



The Gospel of John - Chapter Thirteen

Summary of Chapter Thirteen

The chapter commences with the account unique to John of Jesus washing his disciples' feet during the Passover meal. This was a remarkable act on many levels for the washing of feet was something that was normally undertaken by the non-Jewish servants although it could be undertaken within intimate groups such as a wife washing her husbands' feet or a disciple performing it on his teacher. For a teacher to wash the feet of his disciples was scandalous. Peter, in fact, protested that Jesus would never wash his feet to which Jesus replied that, unless Peter submitted to him in this, he could no longer be his disciple. Peter wanted Jesus to wash him completely but Jesus replied that it was only his feet that needed cleansing.

The purpose of this act was for Jesus to teach his disciples that following him was about being truly humble and willing to be submissive in service to others before God: <<*He sat down, called the twelve, and said to them, 'Whoever wants to be first must be last of all and servant of all'*>> (Mark 9:35).

When Jesus rejoined them at the table he was deeply troubled in his spirit and announced to the disciples that one of them was going to betray him. At Peter's prompting, John asked him who it would be. Jesus said the one to whom he would give some bread would be the one, which was of course Judas. Jesus then told Judas to go and do what he must, but the disciples thought he was simply going on an errand, for they still did not realise that it was Judas who was the betrayer.

Jesus then commences his departure discourse by instructing the disciples to love one another so that they could be witnesses to Christ in doing so. When he tells them they cannot yet follow him where he is going, Peter says that he would follow Jesus even to death. Jesus then foretells Peter's imminent denial.

III John 13:1-20:31 - The Farewell Discourse and the Passion Narrative

The second half of John's Gospel consists of Jesus' Farewell Discourse (Chapters 13-17) and the passion narrative (Chapters 18-20). Now that Jesus has been rejected by the Jews, he turns his attention to his new messianic community. After the community is cleansed and instructed, Jesus prays, is arrested, and is subjected to Jewish and Roman trials, is crucified and then buried. This is followed by the resurrection, resurrection appearances, and Jesus' commissioning of his disciples. The section concludes with a purpose statement (20:30-31).

III.a John 13:1-17:26 - The cleansing and instruction of the new messianic community and Jesus' final prayer

In the second major section of John's Gospel, Jesus prepares his new messianic community, represented by the Twelve initially but to soon exclude Judas, for the time subsequent to his exaltation to the Father. The community is first cleansed both literally and symbolically through the foot washing (13:1-17), and then figuratively through the removal of the betrayer (13:18-30). The Farewell Discourse proper extends from 13:31 to 16:33 and contains Jesus' final instructions to his followers before his arrest and crucifixion. The discourse, which is unique to John's Gospel, concludes with Jesus' final prayer in Chapter 17.

III.a.i John 13:1-14:31 - The Last Supper

Jesus shares one last meal with his disciples during which he washes their feet; announces that one of them will betray him, at which point Judas leaves the group for the last time; gives them a new commandment to love one another; and predicts Peter's denial of even knowing Jesus.

Jesus goes on to announce that he is the way to the Father. When Philip asks to be shown the Father Jesus rebukes him by saying that, since he has seen Jesus, he has already seen the Father. Jesus goes on to explain to them that he must go away but he is not deserting them for they would soon receive the gift of the Holy Spirit, who would guide them onwards and would keep them in communion with Christ.

III.a.i.1 John 13:1-20 - Jesus Washes the Disciples' Feet

With his crucifixion imminent, Jesus washes his disciples' feet as a final proof of his love for them, setting an example of humility and servanthood, signifying the washing away of sins through his death. In a striking demonstration of love for his enemies, Jesus washes all of his disciples' feet, including those of Judas. Jesus' act is all the more remarkable, as washing people's feet was considered to be a task reserved for non-Jewish slaves. In a culture where people walked long distances on dusty roads in sandals, it was customary for the host to arrange for water to be available for the washing of feet. Normally, this was done upon arrival, not during the meal.

¹ Now before the festival of the Passover, Jesus knew that his hour had come to depart from this world and go to the Father. Having loved his own who were in the world, he loved them to the end.

