

John 13

- Tonight we begin the study of the most momentous events in the life of Jesus
 - His final Passover meal, His passion, His death and His resurrection
 - The first of these begins in chapter 13 and will last a full five chapters in John's Gospel
 - Almost 20% of John's entire book is devoted to this one moment in Jesus earthly life
 - That should tell us how important this moment was for John in telling Jesus' story
 - But tonight before we enter that moment, we have one passage at the end of chapter 12 to cover
 - A final call to the people to believe

[John 12:44](#) And Jesus cried out and said, " He who believes in Me, does not believe in Me but in Him who sent Me.

[John 12:45](#) " He who sees Me sees the One who sent Me.

[John 12:46](#) " I have come as Light into the world, so that everyone who believes in Me will not remain in darkness.

[John 12:47](#) "If anyone hears My sayings and does not keep them, I do not judge him; for I did not come to judge the world, but to save the world.

[John 12:48](#) " He who rejects Me and does not receive My sayings, has one who judges him; the word I spoke is what will judge him at the last day.

[John 12:49](#) " For I did not speak on My own initiative, but the Father Himself who sent Me has given Me a commandment as to what to say and what to speak.

[John 12:50](#) "I know that His commandment is eternal life; therefore the things I speak, I speak just as the Father has told Me."

- You may remember that John reported earlier in his Gospel that Jesus had already gone away from the people in preparation for His death
 - But now we hear Jesus crying out for the people to believe in Him while the opportunity still exists
 - Who was He crying out to in this case?

- Well, we know from the other Gospels that Jesus spends the first half of the Passover week in the temple teaching
- John doesn't record this time, probably because the other Gospel writers do
- So though John says Jesus went away from the people on this day, He re-emerged the next day in the temple
 - And when He did, at some point He issued this final call to believe
 - There is a small chiasm in these verses
 - A chiasm is a literary device in which the progression of thought moves in a series of steps toward a point
 - And then backs out a liken number of complimentary points
- In this case, the beginning and ending points are on Jesus' representation of the Father
 - Notice in vs.44-45 and in vs.49-50 Jesus emphasizes the same point
 - Your response to Jesus is your response to the Father God
 - To believe in Jesus is to believe in the Father
 - To witness Jesus at work is to witness the Father
 - In fact, there can be no other way to see the Father except to see Jesus
 - As John explained to us in the first chapter

John 1:18 No one has seen God at any time; the only begotten God who is in the bosom of the Father, He has explained Him.

- Only through Christ can the Father be known
- And then in the second half of the chiasm, Jesus explains that He spoke only as the Father directed Him
 - Jesus didn't speak things that were of His own choosing
 - He spoke as the Father directed Him
 - In fact, the message was intended to bring eternal life to those who believed

- So it was especially important that Jesus deliver it exactly as intended
- So at the beginning and the end, Jesus emphasizes His desire to represent the Father and the Father's message of salvation
 - And then sandwiched between these in the chiasm is a message of judgment
 - In v.46 Jesus explains that His mission in coming was to call people out of darkness and into the light of salvation
 - Had God wished to condemn the world for sin, He need not go to the trouble of delivering Jesus into the world first
 - Sometimes, Christians make the mistake of assuming that fairness obligated God to offer mankind a chance at salvation
 - But that isn't so...God would have been perfectly justified in condemning all men without so much as a second thought
 - But in mercy He made a way available through His Son
 - That's why Jesus says He came to rescue men from darkness
 - There would be no other reason for Him to come much less to suffer
 - Going a step further, Jesus says that for those who hear the Gospel and do not believe it, Jesus will not exact judgment upon them in that moment
 - Once again, God is not obligated to wait before He brings judgment for sin
 - It would have been perfectly reasonable for God to never send His Son in the first place
 - But having sent Him, it would have been equally reasonable for the Father to have struck down immediately anyone who rejected His Son
 - But Jesus says that even so, He will not bring judgment for that person in this moment
 - Instead, Jesus is intent on bringing a message of mercy

