

## CHAPTER VI

### THE PRIVATE MINISTRY JESUS CHRIST (PART I)

#### John 13:1-14:31

THE withdrawal of Jesus Christ from the Passover crowd (12:36) transfers us from His ministry of public testimony to Israel to His concluding private ministry to His disciples. Not that the teaching of the twelve to date has been of minor importance. Quite to the contrary. However it is the fact that Jesus advises the eleven, immediately following the departure of Judas from the upper room, that He is about to leave them (13:30-33), that prompts Him to provide significant final remarks. Hence, we have here a last will and testament made known to beneficiaries before the death of the testator, which is not contained in the other Gospels. Doctrinal thrusts include a sense of completion (13:1; 16:33; 17:1, 11, 13), a sense of anticipation (14:28; 16:5, 10, 16, 28; 17:1, 11, 13), a sense of concern for provision (13:13-15; 14:1-3, 14-18, 26-27; 16:1-4; 17:14-15, 17, 20-23), and a sense of vital, essential matters proceeding from a man who is about to die (13:1-17; 15:1-17; 17:13-23).

Concerning the major theme of this discourse, whereas in John 3-12 the glory of Christ was made known to the world, now in John 13-17 it is declared in more intimate detail before believers. This new relational aspect is further born out by the fact that whereas cognates of φῶς, phōs, light, and ζωή, zōē, life, occur in John 1-12 some 82 times, while only 6 times in John 13-17, by way of contrast cognates of ἀγάπη, agapē, love, are found only 6 times in John 1-12, but 31 times in John 13-17. Here then Christ is ministering exclusively to His own as He anticipates the cross as imminent and the subsequent church age. Both He and His disciples will reap in joy having sown in tears. God the Holy Spirit will be their comfort while God the Father will be glorified.

The common title for this section is *The Upper Room Discourse*, although this raises the question as to whether the command of Jesus to the disciples, “Let us go from here” (14:31), was immediately acted upon. Alternatively, departure from the upper room may have been deferred (16:33). In either case, it would mean that the prayer of 17:1-26 was offered in transit, peripatetic in style, while approaching “the ravine of the Kidron” leading to the Garden of Gethsemane (18:1). Hence the expression of Jesus, while “lifting up His eyes to heaven, . . . Father, the hour has come” (17:1), would have specifically anticipated his imminent betrayal; the disciples would have been soberly enthralled as they walked with Jesus, observed His heavenward posture, and listened to His heavenly intercession. It was unforgettable, and later transcribed.

#### A. Jesus discourses on his impending departure from the disciples, 13:1-38.

The constant emphasis of John 1-12 concerning Jesus Christ is that He has been sent by the Father (5:36-37; 6:44, 57; 8:16, 18; 12:49) and has come from the Father (1:14). Now the constant emphasis of this discourse concerns Jesus Christ going back to the Father (13:1, 33; 14:2, 12, 28; 16:5, 7, 10, 17, 28; 17:11, 13). After three plus years of study in the presence of Jesus by His disciples, and questionable completion of the courses Discipleship Training 101, 201, 301, now they take the final course, Discipleship Training 401, especially focusing on “a new commandment.”

1. The new commandment demonstrated, vs. 1-20.

Before Jesus teaches His disciples concerning this “new commandment” (13:34-35), that is “a new commandment . . . which is true in Him and in you” (I John 2:8), He intends giving a personal, unforgettable visual demonstration, by footwashing, concerning subsequent instruction that is double-edged. On the one hand it speaks of the divine, voluntary humiliation of crucifixion portrayed by divine, voluntary, physical humiliation (13:1-11). On the other hand it speaks of divine, voluntary humiliation requiring disciple, voluntary humiliation (13:12-17).

a. Jesus begins to wash the disciples’ feet, vs. 1-5.

What is it that causes a person so lofty in stature as Jesus Christ readily to stoop to such a lowly level? When a nobody pretends to be somebody, we call it pretension, affectation, hypocrisy; when a somebody pretends to be a nobody, we call it meekness, modesty, self-abasement. However the latter virtues only result from genuine self-appreciation. Hence it is the self-appreciation of Jesus, that is His knowledge of who he really is in relation to His Father, vs. 1, 3, that enables Him to humble himself (Phil. 2:5-11). It is Peter’s lack of true self-appreciation that causes him to act so pretentiously, at least to begin with (13:6-9).

(1) His knowing His earthly hour had come, vs. 1-2.

The divine drama here concerns the great conflict, playing out to a climax, between God the Father through His Son Jesus and the devil, that is Diabolos, as is so wonderfully portrayed by John Bunyan in his classic allegory, *The Holy War*.

Diabolus is indeed a great and mighty prince, and yet both poor and beggarly. . . . [H]e was at first one of the servants of King Shaddai. . . . [Then he] begins to think with himself how he might be set up as Lord over all, and have the sole power under Shaddai! Now that did the King reserve for his Son, yea, and had already bestowed it upon him. . . . So, in fine, they [Diabolus and his associates] came to this issue, that they should make an attempt upon the King’s Son to destroy him, that the inheritance might be theirs.<sup>1</sup>

(a) The hour of His exaltation from humiliation, v. 1.

“Now before the Feast of the Passover, Jesus knowing that His hour had come in order that He would depart [μεταβαίνω, metabainō] out of this world to the Father, having loved His own who were in the world, He loved them to the end [εἰς τέλος, eis telos].” Assuming that the reference here is to Thursday, on which day the Passover will be celebrated by Jesus with His disciples, in agreement with the other three Gospels, John now refers to what will immediately precede on that Thursday, that is the footwashing incident.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> John Bunyan, *Works*, III, p. 256.

<sup>2</sup> D. A. Carson, *The Gospel According to John*, pp. 460-461.

There seems to be a close connection here between the Passover, Jesus' "hour that has come," and His "departure out of this world." It is as if the type and antitype precisely coalesce in time according to 1:29. And this coordination is through divine sovereignty that no man, however possessed of the devil, might attempt to fracture. The Son of God's heavenly focused awareness of this climax in His earthly life, that will eventually reunite Him with His Father, is also conditioned by His unfailing love for His disciples, "to the end." Certainly He loved them to the end of His earthly sojourn; but more likely here is His loving them "to perfection," that is "utterly," "to the uttermost," with "no greater love" (15:13; cf. Rom. 5:7-8) than His dying for "His own." Hence the Christian's belief in the perseverance of the saints must yield to his ultimate hope in the perseverance of Christ, with the words of the hymn:

O love, that will not let me go,  
I rest my weary soul in Thee.

(b) The hour of His betrayal by Judas, v. 2.

"And being/during supper, the devil [διάβολος, diabolos] having already placed/cast [βάλλω, ballō] into the heart of Judas Iscariot, [the son] of Simon, in order that he might betray [παραδίδωμι, paradidōmi] Him." This was a main evening meal, it now by inference being dark (cf. v. 30; 9:4; 11:10), that is the environment in which men devise their evil deeds. The possession of Judas by the devil (Satan, the accuser/maligner, cf. 8:44) has already taken place (6:70). It would seem that the spirit of Satan having previously solicited Judas concerning the betrayal and found a willing accomplice, he now directs this possessed soul to implement the agreed plan. Here then is the secret, devious working of Satan in a prominent, outwardly religious man; he opposes and despises what he outwardly professes (II Cor. 11:13-15).

(2) His knowing His heavenly Father's commission, vs. 3-5.

Once again, Jesus' self-awareness is revealed as lofty rather than restricted. It also involves not only who He is but also a sense of being commissioned by His Father. Knowing both His authority derived from His Father, and His appointed task designed by His Father, He is not about to be vanquished by the devilish machinations of Judas.

(a) The commission foreknown, v. 3.

"[Jesus] knowing that the Father had given all things into [His] hands and that He had come from God and [that] He departs/goes to God." The famous saying of the Greek Oracle of Delphi, "Know thyself," is well illustrated here, that is in terms of confidently accomplishing an important task. The "all things" bestowed by the Father are His authority, the Word and Spirit of the Father (1:33; 3:34-35; Matt. 28:18), especially endowed to accomplish redemption, except that the

exercise of this power is first to be a shadowy, earthy portrayal of humiliation, in which even Judas will participate. This is to be shortly followed by the real substance of humiliation, in which those given to Him by the Father will participate (6:37; 17:2, 6, 24). As a result, having come from the Father He will successfully return to the Father since “not one of them perished but the son of perdition” (17:12).

(b) The commission demonstrated, vs. 4-5.

There is no hesitation here on Jesus’ part, for “<sup>6</sup>although He existed in the form [μορφῇ, *morphē*] of God, [He] did not regard equality [ἴσος, *isos*] with God a thing to be grasped [ἀπαγμός, *harpagmos*], <sup>7</sup>but emptied [κενόω, *kenoō*] Himself, taking the form [morphē] of a bondservant, and being made in the likeness [ὁμοίωμα, *homoiōma*] of men. <sup>8</sup>Being found in appearance [σχῆμα, *schēma*] as a man, He humbled [ταπεινός, *tapeinoō*] Himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross” (Phil. 2:6-8). As Charles Wesley puts it:

He laid His glory by,  
He wrapped Him in our clay.

1) Jesus takes on a servant’s role, v. 4.

“Rising from the supper and placing [aside His] garments and taking a towel [λέντιον, *lention*], He girded Himself.” Morris suggests that Jesus may have “stripped to a loin cloth, just like a slave.”<sup>3</sup> In Luke’s account we are told that at this time “there arose also a dispute among them as to which of them was regarded to be greatest.” Perhaps the greater ones would then not have to stoop to wash feet. So a stalemate arose. To this Jesus responded that, “I am among you as one who serves” (Luke 22:24-27). Probably reclining at the place of honor at the low table and listening to the squabble, on arising, He took a long towel and girded himself with it. By this means he could kneel and place a foot on his lap using the end for wiping. This is the picture of Luke 12:37. So today man argues about his greatness while Jesus has come to cleanse.

2) Jesus performs a servant’s role, vs. 5.

“Then He poured/cast water into the basin/jug [νιπτήρ, *niptēr*] and began to wash [νίπτω, *niptō*] the feet of the disciples and to wipe with the towel with which He was girded.” This was a most common custom in the hot Middle East; imagine wearing sandals only and walking miles on dusty, dirty, disease ridden roads! Hence, courteous, loving hospitality required cleansing and wiping (I Tim. 5:10); neglect here was insulting (Luke 7:44). But what was

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<sup>3</sup> Leon Morris, *John*, p. 615n.

so outrageous here was the guest of honor, the Messiah, the Son of God, stooping to wash the feet of sinners.

Yet was there ever anything more glorious than the fact that Jesus Christ came into the world to save the unwashed, those so polluted by traveling through this world? If you say you have clean feet, then you need tell Jesus that you don't need Him. But then, if you say your feet are clean, first get confirmation of this from those who really know you! How can you say you have passed through this United States and not become corrupted? You may say your feet are clean, but God says they are putrid. Only Jesus can sweeten them!

b. Jesus is challenged by Peter, vs. 6-11.

Remember that Peter is the head disciple, always mentioned first in the three Gospel listings of the twelve; he has already been favored with the promise of "the keys of the kingdom" (Matt. 16:19) that will be employed at Pentecost (Acts 2:14-42), as well as the revelation of Christ's glory on the mount of the transfiguration with James and John (Matt. 17:1-8). According to the current "pecking order," after Jesus, he is the one least likely to be expected to wash feet. For him, now the unthinkable occurs, causing the arousal of righteous indignation. If approached by Jesus first, He probably claims to speak for the whole twelve, including Judas.

(1) The cleansing of Peter, vs. 6-9.

We should not be too harsh on Peter unless we never have to think twice about many of the impetuous decisions we make (Gal. 4:9). Rash decisions, such as here, are usually made according to selfish impulse rather than careful reflection concerning the truth about ourselves.

(a) His reluctance declared, v. 6.

"Therefore He came to Simon Peter. He [Peter] said to him, 'Lord, do You to wash [νίπτω, niptō] my feet?' Peter is outraged, offended; he objects to the Son of God's humiliation in a similar way to that of man resenting the necessity of salvation by a sacrificial blood atonement; he sees it as unnecessary; it is going too far because someone else can do the job! However Jesus has a right view of who He is and acts accordingly, while Peter has a wrong view of himself and acts accordingly; he is ignorant of the personal necessity of Jesus' washing his feet; he believes someone lower than He should carry out such a menial task. But once Peter becomes sensitive to his condition, aware of his need of a greater than he to cleanse him, then he will gladly submit, especially as described in 21:17.

## (b) His realization deferred, v. 7.

“Jesus answered and said to him, ‘What I do you do not understand now, but you will know after these things/afterward.’” Jesus ministry to the twelve has involved the communication of so much that will only be comprehended later on. So here Jesus explains there is still present mystery. Therefore, even now Peter must learn to obey his Master when he knows he does not fully understand. He now knows more than enough about Jesus through His words and works to respond submissively. While understanding may be limited, yet Jesus expects unqualified obedience to His will. And even later when Peter understands what Jesus was really accomplishing, there will still be much that he must submit to that he will still not fully understand, that is “following in His steps” that involve submission to suffering (I Pet. 2:21-23; cf. John 21:18-19). Yet there is the promise of eventual enlightenment. One day, “we will know fully just as we also have been fully known” (I Cor. 13:12).