John 13:1

Jesus knew that his hour had come. John emphasises the context of the Passover, for the lamb is about to be sacrificed for the sins of the world.

To depart from this world. In several places John says that Jesus is leaving the world and going to the Father. Yet in other places Jesus can say that he will always be present with his disciples, even after his ascension into heaven: <<*For where two or three are gathered in my name, I am there among them*>> (Matthew 18:20), <<*Jesus answered him, 'Those who love me will keep my word, and my Father will love them, and we will come to them and make our home with them'*>> (John 14:23), and: <<*Listen! I am standing at the door, knocking; if you hear my voice and open the door, I will come in to you and eat with you, and you with me*>> (Revelation 3:20). Both are true: Jesus in his human nature is no longer here on earth but has returned to heaven and will come again one day, but in his divine nature Jesus is omnipresent and is with believers always: <<*And remember, I am with you always, to the end of the age*>> (Matthew 28:20b).

Having loved his own who were in the world, he loved them to the end. This verse sets the scene for Chapters 13-17 for the overriding theme is love, occurring 31 times in these five chapters. Jesus' own are now the Twelve, the representatives of his new messianic community (1:11). Although Jesus was about to die an agonising death, he continued to love his disciples.

² The devil had already put it into the heart of Judas son of Simon Iscariot to betray him. And during supper ³ Jesus, knowing that the Father had given all things into his hands, and that he had come from God and was going to God, ⁴ got up from the table, took off his outer robe, and tied a towel around himself.

John 13:2-4

The devil had already put it into the heart of Judas son of Simon Iscariot to betray him. This is the first of several references in this section to the betrayal, which will be the focus of vv.21-30. It is extremely important to realise that Jesus is going to wash the feet of one who is considering betraying him. It is known from other accounts that Judas had already been paid by the authorities to find a way to betray Jesus: <<*Then Satan entered into Judas called Iscariot, who was one of the twelve; he went away and conferred with the chief priests and officers of the temple police about how he might betray him to them. They were greatly pleased and agreed to give him money. So he consented and began to look for an opportunity to betray him to them when no crowd was present*>> (Luke 22:3-6).

Jesus, knowing that the Father had given all things into his hands, and that he had come from God and was going to God. Jesus' own awareness is also an important part of the context of the foot washing. This knowledge does not simply

give Jesus the security to wash the disciples' feet, his sharing in the divine essence is what leads him to wash their feet. Jesus had said that he only does what he sees the Father doing (5:19), and this foot washing is not said to be an exception to that rule.

The verb used for **took off**, *tithemi*, is not the usual word for the removal of clothing. Perhaps John intends an allusion to Jesus' imminent laying down of life, since this verb is used for that idea elsewhere. Similarly, the word used for taking up his garments in v.12, *lambanō*, was used to describe his taking up his life again in 10:17-18.

Jesus **tied a towel around himself** with which to dry their feet, obviously not what one would expect a master to do. A Jewish text says this is something a Gentile slave could be required to do, but not a Jewish slave. It certainly would have been unprecedented for a Rabbi to do such a thing!

Foot washing is something wives did for their husbands, children for their parents, and disciples for their teachers. A level of intimacy is involved in these cases, unlike when Gentile slaves would do the washing. In Jesus' case, there is an obvious reversal of roles with his disciples. The one into whose hands the Father had given all now takes his disciples' feet into his hands to wash them.

⁵ Then he poured water into a basin and began to wash the disciples' feet and to wipe them with the towel that was tied around him.

John 13:5

He poured water into a basin and began to wash the disciples' feet. The first disciples that Jesus came to seemed to accept what he was doing without further comment.

At the time when a woman washed Jesus' feet with her tears, Jesus rebuked the Pharisee who was his host for criticising her yet not having Jesus' feet washed when he arrived as a guest in his house: <<*Then turning towards the woman, he said to Simon, 'Do you see this woman? I entered your house; you gave me no water for my feet, but she has bathed my feet with her tears and dried them with her hair'*>> (Luke 7:44). Jesus, as either the host or the most prominent guest, undertook the task himself.