- So He overlooks the naysayers and mockers and all those who persecute Him
- In fact, Jesus' mission can't be fulfilled otherwise
- If the Lord condemned those who rejected Him, then how could He go to the cross as required?
- But rest assured, judgment for rejecting Christ is coming one day
 - Jesus says in v.48 that the Father has reserved a day of judgment for all those who reject His Son
 - That day, called the last day, will mark the end of mercy and waiting
 - The Lord will note that the Gospel reached in our ears yet we rejected it
 - And in that way, we will have been convicted by our unbelief
 - This is the unavoidable reality of grace
 - Grace is God's unmerited favor in the face of impending judgment
 - Grace isn't grace if judgment weren't a reality
 - The enemy negates God's grace by denying the reality of a coming judgment
 - But Jesus sets the record straight
 - He came to bring a message of salvation to a world that was due judgment
 - And whether you receive mercy or judgment is determined by how you respond to the Father's representative
 - Hear Jesus, believe in Jesus and be saved
 - Reject Him, and in the last day judgment will be certain
- That sobering call sets the stage for the last night of Jesus' earthly life: the Passover celebration
 - John doesn't record much of the ceremony of the Passover meal as does the other Gospel writers

- Instead, John focuses in on the conversation that took place around the table that night
- And what a strange conversation it must have seemed to the disciples who didn't know what was coming

John 13:1 Now before the Feast of the Passover, Jesus knowing that His hour had come that He would depart out of this world to the Father, having loved His own who were in the world, He loved them to the end.

John 13:2 During supper, the devil having already put into the heart of Judas Iscariot, the son of Simon, to betray Him,

- In v.1 we hear that Jesus is meeting with the disciples before the feast of Passover
 - The passover was celebrated on the 14th of Nisan on the Jewish calendar
 - Notice that John says that this meeting is happening “before the feast of Passover”
 - Luke sets the scene in similar way

Luke 22:1 Now the Feast of Unleavened Bread, which is called the Passover, was approaching.

Luke 22:2 The chief priests and the scribes were seeking how they might put Him to death; for they were afraid of the people.

Luke 22:3 And Satan entered into Judas who was called Iscariot, belonging to the number of the twelve.

- As you probably know, Passover is a feast prescribed in the Law for Israel to observe in commemoration of their exodus from Egypt
 - The Law required each family to sacrifice and eat a lamb
 - The feast was to be celebrated by families in in small groups of around ten people or so
 - In the days preceding the feast, the family brought the lamb into their home and inspected it to ensure it is free of defects
 - Then on the 14th day of the month of Nisan, the lamb was slain
 - And the Passover meal was eaten before twilight on that same day

- Complicating our understanding, the Jewish way of reckoning a day designates that a new day begins at sundown, not at midnight
 - Each calendar day consisted of a 12 hours of dark followed by 12 hours of daylight
 - Therefore, the 14th day of Nisan began like all days: at sundown
 - Since the lamb wasn't to be slain during the nighttime hours, the sacrifice must wait until the daylight hours
 - Naturally, the meal must also wait until the afternoon
 - Since the Law required it be eaten before twilight on that day, the Passover meal was consumed on the afternoon of the 14th after the lamb was slain
- But when we look at the meal Jesus shares with the disciples, we find a different pattern
 - This meal is being prepared on the night before the Passover Feast
 - John has said this meal happened before the Passover feast took place and Luke said the Feast was approaching (i.e., not here yet)
 - And we know from all the Gospel accounts that this meal was held before the day Jesus was crucified
 - They are still eating the meal on the 14th of Nisan as required, since the day began at sundown
 - But it's happening before the lambs were sacrificed, in the evening before the normal day of celebration
 - How do we explain this change?
 - First, we know that Jesus dies during the daylight hours of the Passover day
 - Which means He dies on the afternoon of the 14th of Nisan just like the Passover lambs
 - Naturally, dying on the cross precludes Him from eating His Passover meal with the disciples at the usual time
 - By the afternoon of the day of Passover, Jesus would already be dead

