

The Inner Circle
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Bible Study
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- I. Bad Intentions...John 12:4-8
 - a. One of His Disciples John 6:64 &70
 - i. Judas-
 - 1. The term “the Twelve” designates the inner circle of the disciples of Jesus. It occurs once in Paul, eleven times in Mark, eight times in Matthew, nine times in Luke-Acts, and four times in John. Judas’ attachment to this group has posed theological problems since antiquity
 - ii. Disciple - one who is rather constantly associated with someone who has a pedagogical reputation or a particular set of views, *disciple, adherent*
 - 1. but from the shocking force of their hindsight. It is as if they cannot recollect anything he said and did without also remembering that he was the one who ultimately betrayed the Lord of Glory
 - 2. His general behavior was probably not different either; he evidently heard the words of the Savior, saw the miracles, and performed the various responsibilities of the disciples. According to John 12:5–6; 13:29, his penury as treasurer of the group was tempered by greed and theft. Indeed, greed prompted Judas to go to the chief priests and bargain with them for the betrayal of Jesus (Matt. 26:14–16 par¹).
 - b. Bad Intentions
 - i. Intending - *propose, have in mind*
 - ii. *Betray- hand over, turn over, give up* a person
 - c. Symptoms
 - i. Not Concerned about the Poor
 - 1. **Concern - *it is a care/concern, is of interest***
 - 2. With Judas Iscariot, the case is far worse: his personal greed for material things masquerades as altruism
 - 3. In this story John makes it plain that Judas was not an unfortunate, misguided person. He was inherently an evil thief who had no concern for the poor
 - ii. Thief
 - 1. *Pilfer- take surreptitiously(secretly), pilfer, steal*
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- II. Heart of the Betrayer - John 13:2-3
 - a. The Setting-

¹par. parallel

- i. The disciples whose feet he was about to wash include Judas Iscariot, son of Simon (*cf.* Additional Note), whose treacherous plot had already been conceived.
- b. Devil already put into the heart
 - i. Put- to lay, inspire, mediate
 - 1. Put- the genitive of Judas (*Iouda*) that sanctions such a rendering. The idea, then, is not that Judas was not responsible, for a heart incited by Satan actually wills what the devil wills (Schlatte²r, p. 279); rather, the plot against Jesus, however mediated by wicked human beings, was nothing less than satanic.
 - 2. Either way, the devil and Judas are now in a conspiracy of evil to bring Jesus to the cross, a conspiracy fleshed out
 - 3. that the heart that is inspired by the devil wills what the devil wills (*cf.* also 13:18, 21, 27). Some manuscripts read “the heart of Judas” (the genitive *Iouda*), but the nominative *Idoudas* here is to be preferred. the harder reading actually turns out here to be theologically significant because it presents Judas clearly as the responsible actor in the betrayal of Jesus and the devil as the one who inspires the evil heart.
 - 4. Building upon the statements concerning Jesus’ knowledge of his hour in v. 1, the evangelist expands the idea here to remind the reader that Jesus was clearly knowledgeable about his origin and his goal or destiny.

III. One of You - John 13:10-15

- a. You are clean
 - i. Clean **-to being clean or free of adulterating matter, *clean, pure***
 - 1. Hb. emphasizes the superiority of the new covenant to the old. It uses the concept of purity in this connection. In contrast with the older ritual purity, the new moral purity is true and perfect purity power of blood is maintained (9:22). Cleansing
 - 2. (Jn. 3:25; 13:10 f.; 15:2 f.; 1 Jn. 1:7, 9). It is a basic thesis that the disciples of Jesus are clean (15:3; 13:10). According to the Gospel the disciples are clean because of their life-association with Jesus (15:3). His Word causes His Spirit, His higher divine mode of life, to enter into them effectively.
 - 3. A preferable interpretation is that after salvation all one needs is confession of sins, the continual application of Jesus’ death to cleanse one’s daily sins (*cf.* 1 John 1:7; 2:1–2).
 - 4. In Jn. 13 the foot-washing has two meanings. On the one hand it is a parabolic action (6–11), on the other an example (12–17). The former sense expresses the fact that the full bath (ὁ λελουμένος, v³. 10) of baptism accomplishes full cleansing. He who is baptised is

²

³v. verse.

clean (v⁴. 10, cf. 3:6). In distinction from other washings, baptism need not and cannot be repeated. The foot-washing (νίπτεισθαι of partial washing), however, symbolizes the loving service which Jesus performs for His own by the daily forgiveness of minor offenses (cf. 1 Jn. 5:16: ἁμαρτία μὴ πρὸς θάνατον). The link with Jesus must be upheld if the disciple is to receive this service from his Master.

5. The purity of the N⁵T community is personal and moral by nature. It consists in full and unreserved self-offering to God which renews the heart and rules out any acceptance of what is against God.
6. Those who are pure in heart in this way are called to participate in the kingdom of God, Mt. 5:8. This purity of heart is far above the cleanness of hands which was so greatly valued by the Pharisees. It alone counts before God.
7. 1:27) and when he says that the sinner must cleanse his hands and sanctify his heart if he is truly to draw near to God (4:7, 8; cf. Is. 1:16 f.).

b. Not all of You

- i. Moreover, the text itself here indicates that Jesus was not confused about the status of the betrayer who was present at this event (13:11). The Johannine message has consistently been clear on the fact that although people like Peter and Judas may not have understood the implications of events, it is absolutely certain that Jesus understood what people were like (cf. 2:23–25). What surprised people did not surprise Jesus
- ii. But Jesus' words in 6:70 ('Have I not chosen you, the Twelve? Yet one of you is a devil!') show that Judas is at this point to be counted amongst the Twelve; his words in 13:18 assume the same thing. The reason why he now takes the pains to show that inclusion of Judas was not an oversight or a sign of weakness on his part is so that their faith might be strengthened for the critical hour.

IV. Still Washed John 13:10-15

- i. It is precisely because their Lord and Teacher (note the reversal here of the order)⁴⁶³ was willing to adopt the humbling model of foot washing that Jesus' disciples cannot treat humility as merely a nice idea that is unrelated to Christian life. The actual practice of foot washing in the church is not observed widely today. The mention of the idea in connection with the enrollment of widows in 1 Tim 5:10 may possibly

⁴v. verse.

⁵NT New Testament.

⁶⁴³ The reversal of the designation Teacher and Lord of 13:13 in 13:14 may be because the emphasis falls on the model of humility in the latter verse, but one cannot be certain of the reason for the change.

suggest that some practice could have been observed by the early church, though “washing the feet of saints” in that context of exhibiting hospitality and caring for the weak hardly sounds like a church rite. Rather, it seems a humble, self-giving treatment of other people without regard to shame and honor codes of society.

- ii. The first application used the footwashing to symbolize Christ’s atoning, cleansing death; this second application makes the points just elucidated; the third and final application teaches lessons in humility (vv. 12–17). One could not responsibly argue against the obvious meaning of vv. 12–15
 - iii. The model is, in fact, one that also represents the dying Lamb of God. Therefore the servant/follower of Jesus should realize that the self-giving washing of feet may be far more costly a calling than merely a matter involving a basin of water and a towel.
 - iv. I gave you the example- but the force of the statement here is to remind the followers of Jesus that there is no reason to become puffed up over their calling, accomplishments, or spirituality, a problem that plagued the Corinthians (1 Cor 4:6–7; 5:6; etc.) and is not unknown in Christian communities today.
- b. Finally Betrayed John 18:1-5
- i. Regret- , Judas was overwhelmed with remorse. He went to the chief priests and elders and, throwing down the thirty pieces of silver he had received from them, went and hanged himself (27:3–5; Acts 1:18–20).

A. The Name

Judas Iscariot appears in five different forms: (a) the original name, *Judas*, the Hellenized form of the Hebrew name *Yēhūdā* (Mark 14:43; Matt 26:25, 47; 27:3; Luke 22:47f; Acts 1:16, 25; John 13:29; 18:2f, 5); (b) *Judas Iscarioth* (Mark 3:19; 14:10; Luke 6:16; and as v 1 Matt 10:4 and Luke 22:47), which is the Semitic form of Iscariot; (c) *Judas Iscariot*, the Greek form (Matt 10:3; 26:14; Luke 22:3; John 6:71; 12:4; 13:2, 26; 14:22; and as variant readings in Mark 3:19; 14:10, 43; Luke 6:16); (d) *Judas, the one called Judas Iscariot* (Matt 26:14; Luke 22:3; John 6:71); and (e) *Judas, son of Simon Iscariot* (John 6:71; 13:2, 26).

The term “Iscariot” did not belong, at first, to the name itself but emerged to distinguish this Judas from many others of that name (cf. Luke 6:16; Acts 1:13; John 14:22). Schwarz lists nine interpretations of the term “Iscariot” and adds another of his own (Schwarz 1988). These fall into four main groups:

(i) Some hold that the term “Iscariot” indicates that Judas belonged to the group of the Sicarii: dagger-wielding assassins (Cullmann 1956: 15; 1970: 21–23; 1966); and thus they concluded Judas was a member of the Zealot party.

(ii) Others suggest that the term is derived from the Heb *šāqar* and designates the “false one.” This highlights the character of Judas by alluding in his surname to his act of deception and betrayal (Torrey 1943; Gärtner 1971).

(iii) Others believe that the word designates his deed. He was a “deliverer” (root *škr*), and thus *ho paradidous* is a simple translation of (I)Skariot (h). It has been noted that the LX⁷X of Isa 19:4 translates the *Pi’el* of *škr* (“capture and hand over”) with Gk *paradidomi*, the same word used in Mark 3:19 to designate Judas (*ho paradidous*, “the one who betrayed him”). Morin (1973) takes the Markan designation to be a literal translation of (*i*)skariot, “the one handing over.” Still others suggest that it refers to what Judas did for a living, concluding that he was a red dyer (Ehrman 1978; Arbeitman 1980) or a fruit grower (Krauss 1902).

(iv) Some believe that the name Iscariot indicates hometown. Was Judas perhaps the only one of the Twelve from Judea, from the village of Kerioth (Josh 15:25)? Billerbeck gives many cases where the Heb *’iš* is connected with a hometown and calls this “the right explanation” (1922: 537; so also Haugg 1930: 76 and Dalman 1929: 28–29). Askaroth or Askar, near Shechem, has also been suggested (Dalman 1935: 213). Schwarz (1988) proposes that the original Aramaic yields the translation “the man from the city”= Jerusalem. This is supported by evidence from the Targums where the formula appears frequently at least in the plural, “men from the city,” and the word *keriotha* is often used to mean Jerusalem. If those who suggest that the term “Iscariot” came into use only after Judas’ death are correct (Torrey 1943; Vogler 1985) then it is also possible that not even the evangelists knew what it meant (Dalman 1902: 51–52).

Although it seems plausible (Klauck 1987) to interpret “Iscariot” as designating place of origin there is no consensus on this or on the place designated.

B. The Act of Judas

The usual word for the deed of Judas is *paradidonai*, which occurs 122 times in the NT, 57 times in connection with the capture of Jesus. It appears 18 times in the Gospels in the general

⁷LXX Septuagint

sense; e.g., “It is necessary for the Son of Man to be handed over.” The verb is connected directly with Judas 44 times. The word is many-layered, appearing often in the NT without reference to Judas (Popkes 1967).

For example, it is used of the chief priests who deliver Jesus to Pilate (Mark 15:1, 10; Matt 27:2, 18; Luke 24:20; John 18:30, 35); to describe his being delivered over to the “Jews” (John 18:36), or by the contemporaries of the apostles (Acts 3:13). Pilate “hands [Jesus] over” to be crucified (Matt 27:26; Mark 15:15; Luke 23:25; John 19:16). It is striking that Judas is never mentioned without some reference to this act; apart from it Judas has no recognizable identity in any of the Gospels.

In Luke 6:16 the noun *prodotes* (traitor) stands in its place, and in Acts 1:16 Judas is designated as the *hodegos*, the one who pointed the way to those who sought to take Jesus captive. However, most often Judas is simply noted as the “one who handed him over.”

Judas is never mentioned by Paul, although Paul repeats the tradition of Jesus being handed over without specifying who did it (1 Cor 11:27). The same verb is used by Paul in theological contexts as in Rom 4:25: “Jesus was delivered to death for our misdeeds.” In Rom 8:32 it is God who delivers his own son, and in Gal 2:20 Jesus delivers himself to death (so also Eph 5:2, 25). This widespread variation in usage of the term suggests caution in translating *paradidonai* as “betray.” That translation is, in fact, quite peripheral in biblical literature (Klauck 1987: 45). The oldest occurrence of the word in connection with Jesus’ capture occurs in 1 Cor 11:23b, where Judas is not mentioned by name. The tradition of *Judas* as betrayer was not found in Paul or in the earliest layers of the tradition.