⁶ He came to Simon Peter, who said to him, 'Lord, are you going to wash my feet?' ⁷ Jesus answered, 'You do not know now what I am doing, but later you will understand.' ⁸ Peter said to him, 'You will never wash my feet.' Jesus answered, 'Unless I wash you, you have no share with me.' ⁹ Simon Peter said to him, 'Lord, not my feet only but also my hands and my head!' ¹⁰ Jesus said to him, 'One who has bathed does not need to wash, except for the feet, but is entirely clean. And you are clean, though not all of you.' ¹¹ For he knew who was to betray him; for this reason he said, 'Not all of you are clean.'

John 13:6-11

He came to Simon Peter, who said to him, 'Lord, are you going to wash my feet?' Slaves were looked down upon in the ancient world, and Peter cannot stand the thought of his teacher doing the work of a slave. It would have been appropriate for one of the disciples to have washed Jesus' feet, but the reverse is intolerable. In the Greek both pronouns, you and my, are emphatic. This response expresses Peter's love, but his is a defective love. It lacks humility, which is one of the essential attributes of discipleship according to this Gospel. Indeed, humility is the very thing illustrated in Jesus' present action.

You do not know now what I am doing, but later you will understand is another example of misunderstanding what Jesus says or does, as commented on in 6:52 and 12:16. On one level, Jesus' act is an example of humility, and they are expected to grasp this point. But as with most of what Jesus has said and done, they will fully understand this event only after the Cross and resurrection, and the coming of the Spirit, who will lead them into all truth.

To have no share with Jesus means that one does not belong to him and can no longer be called his disciple. Here the foot washing symbolises the washing necessary for the forgiveness of sins, in anticipation of Jesus' death for his people, by which sins are washed away. If Peter is to have a share with Jesus in his community and the eternal life that comes through faith in him, then he must be washed by Jesus.

Jesus applies the foot washing in another way. Those who have been washed through Jesus' once-for-all death also need daily cleansing of their sins, symbolised by their frequent need to wash their feet. It is apparent that Jesus applies the foot washing figuratively since he says not all are clean, referring to Judas, but clearly he cleaned Judas' feet as well. Because Judas is not spiritually cleansed, unlike Peter, he does not have a share with Jesus.

Simon Peter said to him, 'Lord, not my feet only but also my hands and my head!' Peter's response may seem enthusiastic but it is misguided because he does not grasp what Jesus is doing. Peter at this point is an example of religious enthusiasm that is really a manifestation of the unregenerate self rather than of genuine discipleship.

One who has bathed does not need to wash, except for the feet, but is entirely clean. It was common practice for people to bathe before coming to a celebratory meal. However, their sandaled feet would become dirty walking to the location of the meal.

And you are clean, though not all of you. Throughout, Jesus has been speaking individually to Peter and he now declares him cleansed, part of Christ in his death, but Jesus notes that there is one who remains unclean spiritually, a cryptic reference to Judas. Eleven of the disciples were clean because they had accepted the word: <<*You have already been cleansed by the word that I have spoken to you*>> (John 15:3). Judas was unclean himself in the sense that he has not received Jesus with true faith, and he is himself an unclean presence among the body of believers that has yet to be cleansed. Judas' cleansing from the body of believers is about to take place.

¹² After he had washed their feet, had put on his robe, and had returned to the table, he said to them, ‘Do you know what I have done to you?’ ¹³ You call me Teacher and Lord – and you are right, for that is what I am. ¹⁴ So if I, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also ought to wash one another’s feet. ¹⁵ For I have set you an example, that you also should do as I have done to you. ¹⁶ Very truly, I tell you, servants are not greater than their master, nor are messengers greater than the one who sent them. ¹⁷ If you know these things, you are blessed if you do them.

John 13:12-17

Do you know what I have done to you? The disciples will understand fully only after the Cross, although they do grasp in part Jesus’ amazing humility, which serves as a model for all of his disciples.

You call me Teacher and Lord – and you are right, for that is what I am. The disciples frequently referred to Jesus as Lord, which was as it should be: <<*to you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, who is the Messiah, the Lord*>> (Luke 2:11), and: <<*because if you confess with your lips that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved*>> (Romans 10:9). Jesus affirms that this is indeed his identity. The humility he is exemplifying is not a false humility. True humility is always grounded in the truth. Although they have grasped something of Jesus’ identity, they now need the further cleansing that comes through a revelation of the nature of Jesus, whose authority they recognise. Jesus’ understanding of the characteristics of a teacher and a lord are quite different from those of the disciples and their culture.