## (c) His refusal decided, v. 8.

“Peter answered and said to Him, ‘Never/in no way will you wash my feet, at any time/for ever!’ Jesus answered him, ‘If I do not wash you, you have no part/-place/stake/share with me,’” Here a double negative plus an eternal qualification suggest an impulsive, hotheaded, defiant, socially offended outburst, supposedly for upholding the honor of Jesus, as if to say: “I won’t allow you to do this!” To this Jesus responds with sober firmness, and the inference of a far more profound meaning with serious consequences. He speaks of cleansing Peter (“you”), not just Peter’s feet. This also suggests a more profound meaning of “cleansing” here. Yet further, the categorical threat of disinheritance from Jesus’ company and interest and kingdom, lack of understanding notwithstanding, now gets Peter’s attention. This is a moment of great significance for Peter, or any person who would be a true disciple of Christ. Will he be humbled by Christ, confess his need, not of merely being assisted by Christ, but of being washed by Christ, or not?

## (d) His repentance displayed, v. 9.

“Simon Peter said to Him, ‘Lord, [wash] not only my feet, but also my hands and my head.’” In now thinking twice about what Jesus is about to do, Peter rises from the depths of mock, self-centered devotion to the heights of total confession and consecration. When he failed, he did it with effort and flair; however when he saw his folly, his repentance was so much better (6:67-68; 18:15-27; 21:17). Suddenly a man restricted by his blindness is awakened by a flash of truth to his soul from heaven, even as earlier (Matt. 16:15-17), that causes him to see the unsavory truth about himself with startling clarity. He is like King David suddenly coming to his senses when the prophet Nathan points at him with condemnation concerning his great sin with Bathsheba against God and Israel and Uriah, “You are the man!” (II Sam. 12:7). It is as if

quivering Peter says: “Lord, I believe and submit to You with all that I am concerning whatever is in store; Lord, help my unbelief. Lord, never consider me apart from your inheritance; the very thought terrifies my soul.”

(2) The uncleanness of Judas, vs. 10-11.

How does Jesus respond? It is quite possible that as He now washes docile Peter’s feet he speaks to him further in what follows. Here are words of mystical comfort, also signified to compliant Peter through the touch of Jesus’ hands. Peter’s extreme response was actually true in terms of what is demanded of any who would first become a disciple, that is complete cleansing. But Peter is a disciple; He has already had a full bath in being set apart, sanctified (6:37; 17:12) from the world, and so belongs to Christ (Luke 22:31-32); his emphatic, repentant response indicates this; he now only needs a wash, as a family member, to cleanse from daily street grime.

(a) Jesus knows of his defilement, v. 10.

“Jesus said to him [Peter], ‘Whoever has been washed [λούω, louō] has no need except for [his] feet to be washed [νίπτω, niptō, but is wholly clean [καθαρός, katharos]; and you are clean, but not all.’” Morris suggests the image of a man going to a feast. In preparation he will fully bathe at home; upon arrival at the banqueting residence he only needs to have his feet washed when seated as a guest.<sup>4</sup> Hence distraught Peter is consoled; he has been chosen by Christ out of this world (15:16, 19); therefore he already belongs to Christ. Nevertheless while traversing this world there will be the need of nourishment and pruning through means of grace such as the cleansing word of Christ (15:2-3) and the daily cry for forgiveness through prayer (Matt. 6:12). Thus here initial conversion and subsequent growth in grace seem to be distinguished while yet being inseparable. However the order here is vital, that is there must *first* be an initial bath before receiving the supplement of daily washing as a disciple. Judas is lost with merely daily, ritual washing. Hence the revelation about a pretender or pseudo-disciple was probably misunderstood with regard to spiritual growth rather than Jesus’ reference to conversion.

(b) Jesus knows of his betrayal, v. 11.

“For He had known who was to betray Him. On account of this He said that, ‘You are not all clean.’” John’s editorial comment is surely born of subsequent enlightenment. Now we know of the type of “cleanness” that Jesus is speaking about. Eleven disciples, for all of their littleness of faith and the dullness in their souls, are clean. Judas, seemingly indistinguishable from the eleven, is unclean. Jesus focuses upon a divine, inward perspective of recognition or reckoning rather

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<sup>4</sup> Morris, *John*, p. 618.

than one of outward virtue. The distinction is radical, yet the evidence is not so apparent since all of the twelve are physically close to their Master. However, Jesus has known all along about the darkness in Judas' heart and his present "betraying," present tense. He probably looks him in the eye aware that although He has washed Judas' feet, yet he remains unclean and deceitful in his soul. Ritual is no substitute for regeneration!

- c. Jesus applies the lesson, vs. 12-20.

While the symbolic representation of Jesus' crucifixion humiliation just concluded must be left to *future* enlightenment after Pentecost, yet the demand for *immediate* humiliation on the part of the disciples is now made clear. Their bickering over rivalry (Luke 22:24-27) must yield to selfless serving even as they have been served.

- (1) The significance of Jesus' servitude, vs. 12-17.

Further contrast is now drawn between the *passivity* of being bathed, that is justification, and the resultant *activity* of sanctification, that is serving one another. The example here of Jesus has application only to those who have first been bathed by Christ. However the bathed are expected to be engaged in the daily cleansing of other disciples as a reciprocal service.

- (a) His didactic questioning, v. 12.

"Therefore when He had washed their feet and taken His garments and reclined [at the table] again, He said to them, 'Do you know what I have done to you?'" Alternatively, Jesus could be saying, "Know what I have done to you!" Following the washing of Peter's feet, Jesus had washed the feet of the remaining disciples, including Judas. Only after this object lesson is repeated twelve times does Jesus dress and resume his privileged position at the table, and then ask his pupils if they get the message! Doubtless they do grasp the *point* that they ought to be doing this to one another, that is serve rather than be served, yet they continue to lack the *passion* for it. The reason is that they don't grasp the underlying cause for serving rather than being served. It is the principle that, "We love [serve], because He first loved [served] us" (I John 4:19). Consequently Jesus will now institute the Lord's Supper which, when rightly understood, becomes the great constrainer for service amongst the brethren.

Jesus' makes a very profound enquiry of eleven disciples who were "clean" and one who was "unclean." By way of contrast, how would they respond? Later they more fully appreciated what Jesus had done and what they had done, and thus they acted accordingly. So for any Christian it is vital that Jesus' question be carefully answered.

- (b) His didactic qualification, v. 13.



“You call Me the teacher and the [exalted] Lord, and you say well/correctly, for [so] I am.” Recall that in the present Jerusalem society, Jesus was aware of the Jewish leaders being revered while at the same time being unworthy of such esteem. So He exhorted the populace and his disciples: “All that they tell you, do and observe, but do not do according to their deeds; for they say things and do not do them” (Matt. 23:3; cf. Luke 6:46-49). Now the disciples are further warned about this deadly plague of hypocrisy for, in verbally addressing Jesus correctly, even reverently, at the same time they have been selfishly competing with each other regarding who was the greatest (Luke 22:24-27). While mouthing that they were disciples of Christ, yet they were acting as citizens of this world. In *The Pilgrim’s Progress* Bunyan portrays this charade of religion well in the person of Talkative. He is not only verbose, doctrinally aware and persuasive in terms of his Christian profession, but also a brute at home, unscrupulous in his business dealings, and ungodly in his conversation outside of Christian company! However, note that Jesus does not disqualify true verbal testimony; it is right to address Jesus correctly. Talkative’s principal problem was *not* that he was too talkative; it was that his talk was not matched by consistent godly living.

(c) His didactic reasoning, v. 14.

“Therefore if I, the [exalted] Lord and the teacher [Rabbi], washed your feet, you also ought/are under obligation [ὀφείλω, ophelō] to wash one another’s feet.” In the case of Jesus, He is the ultimate model of holy consistency in terms of who He is and claims to be, and what He does. First He affirms, without blushing, His being, that he is “the [exalted] Lord and the teacher [Rabbi].” Then He affirms his doing, that is His unsolicited foot- washing of all of the disciples, both the genuine and the counterfeit. But further, He upholds his greatness as a person that in no way restricts his readiness to offer lowly servitude. Therefore true nobility serves its constituency. I heard of a celebrity invited to stay a night at the White House. Reaching his room he was approached by President George H. W. Bush carrying his luggage. This being the guiding principle of the God of heaven through His Son (Mark 10:43-45), how much more should His servants follow the pattern of His Son. However the sense of obligation here is directly related to the consecration of our discipleship. The truly saved will serve. The treachery of Judas at this point is evidenced by his disloyalty to Christ and unwillingness to serve; he is out to get rather than give (12:6; 13:29). The commitment of the eleven is evidenced by their loyalty to Christ and eventual willingness to serve (Matt. 10:8).

(d) His didactic exhortation, v. 15.

“For I gave an example to you so that just as I did to you, you also should do [to one another].” To begin with, we do not believe that this primarily concerns the institution of a rite of foot-washing, especially

since modern society, with its more protective footwear does not so readily appreciate the significance of this necessary ancient custom. There is no subsequent biblical mandate for such an ordinance, notwithstanding I Timothy 5:10. Two levels of application are evident here. First general benevolent service showered upon other Christians (I John 3:16). So Ryle explains that Christians

should think nothing too low, or humble, or menial to undertake, if they can show love, kindness, and condescension to another. If Jesus, the King of kings, condescended to leave heaven to save souls, and to dwell thirty-three years in this sin-defiled world, there is nothing that we should think too lowly to undertake.<sup>5</sup>

Second, cleansing benevolent service after the analogy of necessary daily cleansing from worldly grime, v. 10. In other words, as Christ cleanses His already bathed disciples through means of grace, so the Christian should encourage his fellow Christian in ways that assist in this daily cleansing. This ministry is not so much concerned with pointing out evident pollution in another; that is a given for us all. Rather we encourage participation in means of grace that include fellowship in prayer, Bible study, social get-togethers, email or phone contact, literature sharing, etc.

(e) His didactic illustration, v. 16.

“Truly, truly, I say to you, a servant is not greater than his master, neither is the one who is sent [ἀπόστολος, apostolos] greater than the one who sent him.” Here is a proverb that was popular with Jesus, doubtless because of carnal aspirations amongst men when mingling with the great (Matt. 10:24; Luke 6:40; 22:27; John 15:20). Unfortunately pupils and slaves serving notable masters sometimes tend to have pretentious airs about themselves, as if having become part of an elevated elite class. Then they become particularly obnoxious. The disciples seem to have erred in this matter (Luke 22:24-27). However humble service is not a soft option. Jesus has pricked the self-centered bubble here, both practically and now verbally. In other words, the biblical Christian will always know the terms of his calling, that is being saved to serve.

So the one sent will ever be mindful of obedience to He who sends; again, he will know his place. Likewise the Apostles, being chosen in grace to be pillars and foundation stones of the church of Jesus Christ (Gal. 2:9; Eph. 4:11-12) would later recollect this admonition, and never seek to elevate themselves as some religious pretenders do.

(f) His didactic purpose, v. 17.

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<sup>5</sup> Ryle, *John*, III, p. 23.

“If you know these things [and you do], you are blessed if you do them.” Jesus assumes that the disciples do understand this truth. They have the doctrine; they know what is expected of them. But practice amongst them is another matter; it is lacking. Certainly they will grasp this principle with greater clarity after Pentecost, after further experience, reflection and involvement in ministry. Then they will better appreciate that active submission to God’s vocation in the service of others, the humble embodiment of gospel truth, has its own reward. Mere assent to the truth and selfish titivation may produce some personal satisfaction, but it does not please God or His Son. However doing the truth produces much greater soul contentment, even the voice of “Well done” from heaven!

(2) The significance of Judas’ treachery, v. 18.

“I do not speak concerning all of you. I know the ones I have chosen [ἐκλέγω, eklegō]. But in order that the Scripture might be fulfilled, ‘The one eating My bread lifted up [ἐπαίρω, epairō] on/against Me his heel.’” Judas has been variously exposed up to this stage by John (6:71; 12:4; 13:2, 10), though now with more specificity, as a guest who partakes of Jesus’ hospitality. In 6:70 Jesus declared, “Did I Myself not choose you, the twelve, and yet one of you is a devil.” Now He seems to distinguish the clean, enlightened eleven, v. 17, as specially chosen unto life from the one unclean also specially chosen unto death (cf. 17:12). So Carson comments that “not all election is to salvation.”<sup>6</sup> Here the Son of David quotes King David in Psalm 41:9 concerning “my close friend in whom I trusted,” and also lavished on him “bread” and a generous table! Did Judas in fact partake of the Lord’s supper? Perhaps, according to Luke 22:14-23. Or did he only take “the morsel” of vs. 26-27, but not the broken bread and the cup?

(3) The significance of Jesus’ foreknowledge, vs. 19-20.

The faith of the eleven at this stage is not that strong, and Jesus knows it. Hence he seems to be thinking in terms of the future and what will bolster faith after His ascension to the Father. The betrayal of Judas will be an initial shock as well as a time of minute examination of the past. What will reinforce faith amongst the disciples will be the awareness that Jesus was not shocked, that Judas’ traitorous actions were known as part of Jesus being “delivered over by the predetermined plan and foreknowledge of God” (Acts. 2:22-23; cf. 4:27-28).