Recent studies (Klauck 1987; Vogler 1985) of the pre-Synoptic layers of the tradition have led to two important conclusions. First, Judas was neither a symbolic figure nor a product of kerygmatic imagination, but a clearly recognizable historical figure, i.e., an actual disciple of Jesus. His designated name, Iscariot, comes from a Semitic milieu; and our knowledge that he belongs to the circle of the Twelve also rests on tradition which comes from the Aramaic-speaking Church. Missing from the earliest traditions are any aspects of the paid informant who, in remorse, later commits suicide. We have portrayed rather a man who is no worse than his colleagues in the circle of the disciples and who received as much recognition from Jesus as did the rest and may have been honored by Jesus in this singular mission. The subsequent understanding of his action as a “betrayal” may come from the Aramaic-speaking Church, which later felt compelled to make Judas at least partially responsible for the death of Jesus. It was covered up with a theological rationalization of the death of Jesus in which Judas became a villain.

Second, the interpretation of the deed of Judas was soon changed, for as the Church began to interpret the death of Jesus, an increasingly larger degree of blame was placed on Judas. He was initially remembered only as the first who had parted company with Jesus even though all the other disciples likewise had occasion to abandon Jesus, leaving him dying on the cross attended only by a few female followers. However, Judas’ initial abandonment was eventually seen as a betrayal, and, eventually, the Church used the term “betrayal” to designate his deed, at times (Mark 14:21) avoiding the use of his name (Vogler 1985: 37; cf. Klauck 1987: 48–76).

C. Judas as One of the Twelve

The term “the Twelve” designates the inner circle of the disciples of Jesus. It occurs once in Paul, eleven times in Mark, eight times in Matthew, nine times in Luke-Acts, and four times in John. Judas’ attachment to this group has posed theological problems since antiquity. These

problems are even more acute if Jesus himself established this group and chose Judas to be a part of it.

The earliest reference to the Twelve is found in 1 Cor 15:5. As the negative tradition about Judas formed, it mentioned only eleven disciples at the post-resurrection appearances (Matt 28:16; Luke 24:9, 33; Mark 16:14; Acts 1:26; cf. 1:13). Given the theological difficulties of including Judas among the Twelve, it seems highly likely that the tradition of his attachment to the Twelve rests on historical fact. The more the community reflected on the capture and trial of Jesus and on Judas' role, the more critically they judged Judas' actions. They were, however, unable to conceal his place among the Twelve.

D. Judas in the Four Gospels

The negative portrayal of Judas can be seen by examining the evidence from the Gospels, written a generation or two after the events.

1. Mark. Mark says very little about Judas, and attributes his action to no particular motive. He is simply the one who handed Jesus over (3:19; 14:10, 44). Three parts of the Judas tradition that Mark appropriated from an earlier source are traceable:

a. In 14:43, 46, perhaps the oldest layer of redaction, it is simply reported that while Jesus was speaking, Judas, one of the Twelve, appeared with an armed crowd sent by the chief priests, lawyers, and elders, who seized Jesus and held him fast. The designation "Iscariot" is missing, and the verb *paradidonai* is not attached directly to Judas, attesting to the antiquity of the tradition.

b. Slightly more recent are the two reports in 14:18 and 14:21. The first states that as they sat at supper Jesus predicted that one of them, now eating with them, would hand him over. The second states that while Jesus' death is necessary, it is too bad for the person who will hand him over. This tradition is promoting the view that the death of Jesus was no accident, that Jesus had a premonition of it, and that, indeed, it was according to the divine plan revealed in Scripture (Gerhardsson 1981).

c. A later development is evident in 14:10, where mention is made of a financial reward offered by the leaders.

According to Vogler (1985: 55–56), the final redaction of Mark reflects the following concerns:

(1) Judas was not just any false brother who had smuggled himself into the inner circle of the Twelve but was "chosen of God and of Jesus Christ." Judas had a place in the community, even participating in the Last Supper. He belonged to the core of the Church (cf. Klauck 1987: 63).

(2) Just as Jesus and his circle of disciples could not protect themselves from the defection of Judas, neither can the Church protect itself from defectors.

(3) Just as the Church is not certain that there will be no defectors, so the individual believer is never certain whether he/she may not ultimately become a defector. The question "Not I, surely?" (14:19) leads the readers of Mark to ask this critical question of themselves.

(4) Defection means not only changing one's loyalty but also brings a curse, or at least a woe (14:21). Perhaps it can even be connected with the anathema of the early Church, and in the later Church the term "kiss of Judas" refers to any act of defection.

2. Matthew. Matthew offers nothing by way of tradition that is not found in Mark, but the redactional development is notable. Three texts (26:15, 25, 50) are taken over from Mark but developed. In one of them Matthew quotes Judas directly (26:15), thus livening up the narrative and providing Judas with some new features. To each of the three texts he has added new materials (Vogler 1985: 71).

(a) In 26:14–16 Matthew adds the detail that Judas received money for turning Jesus in. There is no explanation of the reason for this. In the anointing story Matthew states that “the disciples” were indignant at the waste (26:8), while Mark has “*certain of those present*” (but Mark escalates their anger by mentioning it twice [14:4, 5], and gives no indication that Judas might be driven by love for money).

(b) In Matt 26:20–25 Judas is portrayed as an unscrupulous man. Although he has already put into action his plan to betray Jesus (26:14) and should not even be there eating with them, still in the hearing of the others he asks: “Could it be I?”

(c) Matt 26:47–50 highlights this character trait when Judas brazenly meets Jesus in the garden with a kiss and the appellation: “Hail, Rabbi.” In Mark he greets him with the words “Rabbi, Rabbi,” and in all three Synoptic Gospels he kisses (in Luke he is about to kiss) Jesus. In Matthew the ruthless Judas of questionable moral background carries out his act, seeks repentance by trying to return the money (Matt 27:3–5), throws it down in the Temple, and goes out and hangs himself (27:5).

To heighten this dark picture of Judas, Matthew draws sharp contrasts between Judas’ behavior and that of others around him: the woman who anoints Jesus’ feet (26:6–13), the disciples at the table (26:20–35), and finally between Judas and Jesus himself (26:47–56).

Matthew’s account stands alone in describing Judas’ remorse and even his confession of guilt (27:3–10). The account is unlike that of Luke, but at no point does Matthew pass judgment on Judas or ascribe any ulterior motive to his deed.

In Matthew, Jesus relates to Judas in all gentleness during those last days, as seen especially from his greeting in the garden. According to Luke, Jesus addressed him by name, saying: “Judas, do you hand over the Son of Man with a kiss?” (Luke 22:48). But Matthew has Jesus using a word he uses for no other person in direct address: “Friend, what are you here for?” (Matt 26:50). The Greek word *hetairios* (“friend”) occurs only in Matthew and each time as direct address; twice in parables (20:13; 22:12) and once here. In all cases the one addressed is committing an ungrateful action against the one who has been generous. Here it highlights the very important relationship of trust which exists between Jesus and Judas.

Matthew’s portrait of Judas is based on traditions found in Mark’s gospel, except for the account of his death preserved in 27:3–10. Matthew’s redaction of the Markan materials is noteworthy. The narrative becomes more lively by the introduction of direct address in 26:15, 25, 50. More important, Matthew has added new dimensions to the portrait of Judas. In 26:14–16 he provides additional information about the amount of money Judas received. In another passage (26:20–25) Jesus traces Judas’ deed back to the inherent nature of Judas: “It would have been better for that man if he had never been born” (24, cf. Mark 14:20–21; Luke 22:22). In Matthew’s account the perversity of Judas is heightened by the fact that he has already taken steps, as one of the Twelve, to betray Jesus (26:14–16), and despite this joined the others in the final meal.

It is hardly correct that “seen from a purely human standpoint, [Jesus] must have hated Judas like poison” (Guardini 1964: 416). Rather, Matthew’s portrait of Judas serves as an example to the community. The transgressor, or the betrayer, is openly exposed. Peter, from Galilee, finds his way to genuine repentance, whereas Judas, from Judea, in spite of his remorse exercises the final judgment on himself. This represents a considerable escalation of the debt laid on Judas.

3. Lukan Tradition. In the Lukan writings there are four separate pieces of tradition dealing with Judas:

a. Luke 22:1–6. While Matthew suggests that Judas acted because of love for money, Luke goes considerably beyond that and attributes it to the entrance of Satan into Judas (22:3). This fits with Luke's notion that the devil left Jesus for a season (Luke 4:13) now to return, and through one of the Twelve, Satan will now bring the conflict between God and Satan to a decisive stage. Luke does not, like Mark and Matthew, have Jesus rebuke Peter with the words: "Get you behind me Satan" (Mark 8:33; Matt 16:23). Only in Luke does Satan enter Judas. Luke, furthermore, sets Judas on equal footing with the chief priests and officers of the Temple because he goes to negotiate with them. They want to take Jesus into captivity but cannot because of the crowds (19:47; 20:19). Luke provides a reason for Judas' deed and also prepares for the act that made it possible to capture Jesus. Just as Ananias is possessed by Satan in Acts 5:3, so here Satan takes over Judas and sets the execution of Jesus into motion. But Luke also portrays Judas as acting in partnership with the upper levels of authority in Judaism.

b. Luke 22:21–23. It is remarkable that in Luke's description of the Last Supper Judas stays until the very end; indeed, he is not even exposed as a traitor at this meal. If Matthew and Mark have avoided the problem of having Judas participate in this most intimate meal with Jesus by exposing him at the outset, Luke introduces a different problem: How can the betrayer, possessed as he is of Satan, participate in the inner circle of the Twelve with Jesus? Luke affirms that even in this intimate circle a betrayer, indeed one possessed of Satan, can be present. He is known to Jesus (22:21–23) but not exposed. Instead, in Luke's narrative the disciples break out into a jealous dispute about who among them ranks the highest. Perhaps it is Luke's way of saying that the act of betrayal is not restricted to one person alone, and although Judas' act is singular, there is in this context also a reminder that Peter will deny his Lord three times, in spite of his assurances that he will not.

c. Luke 22:47–53. The words "with ... Judas ... at their head" (v 47) are Luke's own, stressing Judas' leadership role. He does not actually depict Judas kissing Jesus, although it is clear that he intends to do so. Jesus addresses Judas by name with no qualifiers, signifying an early tradition. Most striking is also the way in which Judas is interrogated by Jesus (v 48); "the hour of darkness may now reign" (v 53), but ultimately Jesus is in charge. As Grundmann (*Luke* THKN⁸T) has said: "The One who has come to free those sitting in darkness ... came under their power himself through those who served it. Their hour will however be ended by his hour and the power of darkness will be overcome through his victory."

d. Acts 1:16–20. At the center of this narrative stands Peter, acting as an interpreter of the act of Judas. Missing is any reference to Satan; instead, Peter (through Luke's redaction) speaks of the way in which Scripture was fulfilled through the deeds of Judas. Nothing is said of a betrayal, rather, his deed is described as "acting as a guide to those who arrested Jesus" (Acts 1:16). To be sure, as Lüthi (1955: 113) has noted, while Matthew attributes an immoral dimension to Judas' financial negotiations, here it is explicitly described as "the price of his villainy" or unrighteousness. Luke sees *adikia* as related to *mamona* (16:8), and while his account of the death of Judas is clearly secondary to that of Matthew, neither one necessarily reflects historical reality. Luke tied it to two OT texts: Pss 69:26 and 109:8.

As for elements of the tradition, Luke offers little information about Judas that is not found elsewhere in the NT. Yet the shape and form which he gives it is uniquely his own, directed no doubt to his own community. By now it is clear that a supernatural element is needed to explain his action, and thus Satan is introduced for the first time. By having Judas at the Last Supper throughout the evening, Luke shows that satanic powers can permeate the very inner circle of

⁸THKNT Theologischer Handkommentar zum Neuen Testament

believers when they meet with their Lord. His Judas does not seek repentance. He ends his own life even though “he had this ministry with us” (Acts 1:17). But Luke’s understanding of salvation history also includes the victory of Jesus over Judas, the victory of good over evil, of light over darkness.