Foot washing continues as a regular ceremony in a number of modern denominations, which literally obey Jesus’ command: you also ought to wash one another’s feet. Others believe the language is figurative for the importance of serving one another, and that the act itself is not required. This is more in line with what Jesus actually says here because he does not say to do ‘what’ he did but as he did. The cleansing and the further foot washing are symbolic of the revelation that Jesus gave of the Father, and thus the disciples are called upon to embody this same revelation.

The community Jesus has brought into being is to manifest the love of God that he has revealed through serving one another with no vestige of pride or position. There will be recognised positions of leadership within the new community, but the exercise of leadership is to follow this model of servanthood.

I have set you an example, that you also should do as I have done to you. As he does in all things Jesus sets the example that all believers should aspire to copy. He is the template for all who would wish to serve God.

Servants are not greater than their master. Servant is Greek *doulos* that can also be translated as slave. They are there for the sole purpose of serving their master. They should aspire to be like their master but never greater. Jesus will use this

phrase again: <<Remember the word that I said to you, “Servants are not greater than their master.” If they persecuted me, they will persecute you; if they kept my word, they will keep yours also>> (John 15:20).

Messenger is the Greek word *apostolos*, meaning one who is sent. Jesus is the one sent by the Father, and the disciples will be sent by Jesus. Jesus has been submissive to the Father, and the disciples are to be under the authority of Jesus. This is one of a few places in the NT where this Greek word does not refer to the office of ‘apostle of Jesus Christ’ but simply to a messenger in general. It is also used this way in: <<As for Titus, he is my partner and co-worker in your service; as for our brothers, they are messengers of the churches, the glory of Christ>> (2 Corinthians 8:23), and: <<Still, I think it necessary to send to you Epaphroditus – my brother and co-worker and fellow-soldier, your messenger and minister to my need>> (Philippians 2:25).

If you know these things, you are blessed if you do them. The pattern of life exemplified in the foot washing is true blessedness, contrary to what the world, which is centred in pride and selfishness, thinks. The Gospel is a life to be lived and not just an ideal to be contemplated: <<Everyone then who hears these words of mine and acts on them will be like a wise man who built his house on rock>> (Matthew 7:24), <<But he said, ‘Blessed rather are those who hear the word of God and obey it!’>> (Luke 11:28), and: <<But those who look into the perfect law, the law of liberty, and persevere, being not hearers who forget but doers who act – they will be blessed in their doing>> (James 1:25).

This is the only Gospel that does not record the introduction of the communion meal at the Last Supper, refer to Matthew 26:26-30, Mark 14:22-25 and Luke 22:14-23. Paul also provides a full account: <<For I received from the Lord what I also handed on to you, that the Lord Jesus on the night when he was betrayed took a loaf of bread, and when he had given thanks, he broke it and said, ‘This is my body that is for you. Do this in remembrance of me.’ In the same way he took the cup also, after supper, saying, ‘This cup is the new covenant in my blood. Do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of me.’ For as often as you eat this bread and drink the cup, you proclaim the Lord’s death until he comes>> (1 Corinthians 11:23-26).

¹⁸ I am not speaking of all of you; I know whom I have chosen. But it is to fulfil the scripture, “The one who ate my bread has lifted his heel against me.”

John 13:18

I know whom I have chosen does not refer to choosing for salvation but to Jesus’ choosing of the Twelve, including Judas, to be disciples; this is the same sense given to ‘choose’ in 6:70, where it clearly includes Judas. However, by using the prefix I am not speaking of all of you Jesus shows that he has already discounted Judas as one of his chosen group.

But it is to fulfil the scripture. The birth, life, death, resurrection and ascension of Jesus, along with the things that happened around him fulfilled 353 OT prophecies or scriptures.

