

John Chapter 13

From (here to 17:16), these remaining chapters before His crucifixion, the record looks at Jesus' devoting Himself to His own disciples.

While chapters 1-12 center on the rejection of Jesus by the nation (1:11); chapters' (13-17), center on those who did receive Him (see 1:12).

Beginning in chapter 13, Jesus moved completely away from public ministry to private ministry with those who had received Him. Chapters (13-17), were spoken by Jesus as a farewell on the night of His betrayal and arrest to communicate His coming legacy to His followers (chapters 13-16); and pray for them (chapter 17).

The cross was only one day away.

John 13:1 "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."

Jesus never stops loving those who believe and follow Him. His last hours before they capture Him and crucify Him, He wants to be spent with those He loves so dear. Jesus wants to comfort them, and teach them as much as He can before His departure.

"To the end", meaning "to perfection" with perfect love. God loves the world (3:16), and sinners with compassion and common grace, but loves His own with perfect, saving, eternal love.

John 13:2 "And supper being ended, the devil having now put into the heart of Judas Iscariot, Simon's son, to betray him;"

"Supper": Passover on Thursday night after sunset. "The devil ... heart of Judas". This does not exonerate Judas, because his wicked heart desired exactly what the devil desired, the death of Jesus. The devil and Judas were in accord.

Judas was not a true follower of Jesus from the beginning. He wanted to go with them so he could carry the purse. We read in a previous lesson, that he was a thief.

John 6:70 "Jesus answered them, Have not I chosen you twelve, and one of you is a devil."

You see, Judas was a devil from the beginning. Judas did whatever the devil wanted him to do, because he was demon possessed.

John 13:3 "Jesus knowing that the Father had given all things into his hands, and that he was come from God, and went to God;"

Jesus faced the betrayal, agony, and death because He knew He would be exalted to the Father afterward, where He would receive the glory and fellowship He had eternally enjoyed within the Trinity (see 17:4-5). This was the “joy set before Him” that enabled Him to “endure the cross” (Hebrew 12:2).

Verses 4-5: The dusty and dirty conditions of the region necessitated the need for foot washing. Although the disciples most likely would have been happy to wash Jesus’ feet, they could not conceive of washing one another’s feet. This was because in the society of the time, foot washing was reserved for the lowliest of menial servants.

Peers did not wash one another’s feet, except very rarely and as a mark of great love. Luke points this out (in 22:24), that they were arguing about who was the greatest of them, so that none was willing to stoop to wash feet. When Jesus moved to wash their feet, they were shocked. His actions serve also as symbolic of spiritual cleansing (verses 6-9), and a model of Christian humility (verses 12-17).

Through this action Jesus taught the lesson of selfless service that was supremely exemplified by His death on the cross.

John 13:4 “He riseth from supper, and laid aside his garments; and took a towel, and girded himself.”

The knowing (in verse 3), does not mean that Jesus acquired this knowledge. Jesus knew from the beginning. Jesus knew who He was, and had sacrificed His presence with the Father to come on a mission to the earth to save the world. This was a voluntary act on His part. This was planned from the foundation of the earth.

Since we are Jesus' creation, then it is right that He would be the one to redeem us. We have discussed, over and over, how Jesus is Creator God. Read the first chapter of John again, if you have any doubts along this line.

Jesus now humbles Himself to the place of a servant. He removes His outer garments and is clothed in a towel. Jesus is about to teach one of the most vivid lessons on humbleness.

John 13:5 “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 this part of the country, people wore sandals across the sand. Their feet would have been dirty and probably calloused. This was an act of total humility on His part.

In verses 6 to 10 we see these proceedings embarrassed all of the disciples. While others remained silent, Peter, perhaps on behalf of others (see Matthew 16:13-23), spoke up in indignation that Jesus would stoop so low as to wash his feet.

He failed to see beyond the humble service itself to the symbolism of spiritual cleansing involved (verse 7; 1 John 1:7-9). Jesus' response made the real point of His actions clear: Unless the Lamb of God cleanses a person's sin, (i.e. as portrayed in the symbolism of foot washing), one can have no part with Him.

John 13:6 "Then cometh he to Simon Peter: and Peter saith unto him, Lord, dost thou wash my feet?"

Peter knows that Jesus is his Lord, and he is astonished that Jesus would wash his feet. He feels that he should be washing Jesus' feet.

John 13:7 "Jesus answered and said unto him, What I do thou knowest not now; but thou shalt know hereafter."

We see here, that until Peter has been baptized with the blessed Holy Spirit of God and receives the mind of Christ, he will not understand why Jesus did this.

Many things the Lord Jesus wants us to do, we do not fully understand at the time we are doing them. We must just do as He says, without question. At a later time, looking back we will understand the why of it. This is what Jesus says here to Peter.

John 13:8 "Peter saith unto him, Thou shalt never wash my feet. Jesus answered him, If I wash thee not, thou hast no part with me."