4. The Gospel of John. There are a total of five references to Judas Iscariot in the Fourth Gospel.

a. John 6:64–71. Unique is the introduction of Judas’ unbelief so early in the ministry of Jesus. While the Synoptic Gospels have also introduced Judas when naming the Twelve, they have only identified him further with the words “the one who handed him over.” John, however, introduces Judas here to show that Jesus is aware that, although he chose Twelve, “yet one of you is a devil” (v 70). Later, of “the Jews” Jesus says that their “father is the devil” (8:44). Here John’s concern is to affirm that Jesus knew everything: “Jesus knew from the first who those were that did not believe and who it was that would betray him” (6:64). Where Luke speaks of Satan entering into Judas, John states flatly: “One of you is a devil” (6:70). John’s gloss explains that “he meant Judas, son of Simon Iscariot.”

b. John 12:1–8. John’s editing of the anointing story builds on certain traditional materials, e.g., only here does John refer to Judas as “Iscariot” and only here does he use the expression *heis tōn mathētōn*, “one of the disciples.” He prefers the term *ek tōn mathētōn*, and he uses the traditional formula “the one who was to betray him.” What is new in this story is the notice that Judas served as treasurer and, secondly, that he was a thief who used to pilfer the money put into the common purse. Since the narrative reads well without any reference to Judas whatever, this could well be a later Johannine redactional addition. Since no group can long survive without confidence in its treasurer, and since the other gospels do not mention it, we may assume that John is here adding later gossip for which there is no historical evidence. It does, however, fit into his overall attempt to demonize Judas.

c. John 13:2–30. The context is the footwashing and the Last Supper. Judas serves as the backdrop of the foot-washing, for having spoken of his willingness to demonstrate the love Jesus had for his own, the narrative abruptly jars us with: “The devil had already put it into the mind of Judas ... to betray him.” We are led to believe that Judas participates in the washing of the feet without objection. The gloss in v 10 addresses the matter; Jesus was aware of who would betray him. He also knows whom he has chosen, but one of them is excluded from this choice, “the one who eats bread with me has lifted his heel against me.” Jesus is then described as being in “deep agitation of spirit” (v 21) because of the betrayal. The scene is similar to that of the Synoptics: the disciples ask who is it, and finally by dipping bread in the dish and giving it to Judas the secret is revealed. “As soon as Judas had received it, Satan entered him.” When Jesus tells him, “Do quickly what you have to do,” no one at the table understood what he meant. The perplexity of the disciples also indicates that Judas was not an “outsider” from the start. Rather, the reference to Satan entering him after he ate the bread indicates that Judas was a believer like the other disciples. He fully participated in their common life with Jesus. Twice John says that he received the bread (v 27, 30). But for John light and darkness are essential parts of moral reality, and when Judas departs he takes leave of the light and goes out into the darkness.

d. John 17:12. Even in the great prayer of Jesus recorded in chap. 17, the discordant note of Judas is sounded, although he is not named. “Not one of them is lost except the son of perdition who must be lost, for Scripture has to be fulfilled.” The divine will is here applied to Judas, and he is called something similar to the son of iniquity (2 Thess 2:3), i.e., someone born from and destined for iniquity. Judas appears here more like an automaton than a free, willing person.

e. John 18:1–11. What is striking here is the mechanical behavior Judas displays. Described only as “Judas, the betrayer” he appears as the leader of the contingent of soldiers and police provided by the chief priests and the Pharisees, equipped with torches, weapons, and lanterns. John confines himself simply to saying that after Jesus had come forward to ask them whom they were seeking and had identified himself, “there stood Judas the traitor with them” (v 5).

For John there is no genuine interaction between Jesus and Judas. The latter represents the evil darkness and he comes across the stage as an actor merely playing his part. Jesus can only rebuke him for murmuring about the waste of money at the anointing. John blames that solely on Judas and for the worst of motives.

In the final scene in Gethsemane in John’s account Jesus says nothing to Judas. Luke leaves open the question whether Judas kissed Jesus in the garden, but John portrays no interaction at all between the two. For him the realm of darkness cannot touch the Lord of Light, and he damns Judas into darkness. It may make good drama, but we have moved far from a description of the actual historical situation.⁹

Judas’ Place among the Twelve Apostles

The Gospels and Acts are the only New Testament books to mention Judas, although 1 Cor 11:23 indicates that Paul was aware of the tradition of betrayal following the Last Supper (1 Cor 11:23). The Synoptic Gospels list Judas among Jesus’ circle of 12 apostles, placing his name last and identifying him as Jesus’ betrayer (Matt 10:4; Mark 3:19; Luke 6:16). John’s first explicit mention of Judas also affirms Jesus’ choice of him as one of the Twelve, and even highlights his allegiance at a time when other disciples are withdrawing. However, John also simultaneously labels him a devil and references his future betrayal (John 6:66, 70–71). The Synoptics repeatedly identify Judas as one of the Twelve even after the betrayal is underway (Matt 26:14, 47; Mark 14:10, 43; Luke 22:3; Acts 1:17). Judas receives no special treatment from the evangelists until the final days of Jesus’ life; as go the Twelve, so, presumably, goes Judas (compare Matt 10:1; 20:17; Mark 4:10; 6:7; 9:35; 10:32; 11:11; Luke 8:1; 9:1–6, 12). Only after Jesus’ death is Judas notably absent from the eleven (Acts 1:13).

Overview of Judas’ Betrayal

All four Gospels indicate that, as the time of Passover neared, the chief priests desired to arrest Jesus (Matt 26:4; Mark 14:1; Luke 22:2; John 11:57). The Synoptics say they were hesitant for fear of the people (Matt 26:5; Mark 14:2; Luke 22:2), while John writes that they could not find Jesus (John 11:57). The Synoptics specify that Jesus had been teaching publicly in the temple

⁹ William Klassen, “[Judas Iscariot](#),” ed. David Noel Freedman, *The Anchor Yale Bible Dictionary* (New York: Doubleday, 1992), 1091–1095.

(Matt 26:55; Mark 14:49; Luke 21:37; 22:53), indicating the chief priests may have struggled to locate Him away from the crowds.¹⁰

7. Judas Iscariot [ʔs kār'ē ət]; one of the twelve apostles and the betrayer of Jesus. The meaning of the appellative Iscariot (cf. Luke 22:3; John 14:22) remains uncertain, although various etymologies have been suggested, including “liar” (cf. Aram¹¹. ܝܫ ܫܩܪܝܐ “man of the lie”), “dyer,” “dagger bearer” (from Lat¹². *sicarius*), and “man of Issachar.” A commonly accepted meaning is “man from Kerioth,” supported by its reading as a gentilic by several MS¹³S; the location of Kerioth is uncertain, but it is believed to be in Judea. The same name is associated with Judas’ father Simon at John 6:71; 13:26.

Judas Iscariot is infamous for his betrayal of Jesus, attested by all four Gospels (Matt. 26:47–56 par¹⁴.) and foretold by Jesus himself (John 6:70–71). He accomplished this heinous act by leading the soldiers and officers of the chief priests and Pharisees to the garden, where he betrayed Jesus by a prearranged signal—a kiss of greeting.

Although Judas is mentioned in all the lists of the apostles, his selection and calling are not described. It may be assumed that his call was not different from that of the other apostles. His general behavior was probably not different either; he evidently heard the words of the Savior, saw the miracles, and performed the various responsibilities of the disciples. According to John 12:5–6; 13:29, his penury as treasurer of the group was tempered by greed and theft. Indeed, greed prompted Judas to go to the chief priests and bargain with them for the betrayal of Jesus (Matt. 26:14–16 par¹⁵).

Judas plotted and waited for an opportunity to betray Jesus. During the Passover meal, Jesus predicted that one of the disciples would betray him; Judas left the room and continued to follow his plan. Familiar with Jesus’ habits, Judas found an opportunity and led the soldiers to the garden of Gethsemane where, as prearranged, he betrayed the Master with a kiss. After Jesus had been condemned to death, Judas was overwhelmed with remorse. He went to the chief priests and elders and, throwing down the thirty pieces of silver he had received from them, went and hanged himself (27:3–5; Acts 1:18–20).

Speculation abounds concerning the phenomena of the betrayal of Jesus by Judas, from the point of view both of theology and the accomplishment of the atonement through the Cross as presented in the biblical account, and of the dynamics of the personality of Judas. Why did Jesus choose Judas and entrust him with the moneybox? Why did Judas first join the disciples and then turn traitor? Was he attempting to force Jesus to exercise temporal—or suprahuman—power? There are, however, no certain answers.¹⁶

¹⁰ Karelynn Gerber Ayayo, “[Judas Iscariot](#),” ed. John D. Barry et al., *The Lexham Bible Dictionary* (Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press, 2016).

¹¹Aram. Aramaic

¹²Lat. Latin

¹³MSS Manuscripts

¹⁴par. parallel

¹⁵par. parallel

¹⁶ Allen C. Myers, [The Eerdmans Bible Dictionary](#) (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1987), 607–608.

John 12:4-6

Word Studies

Intending- *intend, propose, have in mind*¹⁷

Betray - *hand over, turn over, give up a person*¹⁸

Discipleship - one who is rather constantly associated with someone who has a pedagogical reputation or a particular set of views, *disciple, adherent*¹⁹

Concern - *it is a care/concern, is of interest*²⁰

Thief - Jn. 12:6 characterises the κλέπτης as a betrayer of fellowship.²¹

Pilfer- *take surreptitiously(secretly), pilfer, steal*²²

Commentary Studies

12:4–5. Although Judas Iscariot (*cf.* notes on 6:71) speaks, others doubtless had the same thought (Mk. 14:4), even amongst the disciples (Mt. 26:8). The persistent habit of the Evangelists to tag Judas as the traitor (here, *who was later to betray him*) does not spring from any prescience they enjoyed at the time, but from the shocking force of their hindsight. It is as if they cannot recollect anything he said and did without also remembering that he was the one who ultimately betrayed the Lord of Glory for thirty pieces of silver.

¹⁷ William Arndt et al., [*A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature*](#) (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000), 628.

¹⁸ William Arndt et al., [*A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature*](#) (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000), 762.

¹⁹ William Arndt et al., [*A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature*](#) (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000), 609.

²⁰ William Arndt et al., [*A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature*](#) (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000), 626.

²¹ Herbert Preisker, “Κλέπτω, Κλέπτης,” ed. Gerhard Kittel, Geoffrey W. Bromiley, and Gerhard Friedrich, *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1964–), 755.

²² William Arndt et al., [*A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature*](#) (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000), 171.

The objection Judas raises has a superficial plausibility to it. The sum of ‘three hundred denarii’ (RS^{23v}), the value of the perfume, must not be estimated according to the modern value of an equivalent amount of silver, but according to wages and purchasing power. One denarius was the daily wage given to a common day-labourer; three hundred denarii was therefore the equivalent of *a year’s wages* for a fully employed labourer (no money would be earned on Sabbaths and other holy days). The sum was enormous. Either Mary and her family were very wealthy, or perhaps this was a family heirloom that had been passed down to her. Either way, Judas displays a certain utilitarianism that pits pragmatic compassion, concern for the poor, against extravagant, unqualified devotion. If self-righteous piety sometimes snuffs out genuine compassion, it must also be admitted, with shame, that social activism, even that which meets real needs, sometimes masks a spirit that knows nothing of worship and adoration.

12:6. With Judas Iscariot, the case is far worse: his personal greed for material things masquerades as altruism. Like the hired hand, he cares nothing for the sheep (10:13). Because he was the treasurer of the apostolic band, the *keeper of the money bag*, probably he hoped such gifts as this nard could in future be turned into cash, to which he could then help himself. The *money bag* was doubtless used to meet the disciples’ needs, and also to provide alms to the poor. Normally it was replenished by disciples who cherished Jesus’ ministry, like the women mentioned in Luke 8:2, 3. The last clause could almost be taken to mean that Judas used to ‘carry’ (*bastazō*) what was put in, but in the right contexts the verb means ‘steal’ or ‘pilfer’—not unlike the verb ‘lift’ in the United Kingdom. This is the only place in the New Testament where Judas is called a thief—indeed, where any charge other than Judas’ ultimate betrayal is levelled against him. Yet the charge is believable: anyone who would betray another person for thirty pieces of silver has an unhealthy avarice for material things.²⁴

12:4–7 The reaction to the anointing by Mary is focused here as in Matthew (26:8–9) and Mark (14:4–5) on economic evaluation of the situation. The Lukan story, however, does not concentrate on economics. Instead, the Pharisees charged Jesus with lacking sufficient insight as a prophet to recognize that a sinful woman had touched (*haptesthai*) him. The focus of the Lukan story is, therefore, very different. Yet, unlike John, Matthew and Mark charged the disciples with condemning the woman for her wastefulness. The disciples there thought that the poor could have been the beneficiaries of such a large economic sum. In view of such a charge, Jesus rebuked them because of their misunderstanding of the good or beautiful (*kalon*) thing she had done. Typical of the Markan message, the disciples there had once again misunderstood the events in the life of Jesus. So Jesus had to enlighten them to the effect that the act was an important preparatory symbol of his forthcoming burial (cf. Mark 4:8; Matt 26:12).