The one who ate my bread has lifted his heel against me. Jesus cites Psalm 41:9, dealing with Absalom's rebellion against King David; the 'faithless friend' there may be Ahithophel: <<*Now in those days the counsel that Ahithophel gave was as if one consulted the oracle of God; so all the counsel of Ahithophel was esteemed, both by David and by Absalom*>> (2 Samuel 16:23); Judas' lifting his heel against Jesus fulfils the scripture, as Jesus highlights the treacherous and faithless nature of Judas' deed. David was not prophesying when he wrote these words so this is more a repeat of OT failures than a fulfilment as such.

¹⁹ I tell you this now, before it occurs, so that when it does occur, you may believe that I am he.

John 13:19

I tell you now, before it occurs. Jesus' statement is one of several references to his foreknowledge in this section. The common OT idea that God and his true prophets are known by their ability to foretell events. For example: <<*I declared them to you from long ago, before they came to pass I announced them to you, so that you would not say, 'My idol did them, my carved image and my cast image commanded them'*>> (Isaiah 48:5), is seen to be true of Jesus.

The statement I am he very likely has overtones of a claim to deity.

²⁰ Very truly, I tell you, whoever receives one whom I send receives me; and whoever receives me receives him who sent me.'

John 13:20

The one whom I send refers first of all to the disciples whom Jesus would specifically send out: <<*Jesus said to them again, 'Peace be with you. As the Father has sent me, so I send you*>> (John 20:21). But more broadly it applies to all messengers of Christ, in every age, who bring the Gospel of Christ to others.

To truly receive such a messenger is to accept and believe the Gospel and to trust in Christ. The same word for receive, Greek *lambanō*, is also used in 1:12, 3:32-33, 5:43 and 12:48. This and similar verses, e.g. <<*Truly I tell you, whoever does not receive the kingdom of God as a little child will never enter it*>> (Luke 18:17), and: <<*When he had said this, he breathed on them and said to them, 'Receive the Holy Spirit'*>> (John 20:22), give the basis for using the language of 'receiving Christ as Saviour' in reference to hearing the Gospel message and believing it.

III.a.i.2 John 13:21-30 - Jesus Foretells His Betrayal

For Jesus to be betrayed by one of his own disciples is bad enough, but that it should come so soon after Jesus had washed the feet of his betrayer adds an almost unbelievable dimension to the story. What type of person could do it?

Jesus is again in a state of anguish as he reveals his betrayal. This is similar to the way he felt when he witnessed the sorrow of his friends at the time of Lazarus' death. He felt the same way as he pondered his own death, with its separation from the love of his Father, and now he feels the pain again because of his love for

his disciples, including Judas. In his anguish the effects of human sin and its consequences are revealed.

²¹ After saying this Jesus was troubled in spirit, and declared, ‘Very truly, I tell you, one of you will betray me.’

John 13:21

Troubled in spirit. This is similar to how Jesus felt when he was troubled by the thought of his impending death (12:27) and is similar to the way King David felt: <<*Be gracious to me, O Lord, for I am in distress; my eye wastes away from grief, my soul and body also. For my life is spent with sorrow, and my years with sighing; my strength fails because of my misery, and my bones waste away*>> (Psalm 31:9-10).

One of you will betray me. This statement must have fallen like a bombshell. These men were enjoying a celebratory meal with their Lord only to find that within their midst was the perpetrator of the world’s worst crime.

²² The disciples looked at one another, uncertain of whom he was speaking.

John 13:22

The disciples looked at one another. They did not all turn round to look at Judas. They could not begin to imagine who would do such a thing, in fact, each of them even wondered if they were the guilty one: <<*They began to be distressed and to say to him one after another, ‘Surely, not I!’*>> (Mark 14:19).

Uncertain of whom he was speaking. Judas’ outward behaviour conformed so nearly to that of the other disciples that they did not immediately assume that Jesus was talking about Judas, as already noted.

²³ One of his disciples – the one whom Jesus loved – was reclining next to him; ²⁴ Simon Peter therefore motioned to him to ask Jesus of whom he was speaking.

John 13:23-24

This is the first reference to the disciple whom Jesus loved, which is generally accepted to be the author of this Gospel, John Zebedee. It appears that the reason why John refers to himself in this way was that he was genuinely the one whom Jesus loved, probably because he was the one who most reflected the humility of his master. He may also have been the youngest of Jesus’ first disciples, perhaps only 17 years old by the time of his passion.

