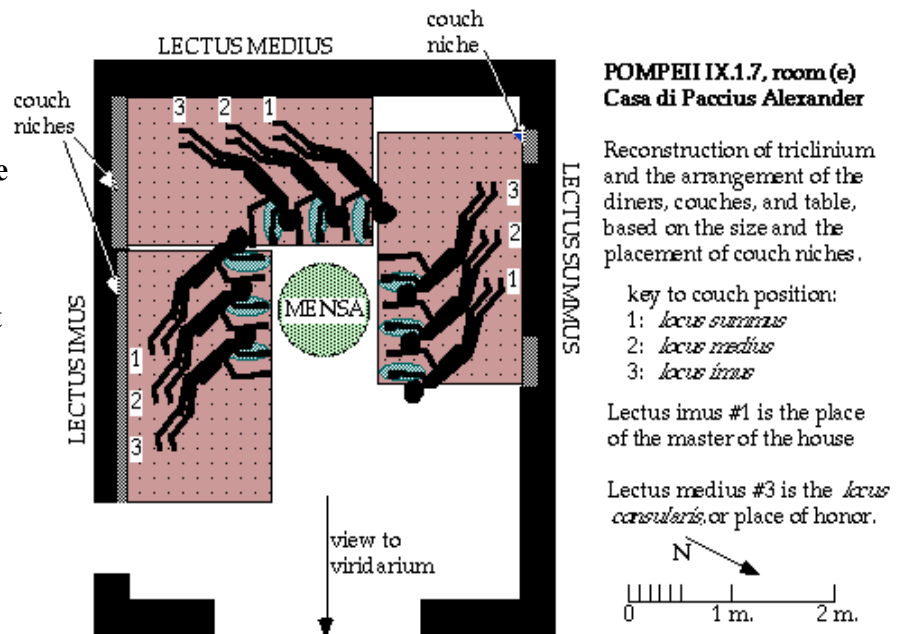


Fig. 1.27: Reconstruction of the Standard Order of Reclining Diners in Triclinium (e) of the Casa di Paccius Alexander, IX.1.7. Diners (Stick Figures in Black) are Shown Three to a Couch, Supporting Themselves on their Left Elbows, Which Rest on Ovals That Signify Cushions.

<http://depthome.brooklyn.cuny.edu/classics/dunkle/romnlife/trclnium.htm> , below from <http://www.arts.usyd.edu.au/departs/classical/dropbox/hgender.html> . The couches each held three people. The master of the feast (Jesus in this case) would be at #1 on the *lectus imus*, and John would then be at #2, the place that the host's wife would occupy if he were married.

one of his disciples, whom Jesus loved.--John loves to designate himself this way, This is the first instance; the others are 19:26 (at Calvary, dedicating Mary to John's care), 20:2 (with Peter, the one to whom Mary Magdalene reports the resurrection), 21:7 (on the Sea of Galilee after the resurrection, recognizing the Lord), and 21:20 (the object of Peter's question about other disciples' duty).

John does not mean to claim that he is the only one whom Jesus loved. He has already told us plainly of the Lord's love for the family in Bethany (11:5). We are not to think that John thinks that the Lord loves him more than others, but rather that he defines himself in terms of one beloved by the Lord. Believer and unbeliever alike can profess, "God loves sinful men," but only a believer can say, "God loves me."

John's position in front of the Lord was a position of intimacy, but it is not the place of honor. That was the *locus imus* of the *lectus medius* (#3 in the diagram). It is worth noting that these two are often not the same. The place of highest prestige in the kingdom of God may not be the place that is closest to the Lord. The flesh seeks, with John's mother (Matt 20:21), to sit on the Lord's right hand; the Spirit leads John himself to prefer the Lord's bosom.

Who was in the place of honor? Recall from Matt 26:22 and Mark 14:19 that each of the disciples asked the Lord, "Is it I?" When Judas asks the question, the Lord replies in the affirmative (Matt 26:25), yet Peter's question (v.24) shows that the others remain ignorant of this identification. This suggests that Judas must have been sitting very close to the Lord, where the Lord could speak with him without being overheard by the others. It seems likely that he occupies the *locus consularis*, the place of honor, just on the other side of the Lord from John. The Lord treats him with respect and kindness right down to the end. Matthew Henry:

We must not be outrageous against those whom we know to be very malicious against us. Christ carved to Judas as kindly as to any at the table, though he knew he was then plotting his death. If thine enemy hunger, feed him; this is to do as Christ does.