The story in John, however, makes a slightly different point. It certainly picks up the burial symbolism (12:7), but it refocuses the picture from the misunderstanding of the disciples to Judas, who was not merely mistaken. In this story John makes it plain that Judas was not an unfortunate, misguided person. He was inherently an evil thief who had no concern for the poor (12:6). Thus John would never agree with some modern portrayals of Judas as a tragic hero who merely misunderstood Jesus. For John, Judas was a devil-man (*diabolos*; 6:70), a receiver of

²³RSV (American) Revised Standard Version.

²⁴D. A. Carson, [*The Gospel according to John*](#), The Pillar New Testament Commentary (Leicester, England; Grand Rapids, MI: Inter-Varsity Press; W.B. Eerdmans, 1991), 428–429.

Satan (13:27), and the son of doom or destruction (17:12). For John, he was the unforgivable betrayer (*hōparadidous*) who stood with the enemies of Jesus (18:5; cf. *paradidonai*; 12:5). For a discussion of Iscariot, see my comments at 6:71.

According to our Gospel, the role of Judas in the band of Jesus' disciples would be likened to that of the treasurer, indeed a fraudulent treasurer who made the community money box (*glōssokomon*, NI²⁵V “money bag”) his personal estate. The value of the pure nard, therefore, did not escape his greedy interest. His estimate of its worth was three hundred denarii (12:5; Mark even suggests “more than” three hundred at 14:5), which was the equivalent of a laborer's annual wages (calculated at six days a week less festival days). Such an amount was very significant. Indeed, it could have served as an economic security blanket or, as I have suggested below, as a woman's dowry. Judas's suggestion that the money should have been given to the poor is regarded by the evangelist as a mere hoax or fraud in the mouth of the deceptive thief.

In responding to Judas, Jesus did not engage in any explanation or indicate a correcting spirit, such as he expressed to the disciples, especially in Matthew (26:10–13) and to some extent also in Mark (14:6–9). Judas was not like the other disciples. In those Gospels, Jesus attempted to inform the disciples about the good or beautiful nature of the deed performed by the woman. Here in John, Judas is given the curt reply, “Leave her alone,” somewhat like Mark 14:6 but with none of the softening that follows. Instead, what comes next are the somewhat confusing words “in order that she might keep it for the day of my burial.”

This Johannine shorthand here concerning “keep” (NI²⁶V “save”) has led to much debate on the part of scholars. Obviously, it can hardly mean that the perfume or ointment had not all been used and/or that she would keep it (or the remainder of it) until the actual burial date. What then can it mean? Some have suggested that although Mary did not realize what she had done, Jesus understood the implications. Others have posited that “keep” means “keep in mind.”¹²⁷⁶ Hoskyns and Davey argue that Mary “consciously recognized” what she had done and anticipated the burial.¹²⁸⁷ Carson thinks that it is not the anointing itself that is in focus but the burial of Jesus.¹²⁹⁸ Daube argues from his rabbinic background that her act was culticly in anticipation of his death.¹³⁰⁹

To what does “keep” refer—to the act, or the nard, or a play on both? Why would a woman “keep” such an expensive item? It must have been very important to her. Could it have been part of a possible dowry? If that was the case, then the gift of the ointment or perfume would be for a woman of marriageable expectation almost the equivalent of an ultimate gift to Jesus. That Matthew (26:13) and Mark (14:9) saw in this gift a significant commitment, worthy of a “Gospel” notation in relation to Jesus' death, is very suggestive indeed. The woman's gift then could be regarded as an incredible expression of attachment to Jesus. Moreover, positioned where it is in John at the point of the coming of the hour (12:23) and the declaration of Jesus'

²⁵NIV New International Version

²⁶NIV New International Version

²⁷¹⁶ Cf. C. Barrett, *The Gospel According to St. John* (London: S.P.C.K., 1956), 345. Note also the discussions in B. Newman and E. Nida, *A Translator's Handbook of the Gospel of John* (New York: UBS, 1980), 391–92 and Brown, *John*, 1.449.

²⁸¹⁷ See E. Hoskyns, *The Fourth Gospel* (London: Faber & Faber, 1956), 416.

²⁹¹⁸ See D. Carson, *The Gospel According to John* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1991), 429–30.

³⁰¹⁹ D. Daube, “The Anointing at Bethany,” in *The New Testament and Rabbinic Judaism* (London: Athlone Press, 1956), 312–24.

readiness for death (12:27–33), the story of the anointing becomes nothing less than an important signal for the forthcoming glorification of Jesus. Without doubt then the gift of the woman was a tremendous memorial, wonderfully preservable in the light of the forthcoming death of Jesus. It was a marvelous symbol of burial that would answer the ultimate question of life itself; just as Jesus said, seed that dies bears much fruit (12:24). It was an anointing fit for a king who came to save the world (cf. also elaborate spicing at John 19:39–41).²³¹⁰

From both the sociological and theological perspectives the response of Jesus then is very appropriate here. Since Mary's gift was of such an economic significance, sociologically Mary had depleted her potential of gaining a husband. That move is not to be understood as merely some nice act of honoring the Lord but as a tremendous demonstration of commitment to him. As a result, Jesus graciously accepted the act of dedication that many might consider both strange and wasteful. Thus, Jesus in John gives this act a theological significance far beyond the mere act itself. John recognized the great significance of this act and used this event as a hermeneutical key to introduce in this segment of his book the death of King Jesus.³²

12:4–5. **Judas Iscariot ... objected** to this lavish waste (in his viewpoint). His objection—that **money** from the sale of the **perfume** should have been **given to the poor**—was not honest (cf. v. 6). According to Mark (14:4–5) the other disciples picked up his criticism and rebuked her harshly. Evil quickly spreads, and even leaders can be carried along by Satan's tools. The value of the perfume was **a year's wages** (lit., "300 denarii") perhaps a lifetime of savings³³

John 13:2

³¹²⁰ The reader of John should not miss the fact that the word *litra* (pound) is used in only two places in the entire NT, namely at John 12:3 and at 19:39, both related to the burial of Jesus.

³² Gerald L. Borchert, [John 12–21](#), vol. 25B, The New American Commentary (Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 2002), 35–38.

³³ Edwin A. Blum, "[John](#)," in *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures*, ed. J. F. Walvoord and R. B. Zuck, vol. 2 (Wheaton, IL: Victor Books, 1985), 316.

Word Studies

Put - to put or place someth³⁴. in a location, *put, place, apply, lay, bring*³⁵

Commentary Studies

13:2. Judging by the time marker in v. 30, the meal that is about to begin is an *evening meal* (*deipnon*; cf. notes on 12:2). Assuming that the opening clause means that this meal had just been served (cf. Additional Note), the stage is thereby set for Jesus to begin washing his disciples' feet. Before proceeding with the narrative, however, John ensures that his readers will grasp just how strongly this episode attests the loving character of Jesus. The disciples whose feet he was about to wash include Judas Iscariot, son of Simon (cf. Additional Note), whose treacherous plot had already been conceived.

The expression is awkward: 'the devil already having put it into the heart that Judas ... should betray him'. Whose heart? One might assume the heart of Judas (for somewhat analogous language, cf. Rev. 17:17), and indeed some Greek manuscripts preserve the genitive of Judas (*louda*) that sanctions such a rendering. The idea, then, is not that Judas was not responsible, for a heart incited by Satan actually wills what the devil wills (Schlatte³⁶, p. 279); rather, the plot against Jesus, however mediated by wicked human beings, was nothing less than satanic. Interpreters admit, however, that the genitive *louda* is an easier reading than the nominative *loudas*, and therefore, all other things being equal, somewhat less likely to be original. If we adopt the nominative, it is more natural (though, against Barret³⁷, p. 439, surely not required) to understand the heart to be the devil's: the devil put it into *his own heart* that Judas would betray Jesus, *i.e.* the devil so decided. Despite alleged parallels, however (*viz.* 1 Sa. 29:10 L^x³⁸; Jb. 22:22), it is doubtful that 'to put into one's (own) heart' ever means 'to decide', so that this understanding of the nominative is intrinsically unlikely. One is tempted to think that the original was nominative, but was such an awkward way of saying that the devil put the thought into Judas' heart that some later copyists made the point clear by 'correcting' to the genitive. Either way, the devil and Judas are now in a conspiracy of evil to bring Jesus to the cross, a conspiracy fleshed out in vv. 18, 19, 21–30; ch. 18.³⁹

³⁴**someth. someth.** = something

³⁵ William Arndt et al., [*A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature*](#) (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000), 163.

³⁶Schlatter A. Schlatter, *Der Evangelist Johannes* (Stuttgart: Calwer, ⁴1975).

³⁷Barrett C. K. Barrett, *The Gospel according to St John: An Introduction with Commentary and notes on the Greek Text* (SPCK, ²1978).

³⁸L^{xx} The Septuagint (pre-Christian Greek version of the Old Testament).

³⁹ D. A. Carson, [*The Gospel according to John*](#), The Pillar New Testament Commentary (Leicester, England; Grand Rapids, MI: Inter-Varsity Press; W.B. Eerdmans, 1991), 461–462.

13:2 Although relating temporal markers in John to the Synoptics is often difficult, particularly in the chronology of the Passover events, the time designation at 13:1 is merely the vague “before” (*pro*) Passover, which by itself supplies little assistance in any comparison. But several matters should give some pause for reflection.

The foot washing depicted in John’s (pre-Passover?) meal event (13:2, “supper”) does not appear in the Synoptics, and what occurs in the Synoptics related to the institution of the Lord’s Supper¹⁴⁰³ does not occur here in John. Nevertheless, there is little reason to doubt that the meal experience should be understood to be the same meal in both John and the Synoptics.¹⁴¹⁴ One reason we can make such an identification is that in both John and the Synoptics, Jesus announced at the meal the presence of the betrayer, which resulted in a sense of uneasiness among the disciples (13:21–22; cf. Matt 26:21–22; Mark 14:18–19; Luke 22:21–23). Moreover, Jesus also identified Judas at the meal through the event of “dipping” (*baptein* is the verb used in John 13:26; cf. Mark 14:20; Matt 26:23, where *embaptein* is used). The occasion described here, therefore, must be the so-called “Last Supper” even though the Synoptics do not speak of a “supper,” and John does not speak of an upper room (cf. Mark 14:15; Luke 22:12; Matthew does not use the designation).

The dark side of the story is also introduced in this verse with the mention of the devil (see Excursus 13: “Satan and the Prince of the World”).¹⁴²⁵ Although John indicates that the devil had thrown (perfect participle of *ballein*; the NI⁴³V “prompted” is weak) “into the heart” (a

⁴⁰¹³ The designation the “Lord’s Supper” is not found in the Gospels but is found in 1 Cor 11:20. The issue of whether the Last Supper of Jesus was, in fact, a Passover meal has been highly debated by scholars. Among the supporters is E. Gaugler (*Das Abendmahl in Neuen Testament* [1943]), but he is not prepared to argue with Jeremias, (*Die Abendmahlsworte Jesu* [Gottingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1935]); *The Eucharistic Words of Jesus* (New York: Scribner’s, 1966), and others that the evidence is totally conclusive (24–26). Cf. M. Barth, *Das Abendmahl: Passamahl, Bundesmahl und Messiasmahl*, *ThST* 18 (1945), who links all three meals in an interlocking argument. On the other hand, E. Lohmeyer rejects the arguments of Jeremias as being completely unconvincing. See his reaction in “Vom urchristlichen Abendmahl,” *TRu* 9 (1937): 198. Once again I would suggest that the reader should not concentrate on chronological issues in John. For a brief review of the issues see B. Klappert, “Lord’s Supper,” *DNTT* 2.520–38.

⁴¹¹⁴ For a discussion of the relationship of John with Luke at this point see J. A. Bailey, *Traditions Common to the Gospels of Luke and John* (Leiden: Brill, 1963), 29–31.

⁴²¹⁵ I am completely unmoved by the argument that the reference to the devil here in v. 2 is a later addition to the story and is to be contrasted with the statement related to Satan in v. 27.