- Sacrificed for the sins of the world
- Therefore, the only way Jesus could observe a Passover meal with the disciples was if He moved the meal up to the prior night
 - The Law requires that the meal be finished by twilight on the 14th of Nisan
 - But it places no restriction on how *early* the meal could be eaten on that day
 - So Jesus was still celebrating the meal on the 14th of Nisan as required
 - He just changed convention to accommodate his appointment with the cross
- But what about the lamb they ate at that table?
 - The lamb they consumed at the Last Supper couldn't have been sacrificed as required by the Law
 - In order for their lamb to be ready for dinner on that evening, it must have been killed, prepared and roasted earlier that day, which was the 13th of Nisan
 - Since the Passover lamb had to be killed on the 14th of Nisan, their lamb couldn't have been considered a Passover sacrifice
 - So how did the meal Jesus ate with the disciples satisfy the Law's requirement that they eat a lamb slain on the 14 of Nisan?
 - In the synoptic Gospel, Jesus interrupts the meal to take some bread and wine and then declares they are His body and blood
 - Jesus made those elements representative of His own body, which would be slain on the proper day
 - So it wasn't the roasted lamb at the table that fulfilled the Passover requirement
 - The lamb of the Last Supper was Jesus Himself as represented in those elements
 - Symbolically, the Lamb of that Passover was consumed in advance of His death, for that was the only way it could happen

- As Jesus told the crowd in John 6, unless they would eat His flesh and drink His blood, they would not be saved
- We will return to studying the timeline of the events surrounding Jesus' death as we move further through John's Gospel
 - For now, we rejoin Jesus and the disciples in the waning hours of daylight on Wednesday, April 21, AD 34 (a date we will examine later as well)
 - The day of Passover is about to begin at sundown
 - And as the other Gospels tells us, Jesus has told the disciples that He earnestly wished to celebrate the Passover meal with them
 - If they thought the request was a bit odd, they don't say anything
 - An upper room has been prepared for Jesus
 - It makes sense that a room could have been prepared for the Passover meal yet go unused
 - Remember, this meal is taking place the night before it normally would
 - So the room was prepared but not expecting guests for another 24 hours – except Jesus
- As the men assemble in the room, John opens the scene of the meal remarking on Jesus's amazing mindset
 - Jesus knew that His death was mere hours away
 - He knew that He would die and He knew *how* He would die
 - And yet His focus remained on showing love to those who were His, John says
 - We would have understood had Jesus been a little distracted or even on edge
 - Instead, He's kind, calm and purposeful in all that He does
 - This leads John's conclusion that Jesus loved them to the end
 - In this context John's referring specifically to Jesus' willingness to serve the disciples even in the midst of His mental suffering
 - He was unimaginably burdened by what lay ahead

- Still, He wanted to use these last hours to teach lessons that would stay with the disciples forever
- Even more remarkable is the way Jesus served the very one who would betray Him and bring about His death
 - Judas was still among the twelve as this Passover began in the upper room, though he won't be there at its conclusion
 - And we're told Satan had already sparked in Judas the desire to betray Jesus
 - Judas was not a true disciple, as Jesus highlighted in chapter 6
 - Judas is a devil, yet Jesus recruited him for a specific purpose
 - And that purpose is about to be fulfilled
 - Judas serves as a useful study for us in how the enemy works within the hearts of the world
 - The enemy has dominion over fallen humanity as their slave master
 - Hebrews tells us that the enemy has enslaved sinful men through fear of death
 - Every unbeliever is a target for the enemy's agents to indwell and possess
 - And even before he takes that step, the enemy can influence the thoughts and the unbeliever, as we see here
 - We find another useful example in the book of Acts

[Acts 13:6](#) When they had gone through the whole island as far as Paphos, they found a magician, a Jewish false prophet whose name was Bar-jesus,

[Acts 13:7](#) who was with the proconsul, Sergius Paulus, a man of intelligence. This man summoned Barnabas and Saul and sought to hear the word of God.

[Acts 13:8](#) But Elymas the magician (for so his name is translated) was opposing them, seeking to turn the proconsul away from the faith.