We should note the conclusion of the verse that Henry quotes:

for in so doing thou shalt heap coals of fire on his head. (Rom 12:20; from Prov 25:21-22).

Think how heavily this gesture must have borne down on the thoughts of Judas. It is at once a reminder of the Lord's goodness to him, and a confirmation of his wickedness if he persists with his treachery.

24 Simon Peter therefore beckoned to him.--That Peter gestures, rather than speaks, suggests a certain reserve or quietness, which is borne out in the next two verses. Peter is apparently across the table from John, and does not want to ask his question openly.

25 He then, lying on Jesus' breast, saith.--John's question to the Lord is similarly subdued. He leans back and speaks quietly to him.

Lord, who is it?--Matthew Henry again: "Though he whispered this in Christ's ear, yet he called him Lord; the familiarity he was admitted to did not at all lessen his respect for his Master."

26-30, Revelation of the Traitor

26 Jesus answered.--The Lord's words are marked as a response to John, not a public announcement, apparently whispered.

It is interesting that though the Lord does not answer the disciples' questions about themselves, "Is it I?" (Matt 26:22; Mark 14:19), he does answer John's question about Judas. There are two lessons here for us in discerning the body at the Lord's Table.

1. To answer the public questions would have given public knowledge of Judas' role, and the Lord avoids that. Peter has a sword (18:10), and if he understood that Judas were the traitor, he might well have taken actions into his own hands. The Lord is content to leave the disposition of affairs in the Father's hand. As we have suggested, he tries to minimize any sense of publicly embarrassing Judas. In discerning the body, we must remember the tendency of the flesh to behave in spiteful ways, and keep the details as restricted as possible.
2. Yet he is willing to tell John. In discerning the body, we must discriminate between those who truly know the Lord and those who do not. Like John, we should undertake this sober responsibility in private consultation with the Lord.

He it is, to whom I shall give a sop.--This may have been another mark of honor; cf. Boaz's reaching parched grain to Ruth in 2:14. If so, like seating him at the place of honor, it deepens even further the perfidy of Judas' behavior.

he gave it to Judas Iscariot, the son of Simon.--Note the full name. The purpose of the action is to identify the traitor, and John makes sure we know absolutely who it is. There was another Judas among the Twelve (Luke 6:16; John 14:22), otherwise called "Thaddeus," with whom we must not confuse him.

Satan entered into him.--In v.2, we read that the devil had put into Judas' heart the intent to betray Jesus, but now Satan himself enters.

John describes Judas' Satanic associations in three successive steps.

- 6:70, he calls him "a devil." He does not identify him as "the devil," Satan, nor should we think he is identifying him with one of Satan's demons ("devils" in this sense in the NT always translates *daimonia* "demons"). The title in this case probably means "slanderer" (common with anarthrous instances of *diabolos*), and contrasts his usual speech with Peter's confession of Christ. The point is the similarity of his conduct to that of the devil, the great slanderer. Like the Jews in 8:44, "you are of your father the devil, and the works of your father you will do." Unbelievers are under a natural inclination to imitate Satan.
- 13:2, the devil put into his heart to betray the Lord. Where our conduct is already in line with Satan's priorities in general, it is a small matter for him to gain our attention and give us specific ideas.
- When Satan finds ready entrance for his ideas, the next and natural step is for him to enter into the poor wretch and take over the reins directly.

Once we recognize this sequence, it provides us with a solemn but salutary warning. We need to cut off this chain of corruption as soon as possible. All men by nature imitate their father the devil, so we must diligently pursue after Christlikeness. And we should never think it a light thing to fill our minds with Satan's thoughts—a warning that, if heeded, will turn us away from most of the world's entertainments.

27 And after the sop.--By accepting this gracious gift from the Lord while still harboring his murderous plan, Judas confirms his hardness, and surrenders to Satan.

Then said Jesus unto him.--Unlike the previous exchange between Jesus and John, this statement was heard by the other disciples.