⁴³NIV New International Version

nonpersonalized statement) the betraying of Jesus by Judas Iscariot,¹⁴⁴⁶ the son of Simon,¹⁴⁵⁷ such an idea in no way is said to excuse Judas. Rather, A. Schlatter's maxim-like explanation of a Judas-type person seems to catch forcefully the perspective of John—that the heart that is inspired by the devil wills what the devil wills (cf. also 13:18, 21, 27).¹⁴⁶⁸ Some manuscripts read “the heart of Judas” (the genitive *Iouda*), but the nominative *Idoudas* here is to be preferred. Following the basic rules of textual analysis, the more difficult reading is to be preferred and thus can explain the others; the harder reading actually turns out here to be theologically significant because it presents Judas clearly as the responsible actor in the betrayal of Jesus and the devil as the one who inspires the evil heart.¹⁴⁷⁹

13:3 Building upon the statements concerning Jesus' knowledge of his hour in v. 1, the evangelist expands the idea here to remind the reader that Jesus was clearly knowledgeable about his origin and his goal or destiny.²⁴⁸⁰ These concerns were epitomized in the two questions of “whence?” (*pothen*) and “where?” or “whither?” (*pou*) that brought him into conflict earlier with the Pharisees (cf. 8:14ff.). The Pharisees, like most people, could not understand that Jesus was someone whose very existence defied the limitations of their time and space barriers (cf. 1:1). “Coming from” (*exerchesthai* plus *apo*) and “going to” (*hypagein* plus *pros*) was the way John here described the broad dimensions of Jesus' earthly existence and his relationship to the eternal God. But one must be careful not merely to pour these ideas into the human time restraints of past, present, and future. Of course, they are applicable to the incarnation of Jesus, but these statements are also intended to remind the reader of the divine dimension to life as well.

Moreover, these ideas form a foundation for understanding the earlier statement in this verse of the Father committing “all things” (*panta*) “into his hands.” This idea, as discussed in 3:35, is a testimonial expression for Jesus acting as the agent for God. In the Prologue the *logos* was active in creation (1:3) and became flesh (1:14). There is a sense in which that special nature of Jesus impacted the way the Johannine evangelist looked at the broad scope of Jesus' *authority*. To see Jesus is to see God (12:45) or his agent on earth because he is “from above” (*ek tōn anō*, 8:23). Moreover, he has life in himself and has the authority to execute judgment because he “is” the powerful Son of Man (5:26–27).²⁴⁹¹ But given these divinely oriented attributes, what comes next is absolutely stunning.⁵⁰

⁴⁴¹⁶ Contrast the ideas of K. Hein, “Judas Iscariot,” 228–29.

⁴⁵¹⁷ The UBS text reads “Judas son of Simon Iscariot,” but P⁶⁶, \aleph , B, and others read “Judas Iscariot, son of Simon,” which I have used here following the NIV and against the NRSV. The weight of the manuscript evidence, however, is such that one cannot be certain.

⁴⁶¹⁸ A. Schlatter, *Der Evangelist Johannes* (Stuttgart: Calwer Verlag, 1948), 279.

⁴⁷¹⁹ Although I believe my analysis here is correct, I am prepared to agree that the ultimate implication of the variant reading is not radically different. There is no doubt that the devil, from John's perspective, had a part to play in Judas's betrayal of Jesus.

⁴⁸²⁰ Cr. W. Grossouw, “A Note on John xiii 1–3” *NovT* 8 (1966): 124–31.

⁴⁹²¹ See Excursus 11 on the Son of Man.

⁵⁰ Gerald L. Borchert, *John 12–21*, vol. 25B, *The New American Commentary* (Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 2002), 77–79.

John 13:10-19

Word Studies

Clean- to being clean or free of adulterating matter, *clean, pure*⁵¹

According to the judgment of Jesus the ritual or cultic purity sought by the Jews is quite inadequate, since it is concerned only with externalities, Mt. 23:25 f.; Lk. 11:41.⁷⁵²⁶ The purity of the N⁵³T community is personal and moral by nature. It consists in full and unreserved self-offering to God which renews the heart and rules out any acceptance of what is against God. Those who are pure in heart in this way are called to participate in the kingdom of God, Mt. 5:8. This purity of heart is far above the cleanness of hands which was so greatly valued by the Pharisees. It alone counts before God. Neither in the Synoptists⁷⁵⁴⁷ nor in Paul, however, is Jesus' new concept of purity made a positive guiding motif of the new piety. Jesus speaks of obedience, Paul of sanctification, and neither of purity of life. This motif first comes to the fore in the Past., Hb., Jn., also Jm. and 1 Pt., i.e., in writings which were strongly influenced either by opposition to the O⁵⁵T cultus (Hb.) or by the terminology of Hellenistic Judaism. Opposition to the inadequacy of purely cultic purity is found in the admonitions of Jm. when he describes practical love and the avoidance of worldliness as true, pure and unspotted religion (1:27) and when he says that the sinner must cleanse his hands and sanctify his heart if he is truly to draw near to God (4:7, 8; cf. Is. 1:16 f.). In a general exhortation 1 Pt. 1:22 demands sanctification of soul and love out of a pure heart.⁷⁵⁶⁸ In Eph. 5:26 the symbolism of baptism is impressively used to portray the basic moral purification by Christ which binds our whole conduct (καθαρίσας τῷ λουτρῷ τοῦ

⁵¹ William Arndt et al., [*A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature*](#) (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000), 489.

⁵²⁷⁶ The form of the saying in Lk. may be due to a misreading of the Aram. original (Wellh. Lk., *at loc.*): δότε ἐλεημοσύνην == ܘܕܝܬ, whereas the καθαρίσον of Mt. gives us ܘܕܝܬ. According to Lk. only the benevolent giving away of what we have (τὰ ἐνόητα) gives a comprehensive and true purity. Cf. Dalman WJ, I, 50 f.

⁵³NT New Testament.

⁵⁴⁷⁷ Apart from Past. and Eph., the root καθάρως, καθαρίζειν is found in Pl. only in the principle enunciated in R. 14:20 and in 2 C. 7:1. The Pauline authorship of the whole section 2 C. 6:14–7:1 is hotly debated, cf. A. Jülicher-E. Fascher, *Einleitung in d. NT*⁷ (1931), 87 f. The terminology of spotting the flesh and spirit is generally alien to Paul, though it is common, e.g., in Herm. (s., 5, 7, 2 and 4; 6, 5 f.; m., 5, 1, 3). Naturally, only the human spirit can be stained in 2 C., by lack of love, contentiousness etc., Wnd. 2 K., 218.

⁵⁵OT Old Testament.

⁵⁶⁷⁸ Acc. to the reading of κ* C K, as against BA vg: καθαράς.

ὔδατος ἐν ῥήματι, nowhere else in Pl.).⁵⁷⁷⁹ In particular, the death of Christ is seen from the standpoint of an efficacious sacrifice which expiates sin and creates a new purity for those who are pledged thereto. In virtue of the sacrificial death of Christ, Christians are a new and purified people for God's possession, able and willing to perform the corresponding works (Tt. 2:14; cf. 1 Jn. 1:7, 9). Like Hellenistic Judaism, the Past. speak of a pure heart (1 Tm. 1:5; 2 Tm. 2:22) and conscience (1 Tm. 3:9; 2 Tm. 1:3), i.e., the inward life of believers as cleansed from past sin and wholeheartedly directed to God. The word expresses the unreserved nature of the return to God and also the inner unity of a conscience which is no longer disturbed by the sense of guilt (cf. Ac. 18:6; 20:26).

Hb. emphasises the superiority of the new covenant to the old. It uses the concept of purity in this connection. In contrast with the older ritual purity, the new moral purity is true and perfect purity (9:13). As in cultic religion, the cleansing power of blood is maintained (9:22). Cleansing and remission are synonymous. The author ventures to state that even the heavenly sanctuary needs to be cleansed (9:23).⁵⁸⁸⁰ But the blood of animals is obviously useless for this purpose. Cultic thinking thus demonstrates the necessity of the death of God's Son. The result of this supreme sacrifice is above temporal limitations (10:2: ἄπαξ, valid once and for all). Materially, too, this is the supreme cleansing. Unlike that of the old covenant, it does not apply only to the body (9:13); it applies also to the conscience (9:14). The death of Christ accomplishes this cleansing from sins (1:3) and liberation from sinful impulses (9:14: νεκρὰ ἔργα, which defile as contrasted with those done in the service of God). It thus gives access to holiness and enables man truly to live in the presence of God.

In the Johannine writings, too, the concept of purity is a leading motif (Jn. 3:25; 13:10 f.; 15:2 f.; 1 Jn. 1:7, 9). It is a basic thesis that the disciples of Jesus are clean (15:3; 13:10). The question arises what is the basis of this purity, whether it is absolutely valid, and whether it can be restored. According to the Gospel the disciples are clean because of their life-association with Jesus (15:3). His Word causes His Spirit, His higher divine mode of life, to enter into them effectively. They are thus made clean by the Word (15:3; 17:14ff.). In 1 Jn. the death of Christ has power to wash away sin (1:7). In both Jn. and 1 Jn. the question of the full purity of Christians is discussed. It is affirmed absolutely in theory (Jn. 15:3; 1 Jn. 2:10; 3:6), but it is denied in relative and practical reality (1 Jn. 1:7 ff.; 2:1 ff.; Jn. 13:10 f.). In Jn. 13 the foot-washing has two meanings. On the one hand it is a parabolic action (6–11), on the other an example (12–17). The former sense

⁵⁷⁷⁹ ἐν ῥήματι, to be taken with τῷ λουτρῷ τοῦ ὔδατος, is a brief reminder (cf. 2:15) that it is the formula pronounced in baptism (→ ῥῆμα, efficacious word) which gives baptism its supramaterial efficacy. H. J. Holtzmann (A. Jülicher, W. Bauer), *Nt.liche Theologie*², I (1911), 455; W. Bousset, *Kgrios Christos*² (1921), 226 f., 287.

⁵⁸⁸⁰ Wnd. Hb., 85 assumes that by the law of correspondence (8:5) the sins of the people defiled the heavenly sanctuary too; H. Strathmann (NT Deutsch, III, 113), however, thinks that the point of comparison is simply the general thought of the dedication or opening of the sanctuary. There is certainly no suggestion of defilement by warring angels (Col. 1:20) or by Satan (Lk. 10:18).

expresses the fact that the full bath (ὁ λελουμένος, v⁵⁹. 10) of baptism accomplishes full cleansing. He who is baptised is clean (v⁶⁰. 10, cf. 3:6).⁸⁶¹¹ In distinction from other washings, baptism need not and cannot be repeated. The foot-washing (νίπτεισθαι of partial washing), however, symbolises the loving service which Jesus performs for His own by the daily forgiveness of minor offences (cf. 1 Jn. 5:16: ἁμαρτία μὴ πρὸς θάνατον). The link with Jesus must be upheld if the disciple is to receive this service from his Master. In Rev., too, the purity of the new community is a leading motif. Here material and ritual cleanness is a symbol of perfect inward sanctity.⁶²

Commentary Studies

13:10–11 Jesus' reply, however, requires more attention. The first part of the reply (13:10a) involves an important contrast. Up to this point the conversation had focused on the various forms of the verb *niptein*, which has here been translated as "wash," but in this verse the verb *louein*, "bathed," occurs first. Jesus' play on words thus suggests that Peter misunderstood the meaning of the foot washing to be a mere washing of feet, whereas the washing was, in fact, much more. It actually refers to Jesus' bathing of the disciples with a new perspective (i.e., humble love). Therefore the disciples had actually been significantly bathed in the foot washing experience.

But there is also in this verse an important textual problem. The UB⁶³S text and most English translations add to the statement of "not need to wash" the words "except the feet" (*ei mē tous podas*; the NI⁶⁴V has reworked the words to read "needs only to wash his feet"). Codex Sinaiticus, however, omits this phrase, and the textual history might seem to indicate that the phrase was imported into the text from the eastern churches. The argument would then be that those Christian scribes may have thought that something had to be said about feet here and therefore added the phrase. It is more likely, however, that Jesus was here ignoring the issue of feet because he had proceeded to the real issue of being clean, which is the focus of vv. 10b, 11. Thus the play on the verbs in v. 10a would seem to serve as the transitional statement.²⁶⁵⁹

⁵⁹v. verse.

⁶⁰v. verse.

⁶¹⁸¹ The reading in κ vg Or: εἰ μὴ τοὺς πόδας, must be regarded as an erroneous attempt at harmonisation with ὅλος, cf. E. Hirsch, *Das 4 Ev.* (1936), 331 f. Brandt, *op. cit.*, 121; A. Merx, *Das Ev. des Joh.* (1911), 350 f.; Zn. J., 539.

⁶² Friedrich Hauck and Rudolf Meyer, "[Καθαρός, Καθαρίζω, Καθαίρω, Καθαρότης, Ακάθαρτος, Ακαθαρσία, Καθαρισμός, Ἐκκαθαίρω, Περικάθασμα,](#)" ed. Gerhard Kittel, Geoffrey W. Bromiley, and Gerhard Friedrich, *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1964–), 426.

⁶³UBS United Bible Societies

⁶⁴NIV New International Version

⁶⁵²⁹ See the logic of the editors of the UBS Greek text in B. Metzger, *A Textual Commentary on the Greek New Testament* (New York: United Bible Societies, 1971), 240.