[Acts 13:9](#) But Saul, who was also known as Paul, filled with the Holy Spirit, fixed his gaze on him,

[Acts 13:10](#) and said, "You who are full of all deceit and fraud, you son of the devil, you enemy of all righteousness, will you not cease to make crooked the straight ways of the Lord?"

- Knowing that the world is the playground of the enemy is important to conducting ourselves in a wise and discerning manner
 - The enemy has real power, but the Lord has infinitely greater power
 - Paul was filled by the Spirit, which was the source of his power against the enemy
- And this moment at the Passover also reflects that hierarchy
 - Satan is already at work striving to bring the end of his enemy, Christ
 - But his progress is entirely dependent on the Lord permission's
 - At the end of the age, the Lord brings Satan to his final reckoning, but not until the Lord has used Satan to accomplished everything the Lord desires
- Then in v.3 John says that despite knowing that Jesus had come from the right hand of God almighty and that all Creation had been given to Him, nevertheless Jesus begins to serve

John 13:3 Jesus, knowing that the Father had given all things into His hands, and that He had come forth from God and was going back to God,

John 13:4 got up from supper, and laid aside His garments; and taking a towel, He girded Himself.

John 13:5 Then He poured water into the basin, and began to wash the disciples' feet and to wipe them with the towel with which He was girded.

- Jesus laid aside His garments
 - This means he dressed himself as a slave, removing his outer cloak
 - Jesus stood only girded at the waist while the disciples remained reclined at the table
 - Remember, the table would have been on the ground, with the disciples reclining on the ground
 - Their feet would have been stretched out behind them
- And then Jesus took a towel and a basin of water and began to wash the disciples' dusty feet

- In a proper home, a servant of the home's master would have had the duty of washing the feet of the guests before the meal
- But there were no servants in this room...just Jesus and the disciples
- Perhaps a few of the disciples noticed that there was no one in the house to perform the traditional foot washing service prior to the meal
 - Clearly, none of the disciples would condescend to perform that duty for the sake of their brethren
 - Luke records that only a few moments earlier, these same men had been arguing among one another over who would be the greatest in the kingdom
 - So it seems they were too prideful to address the need and were resigned to go without
- So instead, their rabbi takes it upon Himself to wash their feet as a lesson
 - Warren Wiersbe makes an excellent observation about Jesus' lesson of humility

"We today, just like the disciples that night, desperately need this lesson on humility. The church is filled with a worldly spirit of competition and criticism as believers vie with one another to see who is the greatest. We are growing in knowledge, but not in grace..."

- As Jesus reaches Peter's feet, he is the first to object

[John 13:6](#) So He came to Simon Peter. He said to Him, "Lord, do You wash my feet?"

[John 13:7](#) Jesus answered and said to him, "What I do you do not realize now, but you will understand hereafter."

[John 13:8](#) Peter said to Him, "Never shall You wash my feet!" Jesus answered him, "If I do not wash you, you have no part with Me."

[John 13:9](#) Simon Peter said to Him, "Lord, then wash not only my feet, but also my hands and my head."

[John 13:10](#) Jesus said to him, "He who has bathed needs only to wash his feet, but is completely clean; and you are clean, but not all of you."

[John 13:11](#) For He knew the one who was betraying Him; for this reason He said, "Not all of you are clean."

- Peter is disturbed at the notion of Jesus washing His feet
 - Jesus tries to explain that the meaning of Jesus' actions won't make sense now but will in the near future
 - Jesus is performing a simple physical act to teach an important spiritual lesson
 - Jesus's concern wasn't for the cleanliness of the disciples' bodies
 - Nor was Jesus worried about satisfying Jewish dining customs
 - Nor was this merely a lesson in humility or service, though it obviously carried that message as well
 - Jesus is creating a beautiful picture of the meaning of His death on the cross
 - First, there is a picture created by their dirty feet
 - But by Jesus' sacrificial death, He will make His disciples spiritually clean
 - Our dirt of our sinful walk is removed by Jesus' sacrificial act on the cross
 - He will wash away their sins by His own blood
 - Notice when Peter objected to Jesus' cleansing, Jesus told Peter it was the only way He could be cleansed
 - Without this cleansing, Peter could not be a part of what Jesus was working to achieve
 - We must be cleansed by the blood of Christ or else we will never see the Kingdom
 - Of course, Peter doesn't understand the spiritual dimension, just as Jesus said he wouldn't
 - So he tells Jesus to wash all of him
- Jesus then adds that this group is clean already, meaning they had already been forgiven by their faith
 - It still remains for Jesus to accomplish the atoning work on the cross
 - But like Abraham and all saints, these men have already been justified by faith in God's promises