That thou doest, do quickly.--Here, he dismisses Judas. He will spend these last hours of fellowship with those who are truly his own, and so dismisses Judas from the company. In doing so, he completes our prototype for “discerning the body.”

The form of his words is strictly speaking comparative, “more quickly.” The Lord urges Judas on to his mission, perhaps faster than Judas himself had planned. See Morris for discussion. The Lord, not Judas, will control the pace of events, and he is eager to get the Passion over and done with, cf. Luke 12:50,

I have a baptism to be baptized with; and how am I straitened till it be accomplished!

There is a lesson here for us. When we have an unpleasant duty to perform, we should not put it off, but discharge it as quickly as we can, lest we be tempted to evade it.

28 Now no man at the table knew.--The others were ignorant because they had not heard the details of the conversation between the Lord and John. But John was also “at the table,” and seems to exclude himself as well. John was having a hard enough time processing the fact that one of the Twelve would betray the Lord, especially one in as important a standing with the Lord as Judas was. He has no concept that the betrayal will happen so soon.

29 For some of them thought.--Judas frequently did commercial errands for the band. It would not be unusual for the Lord to send him out with a task, and most of the disciples naturally assume that the same thing is happening here.

The “some” may be intended to exclude John. John alone in the group knows that Judas is the traitor, and his mind is spinning so fast he doesn't have time to think what the Lord is sending Judas to do.

having received the sop.--Better, “taken.” Put yourself in Judas' position. The Lord penetrates into your heart, and recognizes the wicked plan that you have conceived. He has entrusted you with the company's finances, and seated you in the place of honor, and now he serves you a morsel of food, a gesture of kindness. This is your last opportunity to repent, to fall down before the Lord, confess your sin, and beg for his forgiveness. But Judas reaches out and actively takes the sop. He is shameless in his betrayal.

30 He then... went immediately out.--The Lord has taken control, and Judas does as he says.

and it was night.--This note emphasizes the moral character of Judas' action. In discussing the Lord's interview with Nicodemus, John wrote (3:19-21),

This is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil. 20 For every one that doeth evil hateth the light, neither cometh to the light, lest his deeds should be reprov'd. 21 But he that doeth truth cometh to the light, that his deeds may be made manifest, that they are wrought in God.

Long before, Job wrote of the wicked that they “rebel against the light” (24:13) and “the morning *is* to them even as the shadow of death” (v.17), and Solomon contrasted “the paths of uprightness” with “the ways of darkness” (2:13).

Paul picks up this theme when he exhorts the Thessalonians (5:5-8),

5 Ye are all the children of light, and the children of the day: we are not of the night, nor of darkness. 6 Therefore let us not sleep, as do others; but let us watch and be sober. 7 For they that sleep sleep in the night; and they that be drunken are drunken in the night. 8 But let us, who are of the day, be sober, putting on the breastplate of faith and love; and for an helmet, the hope of salvation.

Judas' nocturnal errand, and its ultimate outcome, should warn all of us of the dangers of the society of the night.

31-35, Departure and Glorification with the Father

The Lord now turns to the third theme of the Upper Room Discourse, his imminent departure to be with the Father. This movement is as essential a part of our salvation as is his incarnation. He had to come to earth in order to die and redeem us from our sins; he must return to the Father in order to send the Spirit and intercede for us. His departure means glory for him, but sadness for them.

31-32, Glory for Him

31 Now is the Son of man glorified.--Five times in two verses the Lord uses the verb *doxazw* "glorify." This verb is semantically related to the verb *timaw* "honor," and in fact our version twice translates *doxazw* as "honor" in John (8:54). But the distinction will help us to understand both of them more precisely.

Each of these verbs has a related noun. "Honor" is related to the noun *timh* "price, value," while "glorify" is related to *doxa* "glory."

To honor something is to value it highly; to glorify something is to polish it up and make it shine. Honor has to do with the attitude of the one who is doing the honoring, but may not involve others.

Glorifying goes a step further. Now the one doing the glorifying is concerned with what other people think. We are to honor our father and our mother, valuing them and thinking highly of them ourselves, but we are to glorify God, enabling other people to think highly of him. We glorify someone when we get other people to honor him.