Washing normally makes one clean, and those who have been “bathed” by Jesus, he says, are completely or “wholly” (*holos*) clean. The NIV⁶⁶ misunderstands the sense of the text and stays on the physical level by importing the noun “body” into the text. In so doing it does not allow the reader to sense the double-level meaning that is here once again implied in a Johannine text (cf. the “temple” in 2:19–21 and “born again/from above” in 3:3–4). The disciples may have become “wholly” clean, but the *whole* group of them (*ouchi pantes*, “not all”) was not wholly clean because the group included the “betrayers” (*ton paradidonta*, 13:11).

This statement has been taken by some to suggest that Jesus did not wash the feet of Judas. But that is a misapplication of this verse and is another indication of failing to sense the double-level meaning of Johannine texts. In this case it is important to remember that the “washing” could not mean “bathing” for Judas—the devil man. Besides, one must also bear in mind that Judas did not depart the scene until later in the story (13:30), unless one unnecessarily excises the verses concerning Judas from this story.³⁶⁷⁰ Moreover, the text itself here indicates that Jesus was not confused about the status of the betrayer who was present at this event (13:11). The Johannine message has consistently been clear on the fact that although people like Peter and Judas may not have understood the implications of events, it is absolutely certain that Jesus understood what people were like (cf. 2:23–25). What surprised people did not surprise Jesus.⁶⁸

13:12–13 Just as the foot washing involved the rising up (*egeirein*) of Jesus from a reclining position and the laying down (*tithesthai*) of his outer garments, so in this section in which Jesus interpreted servanthood for the disciples he retook his garments and resumed his central reclining position. From that posture of one *in their midst as leader*, he began a concerted effort of preparing them. Accordingly, the general tenor of the evangelist’s presentation here shifts slightly to that of Jesus as interpreter or instructor. If one were reading the Gospel of Matthew at this point, one might almost expect to find Jesus sitting down and dispensing wisdom or healing (cf. Matt 5:1; 13:1; 15:29; 24:3; 26:55, 64). The sitting position in Matthew’s Gospel communicated a sense of authority. Here the evangelist does not employ a physical posture to indicate such authority, but rather authority is indicated in the words of Jesus.

The disciples had called Jesus “Teacher and Lord” (*ho didaskalos kai ho kurios*, 13:12), but the way Jesus accepted that designation suggests to the reader the sense that the words are to be understood more like a royal acclamation than a mere acknowledgment of a role. Not only did Jesus accept the designation as a correct or well-stated title, but he also provided a significant rationale for this designation by announcing “for that is what I am” (*eimi gar*). The connection with the *egō eimi* (“I am”) sayings should seem to be obvious, particularly since the full expression is stated at 13:19 as well. Although one could argue that “teacher” here is merely

⁶⁶NIV New International Version

⁶⁷³⁰ See my earlier comments on the thinking of source and redaction critics in the introduction to chap. 13.

⁶⁸ Gerald L. Borchert, [John 12–21](#), vol. 25B, The New American Commentary (Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 2002), 82–83.

the equivalent of rabbi and “Lord” here is either a general statement like “sir” or a mere honorific title like “master,” the entire mood of the text would seem to argue against it. It would seem, instead, that this double designation should be interpreted in terms of Jesus’ divinely directed agency in mission and not merely as a reference to an earthly teacher (cf. Nicodemus, 3:1) or to an earthly master (cf. the nobleman from Capernaum, 4:46). Rather, this Teacher is a divine-human revealer/interpreter, and this Master is none other than the one who is one and the same with the Lord God.⁴⁶⁹¹

Just prior to the acceptance of Jesus’ “acclamation,” he had started the conversation with his disciples by posing a searching question that probed their understanding of what he had just “done” to them (13:12).⁴⁷⁰² That question was hardly intended to elicit a factual news report on the circumstances related to the foot washing episode. Rather, one senses here another double-level question in the use of the verb “understand,” namely: Could they merely provide a report on the event, or did they understand the significance of what they had experienced? The way they would have answered such a question would have been extremely revealing of their perceptivity. That this question is not, in fact, answered here does not mean that we are unable to guess the way the disciples would have responded because when they did respond to Jesus in matters related to his departure (14:5, 8), their response indicates a striking lack of such deep perception.

13:14–15 The foot washing of Jesus becomes in vv. 14–15 the model (*hypodeigma*, “example”) for the disciples to follow. It is precisely because their Lord and Teacher (note the reversal here of the order)⁴⁷¹³ was willing to adopt the humbling model of foot washing that Jesus’ disciples cannot treat humility as merely a nice idea that is unrelated to Christian life. The actual practice of foot washing in the church is not observed widely today. The mention of the idea in connection with the enrollment of widows in 1 Tim 5:10 may possibly suggest that some practice could have been observed by the early church, though “washing the feet of saints” in that context of exhibiting hospitality and caring for the weak hardly sounds like a church rite. Rather, it seems a humble, self-giving treatment of other people without regard to shame and honor codes of society.

But the model of Jesus is not merely one of self-giving service to others epitomized in the foot washing. The model is, in fact, one that also represents the dying Lamb of God. Therefore the servant/follower of Jesus should realize that the self-giving washing of feet may be far more costly a calling than merely a matter involving a basin of water and a towel.

To follow Jesus may cost one’s life (cf. 12:24–26; 21:18–19; 1 Pet 2:21), a price Peter rather glibly offered to pay (John 13:37). He soon discovered, however, that he did not realize what that offer had meant (cf. 18:17, 25–27). The scene in Mark 10:32–45, which is set in the context of the third passion prediction and which deals with the ambition of the two sons of Zebedee,

⁶⁹⁴¹ Contrast the view of G. Nicol, “Jesus’ Washing the Feet of the Disciples: A Model for Johannine Christology?” *ExpTim* 91 (1979): 20–21.

⁷⁰⁴² Cf. the comments of A. Weiser, “Joh 13,12–20—Zufügung eines späten Herausgebers?” *BZ* 12 (1968): 252–57.

⁷¹⁴³ The reversal of the designation Teacher and Lord of 13:13 in 13:14 may be because the emphasis falls on the model of humility in the latter verse, but one cannot be certain of the reason for the change.

evidences some similar elements to this Johannine story. Although that Markan story concerns the request of the brothers for seats of honor next to Jesus in glory, the model Jesus offered them and the rest of the disciples is the cup of death and the way of servant humility (not the way of the Gentile lords of power). Indeed, the purpose for the coming of the Son of Man was not to be served but to be a servant “and to give his life as a ransom” (Mark 10:45). The understanding of self-giving servanthood is basic to the model Jesus established here in John also.⁴⁷²⁴

13:16 This verse is another of the Johannine double *amēn* (“truly”) sayings and is almost maxim-like in its quality. It reminds the reader that the servant does not surpass the master, nor does the “sent one” (*apostolos*, the only use of this term in this Gospel)⁴⁷³⁵ surpass the sender. This agency statement here thus provides perspective on the servant’s ability and responsibility in mission. Similar statements are found elsewhere in Gospel settings (cf. 15:20; see also Matt 10:24–25; Luke 6:40),⁴⁷⁴⁶ but the force of the statement here is to remind the followers of Jesus that there is no reason to become puffed up over their calling, accomplishments, or spirituality, a problem that plagued the Corinthians (1 Cor 4:6–7; 5:6; etc.) and is not unknown in Christian communities today.

13:17 The foot washing focus of this section is completed by means of one of the two beatitudes in the Gospel of John (cf. 20:29 and also the beatitudes of Matt 5, etc.). The Greek *makarioi* (cf. Hb. *ʾasre*), translated “blessed” or “happy” in most English translations, is generally applied to humans in the sense of a positive evaluation or a judgment being rendered upon a person who meets the requirements of a situation. It is to be distinguished from the Greek *eulogētos* (cf. Hb. *bārūk*), which is applied as an ascription or benediction concerning God (cf. Mark 14:61; Luke 1:68; Rom 1:25; 9:5; etc.).

In this case Jesus (as Teacher/Lord and indeed Judge) renders a favorable verdict upon his followers who both “know” (*oidate*) and practice or “do” (*poiēte*) what he has instructed. In the teaching of Jesus there is no division between head-understanding and life-practice. Moreover, as in the case of most beatitudes the happiness or blessedness is not to be limited to earthly well-being, for the implication is that the blessedness has eschatological ramifications.⁴⁷⁵⁷

13:18–19 In contrast to his authentic servants, Jesus here noted that he was not identifying everyone in his company as genuine. Indeed, among those whom he chose, one was/became a traitor. The idea that Jesus chose such a one has created a problem for some interpreters. Barrett thinks that Jesus did not actually choose Judas.⁴⁷⁶⁸ But the statement at 6:70 would argue that even though Judas could be designated as a devil-man, he nevertheless had been chosen by Jesus as a member of the company.

⁷²⁴⁴ Cf. D. Winter, “Motivation in Christian Behavior,” in *Law, Morality and the Bible*, ed. B. Kaye and G. Wenham (Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 1978), 210–11.

⁷³⁴⁵ It is here employed in a generic sense much like our word “missionary” or “a sent one,” and it is not intended by John to be viewed as a title for an “officer” in the church.

⁷⁴⁴⁶ Cf. C. Dodd, “Some Johannine ‘Herrenworte’ with Parallels in the Synoptic Gospels,” *NTS* 2 (1955): 75–78.

⁷⁵⁴⁷ Cf. M. Smith, “The Ascending Christ’s Farewell Discourse,” *Worship* 34 (1960): 320–25.

⁷⁶⁴⁸ See Barrett, *St. John*, 370. Cf. R. Brown, *John*, 2.553.

On the other hand, one must not move in the opposite direction to assume that the choice of Judas by Jesus was a determination of his role as betrayer. Such a theory would be close to the harsh theory of reprobation.⁴⁷⁷⁹ Now the *hina* (“in order that” or “so that”) here must certainly be understood either as a purpose or a result clause of fulfillment, but great care must be taken not to push the text beyond its meaning. The statement of Carson to the effect that “the reason Jesus chose one who would betray him was to fulfill Scripture” is close to the wording but not exactly the way the text is focused.⁵⁷⁸⁰ The text says that Jesus knew whom he chose—not that he knew who they were but that he *knew* them. The next word is “but” (*alla*), a strong adversative, which suggests that there would be a sad, negative side or implication to that choice. Nevertheless, in the working out of the events there was indeed a purpose or result in that choice, which indicated that Scripture was being fulfilled. And tying all these facts together, Jesus told his disciples that he was informing them about what would happen before it took place.

Several important ideas are present in these verses. The theme that the facts involved in the coming of Jesus actually represent the fulfillment of Scripture is repeatedly expressed in Matthew (cf. Matt 1:22; 2:17, 23; etc.). That expression, however, is hardly used in Mark or Luke.⁵⁷⁹¹ In John it is not used in the first eleven chapters. But at the transition to the rejection of Jesus in the Centerpiece of the Gospel, this expression is introduced for the first time (12:38), and it is employed thereafter an additional five times in the Farewell Cycle and Death Story in reference to the fulfillment of an Old Testament text (13:18; 15:25; 17:12; 19:24, 36) and twice in reference to the fulfillment of Jesus’ words (18:9, 32). John wanted his readers to understand that the death of Jesus was no accident and that the sacrifice of the Lamb of God was God’s means for dealing with the sin of the world (1:29).

The fulfillment here described is a reference to Ps 41:9 in which David bemoans the fact that a trusted friend, who shared his bread, had lifted up his heel against him.⁵⁸⁰² The long-term sharing of bread in the Middle Eastern context was normally interpreted as referring either to a family member or a permanent guest at the table. To eat at one’s table was regarded as a symbol of acceptance growing out of the ancient camp context where acceptance of a stranger into the camp was symbolized by the sharing of a meal. To lift up the heel, therefore, in a culture where displaying the bottom of the foot has been regarded as a breach of honor, especially after one had enjoyed acceptance at the meal, was the epitome of shaming the host

⁷⁷⁴⁹ For a thorough analysis of the idea of reprobation within strict Calvinism see the study of former missionary H. Boer, *The Doctrine of Reprobation in the Christian Reformed Church* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1983). His critique from within his heritage is a classic study.

⁷⁸⁵⁰ See D. Carson, *The Gospel According to John* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1991), 470.

⁷⁹⁵¹ The use is slightly different and more general in Mark 14:49 and Luke 24:44. Luke also has other ways of stating such an idea in 4:21 and 21:22.