- This statement is important because it reminds us that this physical cleansing was not the source of these men's salvation
- No one can argue that this washing or any other (like baptism) is required for salvation
- But nevertheless, this cleansing was necessary because it created a powerful picture that Jesus was determined to provide
- Notice also that John is careful to clarify that one of these men is not clean, meaning Judas
 - By saying Judas wasn't clean, we have our clearest evidence yet that Judas was not a believer
 - He was not saved by faith
 - He was an unbeliever attached to the group and brought into the inner circle so that a betrayer would be available
- Ironically, Peter's protest highlights the second lesson Jesus was teaching
 - Jesus is modeling the way Jesus' disciples will serve Christ's followers
 - Disciples are to set aside personal ambition and the pride that provokes such thinking to serve the needs of others
 - Peter's comments sound pious, but they are nothing but pride
 - Peter was to be seen as the one disciple humble enough to refuse Jesus' gesture
 - As we say, Peter was proud of his humility
 - And as Shakespeare wrote, "he doth protest too much"
 - His protest sounds hollow
 - We know Peter spoke up (when others didn't) as opportunity to stand out from his peers
 - He wanted his protest to reflect credit upon himself
 - His primary interest wasn't Jesus' honor, but his own
- So Jesus reinforces the second purpose in His washing by emphasizing the model of a disciple

[John 13:12](#) So 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?”

[John 13:13](#) “You call Me Teacher and Lord; and you are right, for so I am.

[John 13:14](#) “If I then, the Lord and the Teacher, washed your feet, you also ought to wash one another’s feet.

[John 13:15](#) “For I gave you an example that you also should do as I did to you.

[John 13:16](#) “Truly, truly, I say to you, a slave is not greater than his master, nor is one who is sent greater than the one who sent him.

[John 13:17](#) “If you know these things, you are blessed if you do them.

[John 13:18](#) “I do not speak of all of you. I know the ones I have chosen; but it is that the Scripture may be fulfilled, ‘HE WHO EATS MY BREAD HAS LIFTED UP HIS HEEL AGAINST ME.’

[John 13:19](#) “From now on I am telling you before it comes to pass, so that when it does occur, you may believe that I am He.

[John 13:20](#) “Truly, truly, I say to you, he who receives whomever I send receives Me; and he who receives Me receives Him who sent Me.”

- Now the lesson begins, as Jesus asks them do they understand what He has done?
 - There’s no evidence they tried to answer, and I expect they weren’t going to, so Jesus moves directly to answering it for them
 - He says they acknowledge Him as the Teacher and Lord
 - These titles are accurate and there they are right to use them of Jesus
 - But these titles are not badges of honor that we all aspire to gain for ourselves
 - We don’t aspire to receive the honor that is uniquely due to our Lord
 - As another saying goes, there is a God, and you aren’t Him
 - So then Jesus asks them to consider what does it mean if their Lord and Teacher humbles Himself to wash their feet?
 - Clearly, if the Lord is not above performing acts of selflessness and sacrifice, then none of His disciples are either
 - As Jesus, a slave is not greater than his Master
 - Therefore, the lesson for Peter and the rest is to emulate Jesus’ attitude and actions in how they serve the church