The Lord's glory has been a matter of concern before in John. Twice we have read of a future time of glorification, not yet arrived:

7:39 (But this spake he of the Spirit, which they that believe on him should receive: for the Holy Ghost was not yet given; because that Jesus was not yet glorified.)

12:16 These things understood not his disciples at the first: but when Jesus was glorified, then remembered they that these things were written of him, and that they had done these things unto him.

Yet there have been hints of his glory, in the miracles that he performed:

2:11 This beginning of miracles did Jesus in Cana of Galilee, and manifested forth his glory; and his disciples believed on him.

11:4 When Jesus heard that, he said, This sickness is not unto death, but for the glory of God, that the Son of God might be glorified thereby.

11:40 Jesus saith unto her, Said I not unto thee, that, if thou wouldest believe, thou shouldest see the glory of God?

Now the hour of glorification is upon him.

(to Philip and Andrew, concerning the Gentiles:) 12:23 And Jesus answered them, saying, The hour is come, that the Son of man should be glorified.

John 17:1 These words spake Jesus, and lifted up his eyes to heaven, and said, Father, the hour is come; glorify thy Son, that thy Son also may glorify thee:

Thus John, writing the prolog in anticipation of what is to come, can say,

1:14 And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth.

In vv. 31, 32, the Lord speaks of a reciprocal glorification between himself and the Father. Each thinks highly of the other, and wants others to share that high estimate.

Now let's try to unpack the dense repetition of "glorify" in these two verses. Each phrase adds something to what goes before.

Now is the Son of man glorified.--This is a repetition of the announcement in 12:23. That was made to Andrew and Philip, but it is time for all of the disciples to understand that the time has now come for the Lord's intrinsic value to be made visible to everyone.

"Now" must be interpreted in the light of the preceding temporal clause, "when he [Judas] was gone out." In sending Judas out to begin his treasonous work, the Lord has set in motion the final process that will lead to the cross. The Lord views that process as virtually accomplished, and that is what he means by being glorified.

He is continuing here the paradoxical theme that he already introduced in to Philip and Andrew in 12:23-24, that the suffering of crucifixion is the means of glory:

And Jesus answered them, saying, The hour is come, that the Son of man should be glorified. 24 Verily, verily, I say unto you, Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone: but if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit. 25 He that loveth his life shall lose it; and he that hateth his life in this world shall keep it unto life eternal.

To understand this paradox further, we must remember the principle that the Lord laid down in 8:50 and 7:18,

7:18 He that speaketh of himself seeketh his own glory: but he that seeketh his glory that sent him, the same is true, and no unrighteousness is in him.

8:50 I seek not mine own glory

Glory was something he sought, not for himself, but for God. If he manages to glorify God, he has accomplished his aim, and thus considers himself glorified. Thus he goes on to say,

God is glorified in him.--That is, the glory that Jesus claims is in fact the glory that accrues to God through what Jesus does. Grammatically, I understand the conjunction "and" as explicative; see Baker, VT 30 (1980) 129ff, which mentions the use in Greek as well as in Hebrew. See BDF §442.9. "The Son of man is glorified; that is, God is glorified in him." This is not a new interpretation. Calvin very perceptively writes, "When he says, "AND God is glorified," the meaning, I apprehend, is, "FOR God

is glorified.”

An important clue to this interpretation is found in the names used in this section.

- Jesus claims glory as the “son of man.” Contrast 11:4, when he told his disciples that through the death of Lazarus the “son of God” would be glorified, and 1:14, “the glory as of the only begotten of the Father.”
- The glory here is associated, not with the Father (as in 8:54, “ it is my Father that honoureth [glorifieth] me,” but with “God.”

The miracles showed Jesus' glory as the Son of God. But the glory he sought through dying was as the Son of man, and consisted in revealing God's glory.

The idea here goes all the way back to Gen 1:26. Recall our studies in Genesis back in 2000:

The phrase is probably to be understood in the sense “as our image” rather than “in our image.” Cf. 1 Cor 11:7, where man is said, not to be in the image of God, but to be God’s “image and glory.” *b-* can take this meaning (*beth essentiae*, as in Exod 6:3 “as God Almighty”).

A king would erect an image of himself in the midst of his domain to assert his authority over it.

Having created the world, God resolves to place man in it as his representative, as the emblem of his dominion over it.