Reclining. People at special feasts would lie with their heads near a low table and their feet pointing out away from it, resting on one elbow and eating with the other hand. In such a situation it would be easy for John to lean back a bit and whisper privately to Jesus, as he does in v.25.

Simon Peter therefore motioned to him to ask Jesus of whom he was speaking.

This is most unlike Peter who has a record of acting or speaking impulsively. However, following the admonishment he had so recently received during the foot washing, perhaps he thought it best to get someone else to ask the question. John was also close enough to ask Jesus quietly without alerting the others to the conversation.

²⁵ So while reclining next to Jesus, he asked him, ‘Lord, who is it?’

²⁶ Jesus answered, ‘It is the one to whom I give this piece of bread when I have dipped it in the dish.’ So when he had dipped the piece of bread, he gave it to Judas son of Simon Iscariot.

John 13:25-26

So while reclining next to Jesus, he asked him, ‘Lord, who is it?’ Jesus would have been seated as the guest of honour and for John to have been sat next to him shows that he too was in a place of honour. This fits then with the title ‘the disciple whom Jesus loved’.

So when he had dipped the piece of bread, he gave it to Judas son of Simon Iscariot. For the Passover meal there would have been the lamb and a variety of side dishes containing vegetables, herbs and sauces. There would be unleavened bread for the meal and that would normally be dipped in one of the sauces to moisten it. Jesus would have been at the head of the table as the honoured guest. For this person to pass food to another was a sign that he too was to be honoured. By passing the food to Judas in this way, which also indicates that Judas was sat next to Jesus on the other side from John, the crime he was about to commit becomes all the more heinous: *<<It is not enemies who taunt me – I could bear that; it is not adversaries who deal insolently with me – I could hide from them. But it is you, my equal, my companion, my familiar friend, with whom I kept pleasant company; we walked in the house of God with the throng>>* (Psalm 55:12-14).

²⁷ After he received the piece of bread, Satan entered into him. Jesus said to him, ‘Do quickly what you are going to do.’

John 13:27

After he received the piece of bread, Satan entered into him. Although Satan had earlier put the desire to betray Christ into Judas’ heart (v.2), Satan himself now enters into Judas, recorded also by Luke: *<<Then Satan entered into Judas called Iscariot, who was one of the twelve>>* (Luke 22:3), suggesting a more dominant influence in the actions to follow.

Do quickly what you are going to do. Jesus is not commanding Judas to sin but rather commanding him to get on with what he is going to do, one way or the other. Jesus knew that his hour had come and he did not want to delay Judas any further. It is also likely that he did not want him to be part of the intimate teaching that would follow the meal.

²⁸ Now no one at the table knew why he said this to him. ²⁹ Some thought that, because Judas had the common purse, Jesus was telling him, ‘Buy what we need for the festival’; or, that he should give something to the poor. ³⁰ So, after receiving the piece of bread, he immediately went out. And it was night.

John 13:28-30

Now no one at the table knew why he said this to him. John was the only one who knew the significance of Jesus giving the bread to Judas, identifying him as the betrayer. Yet even he did not know that Judas was on his way to instigate Jesus’ arrest that very night.

Buy what we need for the festival. As they were already eating the Passover meal then the festival in view here would be the Festival of Unleavened Bread, a seven day festival that runs on immediately after Passover.

That he should give something to the poor would be in line with Judas’ objection to Mary anointing Jesus’ feet with the expensive perfume (12:5).

He immediately went out. Once he knew that his deceit was uncovered Judas knew that he had no place of fellowship with Jesus or the others.

And it was night strikes an ominous note and is similar to what Jesus said to those who came to arrest him: <<*When I was with you day after day in the temple, you did not lay hands on me. But this is your hour, and the power of darkness!*>> (Luke 22:53).

III.a.i.3 John 13:31-35 - The New Commandment

Jesus now begins what is commonly called his ‘farewell discourse’ (13:31–17:26). This section follows a literary form common in the ancient world, not least within Judaism. There are numerous examples of great people giving a final speech to those whom they are close to, e.g. Jacob, Moses and David. They frequently gave encouragement to those who were left behind once they were gone.