(a) It reveals that “I am,” v. 19.

“From now on I am telling you before it takes place, in order that when it takes place you may believe that I am [the Son of God].” Here Jesus indicates that for the child of God, specific prophetic revelation of the

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<sup>6</sup> D. A. Carson, *John*, p. 470.

future, when fulfilled, can have a salutary effect, that is the calming of a distraught soul and the strengthening of assurance (14:29; 16:4). In particular, the despicable breach of faith by Judas, when understood as necessary for the fulfillment of Jesus' divine destiny, takes on a different cast of meaning. In other words, the conspiracy of Judas being the fulfillment of Scripture, it is possible for grief to give way to wonder and awe and strengthened faith concerning Jesus since He really is the "I Am," ἐγώ εἰμι, egō eimi, God revealed to Moses (Exod. 3:13-15). It is probably for this reason that the disciples reacted more with calm sobriety rather than frenzied animosity toward Judas, thoroughly guilty as he was (Matt. 26:24).

(b) It reinforces His commission, v. 20.

"Truly, truly, I say to you, whoever receives whomever I send receives Me; and whoever receives Me receives Him who sent Me." So Jesus has directed the disciples to a future time when their understanding will be consolidated through a vision of the pieces of the life of Jesus all fitting together. However unlike Judas (Matt. 27:3-10; Acts 1:16-19), they will have a significant ministry. They will be awestruck and constrained by a sense of special vocation to proclaim the glories of this "I Am" Savior from heaven (Acts 4:20; II Cor. 5:14). Now Jesus explains further about that time of ministry. As preachers who have been sent forth by Christ, they will not only have this gospel of the grace of God to declare, it being the personally witnessed visitation of the Son of God from heaven to earth to save sinners, but they will also have fruit for their labors. Men and women will respond with saving faith; however in embracing the apostolic preacher's message, these converts will in fact embrace the preacher's Christ. At the same time they will also be embracing this Christ's commissioning Father, the Jehovah God in heaven; by this means they will be reconciled to God!

2. The new commandment rejected, vs. 21-30.

The upper room gathering remains a mixed multitude, though it now seems that Jesus desires to hasten the departure of Judas, v. 27. Part of the reason may be Jesus' intention to teach the fundamental truth about the new commandment, which he has embodied, and is about to embody, in closed company, vs. 34-35. Of course there is also the intention that the disciples will declare and embody this same teaching. On the other hand Judas will freely, yet according to his reprobate nature, now embody flagrant rejection of this new commandment.

a. Jesus betrays Judas, vs. 21-26.

So Jesus first betrays Judas before Judas betrays Jesus. And we remind ourselves that rightly understood, this disturbing drama yet can enlarge our faith and assurance. Only if Jesus is not in charge here need we be anxious. But the fact is that Jesus is very much in charge. His knowledge of the hearts of the twelve, the clean and the unclean tells us He is in charge. His subtle confrontation of Judas

tells us He is in charge, v. 26. His provocation of Judas to action tells us He is in charge, v. 27.

(1) His soul is troubled, v. 21.

“Having said these things, Jesus was troubled [□□□□□□, tarassō] in [His] spirit [□□□□□□, pneuma] and He testified and said, ‘Truly, truly, I say to you that one of you will betray [□□□□□□□□□□, paradidōmi] Me.’” Then what is it that so deeply disturbs Jesus as He at the same time is moved to stimulate Judas to action? It is certainly not the thought of Judas triumphing in this whole matter; his doom is sealed; he is but a Satanic pawn, v. 27! Nor is it the possibility that Judas might actually have second thoughts about what he had earlier planned to do. No, we suggest that Jesus sees this inevitable betrayal as the trigger that sets in play a sequence of horrifying events that will lead to His defilement and death on the cross. Of course Judas represents the incredible “mystery of lawlessness” (II Thess. 2:7) whereby “Satan disguises himself as an angel of light” (II Cor. 11:14). It must disturb Jesus to be at Satan’s very doorstep, to confront at such close quarters his fiendish, hellish strategy. Yet Jesus remains in charge throughout all of this.

(2) His disciples are troubled, vs. 22-25.

The deceptive, beguiling character of Judas has not been sufficiently comprehended until this point. How it contrasts with the agitation of Peter and the privileged intimacy of John. Doubtless “it is not an enemy who reproaches me, then I could bear it; nor is it one who hates me who has exalted himself against me, then I could hide myself from him. But it is you, a man my equal, my companion and my familiar friend; we who had sweet fellowship together walked in the house of God in the throng. . . . his speech was smoother than butter, but his heart was war; his words were softer than oil, yet they were drawn swords” (Ps. 55:12-14, 21). Matthew 26:14-16 indicates that Judas had already negotiated with the chief priests to betray Jesus; now he was simply waiting for a good opportunity.

(a) Their perplexity, v. 22.

“The disciples [began] looking at one another being at a loss/perplexed/uncertain [□□□□□□, aporeō] concerning who He was speaking about.” Each one exclaimed with incredulity: “Surely not I, Lord” (Matt. 26:22). It seems there was not so much as an outer blush or stammer, an inner twinge of guilt from Judas, even with the blood money in his pocket. Then Jesus becomes more specific at Judas’ enquiry, “Surely it is not I, Rabbi” (Matt. 26:25), though he does not acknowledge Jesus to be “Lord” as do the others. For over three years he had perfected his charade for the final act! Perhaps Jesus’ specific response, “You have said it yourself” is quiet and unnoticed by most, especially if Judas is to one side of him. The amazing reality is that eleven remain “ignorant of Satan’s schemes” and unsuspecting, and one is not (II Cor. 2:11)!

## (b) Their consultation, vs. 23-25.

If we follow the arrangement of Edersheim,<sup>7</sup> on one side of the table there was John, then Jesus, then Judas; on the other side opposite there was Peter, this being a horseshoe type of setting. This would allow for the seeming lack of understanding by some of all that was being said, they being seated further away.

## 1) John with love from Jesus, v. 23.

“One of His [Jesus’] disciples was reclining [□□□□□□□□, anakeimai] on the bosom [□□□□□□, kolpos] of Jesus, who Jesus loved.” It is commonly believed that John the apostle refers to himself here as being “loved by Christ” (19:26; 20:2; 21:7, 20). Note that here □□□□□□, agapaō is used whereas □□□□□, phileō in 20:2. His motivation, as most likely the anonymous author of this Gospel, was probably a degree of modesty mixed with the enjoyment of a nickname that others had attributed to the apostle on account of overhearing Jesus’ conversation. Certainly Jesus loves all of His true disciples, yet He also has distinguishing love for each of his sheep, individually named (10:3), on account of distinctive characteristics. Perhaps it was John’s unique, elevated perception of Christ, conveyed in his Gospel, that so delighted Jesus.

## 2) Peter with enquiry to John, v. 24.

“Therefore Simon Peter nodded/motioned [□□□□, neuō] to him [John] to ask [□□□□□□□□□□, punthanomai] [Jesus] whom He was speaking about.” Simon and John appear as especial friends in the Gospels; they were chosen to be present at the transfiguration, partners in physical and subsequent spiritual fishing (Luke 5:10; Acts 3-4).<sup>8</sup> So with Simon sitting opposite, being easily aroused, he seeks for John’s privileged intercession. There may have been a tone of quiet defensive indignation in his enquiry at this point. Assuming Peter gets the right answer, it would be embarrassing for the perpetrator to learn of his exposure in this way. Hence Judas becomes defensive.

## 3) John with enquiry to Jesus, v. 25.

“Therefore that one having reclined thus on Jesus’ chest [□□□□□□, stēthos], he said to Him, ‘Lord, who is it?’” Significantly the question is not so much concerned with

<sup>7</sup> Alfred Edersheim, *The Life and Times of Jesus the Messiah*, II, p. 494.

<sup>8</sup> Ryle, *John*, III, p. 401.

possibility, as if Jesus' shocking revelation could not possibly be true, but rather identity! Ryle gives the right nuance here.

The idea is evidently of one moving and leaning towards another, so as to get closer to him and whisper a question, without being heard or observed. That this is what John did is evident. It is plain that he did not say out aloud, 'Lord, who is it?'<sup>9</sup>

If Judas is on the other side of Jesus, perhaps conversing with Him, yet he must surely have become privy to Peter's enquiry and John's willing approach. Hence with his pocket full of money, he is probably devising a rapid, ingenious plan of escape, which may be implicit in v. 29.

(3) His betrayer is identified, vs. 26.

"Jesus answered, 'It is that one who I shall dip [□□□□□, baptō] the morsel of bread [□□□□□□, psōmion] and shall give it to him.' Therefore having dipped the morsel of bread, He took it and gave it to Judas, [the son] of Simon Iscariot." Remember that the John who writes this Gospel is the John who leans over to privately enquire of Jesus the identity of the betrayer. So the Master quietly confides in John a subtle method of designation, and *not* aloud to all of the disciples, as the following context suggests. With Judas probably at His immediate left, Jesus then offers him a personal token of saving grace, a morsel of bread dipped in a tasty vinegar sauce. Doubtless Judas formally takes the emblem of grace while his heart repudiates it. Probably he does not look Jesus in the eye. He is like many a person today who is formally seated with Christ, who goes through the motions of partaking of Christ, and yet remains utterly alienated from Christ! So Judas becomes agitated at this exposure; he needs an excuse to make a hasty exit; perhaps he examines his money bag as if suggesting a ruse. The company is too hot; he needs to make a quick retreat, and this Jesus invites him to do, v. 27! Facing Christ eventually forces us to respond to him one way or the other; there is no room for neutrality.

b. Judas betrays Jesus, vs. 27-30.

Satan is an unseen, uninvited guest at this gathering, but especially through his earlier recruited agent. Judas has already consulted with the chief priests and contracted to betray Jesus for thirty pieces of silver (Matt. 26:14-16). However over a year before this Jesus declared, "Did I not choose you, the twelve, and yet one of you is a devil/slanderer [□□□□□□□□, diabolos]?" (John 6:70-71).

(1) He is indwelt by Satan, v. 27.

"So after the morsel [was received by Judas], Satan then entered into him [that one]. Therefore Jesus said to him, 'What you [have planned to] do, do quickly.'" There is something catalytic, like a trigger, that now occurs, as if

<sup>9</sup> Ibid., p. 39.

Satan takes full and direct control of his apprenticed underling. Was Satan concerned that this sudden uncovering of Judas, and probably his immediate disqualification from the apostolic band, might interfere with his hellish plans? After all, now his prime plant had been visibly exposed! However Jesus indicates that he will not interfere with Judas' scheme; rather He encourages him to grasp his opportunity now, to go about his devilish business, even faster! And all of the disciples seem to notice this.

Hendriksen makes the interesting suggestion that Judas had probably planned to betray Jesus a little later since Friday, in commencing the Sabbath, would not have suited the Sanhedrin or Judas. But God has determined that Friday, the fifteenth of Nisan, is to be the day of betrayal and crucifixion.<sup>10</sup> For this reason Jesus nudges Judas, through selective exposure of his guilt, so that he dutifully responds, believing that he should hurry things up and not lose an opportunity, or otherwise forfeit his deal. However there is an intentional ambiguity in Jesus' words lest the other disciples should become disruptive.

(2) He is incognito to the disciples, v. 28-29.

Now while the general announcement of a traitor had been made known to all of the disciples, only three had learned of the specific identification, being John, almost certainly Peter, and Judas. However none rightly understood Jesus' cryptic direction to Judas, that is except Judas himself.

(a) They are mystified at Jesus' statement, v. 28.

"Now no one of those reclining [at the table] knew to what purpose He had said this to him." Even John the beloved, while knowing Jesus' identification of Judas by means of the morsel, yet was unaware of Jesus' real and deeper meaning when He encouraged the treasurer of the band to transact his native business. Both John and Peter may well have accepted that Judas had been disloyal in some way, but not according to the ghastly reality soon to unfold. Jesus well assesses the deeper purposes of men, quite apart from their external religious expression (2:23-25). Judas is externally a bookkeeper for man, but internally a bookkeeper for Satan in opposition to Christ.

(b) They misunderstand Judas' intention, v. 29.

"For some thought that since Judas had the money-bag/purse [ποσειδίον, glössokomon, cf. 12:6], Jesus was saying to him, 'Buy [ποσειδίον, agorazō] what we have need of for the feast,' or that he should give something to the poor." We already know that Judas has "cooked the books" so to speak, for his own gain (12:4-6), though we are not told how this deceit was uncovered. Apparently it was customary for Jesus to direct the purchase of necessities for upcoming events, probably from sympathetic suppliers, such as in advance of a

<sup>10</sup> William Hendriksen, *John*, pp. 247-248.



coming Sabbath; He would also order the distribution of practical charity to needy causes, though all of this especially through the hands of Judas. So Jesus is seen to give a direction to Judas; the assumption by all is that it concerns business he frequently transacted.

(3) He is intent on betrayal, v. 30.