- But then Jesus adds that knowing this principle is not enough
 - The disciples must be prepared to put it into action
 - Notice in v.17 that they will be blessed by God when they do what Jesus did
 - Many students of the Bible are smart enough to see that sacrificial service to the body of Christ is an imperative
 - But only those who make it a practice of their lives will receive God's blessing
- Once again, Jesus makes a distinction adding that He is not speaking equally to everyone: Judas isn't included
 - Jesus knew that what He was speaking simply wasn't being received by Judas
 - His ears were hearing the words Jesus' spoke, but they were words speaking to believers only
 - Jesus says He knew who He had chosen, but what does He mean "chosen?"
 - All 12 men had been chosen to be in the group of twelve
 - But Jesus means He knew the 11 of the twelve who were chosen for salvation
 - Judas had not been chosen to be born again
 - Instead, Judas was included so that the scripture would be fulfilled that one close to the Messiah would betray Him
 - Jesus quoted from Psalm 41:9 to emphasize that there was a purpose in selecting someone for His twelve who was not also selected for salvation
 - There must be at least one traitor among the twelve if God's plan for the crucifixion is to be carried out
 - As we'll see, the act of betrayal follows the eating of the Passover bread
- Since so many important and unexpected things are about to happen to Jesus, He tells the disciples that they will be told in advance of these things

- So that as they come to mind in the days and weeks after they occur, the disciples will have reason to ponder their meaning
 - When the Lord you love and follow dies at the hand of His enemies, it's hard to make sense of that outcome
 - The disciples might be tempted to conclude that Jesus wasn't truly God
 - Or that God isn't all powerful
- On the other hand, if Jesus tells you everything that's going to happen in advance, you have reason to reconsider the meaning of these things
 - It will become clear that Jesus intended for these things to happen
 - In fact, He said He must die
 - And he says how it will happen
 - So clearly, if He knew what was going to happen in advance, then He could have stopped it or avoided it
 - Since He didn't, it must have served His purpose
- And that line of thought eventually leads the apostles to a deep appreciation of what happened
 - So that as they become His representatives, they are in a position to convince others of the truth of His claims
 - Nevertheless, their success in that mission remains dependent on the Lord to work through them
 - Notice in v.20 the Lord says that those who would receive Jesus will likewise receive His ambassadors
 - When we have been born again by the Spirit we join a family of believers
 - And that family knows its own and receives its own
 - Like any other family, we may not always like one another, but we will always love one another
- Having referred to Judas and his purpose on several occasions already, Jesus decides its time to dismiss the traitor now

[John 13:21](#) When Jesus had said this, He became troubled in spirit, and testified and said, "Truly, truly, I say to you, that one of you will betray Me."

[John 13:22](#) The disciples began looking at one another, at a loss to know of which one He was speaking.

[John 13:23](#) There was reclining on Jesus' bosom one of His disciples, whom Jesus loved.

[John 13:24](#) So Simon Peter gestured to him, and said to him, "Tell us who it is of whom He is speaking."

[John 13:25](#) He, leaning back thus on Jesus' bosom, said to Him, "Lord, who is it?"

[John 13:26](#) Jesus then answered, "That is the one for whom I shall dip the morsel and give it to him." So when He had dipped the morsel, He took and gave it to Judas, the son of Simon Iscariot.

[John 13:27](#) After the morsel, Satan then entered into him. Therefore Jesus said to him, "What you do, do quickly."

[John 13:28](#) Now no one of those reclining at the table knew for what purpose He had said this to him.

[John 13:29](#) For some were supposing, because Judas had the money box, that Jesus was saying to him, "Buy the things we have need of for the feast"; or else, that he should give something to the poor.

[John 13:30](#) So after receiving the morsel he went out immediately; and it was night.

- Judas is being removed from the meal at this point, because what's about to follow is only appropriate for those who are truly Christ's disciples
 - So Jesus, fearful again of His coming death, puts the wheel in motion that we bring about his painful death
 - In keeping with His promise, he tells them in advance that He will be betrayed by one of His disciples
 - Naturally, to hear these words greatly perplexes the eleven, who can't understand how this would happen
 - They can't begin to guess who it would be
 - This detail in itself is surprising to me
 - We know Judas is a devil, as Jesus called him
 - John said earlier that Judas was stealing money from the money box
 - He is an unbeliever among men who know and love the Lord
 - And yet know one suspect Judas is the one to betray the Lord