Although Jesus’ farewell discourse fits this pattern, there is the notable exception that the one who is about to leave will continue to be present through the Spirit and will return at the end of the age. Indeed, the way Jesus speaks in this section transcends time, for he speaks in oracular style and often as if the glorification has already taken place. An initial statement by Jesus gets the sequence started: he speaks of glorification (vv.31-32), his departure (v.33), and love (vv.34-35).

³¹ When he had gone out, Jesus said, ‘Now the Son of Man has been glorified, and God has been glorified in him. ³² If God has been glorified in him, God will also glorify him in himself and will glorify him at once.

John 13:31-32

Now the Son of Man has been glorified, and God has been glorified in him. The passage echoes: <<*And he said to me, 'You are my servant, Israel, in whom I will be glorified'*>> (Isaiah 49:3). Again Jesus' glorification is tied to his death. Glorification can refer to either the giving of praise or the manifestation of that which is worthy of praise. When Jesus says now he is referring to the manifestation of God now taking place rather than the praise it will bring forth in the future. Peter was perhaps thinking of this occasion when he later wrote: <<*Whoever speaks must do so as one speaking the very words of God; whoever serves must do so with the strength that God supplies, so that God may be glorified in all things through Jesus Christ. To him belong the glory and the power for ever and ever. Amen*>> (1 Peter 4:11).

The Son of Man is the one to be glorified, that is, the Messiah from heaven who brings God's life and judgment, especially through the Cross. The Cross is itself the revelation of divine glory and the way for Jesus to share the divine life with his followers. It is the way that God will also glorify the Son in himself, which he will do at once as Jesus returns into his presence.

And will glorify him at once. This could apply either to the nearness of Jesus' crucifixion or the fact that God would raise him up from death shortly afterwards and then six weeks later take him back into heaven.

³³ Little children, I am with you only a little longer. You will look for me; and as I said to the Jews so now I say to you, "Where I am going, you cannot come."

John 13:33

By calling them little children, using the diminutive form *teknia*, which the NIV tries to capture by adding 'my', he is putting them in a relationship to himself that is analogous to his relationship to the Father. This term would be in keeping with the Passover meal setting since small groups that banded together to eat the paschal meal had to pattern themselves on family life, and one of the group had to act as a father explaining to his children the significance of what was being done.

The phrase I am with you only a little longer is imprecise, so the disciples could not be sure how soon this separation would take place, but given the announcement of the betrayal they might suspect that it would be very soon. Jesus seems to refer not just to the time of separation between his death and resurrection, but also to the time thereafter. For he says you will look for me, which they did not do immediately after his death, but which they did do after the resurrection. Just as the first disciples sought him out (1:38), so will they continue to seek for him after his departure. Part of the purpose of the farewell discourse is to tell them of the new ways in which they will find him in the future.

Where I am going, you cannot come. The departure had been a theme in the controversy with the Jewish opponents (7:34 and 8:21), as Jesus reminds the disciples. While it is impossible for either group to follow Jesus where he is going, there is a big difference between the groups' relationships to Jesus. For the

opponents are alienated from God and can never follow Jesus into the Father's presence as long as they remain in that condition. The disciples, on the other hand, have been cleansed (v.10). They are little children who will indeed follow Jesus later (v.36). As the following chapters will make clear, they first need to receive the Spirit in order to share in the Father's life and love, and to accomplish his works, as Jesus himself has done.

³⁴ I give you a new commandment, that you love one another. Just as I have loved you, you also should love one another. ³⁵ By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another.'

John 13:34-35

I give you a new commandment, that you love one another. Love must be the distinguishing mark of Jesus' disciples. Jesus' new commandment takes its point of departure from the Mosaic commands to love the Lord with all one's powers and to love one's neighbour as oneself, as recorded in Deuteronomy 6:5 and Leviticus 19:18 respectively, but Jesus' own love and teaching deepen and transform these commands. Jesus even taught love for one's enemies (Matthew 5:43-48).