“Therefore having taken the morsel, that one immediately went out [of the room]; and it was [the darkness of] night [□□□, nux].” Judas partakes of Jesus’ bread, probably aware of its significance to a degree, yet without the slightest participation in the substance of Jesus. He thanks his Master for the morsel, gives a nod of his head as token assent to Jesus’ request for action, and immediately leaves, probably with too much speed to bid the others farewell. Thus Judas’ rapid departure from Christ fulfills many of the contrasts that John makes between light and darkness (3:19; 8:12; 9:4-5; 12:46; cf. Luke 22:53). Anyone who spurns Christ turns from light to darkness. Further, Judas’ exit indicates his apostate, antichrist nature (I John 2:18-19). Yet, as Satan’s emissary, he is also destined to prove that “the Light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not comprehend/overpower it” (John 1:5).

“And it was [the darkness of] night,” into which Judas chose to enter. Jesus had already told “the chief priests and officers of the temple and elders who had come against Him, . . . ‘While I was with you daily in the temple, you did not lay hands on Me; but this hour and the power of darkness are yours’” (Luke 22:52-53). Now Judas demonstrates that he “loved the darkness rather than the light, for [his] deeds were evil” (3:19).

Yet, and here is the wonder, Jesus triumphantly declares to the remaining disciples: “Now is the Son of Man glorified, and God is glorified in Him,” v. 31. He is glorified in the departure of unholy Judas, with his holy band of disciples around Him; he is glorified in the inevitability of His Father being glorified through His resolute obedience unto death.

3. The new commandment proclaimed, vs. 31—35.

The departure of Judas brings about an animated focus of Jesus upon the remaining eleven, now addressed as “little children,” v. 33. Only now is there the revelation of particular truth that is exclusively for genuine disciples. It concerns His imminent, shocking departure which calls for distinctive shepherding in the light of the dullness of the disciples. Here is final preparation that anticipates the foundational importance of the apostolic band in the dawning church age

a. The cross provides the dynamic for obeying the new commandment, vs. 31-33.

While John gives overall emphasis to the “glory” of Christ in His divine person, it is the dawning of this atoning radiance that receives special emphasis in John 13-17 (13:31-32; 14:13; 15:8; 16:14; 17:1, 4-5, 10, 22, 24). Hence the focus narrows to the glory of the cross, the glory of suffering, the glory of death’s conquest, the

glory of sin's conquest, the glory of Satan's conquest, the glory of the Son of God's conquest of death, sin, and Satan!

(1) The persuasion of the glory of God, vs. 31-32.

The whole of John's Gospel is consumed with the doctrine of the glory of God which may be summed up in God the Father's adoring, beneficent love for His Son which is reciprocated by means of God the Son's adoring, submissive love for His Father. Such a relationship calls for unqualified obedience by the Father unto death that finds the Son's unqualified response of obedience unto death (Phil. 2:5-11).

(a) The Son of Man glorifies God, v. 31.

"Therefore when he had gone out, Jesus said, 'Now is the Son of Man glorified, and God [the Father] is glorified in Him.'" We leave Judas to the darkness and now concentrate upon the unsullied upper room where the light shines and is welcomed. The Son teaches these monotheistic Jews of an intimacy of relationship with God the Father heretofore unknown, even by Moses and Elijah. Here is prophetic revelation, sober excitement concerning what is now so near that it is presently real, as if accomplished (17:4). It is like a child so excited at a present about to be given to a parent; it cannot wait to satisfy the parent's pleasure! The culmination of Jesus' obedience will be His active exaltation of the Father's plan of redemption. The Son cannot wait to give this obedience unto death, so that the Father might be displayed and delighted.

(b) God glorifies the Son of Man, v. 32.

"If God is glorified in Him, God will also glorify Him in Himself, and immediately will glorify Him." The words of men who know they are near death are to be seriously considered, but especially those of the Son of God. Here we have described the Son's anticipation of the response of the Father, like the child anticipating the parent's countenance as the gift is unwrapped, and then his expression of great delight (Isa. 53:11-12; Matt. 17:5; Eph. 1:20-22; Phil. 2:8-11; II Pet. 1:17). "God will glorify" means the Father will exalt the Son, and, as it were, the Son can't wait for this to be fulfilled, even though there is the immediate prospect of "walking through the valley of the shadow of death" (Ps. 23:4). So J. C. Ryle explains:

The perfect harmony and cooperation of the Persons in the blessed Trinity shine out here. The Son glorifies the Father, and the Father glorifies the Son. The Son shows the world, by His death, how holy and just is the Father, and how He hates sin. The Father shows the world, by raising and exalting the Son to glory, how He delights in the redemption for sinners which the Son has accomplished.<sup>11</sup>

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<sup>11</sup> Ryle, *John*, III, p. 50.

## (2) The perplexity of Jesus' departure, v. 33.

"Little children, yet a little while longer I am with you. You will seek Me, and just as I said to the Jews that 'Where I am going you are not able to come,' also I now say this to you." If the disciples attempted to join in Jesus' reverent enthusiasm at what seemed a glorious prospect, their Master immediately, yet tenderly, affectionately breaks the sad news that glorification in fact means separation, at least for a time! Earlier intimations of departure to the Jews in general were probably misunderstood more as isolation, even natural death or suicide (7:33-36; 8:21-22). But here it is clear that the disciples understand the plain meaning that so greatly disturbs them, vs. 36-38. They infer that being personally apart from Jesus is unthinkable, intolerable! It is further implied that they would shatter as a group without Him. Jesus believes differently and now teaches otherwise concerning the essence of Christian unity.

## b. The new commandment is prescribed for those who identify with the cross, vs. 34-35.

The priority of Jesus' revolutionary teaching here is accentuated by its contrast with Peter's more militant solution, vs. 36-38. The look on Peter's face, the indignation in his voice, indicates his intense distress; probably he anticipates Jesus' submission to capture, though later on he will change (I Pet. 2:21-24). However Jesus has a radical approach to genuine coherence amongst his disciples; it is the old commandment of the law (Lev. 19:18) made new, being "true in Him" (I John 2:7-8), or "just as I loved you." The old commandment to "love the Lord your God" was given only to Israel since "by a mighty hand [He] redeemed you from the house of slavery" (Deut. 6:5; 7:7-11). So this "new commandment" is given by Jesus *only* to authentic disciples who have first been loved (I John 4:10, 19). In other words, the "new commandment" is with reference *only* to those who have first bowed before the "new Commander"!

(1) Christian disciples respond to the *redemptive pattern* of the love of Jesus, v. 34.

"A new [□□□□□□, kainos] commandment I give to you in order that you may love [□□□□□□, agapaō] one another, just as I loved you in order that you also may love one another." This is not a new commandment in time or structure, but character and nature. This love of Jesus, "just as I loved you" is distinctive from anything in the past history of Israel, just as the law being written on the heart is distinct from it being engraved on tables of stone. It is Scripturally revealed in the earthly life of Jesus, and we need to know about this truth in a personal manner. Paul declares he was individually loved by God so as, "to reveal His Son in me," even from his mother's womb (Gal. 1:14-16). Yet how had the eleven here been loved?

- (a) They have been loved *electively*, John 15:15-17. That is they were also individually chosen from bondage, through adoptive grace, for the purpose of loving one another and being fruitful, or productive in terms of permanence with regard to the harvesting of saved souls.
  - (b) They have been loved *mercifully*, John 21:17. That is, in spite of numerous failings including “little faith” (Matt. 6:30; 16:8), selfish indulgence (Luke 9:46), immaturity (Matt. 20:20-28), and racial pride (Luke 9:51-56).
  - (c) They have been loved *protectively*, Luke 22:31-32. That is when the little faith of Peter has been confronted with Satanic assaults, as if by means of thieves and robbers, Jesus has intervened with effectual, intercessory prayer.
  - (d) They have been loved *persistently*, John 13:1. That is, as the Good shepherd, being distinct from the negligent hireling (John 10:11-14), Jesus loved the eleven “to the end,” that is unfailingly, tirelessly, dependably.
  - (e) They have been loved *didactically*, Matt. 28:19-20. That is Jesus has taught His disciples to be teachers for over three years (Mark 10:1; Luke 11:1; Acts 1:1; 5:25), “teaching them [all the nations] to observe all that I commanded you.”
  - (f) They are to be loved *redemptively*, John 10:14-15. That is Jesus has supremely loved His disciples unto death, “even death on a cross” (Phil. 2:8). After this manner then, self is to be subjected to the service of others (Gal. 5:14; Heb. 13:1; I Pet. 1:22; I John 4:7). Grace received is to result in graciousness spontaneously reflected (II Cor. 5:14; Acts 4:20). So Jesus declared of the sinful woman who lavished attention upon Him that she loved much because she had been forgiven much (Luke 7:36-50). Consequently she would similarly love those who loved Jesus as she did!
- (2) Christian disciples reflect the *redemptive pattern* of the love of Jesus, v. 35.

“By this all men will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for/in [□□, en] one another.” Hence this love of Jesus is not only a truth known from personal experience, but also a truth that transforms, that reaches out, and thus is recognizable by “all men.” They are the world at large that is renowned as savage, debased, a “dog eat dog” world, a “what’s in it for me” world; they are able to observe how Christians selflessly conduct themselves toward each other, and conclude, “Behold, how they love one another!” Here the blindness of the world is not quite so blind, for it sees that which it finds so uncommon! It well knows about our religious labels, but it is the sweetness of our fruit that causes it to really take notice! The Christian is like tough steak that has been tenderized and has become tasty!

- (a) This reflected love is *evident* amongst Christians.

Here is uncommon concern, guided by the truth, that demonstrates how “charity begins at home,” in local church life. In the world of politics and business and the major professions and secular religion and sport there is not selfless love for others, but fierce competition, proud self-assertion, aspiration on the backs of others, the lusting after approbation. However what an attractive surprise and contrast true Christianity presents in this ugly environment. The reason is that Christians are driven differently, by the grace and goodness, and kindness of Jesus. Their whole lifestyle speaks, not of man or themselves or personal achievement, but Jesus, His achievement!

- (b) This reflected love is *distinguishable* amongst Christians.

Further, here then is not merely abstract do-goodism, but love for Jesus that has the marks of Jesus stamped all over it. His humble servants are not mute about their Master. Jesus declares that Christians are distinctively identified, not as disciples of the gurus of this world, but as “My disciples,” disciples of Jesus Christ. In the Sermon on the Mount Jesus promises blessedness for those persecuted “because of Me” (Matt. 5:11; cf. 10:22; 24:9), even unto death. So love among the brethren has the discriminating aroma of Jesus about it. It is love that blends righteousness and grace. So Paul writes, “walk in love, just as Christ also loved you and gave himself up for us, an offering and a sacrifice to God as a fragrant aroma” (Eph. 5:1-2).

#### 4. The new commandment ignored, vs. 36-38.

A problem with communication is connection. If the line is down, then our speaking at either end is fruitless. So we speak to someone and then, as if addressing a glazed look, are compelled to respond, “Are you listening to what I am saying?” Certainly this is Peter’s problem here since, upon hearing one of the Son of God’s most profound and demanding exhortations, Peter responds without the slightest indication he has understood what Jesus has just said.

- a. Peter ignores what has just been taught, v. 36.

“Simon Peter said to Him, ‘Lord, where are You going?’ Jesus answered him, ‘Where I am going you are not able to follow Me now; but you will follow later.’” This takes us back to Jesus’ explanation concerning His departure in v. 33, while the teaching of vs. 34-35 is totally ignored! Peter is distressed at the prospect of Jesus’ physical departure, as indeed are surely the less forward, other ten disciples he speaks for. When we are seriously disturbed our focus tends to narrow. He may well understand death here except that with his intervention, he considers it to be quite unnecessary. Nevertheless, he is not sure and seeks clarification. Will Jesus go into hiding or yield to capture? So Jesus responds mystically, yet he seems to allude to both the His own death and Peter’s subsequent martyrdom (21:18-19).

b. Peter ignores the principle of faith, vs. 37-38.

Tradition tells us that Peter was martyred in Rome, through the persecution of Nero, by being crucified upside down. There he was willing to lay down his life for Jesus even as he here professed. So what distinguishes these two situations? Here Peter would die to prevent Jesus being taken and put to death. However thirty years later he will die because of his refusal to renounce He who died for him. Now he would die to save Jesus; later he would die because Jesus had died to save him!

(1) His boasting in the flesh, v. 37.

“Peter said to Him, ‘Lord, for what reason am I not able to follow You now? I will lay down my soul/life for You.’” Here Peter suffered from two fatal weaknesses, *ignorance* and *impotence*. His *ignorance* was not for lack of instruction since Jesus had informed the eleven on three previous occasions that he would be put to death and rise again (Matt. 16:21; 17:22-23; 20:17-19). Of course this *ignorance* also extended to misunderstanding as to the real atoning purpose of Jesus’ death so that sinners such as he might be saved. Rather Peter presently thought of Jesus embroiled in circumstances that could tragically get out of hand and even lead to martyrdom.