⁸⁰⁵² The rabbis frequently interpreted Ps 41:9 as a reference to the betrayal of David by Ahithophel according to 2 Sam 15–17. Cf. the comments of E. Bishop, “‘He that eateth bread with me hath lifted up his heel against me’—Jn xiii.18 (Ps xli.9),” *ExpTim* 70 (1959): 331–33.

and the equivalent to being a traitorous scoundrel, after the manner of Ahithophel and his betrayal of David.⁵⁸¹³

The fact that Jesus predicted accurately for his disciples what was going to take place means that he fit fully the requirement for the identification of a legitimate prophet according to the test established in Deut 18:15–21, a passage that also predicted the coming of a prophet like Moses. Moreover, John 13:19 clearly indicates that the fulfillment of Jesus' prediction was to be understood by his disciples as a confirmation of his identity and mission. It was to lead the disciples to believe (cf. 20:31) that he was, in fact, none other than the *egō eimi* ("I am"), which was the name of the sending God of Exod 3:14 and the self-designation Jesus used many times in John.⁸²

13:10–11. Jesus' reply has been understood in two fundamentally different ways, with variations. The two ways turn on an exceedingly difficult textual variant.

(1) The majority of modern expositors¹⁸³³ omit the Greek words *ei mē tous podas*, 'except his feet', generating a translation such as 'A person who has had a bath (*louō*) does not need a wash (*niptō*)'—assuming the two verbs *louō* and *niptō* must be sharply distinguished.¹⁸⁴⁴ The verb *niptō* ('to wash') is also the verb used in v. 8, 'Unless I wash you ...' The idea, then, is that the disciples had *already* 'had a bath', and their 'whole body is clean'. Peter therefore does not need a complete wash. The act of footwashing is a symbol of this complete washing, and not some additional cleansing. If it were a mere additional cleansing, it would be a *relatively* insignificant step, which is incompatible with v. 7. Later copyists, failing to understand this point, added the words 'except his feet', and drastically changed the meaning. The shorter reading must therefore be accepted as the original, and is attested by Codex Sinaiticus (Alexandrian

⁸¹⁵³ Having taught in both the Middle East and the Orient, I learned quickly to keep my feet on the floor and not show the bottom of my feet. Such a practice is a change of style for anyone from the West who identifies relaxation with the putting up of one's feet.

⁸² Gerald L. Borchert, *John 12–21*, vol. 25B, The New American Commentary (Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 2002), 85–89.

⁸³¹³ Too numerous to list, they are ably represented by Brown, 2. 567–568; Bultmann, p. 470; Beasley-Murray, pp. 229, 234–235; James D. G. Dunn, *ZNW* 61, 1970, p. 250.

⁸⁴¹⁴ So F. Hauck, *TDNT*, 4. 946–947.

text, fourth century), various Latin readings from the fourth to the twelfth centuries (Western text), and by the text known to Origen (Caesarean, third century).

(2) Nevertheless it must be admitted that the preponderance of textual evidence favours retention of the phrase, generating a rendering such as 'A person who has had a bath does not need to wash, *except his feet*' (or, more idiomatically with the NI^{85}v , '... needs only to wash his feet'). It is far from clear that the move from *louō* to *niptō* is critical to a proper interpretation, for not only is the older semantic distinction between the two verbs often ignored by hellenistic writers (as most scholars admit¹⁸⁶⁵), but John is particularly given to using pairs of verbs synonymously, for purely stylistic reasons (e.g. *oida* and *ginōskō* for 'to know'; *pempō* and *apostellō* for 'to send'; *agapaō* and *phileō* for 'to love'; cf. especially Morris,⁸⁷ *SFG*⁸⁸, pp. 293–319). In this view, Jesus is going on to give a fresh lesson. In vv. 6–8 the footwashing symbolizes the cleansing that is the result of Christ's impending cross-work. But Peter's unrestrained (and thoughtless) exuberance (v. 9) opens up the opportunity to turn the footwashing to another point: the initial and fundamental cleansing that Christ provides is a once-for-all act. Individuals who have been cleansed by Christ's atoning work will doubtless need to have subsequent sins washed away, but the fundamental cleansing can never be repeated. It rather misses the point to charge that this view makes the footwashing a mere 'topping up', a symbol not of the fundamental cross-work of Christ and its effects but of progressive Christian experience. *In this verse* that may be so—but the point is that this verse has launched into a new application of the footwashing. The first application used the footwashing to symbolize Christ's atoning, cleansing death; this second application makes the points just elucidated; the third and final application teaches lessons in humility (vv. 12–17). One could not responsibly argue against the obvious meaning of vv. 12–15 by saying that this makes Jesus' disciples responsible to die a unique, atoning death: that would be to confuse the first and third applications. In the same way, the first and second applications must not be confused.

Some such view was defended by many older scholars, and is supported by some more recent ones.¹⁸⁹⁶ Moreover, this changing, shifting use of a figure is methodologically much like the way John handles the sheep/shepherd metaphor in John 10, or the vine metaphor in John 15. The interpretation of John 13:10 affirmed here also fits the theology of 1 John, which, assuming common authorship (though this point is disputed), is not to be ignored. In his first epistle, addressed to Christians, to people who have already believed (1 Jn. 5:13) and received eternal life (2:25), John insists that continuing confession of sin is necessary (1:9), as is continued dependence upon Jesus Christ, who is the atoning sacrifice for our sins (2:1, 2). The thought of John 13:10 is not dissimilar.

⁸⁵ NIV New International Version.

⁸⁶¹⁵ Chris Thomas, *op. cit.*, ch. 2, is an exception.

⁸⁷Morris, L. Morris, *Studies in the Fourth Gospel* (Paternoster, 1969).

⁸⁸*SFG* L. Morris, *Studies in the Fourth Gospel* (Paternoster, 1969).

⁸⁹¹⁶ E.g. Westcott, 2. 150; Bernard, 2. 462; Schlatter, pp. 282–283; and more recently Haenchen, 2. 457 (though he thinks the text is full of confusion); Bruce, pp. 282–283; Metzger, p. 240; and, on the text-critical question, especially John Christopher Thomas, *NovT* 29, 1987, pp. 46–52.

If the longer reading is original, one must ask what might have prompted the early omission of the phrase. The best suggestion is that some early copyists wrongly detected a pedantic contradiction between this phrase and the next clause, *his whole body is clean*, and consequently decided to drop the phrase. But Jesus' point, granted the longer text, is that the common experience of natural life has its counterpoint in spiritual existence: the person who has taken a bath, and who is basically clean, may nevertheless need to have his feet washed after a short walk on dusty roads, even though another bath would be superfluous. In the same way, the disciples have received the cleansing salvation, prospectively, by faith: *you are clean*, Jesus comments, and then adds, *though not every one of you*.

John comments that Jesus said this in full consciousness of who *was going to betray him* (cf. 6:70, 71).

Doubtless when Jesus washed the disciples' feet he included the feet of Judas Iscariot. If this proves anything beyond the unfathomable love and forbearance of the Master, it is that no rite, even if performed by Jesus himself, ensures spiritual cleansing. Washed Judas may have been; cleansed he was not (cf. 6:63–64). The only other place in the Fourth Gospel where Jesus tells his disciples (minus Judas) that they are clean is 15:3: 'You are already clean because of the word I have spoken to you.' Real cleansing is effected both through Jesus' revelatory word and through the atoning sacrifice to which the footwashing pointed.

This becomes another small but telling reason why sacramentarian interpretations of the footwashing⁹⁰¹ must be firmly rejected—a point increasingly recognized by modern commentators.⁹¹² Many connect the footwashing with baptism (but of course, some detect baptism every time water is mentioned). Some of those who retain the longer reading suggest that the secondary washing refers to the eucharist—though J. Michl has rightly protested that footwashing is a rather remarkable symbol for tasting Jesus' flesh and blood.¹⁹²⁹ The focus of the entire chapter is on Christology and soteriology, *i.e.* on who Christ is and on what he does. The most that can be said is that insofar as the footwashing anticipates the cleansing cross-work of Christ, it is parallel to Christian rites that look back on the same climactic event.

13:12. The notes that serve as preface to this section, above, have argued that there is no reason to think that the new application of the footwashing, immediately before us (vv. 12–17), stems from a different hand. After donning his outer garment again, and returning to his own mat (cf. v. 4), Jesus asks, *Do you understand what I have done for you?* The exemplary nature of the footwashing is then unpacked (vv. 13–17). But the links that tie these verses to the theme of cleansing that dominates the preceding verses are more than accidental. Even when the footwashing is said to point, in various ways, to spiritual cleansing based on Christ's death, both the footwashing and that atoning death are the supreme displays of Jesus' love for his own (v. 1b). The footwashing was shocking to Jesus' disciples, but not half as shocking as the notion of a Messiah who would die the hideous and shameful death of crucifixion, the death of the damned. But the two events—the footwashing and the crucifixion—are truly of a piece: the revered and exalted Messiah assumes the role of the despised servant for the good of others.

⁹⁰¹ *E.g.* J. N. Suggit, *Neot* 19, 1988, pp. 64–70.

⁹¹² *E.g.* Richter, pp. 295–298; Becker, 2. 425; and especially Schnackenburg, 3. 19–20, who once espoused a baptismal interpretation of the footwashing and later abandoned it.

⁹²¹⁹ J. Michl, *Bib* 50, 1959, pp. 697–708.

That, plus the notion of cleansing, explains why the footwashing can point so effectively to the cross. But service for others cannot be restricted to this unique act. If the footwashing and the cross are prompted by Jesus' daunting love (v. 1), the fellowship of the cleansed that he is creating is to be characterized by the same love (vv. 34–35), and therefore by the same self-abnegation for the sake of serving others. And that means that the footwashing is almost *bound* to have exemplary significance, just as Christ's death, however unique, has exemplary force (e.g. Mk. 10:35–45; Jn. 12:24–26; 1 Pet. 2).

13:13. Jesus now answers the question he set in v. 12: whether or not his followers understood, he will explain what he has done. *Teacher* (*didaskalos*) is the equivalent of 'Rabbi', the term regularly used by disciples addressing their teachers (as John the Baptist's followers addressed him, 3:26; cf. also 1:38, 49; 3:2; 4:31; 6:25; 9:21; 11:8). *Lord* (*kyrios*) was doubtless first applied to Jesus as a mark of respect for his teaching role, the equivalent of Aramaic *mar*; the expression is preserved in the New Testament in *marana tha*, lit. 'Our Lord, come!' (1 Cor. 16:22; mr^{93v} 'Come, O Lord')—clearly the influence of Aramaic-speaking Christians projecting one of their favourite sayings into the Greek-speaking world. 'Rabbi' and 'Mari' are known to have come together on the lips of rabbinic pupils addressing their masters (cf. S⁹⁴B 2. 558). But on the lips of Christians after the resurrection of Jesus Christ, 'Lord' took on richer meaning as the deepest reflections on who Jesus is took hold. 'Lord' became one of the important ways Christians referred to Jesus as the one whom God raised and exalted with 'the name that is above every name' (Phil. 2:9–11; cf. Acts 2:36). Indeed, readers of the Septuagint were used to referring to God himself as the 'Lord'. The Evangelist understands this; no-one who reported the confession of 20:28 could fail to do so. Thus he simultaneously remains faithful to the historical constraints of that fateful Passover night, and to the theology he wants to instil. Indeed, later readers could not help finding in Jesus' dramatic words—and *rightly so, for that is what I am*—at least an adumbration of a claim that goes way beyond what a rabbi might say. In its thrust, the verse echoes Lk. 6:46, 'Why do you call me "Lord, Lord," and do not do what I say?'

13:14–15. One of the ways human pride manifests itself in a stratified society is in refusing to take the lower role. But now that Jesus, their *Lord and Teacher*, has washed his disciples' feet—an unthinkable act!—there is every reason why they *also should wash one another's feet*, and no conceivable reason for refusing to do so. Jesus says, *I have set you an example (hypodeigma—the word suggests both 'example' and 'pattern'; cf. Heb. 4:11; 8:5; 9:25; Jas. 5:10; 2 Pet. 2:6) that you should do as I have done for you.* Little becomes Jesus' followers more than humility. Christian zeal divorced from transparent humility sounds hollow, even pathetic.

We may reasonably ask if those Christian communities that practise footwashing as a Christian sacrament on a par with baptism and the Lord's supper have understood this passage better than those who find they cannot elevate footwashing to the same plane. We may ask something similar of the formal act of footwashing on Maundy Thursday, when popes, bishops, abbots and others have often washed the feet of junior clergy and sometimes of paupers. Two factors have prevented most Christians, rightly, from so institutionalizing footwashing. First, nowhere else in the New Testament, or in the earliest extra-biblical documents of the church, is

⁹³NIV New International Version.

⁹⁴SB H. L. Strack and P. Billerbeck, *Kommentar zum neuen Testament aus Talmud und Midrasch* (München: C. H. Beck, 1926–61).

footwashing treated as an ecclesiastical rite, an ordinance, a sacrament. The mention of footwashing in 1 Timothy 5:10 is no exception: there it is not introduced as a universal rite, but is placed in a list of good deeds of open-hearted hospitality that qualify a widow to be included in the support list. Wise theologians and expositors have always been reluctant to raise to the level of universal rite something that appears only once in Scripture. Second, and perhaps more importantly, the heart of Jesus' command is a humility and helpfulness toward brothers and sisters in Christ that may be cruelly parodied by a mere 'rite' of footwashing that easily masks an unbroken spirit and a haughty heart.