- It's a sobering reminder that we can be surrounded by men and women who play the part well but have nothing in their hearts
 - The Gospel isn't a way of life to be adopted
 - It isn't a way of thinking to be argued
 - It's a spiritual rebirth that God alone accomplished in the heart of His children
 - It's prompted by the hearing of God's word
 - And it's consummated by the work of the Spirit
- At this moment, John reveals that he was leaning on Jesus, which means he was seated to the right hand side of Jesus
 - This is the first time John refers to himself as the disciple Jesus loved
 - This is a turn of phrase by John
 - He's not suggesting that he was Jesus' favorite or that he was loved more than the other disciples
 - It's a statement of God's grace spoken in humility
 - John is emphasizing that it was Jesus' love for him that was the foundation for his relationship with Jesus
 - And of course, this same thing could be said about every disciple
 - Ironically, John chose to refer to himself in this way rather than in the first person so as to diminish himself while emphasizing Christ's love
 - Therefore, John is seated next to Jesus
 - Traditionally, the Passover table was arranged so that the most honored sat at the right end of the table with the group arranged around the table
 - The one seated to the left of Jesus would have been the one presumed to have the next greatest honor
 - And so on around the table until you reached the other side
 - There was one except to this rule

- The youngest was positioned immediately to the right of the most honored person
- It was a position intended to preserve the youngest from always being away from the action
- Since men reclined on their left elbow, the youngest person would naturally recline against the one of highest honor
- So John must have been the youngest disciples in the group
 - He reclines next to Jesus, with his head practically touching Jesus' right shoulder
 - Peter must have been seated some distance from Jesus, perhaps directly opposite John
 - If so, then Peter has assumed a position of some humility at the table, seating himself a distance from Jesus
- Therefore, Peter wants John to solicit more information from Jesus, so he gestures to John since he was physically the closest to Christ
 - John relays the request to Jesus
 - To fulfill scripture, Jesus declares that the one who eats the morsel He dips is the betrayer
 - Jesus may have spoken this softly just to those next to him, not necessarily to the whole table
 - The bread was the Passover unleavened bread and it was dipped probably into the paschal stew or perhaps into the bitter herbs
 - If Jesus could reach Judas with this morsel, then it suggests Judas took the seat immediately left of Jesus
 - That would have been the most honored position after Jesus Himself
 - Another irony and indication of Judas' pride and self-deceit
 - We might also conclude that Jesus offered this seat to Judas for this very moment
 - As the saying goes, keep your friends close and your enemies closer

- John records that at this moment, Satan entered Judas
 - The word “entered” indicates an indwelling of Judas’ body by the enemy himself
 - This shows us how strongly Satan took interest in the destruction of the Messiah
 - Satan normally uses his agents to indwell and direct the bodies of unbelievers from time to time (including today)
 - It’s a rare event when Satan himself steps in
 - He does it here and later in the life of the antichrist to come
 - Matthew records that Judas reacts with surprise to learn he is the one to betray Christ
 - Perhaps he’s just feigning surprise
 - Or perhaps his role as betrayer wasn’t formed in his heart fully
 - And it required the indwelling of Satan to bring him to that point
 - The more we consider the interplay between Judas and the enemy, the more revealing it becomes
 - We know that Judas takes his own life after Jesus’ death, which suggests he felt regret at his actions
 - But these actions are not the same as saving faith, of course
 - Unbelievers can do the wrong thing and feel regret in the end without that repentance being evidence of God’s saving work in their hearts
 - Furthermore, we might conclude that without Satan’s direct influence, Judas might not have gone through with the plan
 - So taking all these possibilities into account, I arrive at the conclusion that Judas was placed within Jesus’ inner circle as a pawn available to Satan
 - Judas was an unbeliever living in the flesh and so he followed Jesus as far as flesh can follow God
 - He was drawn by the notoriety of Jesus, flattered to be chosen and remained committed for as long as it benefitted him

- He stole a little money along the way
- And generally understood Jesus' ministry as an opportunity to get in on the ground floor of something new and exciting
- But because he was without the Spirit of God, he was an empty vessel, spiritually speaking
 - Like every unbeliever, he was an asset that Satan controlled
 - And Jesus included Judas in the group knowing that Judas was the only one Satan could control
 - Remember, when Jesus taught on demons possession, He states that unless a person is under the control of the Spirit of God, he remains available to the enemy

Luke 11:24 "When the unclean spirit goes out of a man, it passes through waterless places seeking rest, and not finding any, it says, 'I will return to my house from which I came.'