As a man, Jesus is the image of God. By carrying out God's work, he brings glory to God, and in this glory finds his own glory.

32 If God be glorified in him.--This clause summarizes what has just been said, in preparation for a shift. The verbs change, in two ways: from passive to active, and from aorist to future. Alford recognizes correctly that John turns now to a different glory.

The glory in v. 31 is spoken of as accomplished, now that Judas is on his way. The passive voice of the verb deemphasizes the agent; the agent is in fact Jesus, in his obedience to the Father, but it would be inconsistent with his focus on God's glory for him to emphasize his agency, and so he uses the passive.

The glory in v. 32 is different. While “glorify” is future active in both of the following clauses, each of the clauses emphasizes one or the other of the verbal characteristics.

God shall also glorify him in himself.--The first clause emphasizes the shift from passive to active. Now the verb has an explicit subject: God. Furthermore, it is placed before the verb, rather than after, the usual position (see Levinsohn on Acts, p. 3; BDF §472(1)), thus emphasizing it. Because Jesus has glorified God by his obedient death, God will glorify him.

and shall straightway glorify him.--The second clause emphasizes the shift from past to future. The glory that God will give Jesus is coming, but coming soon (“straightway”). He is thinking here of the resurrection and subsequent ascension.

Thus vv. 31-32 are the seed from which grows Phil 2:8,9,

he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross. 9 Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him...

Once again, John provides a clear dominical foundation for an important Pauline teaching.

It's worthwhile summarizing at this point four distinct kinds of glory that the Lord Jesus enjoyed, in

order:

1. As one with the Father, “the glory which I had with thee before the world was” (17:5).
2. As the Son of God, the glory he showed in his miracles (1:14; 11:4).
3. As the Son of Man, the image of God, the glory of God in his obedience (13:31)
4. The glory of resurrection and promotion that God gave him as a result of his obedience (13:32; Phil 2:9).

33a, Sorrow for those Left Behind

While his departure brings him great glory, he realizes that it will be a shock to his followers. He acknowledges this, then tells them how to deal with it by returning to the opening theme of the chapter.

33 Little children.--A striking term of endearment. The word occurs only in John's writings, and only here in the gospel. As the Lord contemplates the glory that awaits him, his mind turns to his disciples. He is ready to leave, but he realizes that they are hardly ready to be without him. They are not just children, but little children, weak and helpless, about to be deprived of their teacher. We can imagine the Lord choking as he addresses them.

yet a little while I am with you.--Which is to say, I shall shortly leave you. This is a necessary part of his glorification, and completes the discussion of the third theme. Now he moves back to recap the second and first themes.

33b, Recap of the Believer in the World

as I said unto the Jews ... so now I say to you.--The Lord now repeats to the disciples what he said to the Jews in 7:34 and again in 8:21.

7:33-34	8:21	13:33
32 The Pharisees heard that the people murmured such things concerning him; and the Pharisees and the chief priests sent officers to take him.	20 These words spake Jesus in the treasury, as he taught in the temple: and no man laid hands on him; for his hour was not yet come.	
33 Then said Jesus unto them,	21 Then said Jesus again unto them,	
		33 Little children,
Yet a little while am I with you,		yet a little while I am with you.
and <i>then</i> I go unto him that sent me.	I go my way,	
34 Ye shall seek me,	and ye shall seek me,	Ye shall seek me:
and shall not find <i>me</i> :	and shall die in your sins:	
		and as I said unto the Jews,
and where I am, <i>thither</i> ye cannot come.	whither I go, ye cannot come.	Whither I go, ye cannot come;
		so now I say to you.

We need to compare and contrast these sayings: in addition to the common features, there are important contrasts. But first, why does the Lord repeat this statement, originally a rebuke to the unbelievers, to

the believers?

The repetition captures an important truth: in this age, we face the same challenges that the world does, though we have resources that the world does not. We are “in the world, but not of it,” 17:13-16. With his departure, they must now fend for their own. Thus v. 33b moves from the theme of his departure back to the second topic, the believers' struggle with the World. It recaps the issues introduced with the history of Judas.

The features that are common across these are the basis for some important contrasts.