The command to love one's neighbour was not new for it is in the law (Leviticus 19:18); the newness was found in loving one another as Jesus had loved his disciples. God's love had been revealed through the incarnation. In light of Jesus' subsequent death, just as implies a love that is even willing to lay down one's life for another: <<*No one has greater love than this, to lay down one's life for one's friends*>> (John 15:13). The call for disciples to love one another is taken up in the rest of the NT: <<*Therefore be imitators of God, as beloved children, and live in love, as Christ loved us and gave himself up for us, a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God*>> (Ephesians 5:1-2), <<*Now concerning love of the brothers and sisters, you do not need to have anyone write to you, for you yourselves have been taught by God to love one another*>> (1 Thessalonians 4:9), <<*Now that you have purified your souls by your obedience to the truth so that you have genuine mutual love, love one another deeply from the heart*>> (1 Peter 1:22), <<*In this is love, not that we loved God but that he loved us and sent his Son to be the atoning sacrifice for our sins. Beloved, since God loved us so much, we also ought to love one another*>> (1 John 4:10-11), and: <<*But now, dear lady, I ask you, not as though I were writing you a new commandment, but one we have had from the beginning, let us love one another*>> (2 John 5).

By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another. This is the key purpose of this new commandment. Those that truly have love for others will stand out from the crowd and when it is known that they are followers of Jesus then the source of their love will be known too.

III.a.i.4 John 13:36-38 - Jesus Foretells Peter's Denial

When Jesus reiterates that the disciples cannot go where he is about to go, then Peter makes a bold statement that he wants to follow Jesus wherever he is going, even to death. Jesus' response is to tell Peter that he is about to deny even knowing his master.

³⁶ Simon Peter said to him, ‘Lord, where are you going?’ Jesus answered, ‘Where I am going, you cannot follow me now; but you will follow afterwards.’ ³⁷ Peter said to him, ‘Lord, why can I not follow you now? I will lay down my life for you.’ ³⁸ Jesus answered, ‘Will you lay down your life for me? Very truly, I tell you, before the cock crows, you will have denied me three times.’

John 13:36-38

You cannot follow me now; but you will follow afterwards. Jesus clearly indicates that they cannot go with him immediately but implies that a time will come when they can again be together.

Lord, why can I not follow you now? I will lay down my life for you. It is likely Peter was sincere in making this statement but he was not aware of what lay ahead and of his own human frailty. There would come a time when he would lay down his own life for the sake of the Gospel but that time was not yet. He still had much to learn before he would do so.

Peter’s promise here, however well intentioned, is a typical example of how believers in Jesus can often promise to do so much for Jesus and then fail to deliver. After Peter’s betrayal of his Lord, Jesus will show that Peter is both forgiven and restored during their last recorded discussion in 21:15-19. As will be commented on there, Peter is very careful not to overstate his love for Jesus for fear of a similar failure to keep his word.

Will you lay down your life for me? Jesus, of course, knew what the answer would be: <<*Very truly, I tell you, when you were younger, you used to fasten your own belt and to go wherever you wished. But when you grow old, you will stretch out your hands, and someone else will fasten a belt around you and take you where you do not wish to go.* (He said this to indicate the kind of death by which he would glorify God.) After this he said to him, ‘Follow me’>> (John 21:18-19), and: <<*I think it right, as long as I am in this body, to refresh your memory, since I know that my death will come soon, as indeed our Lord Jesus Christ has made clear to me*>> (2 Peter 1:13-14). But Jesus wanted to alert Peter that life is never that straight forward, no matter how sincere he may have been at the time. In fact, Peter must face many barriers and demons first, not least his own. However, he would also face other opposition: <<*Simon, Simon, listen! Satan has demanded to sift all of you like wheat, but I have prayed for you that your own faith may not fail; and you, when once you have turned back, strengthen your brothers*>> (Luke 22:31-32).

Before the cock crows. It was now night (v.30) and the cocks would not crow again until dawn. In a number of manuscripts of Mark’s Gospel, although not all, Mark mentions the rooster crowing twice, but cocks could crow a number of times separated by a few minutes. Mark specifies the first two individual crowings, as evidently Jesus did, while Matthew, Luke, and John focus on the shameful fact of Peter’s denial. They therefore drop this detail and report Jesus as referring to the entire set of crowings rather than the number of times the cock crows.