However Peter’s *impotence*, cloaked by false bravado, was another matter. It contrasted with that measure of God’s indwelling Spirit due to come upon him later (7:38-39; 20:22). Thus Jesus exhorted him so that when he had “turned/changed in heartfelt repentance, [then] strengthen your brothers” (□□□□□□□□, epistrophō, Luke 22:31-32, cf. Acts 3:19). Hence at Peter’s agonizing humiliation by the risen Jesus at Galilee, upon being deeply convicted of his denials, he was exhorted, “Tend My lambs,” “Shepherd My sheep,” “Tend My sheep” (John 21:15-17). After this and the outpouring at Pentecost, Peter was a changed man. Yet the surgery to this end proved painful.

(2) His betrayal in the flesh, v. 38.

“Jesus answered, ‘Will you lay down your soul/life for Me? Truly, truly, I say to you, a rooster will not crow until you have denied Me three times.’” If you were to ask Peter as to whether He was a sinner or not, you would surely receive his ready agreement, probably with the quotation of Isaiah 64:6, “All our righteous deeds are like a filthy garment.” But it is one thing to confess this truth and quite another to profoundly know it to be so. So Dr. Martyn Lloyd-Jones declared that, “It is not sufficient merely to tell a man that he is a sinner – you must prove it to him – give him examples and make him think, then there may be some hope for him.”<sup>12</sup> So here, Jesus is about to prove to Peter his corruption in a most traumatic manner. The Savior is like a surgeon convincing a patient who doubts the need of surgery; so he squeezes him in the area of infection, at which there is a cry of pain. Further Jesus makes His

<sup>12</sup> Iain H. Murray, *D. Martyn Lloyd-Jones, The First Forty Years 1899-1939*, p. 86.

point with a sense of immediacy and emphasis, “Truly, truly.” In a matter of hours, Peter will sin against the Son of God profoundly, repeatedly, and blasphemously with “cursing and swearing” (Mark 14:71).

It is significant that after this fearful revelation, Peter seems subdued, being silent for the remainder of the upper room discourse, even though the other disciples speak freely.<sup>13</sup> This could easily lead Peter to wonder whether he might be facing abandonment; such prophesied denials would qualify him as traitorous. Could he in fact be the one who will eventually prove to be the traitor, vs. 21-22. Since Judas has left the room before this latest revelation of treachery, the other disciples could easily think this way having heard Jesus’ shocking revelation. Peter is bewildered, utterly deflated, perhaps despairing. Yet words of comfort from Christ now follow.

## B. Jesus discourses on his impending departure to the Father, 14:1-31.

Here is one of those cases where a chapter division obscures the significance of the preceding context. The announcement by Jesus of His imminent departure has immediately generated both dismay on the part of the disciples and determined, final, remedial preparation by their Master. When a child is separated from its parents for several days or a week for the first time, there can be considerable anxiety in the child because of entrenched dependency and considerable concern by the parent who well appreciates this same dependency. Yet it needs to be tested and proved! So it is the case here, except that Jesus’ concern has no element of doubt about the ultimate outcome of this separation.

### 1. Jesus is the way to the Father, vs. 1-6.

His immediate, compassionate response is to the disciples’ dismay that has left Peter speechless; the others are similarly near despair, as if about to be abandoned like orphans. Yet such a thought of desertion is really a reflection of faithlessness, of the implicit charge of dereliction of parental duty. Bring to mind that in 17:12 Jesus prays to His Father: “I guarded them and not one of them perished but the son of perdition.” Hence the confident, stable child is the one who knows of being kept by its Father in all circumstances. So Jesus will now reassure his disciples of their absolute security and every necessary provision in his absence.

#### a. The reassuring hospitality of the Father, vs. 1-3.

Many a father has gone ahead from Europe to stake out a claim for his family in the “new world,” and then arrange for their safe transference because of his preparation. Here God the Father has sent His Son to prepare a kingdom, adopt a family, and then transport them through a wilderness to eternal bliss and safety.

#### (1) It is for the troubled disciples, v. 1.

“Do not let your heart be troubled/disturbed [□□□□□□], tarassō, cf. 11:33; 14:27]; you believe in God [and should continue to do so]; keep on

<sup>13</sup> Morris, *John*, p. 635.

believing also in Me.”<sup>14</sup> The Savior well appreciates the unwavering belief of the disciples in Jehovah; the great question concerns the necessity of an identical trust in Jesus because He also is sovereign deity. Jesus knows of His prospective death, hence He exhorts belief that will not wilt even at that time. Therefore:

Through all the changing scenes of life,  
In trouble and in joy,  
The praises of my God shall still  
My heart and tongue employ.

However there is good reason for this perseverance in faith; it is the fact that Jesus’ death is not cessation, not elimination, but demonstrable journeying to a distant “heavenly country.

(2) It is prepared for by Jesus, v. 2.

“In the house of My Father are many dwelling places/abiding places/rooms [□□□□, monē]. If it were not so, I would have told you because I go to prepare a place for you.” We must remember that Jesus has come from this house, having dwelt there in eternity past, and He knows it well, all of its gracious, soul resting, holy amenities. These are the features to be anticipated rather than simply a location above and beyond earth. However Jesus alone obtains access. Eventually this holy citizenry will come to a regenerated earth. But for now He is about to make reservations in heaven as a faithful High Priest, acceptable to the Father, who will undoubtedly grant His request. The point then is that the enrichment and the enhancement and the blessing of the disciples is in mind, not their abandonment. Whatever this world may assail us with, that is for Christ’s sake, our reservations are secure and our arrival is expected. Nothing calms the troubled heart as much as an assured destination, and especially when the means of transportation to it are also provided!

(3) It is for fellowship with Jesus, v. 3.

“And if I go and prepare/make ready [□□□□□□□□, hetomazō] a place for you, I [will] come again and receive you to Myself in order that where I am you also may be.” To begin with, what is this “preparation” that Jesus accomplishes? Surely it is not so much preparation *in* heaven as preparation *for* heaven, that is fellowship with God. In other words, our fitness for heaven, that is our being brought as guests to dwell acceptably with Jesus’ holy Father, is not simply a matter whereby unholy sinners are able to front up on their own! But should Jesus “prepare the way,” that is enable unholy sinners to be made holy and presentable, and thus purchase their reservations through His shed blood, then they await His coming to escort them heavenward.

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<sup>14</sup> Preference here is for the KJV translation (indicative/imperative), as with Ryle, though if not then as the NASB (imperative/imperative). So Hendriksen translates, stressing the present tense: “Continue to trust in God; also in Me continue to trust.” *John*, p. 264.



Thus Jesus “[will] come again,” a second time. It is so certain in the future that it is described in the present. Yes, He will come to the disciples immediately after his resurrection, though that is but a foretaste of what is ahead. Surely the rest of the promise focuses on His coming in great glory for His own sheep at the end of this age, calling them by name, declaring their reservations to be waiting for them in heaven. Here is where the anxiety of the “troubled” disciples begins to dispel. When the child first leaving home is reassured of a prepared welcome upon returning home, then the period of absence is bridged with confident anticipation, of that time “when He appears, [when] we will be like Him, because we shall see Him just as He is” (I John 3:2).

b. The mediatorial way to the Father, vs. 4-6.

It is important at this stage to be reminded of the uppermost purpose of Jesus Christ’s earthly commission from His Father. Having come from heaven to this world, His supreme intention has been the accomplishment of His Father’s plan of redemption so that He might return with “a host of captives” (Eph. 4:7-10), that is a company of believers “reconciled to God” (II Cor. 5:18-21), who qualify for residency in “My Father’s house,” v. 2. So here in vs. 4-6 there are three references to “the way” which focus on the direction of Jesus’ departure, namely being reunited with the Father, or “coming to the Father,” v. 6. So this “way” is the same route for Jesus’ disciples, in that they also have the ultimate goal of being brought near to the Father (Eph. 2:13; Heb. 4:14-16; 7:19, 25; 10:19-22). Of course the assumption here is that of man’s original alienation, “having no hope and [being] without God in the world” (Eph. 2:11-13).

(1) It is for Jesus’ disciples, v. 4.

“And where I am going away, you know the way.” Jesus has, on countless occasions told His disciples not only from where He has come, but also His intention of returning back there (7:33; 8:21). Hence He reminds them of this oft repeated truth that has continued to puzzle them and which they are not so anxious to recollect. This is like a classroom situation where a good teacher appreciates the necessity of recapitulation and repetition because we either forget or are distracted. Peter’s recent train of thought in vs. 13:33, 36-37, nevertheless ignores the vital truth of vs. 34-35. Similarly Thomas, quite vociferous, now appears to be just as oblivious to the meaning of Jesus’ former teaching about His departure. However in chapters 14-17 Jesus will press home this truth with even greater emphasis.

(2) It is for ignorant disciples, v. 5.

“Thomas said to Him, ‘Lord, we do not know where you are going away; how are we able to know the way?’” This disciple’s honesty is only commendable if he is not responsible for his ignorance; but this is not the case, even in his stressed condition; all he reveals is his wooden headedness, cf. 11:16. It is true that destination determines the necessary route in travel. However one feels inclined to ask Thomas, “If you don’t know where Jesus is going, then do you know from where He has come?” Ryle quotes the

seventeenth century Puritan John Trapp as likening Thomas here to, “people who hunt for their keys and purses when they have got them in their pockets.”<sup>15</sup> What is so evidently missing here is that child-like trust in Jesus that, while lacking specific details, yet knows enough of His goodness in terms of the past so as to be calmly confident about the safety and security of the future. Nevertheless Jesus does not give up on such forgetfulness.

(3) It is exclusively through Jesus, v. 6.

“Jesus said to him, ‘I am the way and the truth and the life; no one comes to the Father except through Me.’” Rather than responding with exasperation, Jesus declares a most sublime explanation of His person and mediatorial ministry. To begin with we have here another emphatic “I am,” □□□□□□□□, *egō eimi*, proclamation that introduces, in a manner so typical of John, both positive and negative aspects.

(a) Positively, Jesus is the way to the Father.

Here is the primary answer to Thomas’ enquiry that has two qualifications. Jesus is going back to His Father; but He is more than a guide pointing the way; rather He is the *way* in Himself, the transporting vehicle, the active mediator, the “ladder,” 1:51. Furthermore, as the Son of God, the authentic Messiah, He is the incarnation of the *truth* concerning His Father, v. 9. In the same vein, while many men have claimed to have insight into guiding men toward God, they are utterly disqualified as fraudulent here since in Jesus only is the *truth* revealed, incarnately, righteously, demonstrably. Moreover, He evidently embodies the *life* of God so that, unlike other impotent gurus, He imparts life to those who are genuine disciples. This point is especially to be kept in mind since Jesus’ death, and then His resurrection, are so close at hand, cf. 11:25.

(b) Negatively, there is no other way to the Father.

There is a logical connection here; the preceding confession makes the following qualification inevitable, so that John as it were puts a hedge around the truth. Coming from a seeming mere man, the exclusivity here is breathtaking in that, apart from this stark truth, the only alternative is that of religious madness. But did a mad-man raise Lazarus from the dead? Thus Ryle well concludes,

what an unanswerable argument this sentence supplies against the modern notion that it does not matter what a man believes,—that all religions will lead men to heaven if they are sincere,—that creeds and doctrines are of no importance,—that heaven is a place for all mankind,—whether heathen, Mahometan, or Christian,—and that the Fatherhood of God is enough to save all at last, of all sects, kinds, and

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<sup>15</sup> Ryle, *John*, III, p. 69.

characters. . . . In short, there are not many ways to heaven. There is only one way.<sup>16</sup>

Thus “coming to the Father . . . through Jesus” becomes the all-important goal, even as Job recognized, 4:17; 9:2; 25:4. A direct approach is impossible, unthinkable, presumptuous here, that is when we catch a true vision of the holiness of this Father and the unholiness of man! So Job knew he needed an umpire, 9:33, and that he had hope only in his Redeemer, 16:19; 19:25.

## 2. Jesus is the image of the Father, vs. 7-15.

For Jesus, to “come to the Father,” v. 6, is more than mere presentation and confrontation; it is to know Him in a most intimate sense, even as His, “being in the bosom of the Father,” 1:18. However, for the Jew of Jesus’ day, while he may have formally confessed that Jehovah is the God and Father of Israel (Isa. 63:15-16), he lacked any knowledge of such a bosom kinship. Now Jesus has come to reveal how such a relationship with God the Father is possible, through Him, even as he has already taught, 5:23; I John 2:23.

### a. Through Him the Father is known, v. 7.

“If you had known Me [though in fact you have not, second class condition], you would have known My Father also; and from now on you know Him and have seen Him.” The implication here is that for all of the close acquaintance with Jesus that the disciples have maintained for over three years, yet it has proved to be quite superficial at best. Indeed, it also seems suggested that although Christ has chosen the disciples, 15:16, yet they have not come to know the Father according to v. 6 because they have not come to know Christ as He really is. We might distinguish their knowledge of Christ here as pre-cross, that is as we were acquainted with Christ in a shallow sense before our eyes were opened to the fact that “He loved me and gave Himself up for me” (Gal. 2:20). So, “from now on you know Him” means that the hour of their eyes being opened has arrived. Especially through the promised Comforter, vs. 17, 26, then they will behold “the Light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Christ” (II Cor. 4:6).