Ye shall seek me.--In all three cases, his hearers will seek for him, but from a different perspective. The Jews will seek for the Messiah without recognizing that he is in fact the one they seek, and will go after many false Christs. But the disciples have already recognized him as the Christ, and will seek him personally.

To the Jews, 7:34 adds, “ye ... shall not find me.” This warning is an echo of an OT promise.

- David told Solomon (1 Chr 28:9), “And thou, Solomon my son, know thou the God of thy father, and serve him with a perfect heart and with a willing mind: for the LORD searcheth all hearts, and understandeth all the imaginations of the thoughts: if thou seek him, he will be found of thee; but if thou forsake him, he will cast thee off for ever.”
- The prophet Azariah told King Asa (2 Chr 15:2), “The LORD *is* with you, while ye be with him; and if ye seek him, he will be found of you; but if ye forsake him, he will forsake you.”
- The Lord is echoing these promises when he tells the disciples in Matt. 7:7, “seek, and ye shall find” (Matt 7:7).

The Lord's appropriation of the OT promise is another claim to deity. The Jews' failure to find him after his departure shows his judgment on them. But the promise remains open to the disciples: “if ye seek him, he will be found of you. We can be sure this was their occupation when they gathered in Acts 1:14 for “prayer and supplication” after the Lord's ascension.

The notion of seeking the Lord is a common one in the OT (34x), and the statement that the disciples will seek him is a continuation of this activity. Thus it is striking that not once does the rest of the NT say that believers should seek the Lord. The phrase appears only in Acts 17:27, where Paul tells the Athenians on Mars Hill of the duty of the Gentiles (compare Acts 15:17, with the same sense). What makes the difference? It must be the presence of the indwelling Spirit. OT saints and unsaved pagans do not have this resource, and must seek the Lord. The Lord here encourages the disciples that, unlike the Jews, they will be successful in this search. But now, the Lord dwells in us. We no longer seek him, but direct our seeking toward the objectives he has given us (welfare of believers, 2 Cor 12:14; things above, Col 3:1; Paul, 2 Tim 1:17; peace, 1 Pet 3:13; cf. Matt 7:7).

Whither I go, ye cannot come.--Neither they nor the Jews can come to him—at least, not now, not on their timetable. Both will one day come to him. In v. 36, he will tell Peter, “thou shalt follow me afterwards,” and one day even the Jews will appear before the Lord's judgment throne (ch. 5). But what a difference those reunions will be. Thus the added phrase in 8:21, “ye shall die in your sins.”

Thus after announcing his departure, the Lord sketches their situation in the world, in it but not of it and thus in opposition to it.

34-35, Recap of Loving Unity

34 A new commandment I give unto you.--This verse now moves us back to the first topic, the love among Christ and his people. Articulating this as a commandment is repeated in 15:12, 17. This is an important resource for their life in the world. They need to sustain one another.

That ye love one another.--This in itself is not a new commandment. In Leviticus, God twice commanded Israel to love others. In 19:18 toward “the children of thy people,” and in 19:34 toward “the stranger that dwelleth with you,” he commanded, “thou shalt love him as thyself.” Love for others is a constant expectation of God's people, under any covenant.

as I have loved you.--Here is what is new about this commandment. The standard for love now is not our love for ourselves, but Christ's love for us. As he demonstrated in the first section of the chapter, his love for us shows itself in humble service, and the sequel will show that it extends to laying down his life for us. This is the standard that our love for one another must meet.

35 By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another.--In 17:23 he returns to this theme, praying for our unity with one another “that the world may know that thou hast sent me, and hast loved them, as thou hast loved me.” In the midst of an unbelieving world, we need to love and care for one another.

This discourse by the Lord on these three great themes naturally introduces questions in the minds of the disciples. The next chapter is devoted to these questions.

Notes

Temporal connection in 13:1a

I have expounded this as modifying “he loved,” in temporal contrast with “unto the end.” Most interpreters do not pay as close attention to the syntax, and treat it as a temporal modifier for the entire section, as though John had written, “Now it was before the feast of the Passover. At this time,” This would be possible in Hebrew with a clause like *wayyihiy lifne happesax wayehoshua.... Wahhihiy* is frequently used as a nodalizer, to connect a margin to an entire paragraph rather than to a single clause. But in this case we would need another conjunction to pick up the continuation.