Peter feels that he is not worthy for his Lord to wash his feet. Jesus stops this humble confession of Peter when Jesus tells Peter, if He doesn't wash him; he is not part of Jesus. Jesus has to wash each of us in His blood before we are a part of Him.

John 13:9 "Simon Peter saith unto him, Lord, not my feet only, but also my hands and my head."

When Peter sees the necessity, he wants everything Jesus has for him. In so doing Peter says, cleanse my mind that it will be stayed on you Lord. Cleanse my hands that they will be doing what you would have them do. Cleanse my feet that they will walk in the path you have chosen for me.

John 13:10 "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."

Jesus is telling Peter here, that the Word has made him whole. Just the washing of the body will not make you whole. You must have a brand new heart. When He tells Peter that he is clean, He also says Judas is not clean.

Perhaps, Jesus is allowing Judas one more moment to repent. I am sure it touched his heart.

The cleansing that Christ does at salvation never needs to be repeated, atonement is complete at that point. But all who have been cleansed by God's gracious justification need constant washing in the experiential sense as they battle sin in the flesh.

Believers are justified and granted imputed righteousness (Philippians 3:8-9), but still need sanctification and personal righteousness (Phil. 3:12-14).

John 13:11 "For he knew who should betray him; therefore said he, Ye are not all clean."

In (John 6:40), we had read that Jesus said one of the twelve was a devil. Jesus knew from the beginning which one he was. He speaks this directly of Judas Iscariot who would soon lead the mob to capture Jesus (18:3).

John 13:12 "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"?

Jesus has done this to teach them a great truth on being humble and serving others, even if you do have an elevated position among your fellows. He is asking them; did you understand what I did?

John 13:13 "Ye call me Master and Lord: and ye say well; for so I am."

In this, Jesus tells them that they are correct in believing that He is their Master and Lord. He is Immanuel, God with us.

John 13:14 "If I then, your Lord and Master, have washed your feet; ye also ought to wash one another's feet."

What He is really saying, is to be humble and serve each other. Don't want to rule over the others. Accept whatever position God has called you in. You are not to act arrogantly to each other. Be humble and help each other, not just in washing of feet, but in every way.

John 13:15 "For I have given you an example, that ye should do as I have done to you."

In everything Christians should strive to be like Jesus. Follow in His footsteps, be a reflection of Him.

John 13:16 "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."

He is really telling His followers that they will not be God. They are the ones sent and they must not get swelled up with pride, and think too highly of themselves. The only reason they have the job they do, is because He sent them.

John 13:17 “If ye know these things, happy are ye if ye do them.”

Jesus says, to be happy, you must not be striving to be better than someone else. Be content with whatever God has called you to be, and you will be happy.

Joy is always tied to obedience to God’s revealed Word.

John 13:18 “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.”

This is a reference to the twelve disciples whom the Lord had selected (see 15:16), whom the Lord knew perfectly, including Judas, who was chosen that the prophecy of (Psalm 41:9), would be fulfilled.

Jesus is saying here, that Judas was chosen as one of the disciples, so that the Scripture would be fulfilled. He is saying, one of you twelve is a traitor and will try to destroy me.

John 13:19 “Now I tell you before it come, that, when it is come to pass, ye may believe that I am he.”

Jesus says, that He is telling them ahead of time, so it will not come to them as such a shock and also, that they will know that Jesus knows all things and is truly Messiah.

John 13:20 “Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that receiveth whomsoever I send receiveth me; and he that receiveth me receiveth him that sent me.”

We can see from this, that all who are the called to minister of God are not to worry when people do not accept them. They are not rejecting the minister with the message, but they are rejecting Jesus. He also, said that those who have rejected Him, have also rejected the Father. This should really encourage those of you who are under persecution.

John Chapter 13 Questions

1. How long did Jesus love His own?
2. In whose heart did the devil put the wish to betray Jesus?
3. Whose son was this man (the betrayer)?
4. What did Jesus know had been put in His hands?
5. When Jesus took His outer garments off, what did He wear?
6. When Jesus poured water into the basin, what did He do?

7. What did He wipe them with?
8. What question did Simon Peter ask Jesus when He came to him?
9. Why did Peter not want Jesus to do this to him?
10. Jesus said, if I wash you not, you have _____.
11. Then Peter said for Jesus to wash what three parts of his body?
12. Jesus said, He that is washed is _____.
13. Who did Jesus mean when He said, not all?
14. Who did Jesus say He was in verse 13?
15. What lesson did Jesus teach them in this?
16. What had Jesus given them, so that they would know what to do?
17. The servant is not greater than his _____.
18. To be happy, what must you do?
19. Why was one of the twelve a traitor?
20. Why did Jesus tell them ahead that one was a traitor?
21. He that receiveth whomsoever I sent receiveth _____.