### b. Through Him the Father is seen, vs. 8-9.

Philip is engaged by Jesus’ frank explanation; he even seems to accept the truth that he has not seen the Father as Jesus describes, especially according to the glorious revelation that came to Moses, Ezekiel, and Isaiah. He may also have in mind the Mount of Transfiguration revelation which he did not participate in; then, according to Peter, James, and John, “a bright cloud overshadowed them, and behold, a voice [spoke] out of the cloud” (Mat. 17:5). However, for all of Philip’s confessed blindness at this point, we readily admit that he asks the right question to the right person and comes to the right conclusion.

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<sup>16</sup> Ibid., pp. 70-71.

## (1) The request of Philip, v. 8.

“Philip said to Him, ‘Lord, show us the Father, and it is enough/sufficient [□□□□□, arkeō] for us.’ Philip is not saying, ‘Unless I see God, I will not believe in Him,’ but ‘because I do believe in God, I desire to see Him in a more real sense.’ There are shades of Moses here who boldly asked of God at an opportune moment, when he was favored by God, ‘I pray You, show me Your glory.’ To this God responded, ‘I Myself will make all My goodness pass before you, . . . but . . . you cannot see My face, for no man can see Me and live’ (Exod. 33:17-20). According to good intentions and holy affections, Philip’s request was not really presumptuous, though it did infer the absence of revelation to date, and this is definitely not the case, as Jesus makes clear. Nevertheless, Moses and Philip were not left in the dark. For a man or woman to cry out to God for light in the midst of darkness is a plea that heaven welcomes; however we need to consider if in fact the light has been revealed before our very eyes, and we remain blind to it. This was Philip’s chief problem!

## (2) The revelation of Jesus, v. 9.

“Jesus said to him, ‘So long a time I am with you [all] and [yet] you have not known Me, Philip? He who has seen Me has seen the Father. How is it you say, ‘Show to us the Father?’” We need to keep in mind Jesus’ earlier declaration: “All things have been handed over to Me by My Father; and no one knows the Son except the Father; nor does anyone know the Father except the Son, and anyone to whom the Son wills to reveal Him” (Matt. 11:27). As it now becomes obvious, this revelation to any individual requires much more than mere physical, personal presentation, as Philip has experienced.

## (a) Philip is blind to the light.

Since Philip was originally “found” by Jesus, and became convinced that this Nazarene was “Him of whom Moses in the law and also the Prophets wrote,” 1:43-46, over three years have passed. Consider how much of the word and works ministry of Jesus that Philip has witnessed. Notwithstanding a degree of loyalty, as distinct from Judas, even as a conservative Hebrew he remains blind to the essential character of Jesus. He is like an unconverted scholar who has specialized in the gospels who, for all of his study of the life of Jesus, nevertheless knows nothing about the life of Jesus. Such was the character of learned Nicodemus, 3:10. Philip also needs to be “born gain,” 3:3.

## (b) Jesus is light to the blind.

Jesus’ astonishing, profoundly clear response would especially shock the Hebrew mind here. “He who has seen Me has seen the Father/Jehovah God”! Further Jesus’ prompting of Philip for a reply only reinforces the fact that He unapologetically, really did mean exactly what He said. In fact Jesus climaxed his public ministry with a similar proclamation,

12:44-45; cf. 1:18; 10:38; 13:20; 14:10-11, 20. No mere man could make such a claim unless he presented supporting evidence, and this Jesus has done and will do at His resurrection. Jesus of Nazareth is God incarnate. As Charles Wesley has declared, this Jesus is,

Our God contracted to a span,  
Incomprehensibly made man.

As Jesus enquired, “Who is the one who touched me” when a crowd pressed in around him, in distinguishing the touch of faith (Luke 8:43-48), so here He distinguishes between multitudes, including Philip, who have seen Him, and the true perception of His person as the Son of God. This is the difference between sensual sight and faith sight. The man born blind experienced both, though not simultaneously, 9:7, 35-38. Ten lepers sought and received cleansing from Jesus, but only one returned to worship and give thanks (Luke 17:11-19). The person who perceives Jesus truly, as Jesus desires that He be comprehended, then beholds not simply a man, but God the Father. He believes in Jesus aright!

c. Through Him the Father works, vs. 10-12.

At a fallible human level, we often refer to a son as being the very image of his father, not simply in terms of physical features, but also character and temperament. Though such a son may not be so aware of this similarity. But here the likeness between God the Father and God the Son takes on a far more profound identity, especially in terms of self-consciousness. For here the Son is well aware of His divine being, His intimacy of relationship, His union with the His Father, the great Jehovah, in submission as a Son, yet not with self-deprecating inferiority, cf. v. 28!

(1) Jesus’ word works by the Father, v. 10.

“Do you [Philip] not believe that I am in the Father and the Father is in me? [Yes, you ought to so believe!] The words that I say to you I do not speak from Myself; but the Father abiding in Me does His works.” Has Philip been following Jesus in a cloud? The grounds of Jesus’ expectation of belief here must surely be His words and works, cf. 10:38. In other words, when rightly perceived they lead to an inevitable conclusion that Jesus is the Son of God and thus manifestly bares the likeness of His Father. So the Father is in the Son and the Son is in the Father; so to behold the Son is to behold the Father. To not behold the Father in the Son’s ministry (5:17-19), as with Philip, is to be blind to the words and works of Jesus. So Ryle aptly enquires: “How little we realize the fullness of the expression, ‘The Father dwelleth in Me.’”<sup>17</sup>

But it is also significant here that the words of Jesus are the words of God that are intimately and actively manifest in Jesus’ ministry (Ps. 33:6-9). Certainly the words of Jesus are the Word of God, as are the words the

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<sup>17</sup> Ibid., p. 73.

Father and the Holy Spirit, so that “red letter” Bibles are misleading, as if distinctive from the remainder of the Word of God.

(2) Jesus’ union works by the Father, v. 11.

“Believe Me that I am in the Father and the Father is in Me. But if not, believe on account of the works [□□□□□, *ergon*] themselves.” It is remarkable that in Jesus recognizing the present shallowness, the littleness of the disciples’ faith, he does not give up on them. While Jesus’ union with His Father is such a glorious truth for Him to contemplate, if a direct and primary address about this toward the disciples fails, then He will resort to an indirect and secondary approach that just might spark a degree of comprehension. How the Savior condescended to our weak condition. Faith assisted by “works” is better than no faith at all (5:36; 10:37-38). So those “weak in faith” are to be accepted and nurtured according to their present status, not denounced (Rom. 14:1). So Carson suggests that,

[t]houghtful meditation on, say, the turning of the water into wine, the multiplication of the loaves or on the raising of Lazarus will disclose what these miracles signify: *viz.* that the saving kingdom of God is at work in the ministry of Jesus, and this in ways tied to his very person. The miracles are non-verbal Christological signposts.<sup>18</sup>

(3) Jesus’ disciple works for the Father, v. 12.

“Truly, truly I say to you, ‘Whoever believes in Me, the works [□□□□□, *ergon*] that I do, even he shall also do greater [works] than these, because I am going to the Father.’” Nevertheless Jesus’ condescension toward the weak is for the purpose of elevation to a position of strength. If faith revives through the contemplation of Jesus’ works, then this faith is to be exposed to a horizon of vast proportions. At the heart of this heightened perspective is the fact that Jesus is “going to the Father.” His atonement is to be the trigger, the well-spring, the fountain-head of a whole new era of works that surpass Jesus’ present catalog of wonders in John alone. It is crass logic which concludes from this verse that Christians today will perform more phenomenal miracles, in quantity and quality, than those of turning water into wine, healing the lame, multiplying loaves and fishes, and raising the dead, etc. To begin with, none of these wonders are even performed in a parallel sense today, let alone in an enhanced or greater manner.

Clearly Jesus had something else in mind with which the disciples would be involved, and it is easier to grasp when we appreciate the true significance of Jesus signs. They were not for the purpose of Jesus being admired as a wonder worker, a showman, and a meal ticket (6:26). Turning water into wine signified that Jesus was the means of filling empty human water pots with his sweetness and savor, far beyond the ordinariness represented by common water. Multiplying loaves and fishes signified that Jesus is the divinely provided bread of life for starved and hungry souls. The raising of

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<sup>18</sup> Carson, *John*, p. 495.

Lazarus signified that Jesus himself raises dead souls up to newness of life. Now once Jesus has gone to His Father, the subsequent harvest of enriched and sweetened empty vessels, the feasting of multitudes upon the bread of life with lasting satisfaction, and the raising up of a great mass of dead souls unto eternal life, put the pre-cross ministry of Christ in the shade. Jesus intimated that this was his priority when “the seventy returned with joy, saying, ‘Lord, even the demons are subject to us in Your name.’” He responded: ‘Nevertheless do not rejoice in this, that the spirits are subject to you, but rejoice that your names are recorded in heaven’” (Luke 10:17, 20). Which here was the far greater work?

What man calls a “great work” is not to be compared with God’s definition. For man it is a million dollar offering, for God it is a widow’s mite; for man it is the splendor of religious garments and ornaments and ceremony, whereas for God it is a sinful woman’s devotion to His beloved Son; for man it the proclamation of human righteousness and religious compliance, while for God it is the cry of a downcast and broken man, “God, be merciful to me, the sinner” (Luke 18:9-14).

- d. Through Him the Father is *petitioned*, v. 13-14.

To believe in God is one thing; to commune with Him is quite another, and surely such intimacy involves entreaty, supplication. However, for any person to bring such a request to God is to hope that he is favorably heard, yet his sinful frailty causes doubt; there is a barrier whereby the finite cannot reach the Infinite, the defiled cannot commune with the Undeified, the unholy cannot approach the Holy. Yet here we are introduced to very good reason as to why we may confidently believe God the Father will hear us with a welcome attitude (15:7, 16; 16:23-24, 26). This “good reason” is Jesus Christ Himself, His divine person and atoning work, but especially His mediation between earth and heaven.

- (1) For the glory of the Father, v. 13.

“And whoever asks [My Father] in My name, this I will do in order that the Father may be glorified in the Son.” Again, we recall that in v. 12 Jesus has concluded that “I [now] go to the Father.” This means that Jesus being seated at the Father’s right hand after completion of the Father’s plan of redemption, then the Father will be accessible, that is ready and delighted to hear the petitions of His beloved Son. So whoever is a believer in that Jesus being seated so advantageously, who makes a request of God the Father, that person will have “an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous” (I John 2:1). Thus Jesus will speak on behalf of His authentic disciples; their plea becomes His petition to the Father. Why does He do this? It is so that Father may be exalted through the effectual intercession of the Son. So this disciple can sing:

Jesus, our living Head,  
We bless Thy faithful care;  
Our Advocate before the throne,  
And our Forerunner there.

## (2) For the accomplishment of anything, v. 14.

“If anyone asks Me anything in My name, I will do [it].” The same truth as in v. 13 is made with greater emphasis upon Jesus’ unique mediatorial value. On a human level we sometimes hear that to gain an audience with an important person, “It’s not what you know, but who you know!” So to gain a hearing in heaven, Jesus is the one to know! In the light of 14:16; 15:7, 16; 16:23-24, 26, again the assumption here is that Jesus is about to be seated beside the Father. So the disciple of Christ is to be confident that his petition to the Son, that is through the Son, will gain a favorable hearing. Indeed, *whatever* he brings forward, indeed *anything*, will be presented to the Father with confident expectation. “Whatever?” “Anything? Yes, as it comes from a believer in Christ with the obedience of faith, love that keeps “My commandments,” v. 15. Then “whatever” and “anything” will always be found to be within the sphere of that which pleases Christ, “greater works” that magnify the saving grace of God!

## b. Through Him obedience is generated, v. 15.

“If you love Me, you will keep My commandments/precepts.” Some Bibles give the impression that here we are introduced to a new thrust in Jesus’ upper room teaching. However we suggest a vital connection, especially with vs. 13-14 where the emphasis has been upon the disciples’ *asking* the Father, v. 13, hence *asking* the Son, v. 14. Further in v. 16 the Son *asks* the Father, on behalf of the disciples, that they might receive the substitute heavenly Helper as an outpouring upon their lives. Now on a human level, if a disobedient son makes a request of His Father that looks for hoped for generosity, he may be both chastised and disappointed. But if he has been obedient, he can ask with confidence. Thus when a disciple asks the Father or the Son, vs. 13-14, especially in the realm of “greater works,” v. 12, and that with profuse verbal expressions of “love,” it is in fact a vain request if we do not match our eloquence with our obedience! If we love Christ, our petitions will be adorned with happy compliance with His will (14:21, 23; 15:14; I John 5:3). However, specifically what commandments does Jesus have in mind? There is no thought of Moses here. The Father echoed the same thought on the mount of the transfiguration in the presence of Moses and Elijah (Matt. 17:4-5). Ryle well comments:

[N]otice how our Lord speaks of “My commandments.” We never read of Moses or any other servant of God using such an expression.<sup>19</sup>

Surely the new commandment of 13:34, but more broadly the “commandments” of 14:21; 15:10, 12; I John 2:8 and “words” of 14:24 are in mind. It is the whole righteous administration of Jesus!