Luke 11:25 "And when it comes, it finds it swept and put in order.

Luke 11:26 "Then it goes and takes along seven other spirits more evil than itself, and they go in and live there; and the last state of that man becomes worse than the first."

- So how do we see Judas?
 - He was an unbeliever susceptible to Satan's deceptions and authority
 - He was positioned by Christ so that God's plan would be accomplished
 - Though the Lord is never the author of sin, He knows how to put it to work to accomplish His good purposes
 - In this case, Jesus put to work Satan's desire to destroy the Messiah and Judas' desire to enhance his pocketbook and ego
 - And a dog returns to its vomit, as the saying goes
 - Judas was not innocent, but nor was he the mastermind nor even the agent of Jesus' betrayal
 - The blame always traces to Satan
 - And his antics pollute everyone he touches, including Judas
 - This is why the writer of Hebrews says

[Heb. 2:14](#) Therefore, since the children share in flesh and blood, He Himself likewise also partook of the same, that through death He might render powerless him who had the power of death, that is, the devil,

[Heb. 2:15](#) and might free those who through fear of death were subject to slavery all their lives.

- Finally, Jesus tells Judas to do what he is about to do with haste, and as Judas departs the disciples are confused
 - It's obvious despite Jesus' words that they don't realize Judas is the betrayer and about to turn Jesus in
 - Even though Jesus called it out in advance, everyone missed it
 - How is this possible?
 - Other than lack of attentiveness, we might explain it as a supernatural act
 - Imagine what might have happened in the moment if one or more of the disciples knew Judas was leaving to betray the Lord?
 - Wouldn't they have tried to stop him?
 - Once again, we see the Lord orchestrating every detail to ensure His trip to the cross
 - And once again, we have to marvel at Jesus' obedience, knowing He could have stopped the plan simply by skipping one of these details...yet He didn't
- The disciples try to explain Judas' departure as an errand
 - They think he is going to get things to prepare for the Passover feast
 - This is further evidence that this meal was not the normal time for a Passover celebration
 - The normal Passover feast would take place on the following afternoon
 - So the disciples think Judas is going to make a purchase for the next day's meal (since he held the funds)
 - If this meal were the proper Passover meal, then they wouldn't have made that assumption

- Notice also it was nighttime as he departed
 - This is important for two reasons
 - First, it confirms our timeline that this meal is taking place on the 14th of Nisan after nightfall
 - And yet it's taking place too early to be the normal Passover meal, since the lambs haven't yet been sacrificed
- Secondly, it's one of John's classic devices to represent spiritual power
 - Darkness is the picture of the enemy and sin and death
 - And as Judas leaves the gathering, the world enters a period of extreme darkness spiritually
 - For a time, the Father is going to put His Son into the hands of the enemy and His agents
- For a time, the order of Creation will be flipped, in a sense
 - The enemy will take the life of God, so to speak
 - The Lord will subject Himself to evil scheme of Satan and darkness will fall upon the world
 - But in three days, the darkness will be defeated

[Phil. 2:5](#) Have this attitude in yourselves which was also in Christ Jesus,
[Phil. 2:6](#) who, although He existed in the form of God, did not regard equality with God a thing to be grasped,

[Phil. 2:7](#) but emptied Himself, taking the form of a bond-servant, and being made in the likeness of men.

[Phil. 2:8](#) Being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross.

[Phil. 2:9](#) For this reason also, God highly exalted Him, and bestowed on Him the name which is above every name,

[Phil. 2:10](#) so that at the name of Jesus EVERY KNEE WILL BOW, of those who are in heaven and on earth and under the earth,

[Phil. 2:11](#) and that every tongue will confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.