13:16. Jesus drives the point home with an aphorism, one that was probably often repeated during his ministry, one that could easily be turned to several different applications (*cf.* Mt. 10:24; Lk. 6:40; Jn. 15:20). After the strong Assertive *I tell you the truth* (*cf.* notes on 1:51), Jesus deepens the teacher/pupil contrast by introducing two other pairs: master/servant (understood to be a slave) and superior (*i.e.* one who sends)/messenger. The word for 'messenger' is *apostolos*, the only time the word appears in the Fourth Gospel, and here without any overtones of the official 'twelve apostles': the word enjoyed a wide range of meaning throughout the New Testament period. This does not mean that the Evangelist had no concept of a special group of twelve disciples: he elsewhere repeatedly refers to 'the Twelve' (6:67, 70; 20:24). The point of the aphorism in this context is in any case painfully clear: no emissary has the right to think he is exempt from tasks cheerfully undertaken by the one who sent him, and no slave has the right to judge any menial task beneath him after his master has already performed it.

*Great God, in Christ you call our name
and then receive us as your own,
not through some merit, right or claim,
but by your gracious love alone.
We strain to glimpse your mercy-seat
and find you kneeling at our feet.*

*Then take the towel, and break the bread,
and humble us, and call us friends.
Suffer and serve till all are fed,
and show how grandly love intends
to work till all creation sings,
to fill all worlds, to crown all things.*

Brian A. Wren (1936–) ²⁹⁵⁰

13:17. The words *these things* probably refer back to vv. 14–15, with v. 16 a kind of aphoristic parenthesis. There is a form of religious piety that utters a hearty 'Amen!' to the most stringent demands of discipleship, but which rarely does anything about them. Jesus has already condemned those who hear his words but who fail to keep them (12:47–48; *cf.* 8:31).

⁹⁵²⁰ Reprinted by permission of Oxford University Press (USA and Canada; Hope Publishing Company, Illinois 60188, USA).

Now he emphasizes the truth again, in line with a repeated stress in the Gospels (*e.g.* Mt. 7:21–27; Mk. 3:35; Lk. 6:47–48) and elsewhere (*e.g.* Heb. 12:14; Jas. 1:22–25).

Additional note

13:2. Two textual variants control discussion of this verse: (a) the manuscript evidence for the present participle *ginomenou* and for the aorist participle *genomenou* is very evenly divided. The former is often taken to mean that the meal was ‘in progress’ (hence ‘during supper’, ^{RS}⁹⁶_V), but might mean that it ‘was being served’ (^{NI}⁹⁷_V); the latter is often taken to mean that supper was over (‘supper being ended’, ^A⁹⁸_V), but could be interpreted to mean that supper had just been served. Verses 4 and 26 make it impossible to believe that supper was over, and for that reason many prefer the present participle. Conversely, that makes the aorist participle the harder reading (especially if it is understood as in the ^A⁹⁹_V), and for that reason intrinsically more likely to have been changed by a copyist. It is therefore attractive to suppose that the aorist is original, but that it should be understood to mean that supper had just been served (an instance of what has traditionally been called the ‘ingressive aorist’).

(b) There is a nest of variants surrounding the name ‘Judas Iscariot, son of Simon’, but none affects the basic identification of the man. On the bearing of the contest between the genitive and the nominative of ‘Judas’, *cf.* notes above; on ‘Iscariot’, *cf.* notes on 6:71.

2. Jesus predicts his betrayal (13:18–30)

13:18. Jesus had repeatedly warned about the treachery of someone within the ranks of the Twelve (6:71; 12:4; 13:2). He has just made it clear, once again, that one of them is not at all clean (13:10). Now, referring to those who will be ‘blessed’ by doing what he has told them (v. 17), he says, *I am not referring to all of you; I know those I have chosen*. It is possible to understand these words to carry an implicit tail, *viz.* ‘and Judas isn’t one of them’, making Judas stand outside the circle of the chosen. But Jesus’ words in 6:70 (‘Have I not chosen you, the Twelve? Yet one of you is a devil!’) show that Judas is at this point to be counted amongst the Twelve; his words in 13:18 assume the same thing. The reason why he now takes the pains to show that inclusion of Judas was not an oversight or a sign of weakness on his part is so that their faith might be strengthened for the critical hour. As in 6:70, the argument assumes that not all election is to salvation.

The reason Jesus chose one who would betray him was to fulfill Scripture. The text cited, Psalm 41:9, ascribed to David, is part of a plaintive lament called forth by the painful experience of being mocked by enemies when already suffering debilitating and life-threatening illness. Worse yet is the treason of friends: ‘Even my close friend, whom I trusted, he who shared my bread, has lifted up his heel against me.’ By no stretch of the imagination can the entire psalm rightly be labelled ‘messianic’, for it includes lines such as these: ‘O LORD, have mercy upon me; heal me, for I have sinned against you’ (Ps. 41:4). The basis for seeing in this psalm a prophecy

⁹⁶_{RSV} (American) Revised Standard Version.

⁹⁷_{NIV} New International Version.

⁹⁸_{AV} Authorized Version (=King James Version).

⁹⁹_{AV} Authorized Version (=King James Version).

which is fulfilled in Jesus does not depend on designating the entire psalm ‘messianic’, but on two other features. First, because of 2 Samuel 7:12–16, Psalm 2 and other passages, David himself became a ‘type’, a model, of ‘great David’s greater Son’, the promised Messiah. This did not mean that *everything* that happened to David had to find its echo in Jesus. It meant that many of the broad themes of his life were understood that way—especially where language was so hyperbolic when applied to David alone that many readers of Scripture, Jews and Christians alike, were driven to seeing in such texts an anticipation, an adumbration, of the coming King. That, in part, is the explanation behind the reasoning that quotes Psalm 16:8–11 in Acts 2:24ff., or Psalm 45:6–7 in Hebrews 1:8–9. Second, amongst the great themes of David’s life that are repeatedly picked up in the New Testament are those that focus on his suffering, weakness, betrayal by friends, discouragement (*e.g.* the use of Ps. 22 in the passion narratives). Great David suffered; his greatness did not exempt him from pain and tears. Christians who came to see that the greatest display of the glory of the incarnate Word lay in the suffering and death so despised by the blind world, could not help but emphasize the similar strand in David’s life, and see in it part of the mosaic that established a Davidic ‘typology’.

John’s recording of the text is closer to the M¹⁰⁰T than to the L^x¹⁰¹. Near-Eastern notions of hospitality and courtesy meant that betrayal by one who is sharing bread is especially heinous. The final clause, *has lifted up his heel against me*, literally means (in Hebrew) ‘has made his heel great against me’. There have been many ingenious interpretations. The most likely is that it means ‘has given me a great fall’ or ‘has taken cruel advantage of me’ or ‘has walked out on me’.²¹⁰²¹ The precise point of betrayal is less important than that it was done by an intimate friend.

13:19. Although he is about to be betrayed, Jesus is not a hapless victim. Even the treachery of Judas can only serve the redemptive purposes of the mission on which Jesus has been sent. Here Jesus explains to his disciples that the reason why he is telling them of the impending betrayal is *so that when it does happen you will believe that I am He*. In the event, the disciples found it desperately difficult to come to terms with the cross; they would have found it impossible without this preparation, preparation that recurs in the next chapters (*e.g.* 14:29). Only Jesus’ resurrection and exaltation and his gift of the Spirit would utterly clear their minds and answer their questions, but the careful groundwork Jesus here lays proved sufficiently strong to keep the disciples together. They did not scatter immediately after the crucifixion, but kept together until his resurrection fully vindicated him and established their faith.

The content of that faith could have been put in many ways. Here the object of Jesus’ proleptic reassurance is that they might believe that *egō eimi*—an everyday expression that can be devoid of theological overtones (*cf.* notes on 6:20; 9:9), or can call to mind the ineffable name of God, the I AM, the I AM WHAT I AM (SO NE¹⁰³_B; *cf.* notes on 8:24, 28, 58; *cf.* Ex. 3:14), the I AM HE of Is. 41:4; 43:10.

13:20. This verse is closely paralleled by Matthew 10:40 (*cf.* Mk. 9:37; Lk. 10:16); the basic notion itself is reflected in several other passages (*e.g.* Mt. 25:40; Jn. 5:19ff.). Its relevance in

¹⁰⁰MT Masoretic Text (the ‘standard’ Hebrew text of the Old Testament).

¹⁰¹LXX The Septuagint (pre-Christian Greek version of the Old Testament).

¹⁰²²¹ Bruce, pp. 287, 296 and n. 14, citing A. R. Millard for the last suggestion.

¹⁰³NEB The New English Bible, Old Testament, 1970; New Testament, ²1970.

this context probably turns on three features: (1) The stunning Christological claim, 'I am He', in the previous verse, is filled out by the words *and whoever accepts me accepts the one who sent me*. This inevitably calls to mind 5:19ff., where the intimacy of the relationship between the Father and the Son has been spelled out in such detail. (2) This verse powerfully ties the disciples to Jesus, and therefore serves as a foil for the failure of Judas Iscariot. The mission of Jesus is here assigned the highest theological significance, the most absolutely binding authority—the authority of God himself. Failure to close with Christ is failure to know God. And because his disciples re-present him to the world, their mission, their ministry, takes on precisely the same absolute significance. (3) Thus Jesus anticipates the commission of 20:21 (see notes), where the parallels between his own mission and the mission of his disciples are explicitly drawn. To the disciples before the cross, this saying could be no more than a tantalizing hint at the work that would be theirs; to the same disciples after the resurrection, this became not only assurance that Jesus knew the direction he was taking (and therefore an incentive to their faith, as in v. 16), but also a foretaste of the commission that would consume¹⁰⁴

13:9–10. **Peter** continued to miss the spiritual lesson, but he was certain of his desire to be joined to Jesus. Therefore he asked Jesus to wash his **hands** and **head as well** as his **feet**. **Jesus answered, A person who has had a bath needs only to wash his feet; his whole body is clean.** (Some Gr. mss¹⁰⁵ omit the words "his feet.") Roman Catholics sometimes have interpreted verse 10 to mean that after infant baptism only penance is needed. A preferable interpretation is that after salvation all one needs is confession of sins, the continual application of Jesus' death to cleanse one's daily sins (cf. 1 John 1:7; 2:1–2). When Jesus added that **not every one of you is clean**, He was referring to Judas (cf. John 13:11, 18). This suggests that Judas was not converted.

13:11. Judas had rejected the life-giving, cleansing words of Jesus (cf. 6:63; 15:3), so he was yet in his sins. Judas did have his feet literally washed, but he did not enter into the meaning of the event. John stressed Jesus' supernatural knowledge (cf. 2:25; 4:29) of Judas' deception.

13:12–14. After giving this object lesson in humility the Lord questioned the disciples in order to draw out the significance of the lesson: **Do you understand what I have done for you? He asked them** (cf. v. 7). **Teacher** (*didaskalos*) and **Lord** (*kyrios*) show that Jesus is on a higher level than they. Yet He had done a humble service for them. Meeting others' needs self-sacrificially is what they ought to do too.

13:15–16. The foot-washing was **an example** (*hypodeigma*, "pattern"). Many groups throughout church history have practiced literal foot-washing as a church ordinance. However, present culture in many lands does not call for the need to wash dust from the feet of one's

¹⁰⁴ D. A. Carson, [*The Gospel according to John*](#), The Pillar New Testament Commentary (Leicester, England; Grand Rapids, MI: Inter-Varsity Press; W.B. Eerdmans, 1991), 464–472.

¹⁰⁵mss. manuscripts

guests. Whereas the Lord's Supper was practiced by the early church as an ordinance, it apparently did not practice foot-washing as an ordinance in church gatherings. This passage emphasizes inner humility, not a physical rite. A Christian widow's practice of "washing the feet of the saints" (1 Tim. 5:10) speaks not of her involvement in a church ordinance but of her humble slavelike service to other believers. Not to follow the example of Jesus is to exalt oneself above Him and to live in pride. **No servant is greater than his master** (cf. John 12:26).

13:17. God blesses His servants not for what they **know** but for their responses to what they know. Christian happiness (**you will be blessed**) comes through obedient service (**if you do them**, i.e., **these things** Jesus commanded).¹⁰⁶

¹⁰⁶ Edwin A. Blum, "[John](#)," in *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures*, ed. J. F. Walvoord and R. B. Zuck, vol. 2 (Wheaton, IL: Victor Books, 1985), 320.