## 3. Jesus intercedes before the Father, vs. 16-26.

It is the faithful disciple of Christ, v. 15, obediently, lovingly walking in His steps, who at the same time participates in the faithfulness of Christ. This has involved both His

<sup>19</sup> Ryle, *John*, III, p. 81.



*past* earthly shepherding to date that culminates in His “laying down His life for the sheep” (10:11). Then there is the prospect of His *future* heavenly intercession and provision, vs. 18-19, 21, 23, 26-27.

- a. For the replacement Comforter, vs. 16-24.

Now while the promise in the Old Testament was of the prospect of comfort from Messiah (Isa. 40:1-5; 52:9-10; 61:1-2), that is “the consolation of Israel” (Luke 2:25), and the disciples have already participated in the personal comfort of Christ, especially in a pastoral sense (10:9-11), the departure of Christ necessitates a replacement of the same kind; He will not abandon his flock as orphans, v. 18; there will be no lack or care. Even having ascended to the Father Jesus will continue to be an “Advocate,” a *paraklētos* (I John 2:1).

- (1) His presence that abides, vs. 16-17.

However Christ’s great concern is not simply the provision of a compensating, replacement Comforter that His new covenant guarantees, 7:38-39, but also the very presence of God, as Matthew 28:20 promises. So Jesus’ desire here is that this same presence of God “may be with you forever,” v. 16, that He “abide with you and be in you,” vs. 17, 20, that He “come to you,” v. 18, that He may be “in you,” that He will be “disclosed to you,” v. 21, etc. To fully accomplish this Jesus must return to His Father so as to make an effectual plea.

- (a) As the Comforter and Advocate, v. 16.

“I will ask the Father, and He will give you another Comforter [□□□□□□□□□□□□□□□□, *allon paraklēton*], in order that He may be with you forever.” Here is a clear reference to the personal triunity of God, the Son, the Father, and the Comforter. When will Jesus ask His Father on behalf of His disciples? Surely it is after His ascension to the Father’s right hand when the glory of His sacrificial accomplishment is presented as an offering of such sweet savor that it guarantees a favorable response concerning whatever the Son requests. Thus Jesus’ plea is to be for “another Comforter,” that is of the same sort as Himself, in other words identical in coming alongside to nurture and nourish during His absence. For this reason He is to be “the Spirit of Christ” (Rom. 8:9).

However, the primary meaning of *paraklētos* in its original classic meaning is that of “being called alongside as a legal advocate,” which emphasis is incorporated in 15:26-27; 16:7-11. In a similar vein Paul describes how “the Spirit also helps/lends a hand [□□□□□□□□□□□□□□□□, *sunantilambanomai*] concerning our weakness; . . . the Spirit Himself intercedes/pleads [□□□□□□□□□□□□□□□□, *huperentunchanō*] for us with groanings too deep for words” (Rom. 8:26; cf. Matt. 10:19-20).

## (b) As the Spirit of the truth, v. 17.

“[That is] the Spirit of the truth, who the world is not able to receive/welcome because it does not see [□□□□□□, theōreō] Him or know [□□□□□□, ginōskō] Him; you know Him because He abides with you and will be in you.” Hence the promised Comforter here is not to be identified simply in ethereal, mystical terms, but rather as the mediator of “the truth,” cf. 8:40, 45; 14:6; 15:26; 16:7, 13, and especially in contrast with error that is universal. Of course this is not truth that is regarded in an encyclopedic, academic sense, but rather the particular truth concerning the person and work of Christ, mediated through the Holy Spirit, 15:26; 16:13-14. Furthermore it is, as Jesus declared, “My word” of truth, being embodied through spiritual communication, that identifies His authentic disciples; it is “the truth” about Christ that emancipates (8:32), and cleanses (15:3).

## 1) His distinguishing characteristic.

Here the distinguishing characteristic of a non-Christian is described (Jude 19) whereby the Christian character becomes obvious. It is the fact that the non-Christian is “not able to receive/welcome” this “Spirit of the truth.” The reason is evident in Nicodemus’ spiritual blindness, even as Jesus said to him, “unless one is born again/from above he cannot see the kingdom of God” 3:3. So here, the world “does not see Him [the Spirit of the truth]” because it is looking for Him tangibly, phenomenally, wonderfully, visibly. The world “does not know Him [the Spirit of the truth]” because it is looking for Him intellectually, sensually, academically, rationally. Paul makes the same distinction when he contrasts the “soulish/natural man,” who “cannot/is not able to understand . . . the things of the Spirit of God, with “he who is spiritual [who] appraises all things” (I Cor. 2:14-15). For this Christian, in being spiritual, he is “taught by the Spirit, combining spiritual thoughts with spiritual words” (I Cor. 2:13).

## 2) His Pentecostal characteristic.

“You know Him because He abides *with* you and will be *in* you.” To begin with we must remember that here we are at the great transitional point of the Bible where promise yields to fulfillment. As Jesus explained, “among those born of women there is no one greater than John [the Baptist]; yet he who is least in the kingdom of God is greater than he” (Luke 7:28). Yes, true Old Testament saints were securely indwelt by the Holy Spirit, such as justified Abraham (Rom. 4:1-3, 9-12; Gal. 3:29), and David (Rom. 4:6-8), while at the same time there were also many unregenerate religious

Jews.<sup>20</sup> The eleven disciples were chosen by Christ (15:16), and have been sustained through the Holy Spirit's guidance and keeping, yet they were not initially indwelt according to innermost "rivers of living water;" such a spiritual deluge would not come until Pentecost following Jesus' glorification (7:37-39). Only after Jesus' death, burial, resurrection, ascension and session beside His Father would there come an unprecedented effusion that would descend upon "all mankind/flesh" (Acts 2:17). This would come in such a universal manner, to Jew and Gentile, "both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and even to the remotest part of the earth" (Acts 1:8), that the Old Testament never witnessed.

(2) His presence that consoles, v. 18.

"I will not leave/abandon you [little children, cf. 13:33] as orphans/fatherless/leaderless [ορφανος, orphanos]; I [will] come to you." While this Shepherd will not desert His sheep, yet which coming is here intended? His immediate resurrection appearance is but preliminary, v. 19, that is short-lived for a period of only forty days (Acts 1:3). Then He will again depart while directing His disciples "to wait [in Jerusalem] for what the Father had promised" (Acts 1:4). Rather the context of vs. 16-17, 20, 23, 26 ultimately suggests Jesus' future presence by means of the Pentecostal torrent of the Spirit which would more continuously result in the Pauline experience of "Christ in you, the hope of glory" (Col. 1:27). So, "if anyone does not have [is not having] the Spirit of Christ, he does not belong to Him. If Christ is in you, though the body is dead because of sin, the spirit is alive because of righteousness" (Rom. 8:9-11; cf. II Cor. 3:17; I John 3:23-24). However this is not a conditional coming, but a sovereign promise concerning the guarantee of His keeping of His own. His holy, immutable, gracious character is at stake!

(3) His presence with the Son, vs. 19-21.

The distinctive manifestation of Jesus' presence described in v. 18 is vitally important in terms of the more detailed explanation that follows. Here we are transported from resurrection revelation, v. 19, to ascension back to the Father, v. 20, to disclosure from heaven by means of the Holy Spirit, v. 21.

(a) A post-resurrection presence, v. 19.

"Yet a little/short [time] and the world no longer [will] see [ορασει, theōreō] Me, but you [will] see Me; because I live, you will live also." Immediately following Jesus' resurrection He will only be seen by His

<sup>20</sup> We reject the idea that the Holy Spirit only came upon prophets, priests, and kings in the Old Testament. Further we suggest that in Psalm 51:11-12 David bemoans the prospect of God's disciplinary withdrawal of the gracious, encouraging influence of His Spirit, Who he has grieved to the point of becoming utterly joyless. Here is no possibility of a final falling from grace but rather confession that acknowledges the need of "a clean heart" and "a steadfast spirit," v. 10. To this end there is the necessity of the convicting and judging work of the Spirit (Ps. 32:3-4; 38:1-8, 17-22).

disciples and followers. While the world will be frustrated in not being able to discover His body, Jesus will exclusively reveal Himself to His own (I Cor. 15:5-8) by means of the human senses (Luke 24:39-40; I John 1:1-3). Consequently they will gaze upon Him with astonishment; the effects of the brutality in their minds, the body so severely savaged and disfigured, will give place to the wonder of a glorified, transformed Christ. However, this triumph over death is the guarantee of life for “those who are Christ’s” (I Cor. 15:22-23). When they see a believing, Christian loved one at his hour of dying, so deformed with disease, so emaciated and haggard, they are to remember what Christ has accomplished and will accomplish. He is “the first fruits of those who are asleep” (I Cor. 15:20). Hence, because He lives and “always lives” (Heb. 7:25), then those who genuinely believe in him will partake of a similar resurrection (11:25-26). Thus Horatius Bonar writes:

I bless the Christ of God,  
 I rest on love divine,  
 And with unfaltering lip and heart  
 I call this Savior mine.  
 ‘Tis He who saveth me,  
 And freely pardon gives;  
 I love because He loveth me,  
 I live because He lives.

(a) A post-resurrection ascension, v. 20.

“In that day you yourselves will know that I am in My Father, and you in Me, and I in you.” The reason is that the disciples will stand upon the Mount of Olives and behold Jesus ascend through the clouds to His Father. But furthermore, this knowledge will be enhanced at Pentecost for then, having waited “for what the Father had promised,” the sudden outpouring of the Spirit will cause them to acknowledge that this is a result of Jesus’ intercession, according to what He promised. This being so, they will then be assured that Jesus is indeed “in My Father;” further, the newly indwelling Spirit of Jesus, that has baptized the disciples, will assure them that they are “in Christ” while at the same time Christ is “in them.” Then will the twelve be confident that they have not been abandoned. On the contrary, they have been made more secure than ever, sealed and pledged by the Spirit, “with a view to the redemption of God’s own possession” (Eph. 1:13-14), which describes “the Son of Man coming in a cloud with power and great glory, . . . because your redemption is drawing near” (Luke 21:27-28; cf. Rom. 8:23; Eph. 4:30).

(b) A post-resurrection revelation, v. 21.

“Whoever has My commandments/precepts and keeps them, that one is he who loves Me; and whoever loves Me will be loved by My Father, and I will love him and will manifest [□□□□□□□□, *emphanizō*] Myself to him.”

- 1) *Where are the commandments of Jesus to be found?* In the Bible, especially the four Gospels, and then in his discourses to followers and disciples. Now this may seem all too obvious, yet it calls for commitment to read and search and study and listen and comprehend. Indifference is not in mind here, but rather an earnest quest, as Jesus said, to “learn from Me” (Matt. 11:29).
  - 2) *What are the commandments of Jesus?* They were earlier referenced for the first time in v. 15. Of course the new commandment of 13:34-35 is primary. However there are also the commandments of 14:1, 11; 15:10, 12; I John 2:8, as well as the “words” of 14:24 that are in mind. But then there has also been over three years of prior instruction (Matt. 28:19-20).
  - 3) *What is it to love Jesus?* To begin with it is to love Him because He first loved us as sinners. However such love is reactionary (Matt. 18:23-35; Luke 8:36-48), not static. It is *not* simply active conformity to Jesus teaching, but rather such love for His person and work that constrains obedience and active response, even as was the case with the disobedient son who then became obedient (Matt. 21:28-31).
  - 4) *What is it to be loved by Jesus’ Father?* It is for the Father to behold genuine esteem and love for His Son by a sinner, in spite of whatever the world thinks of Him. Further the Father delights in this same sinner who desires righteousness through His Son. So this disciple is loved by the Father for Jesus’ sake, the result being that he is also adopted as a son of God.
  - 5) *What is it to be loved by Jesus?* This appears to be love of Jesus for His sheep that have already been saved. Now having been incorporated within the family of God for Jesus’ sake, Jesus also loves them for the Father’s sake, for the praise of His glory, for the enhancement of His kingdom, especially by means of His mediatorial position.
  - 6) *What is the manifestation of Jesus to His disciples?* Here He fulfills what was earlier promised in v. 18: “I will come to you.” One aspect of this is that, “When He ascended high, He led captive a host of captives, and He gave gifts to men” (Eph. 4:8). But more basic here is the promise of Matthew 28:20, “Lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age.”
- (4) His presence with the Father and Son, vs. 22-24.

We remember Peter’s narrow train of thought expressed in 13:36 that was concerned about v. 33 and yet ignored the primary truth of vs. 34-35. So another disciple reflects the same narrow focus that ignores a most vital matter,

- (c) As a selective disclosure, v. 22.

“Judas, not Iscariot, said to Him, ‘Lord, how has it come about that You are about to manifest Yourself to us and not to the world?’ Judas here, being one of the twelve apostles, was the son of James (Luke 6:16; Acts 1:13), also called Thaddaeus, or perhaps his successor (Matt. 10:3; Mark 3:18). He may have been a son of Mary and Joseph and thus a brother of Jesus. The conundrum of v. 19 has caused Judas to ignore the truth of vs. 20-21 and wonder what will bring about Jesus becoming invisible to the world while retaining visibility to the disciples. Like his brethren, he is not very bright in terms of spiritual perception. However, it seems Jesus believes the answer to Judas has already been given in vs. 20-21 and for this reason He basically repeats Himself in vs. 23-24. Certainly here, as well as many times in this discourse, we see Jesus ready to enter into interactive discourse with the disciples and not simply lecture them.

- (d) As a triune disclosure, v. 23.

“Jesus answered and said to Him, ‘If any one loves Me, he will keep My word [singular], and My Father will love Him and We will come to him and make Our abode/residency with him.’” Here “keeping Jesus’ word” involves active faith in His “words,” or sayings, that is “the word which you hear,” v. 24. Of course at this stage in the disciples’ career it is simply trust in the essential person of the Son of God without fully comprehending the mystical, paradoxical truth He imparts. The fact of the promise that “We will come and make our abode with him,” surely indicates the indwelling of the Father and the Son in the believer through the Holy Spirit, even as I John 3:24 describes this same indwelling of the Father, “by the Spirit whom he has given us.” So this is Jesus’ answer to Judas who does not presently grasp the truth here, though he will when his memory is soon awakened.

- (e) As a word disclosure, v. 24.

“Whoever does not love Me does not keep My words; and the word which you hear is not Mine but the Father’s who sent Me.” In a typical Johannine manner, the negative of vs. 15, 21, 23, is now presented. As we learned in v. 10, so here again, most emphatically the word of Jesus is the Word of God, not simply the superior ethical instruction of one of the world’s great religious leaders. But then, even if we accept the deity of Christ, as does Satan, and yet fail to conform to the commands of our professed Master, the reality is that we do not love Christ. To behold Him truly is to behave obediently. Thus:

Blessed are the eyes that see Him  
 Blest the ears that hear His voice;  
 Blessed are the souls that trust Him,  
 And in Him alone rejoice;  
 His commandments  
 Then become their happy choice.

b. For the teaching Comforter, vs. 25-26.

While the teaching method of God may vary over the ages, such as prior to Abraham and after by means of the nation of Israel, the content concerning His gracious intent directed toward man remains the same. So here we deal with transition between the personal, earthly communication of God the Son and subsequently the internal communication of God the Holy Spirit. The advent of the Son's return to His Father and a new age calls for a new Agent.

(3) The present teaching of Jesus Christ, v. 25.

"These things I have spoken to you [plural] while being present with you." Here the "these things" again refer to the previous "commandments" and "word/words" of Jesus, vs. 15, 21, 23-24; cf. 16:1, 12, 25, 33. The intimation is that "these things," having been spoken to such a small group, will be brought to the fore in the near future, yet by means of a new medium. The truth will remain, but the vehicle will change, especially due to the prospective universal outreach of the gospel; then the new Agent "will convict the world concerning sin and righteousness and judgment," 16:8. Presently Jesus is able to witness personally to His "little flock" (Luke 12:32); but when this flock becomes a vast multitude, then will come the necessity of "another Comforter" who will indwell every individual.

(4) The future teaching of the Holy Spirit, v. 26.

"But the Comforter/Advocate, the Spirit of the truth, whom the Father will send in My name, He will teach you [plural] all things and bring to your remembrance [□□□□□□□□□□, hupomimnēskō] all things that I said to you." This new Agent of the truth, the Holy Spirit, is a person, a "He," not merely an influence. He "will teach you all things," that is "the things" of v. 25, the "commandments" and "word/words" of vs. 15, 21, 23-24, the words of Jesus, "the Word of God." He will do this by bringing to "remembrance all things that I said to you." Hence the indwelling Spirit of God brings about an awakening of the memory faculty. So Ryle encourages us with the thought:

Does any one complain of his own ignorance and bad memory? Let him not forget that there is One whose office it is to 'teach and bring remembrance.'<sup>21</sup>

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<sup>21</sup> Ryle, *John*, III, p. 96.

Here is an indication of the arousal and kindling that takes place at Christian conversion; there is the awakening by the Holy Spirit of soul-interest in the truth of God. So John tells us that this is exactly what happened after Jesus' "resurrection," 2:22 and "glorification," 12:16. And so important is this prospect that it is reiterated in 15:26-27; 16:7-15.

Come, Holy Spirit, every cloud dispelling;  
 Fill us with gladness through the Master's name:  
 Bring to our memory words that He hath spoken;  
 Then shall our tongues His wondrous grace proclaim.

4. Jesus declares His love for the Father, vs. 27-31.

Up to this point the disciples have already become disturbed at the announcement that one of the disciples would betray Jesus, 13:21-30. Now this level of concern is raised further. Just as anxiety afflicts children when they become separated from their parents, so the disciples of Jesus have become even more apprehensive at the prospect of their Master's imminent departure, 13:33, 36; 14:2-4, 5, 12, 18-19. Hence, in being aware of this heightened distress, Jesus seeks to provide reassurance of a suitable antidote; He is the great spiritual anti-depressant and tranquilizer, if we will take the medication !

a. For this cause He leaves peace, v. 27.

"Peace [□□□□□□, eirēnē] I leave with you; My peace I give to you; not as the world gives do I give to you. Do not let your heart be troubled/disturbed [□□□□□□, tarassō], neither let it be fearful/alarmed [□□□□□□, deiliaō]." The context here would suggest that, once again, the indwelling of the Holy Spirit in the believer is the mediator of what is promised, namely "peace." As with the Old Testament "shalōm," שָׁלוֹם, the New Testament "peace" originates as a characteristic of God, the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, being both essential and communicated; it is closely related to divine "rest," "contentment," and "wholeness" (Rom. 1:7; 5:1; 15:13, 33; 16:20; I Cor. 1:3; 14:33; II Cor. 1:2; 13:11; Gal. 1:3; 5:22; 6:16; Eph. 1:2; 2:14-15, 17; 6:15, 23; Phil. 1:2; 4:7, 9; Col. 1:2, 20; 3:15; I Thess. 1:1; 5:23; II Thess. 1:2; 3:16; I Tim. 1:2; II Tim. 1:2; Tit. 1:4; Philem. 1:3; Heb. 13:20; I Pet. 5:14; II Pet. 1:2; 3:14; II John 1:3; III John 1:15; Jude 1:2; Rev. 1:4). Hence "peace" is a characteristic of the children of God upon which the New Testament places great emphasis (Rom. 8:6; 14:17; II Cor. 13:11; Gal. 5:22; I Thess. 5:13; II Tim. 2:22). Here, in contrast with conflict and turmoil in the human breast, presently exemplified by the disciples, Jesus promises to impart His own distinctive "peace," which is now first mentioned by John in his Gospel.

There is the "peace" of this world, which at best is cessation of hostility and conflict at a surface human level; it is supposed to result from the implementation of conflict resolution principles; it is associated with vacation time, relaxing alone; it is commonly undisturbed personal indulgence and uninterrupted carnality. Of course all of this can be thwarted by fluctuations in society and world conditions. At its worst human peace is cosmetic, like Neville Chamberlain's assurance in 1939 of "Peace in our time," having met to negotiate with Adolph Hitler! Such



peace is often reflected by a pretended smile, a formal hand-shake. In fact it is a charade, a veneer thin agenda that merely covers a raging, deceptive warring within the soul (Jas. 4:1) that is energized by an unholy spirit, as Jeremiah describes (Jer. 6:13-15). However Jesus brings holy peace and friendship with God; in dealing with the root problem, the disturbance of sin, He enables the soul to recline at rest with a clear conscience before God and man; this contentment is free of condemnation and anxiety. Such a condition the world does not appreciate and cannot invade.

Peace, perfect peace, in this dark world of sin?  
 The blood of Jesus whispers peace within.  
 Peace, perfect peace, by thronging duties pressed?  
 To do the will of Jesus, this is rest.  
 Peace, perfect peace, with sorrows surging round?  
 On Jesus' bosom nought but calm is found.  
 Peace, perfect peace, with loved ones far away?  
 In Jesus' keeping we are safe, and they.  
 Peace, perfect peace, our future all unknown?  
 Jesus we know, and He is on the throne.  
 Peace, perfect peace, death shadowing us and ours?  
 Jesus has vanquished death and all its powers.  
 It is enough: earth's struggles soon shall cease,  
 And Jesus call us to heaven's perfect peace.

- b. For this cause He obeys the Father, v. 28-31.

We must continue to keep in mind the governing principle which directed every step the Son of God took. It is the fact that, as Jesus said, "I do exactly as the Father commanded me," v. 31 (cf. 4:34; 8:29; 10:17-18; 12:49). This singular, undistracted sense of vocation was governed by an esteem for the Father that was immense. Here is the source of "Jesus' peace," or "My peace" as He puts it, and thus the peace bestowed upon His disciples, v. 27. The peace of Jesus is inseparably related to His being at peace with His Father. So the Christian has "peace from God" through Christ (Rom. 5:1).

- (1) He goes to the Father who is greater, v. 28.

"You heard that I said to you, 'I go away and I [will] come to you.' If you loved Me, you would rejoice that I go away to the Father, because the Father is greater [□□□□□, *meizōn*] than I." Religious man's problem, in sin, is his continuous assessment of life from a strictly human perspective, even when confronted with a heavenly perspective. So here, in effect Jesus is saying that, "If you really understood what I have just revealed about My departure, according to My perspective, then you would rejoice rather than appear smitten with grief on account of your focusing upon self. You would enter into My enthusiasm for returning to the bosom of the Father. My blissful anticipation here is because the Father, in His heavenly glory, is greater than I. You also need to have a vision of and intimacy with this

‘greatness.’” When a son or daughter is married, the wise parent rejoices at prospective fulfillment, the greater glory of the married state, rather than weep at personal loss!

Hence, if a son were to tell his father, “I am moving to Washington DC to work for the President,” we would prefer that the father rejoice. However, if the father was anxious, the son might respond: “But dad, what a glorious opportunity it is to work for the President, since ‘He is greater than I!’” As a man, the son is essentially identical with the President, who is also a man. Yet the President is greater in the glory of his executive office. So this is what Jesus means here. Compared with the earthly condescension of Jesus who put on humanity, the Father dwells in greater glory. So the Son of God rejoices at the prospect of His return to that Paternal Bosom, and His disciples ought to rejoice with the elevation of their Master. The true worship of Jesus is the praise of His exaltation, the praise of His enthronement in glory, not His utilitarian value.

Jesus, hail! Enthroned in glory,  
There for ever to abide;  
All the heavenly hosts adore Thee,  
Seated at Thy Father’s side:  
There for sinners Thou art pleading,  
There Thou dost our place prepare,  
Ever for us interceding,  
Till in glory we appear.

(2) He prophesies of His departure to promote faith, v. 29.

“And now I have told you before it happens, in order that when it happens you may believe.” In 13:18-19 Jesus has already given notice, by way of prophetic utterance, concerning the certainty of His betrayal by Judas. The purpose is the strengthening of the disciples’ faith. So here, with the same faith purpose in mind, Jesus makes further prophetic reference to His imminent departure to the Father. As a result, faith certainly did result from this aspect of Jesus’ ministry (2:22; 12:16). The same thought is implicit in the purpose statement of 20:30-31. The foretelling of these events was intended to confirm that Jesus’ Father, not Rome or the Jewish leaders, is primarily in full sovereign control of the traumatic events that are about to break forth; for this reason alone, a glorious holy result is inevitable.

(3) He anticipates the ruler of this world, v. 30.

“For not much more will I speak with you, for the ruler of the world is coming [because I go away], and he does not have anything/any part in Me.” Who is this “ruler of the world”? Similarly identified in 12:31 as soon to be vanquished, in a proleptic manner of speaking, he is obviously Satan or the devil (8:44; 13:2; Rev. 2:10; 12:9; 20:2). So John also writes that “the whole world lies in the power of the evil one” (I John 5:19). However Jesus has come to this world termed as Satan’s domain, except without any preliminary negotiation or acknowledgment of Satanic permission. The reason is that the

universe is the Son of God's creation while Israel still remains His possession (1:10-11). The devil's claim to be "the ruler of this world" is wholly fraudulent; He has no grounds for bringing accusation against Jesus in entering his arena; now the very ground of his conquest and judgment is about to be accomplished.

Did we in our own strength confide,  
 Our striving would be losing;  
 Were not the right Man on our side,  
 The Man of God's own choosing.  
 Dost ask who that may be?  
 Christ Jesus, it is He,  
 Lord Sabaoth, His Name,  
 From age to age the same,  
 And He must win the battle.

So Satan is coming, probably through the agency of not only Judas (6:70; 13:2, 27), but also the Pharisees and Romans.

(4) He initiates confrontation, v. 31.

"But in order that the world may know that I love the Father, and just as the Father commanded [□□□□□□, entellō] Me, thus I do. Let us arise, let us go hence/from here." Yet once more, Jesus' preoccupation with His Father is dominant, especially utter passionate consecration to His will. However there is testimony in all of this, that is witness to a blind and incredulous world. It might be considered strange that Jesus does *not* say, "But in order that the world may know that I love it, let us arise." Yes, John 3:16 still stands. However Jesus here wants the world to understand that His going to the cross will not be a result of displeasure of and abandonment by the Father (Isa. 53:10), but conformity to His saving will. Thus, it is as if Jesus were saying, "Come now, let us be on our way to Gethsemane, for I have an appointment there with the devil, set by My Father, and I must not be late for the battle!"