

Into Thy Word Ministries Bible Study www.intothyword.org

General Idea: The betrayal of Jesus' closest followers begins as He warns them of their doings, and that *the very person who shares with me in meals and living, who knows better, will turn against me. Even the Scriptures bring this to our attention and through this you and others will know I am the Messiah. I tell you the Truth, if you welcome my Message, you will welcome Me and the Father who sent Me.* During this time, Jesus is in anguish because of this while the Disciples just look at each other in shock, wondering *who could do this.* Jesus gives a hint that it is *the one who dips his bread with me.* And so, it was Judas Iscariot who focused his relationship not with Christ but rather with Satan; he was the least suspect as he was the most trustworthy one who kept the money. And then, he *went out into the night.* Then, Jesus turns to His other most trustworthy Disciple, Peter, and challenges him more directly. *The time has come for me to enter glory, said Jesus, and I give you a new commandment; love one another, just as I have loved you! And by this love you will prove Me to the world and this will be the mark of the Disciples, the mark of love.* Jesus tells them they cannot yet come with him; Peter was perplexed and confused seeking why, even saying he would die for Jesus. Then, Jesus tells him *in that time you will deny me when the rooster crows and you will deny three different times that you even know Me!*

Contexts and Background

In context, Jesus continues after the foot washing and the call to humility and service while they had an close and dear dining experience. Contrary to Da Vinci's painting of the last Supper, Jews then, when having at a formal meal, sat on the floor or on cushions, each one leaning or reclining just behind the person to their right while leaning on their left elbow and eating with the right hand so their feet and left hand were not in view. The food was already cut up so there was no need to use both hands. Why? Because that was the hand used to wipe the digested meal when it came out the other end, and socially disgusting. Thus, when Jesus' disciples leaned on one another to ask questions, it was just the way they did it then; it was not a sexual statement as the liberal hermeneutic community would have one believe. This passage gives a stark contrast between true humility and servanthood and that of pride and betrayal. One is a force of will by a misguided and upset mindset that leads to anger and disillusionment and the other is trust and obedience that is truly content and rewarded (Luke 7:37-38; John 12:2; 13:1-14:7; 21:20).

Commentary—Word and Phrase Meanings

- *Those I have chosen.* Here refers to the main Disciples that Jesus called to follow Him and then carried on that call after the Resurrection. This does not refer to salvation in general. Even though Judas was called, He was not chosen for salvation (Matt. 26:24; John 6:70; Titus 3:5).
- *Fulfill the scripture.* One of the dominate tasks of the Gospels is that of an apologetic to convince the Jews through their own Scriptures that Jesus is God, the One, True, Messiah Redeemer. Here, Jesus is referring to Psalm 41: 9 and Absalom's rebellion, and of a righteous person who suffers. In addition, there is the theme of Jesus Who gives predictions that come true, a contrast to the predictions of the pagan priests and their Greek gods and the Jewish mystics that did not come true to also prove His Divinity (2 Sam. 16:23; Isa. 41:26; 44:7-11; 48:3-7).
- *Shares my bread / sop.... dipped it in the dish.* Sharing hospitality then created an intimate bond. Today, we tend to take it for granted! Jesus literally shares his food by dipping his bread and giving it to Judas. A common bowl was used for olive oil and other foods like humus and or the bitter herbs that the flat bread was dipped into. For someone to share with the host as Judas did was an honor (Mark 14:20).
- *Heel against me.* This is a Semitic and Hebrew expression of faithlessness and contempt derived from a horse or mule preparing to kick its rider and provider. Considering Jesus was having an intimate meal and teaching, this is a very harsh but deserving distain for those who would betray Him. The

shock was that Judas was very clandestine with his treachery. None of the other Disciples would ever have guessed, even living and working closely with him for three years, that Judas would do this; he would have been the least expected to betray (Matt. 26:25; Luke 9:5; 10:11)!

- *Accepts anyone I send.* Meaning an ambassador or representative that you honor and treat the same as you would the one who sent him. Here, it points to God the Father. This applies to all who carry the Gospel Message to others (John 20:22).
- *Accepts / receives me.* We find here the basic evangelical principle of knowing God by and through the Son from the Power of the Holy Spirit so we can receive/accept Him as Lord and Savior. This is accomplished by Christ's Work that God the Father sent that Jesus obeyed that the Holy Spirit empowered that we hear, accept the Message, and then believe and trust in our Lord Jesus Christ as Savior (Luke 18:17; John 1:12; 3:16, 32-35; 5:43; 12:48; Rom. 3:23-25).
- *Jesus was troubled.* Meaning God is passionate and evil disgusts Him! Jesus is deeply grieved and draws on Old Testament *lament* language (Psalm 42:5-11; 43:5; 142:3-6; 143:3-4; Jonah 4:9; Matt. 27:46). Jesus knows what is ahead and can at anytime get out of it; He chooses to remain true to His mission and God's redemptive plan! For the Greeks, this was troubling because the Stoics stressed tranquility and rarely showed emotion to prove one as superior. Here, Jesus demonstrates His superiority by His sincerity and humanity in identifying Himself as one of us (Judg. 10:16; Psalm 31:9-10; 38:10; 55:1-14; Isa. 63:9-10; Jer. 2:20-32; 9:1-3; Hos. 11:8; John 1:14; 8:24-28; 11:33; 12:27; 16:1-4, 32-33).
- *Betray.* Meaning disloyalty and deceit by a trusted friend. This also proves Jesus' foreknowledge. Judas, secretly using treachery and unfaithfulness, commits the ultimate treason against the Holy One of the universe to get his way and enable his plan to go through to tip Jesus' hand to become a warrior messiah as the Zealots wanted. Contrastingly, Jesus models goodness and humility and love as keys to happiness and commitment in life and ministry (Psalm 23:6; Luke 22:24-30; Phil. 2:1-11).
- *Disciple whom Jesus loved.* This did not mean Jesus did not love the other Disciples. It was a statement of affection, humility, and honor, as Jesus gave this Disciple, John—the human instrument / author of this Gospel—such a coveted position that he would later earn by his service to Jesus' mother and to the Christian community. It would seem John was at Jesus' right and Judas at Jesus' left (John 19:26; 20:2; 21:7-20).
- *Satan entered / beckoned.* Meaning to nod at or signal. Satan was a prime influence but the devil did not make him do it. Satan may have put in the desire to betray Jesus, but Judas was not forced; he still had free will and a warning from Jesus not to do it. A believer still has dominance over Satan or temptations. Yet, what Judas did fulfilled what needed to be done (2 Sam. 15:31; Psalm 41:9).
- *Do quickly.* A statement of Jesus sovereignty; He was still in control. The other Disciples assumed, since it was Passover, that Judas was doing the customary charitable work, but this was not supposed to be done at night. Jews then and many today believed that this helps secure God's favor when in fact, it is a fruit of our gratitude and obedience (Ex. 12:22; Isa. 49:3; John 18:28).
- *My children.* Not a retort or remark of contempt; rather, a term of what is being taught that is extremely important as a father instructs his child or a dying patriarch gives his final decrees and wishes to his family. Sometimes, close teachers and students would call each other "father" and "children" (1 John 2:1).
- *A new command.* Meaning this is the standard operational procedure—now! Not that the information was new or unknown prior, but that the depth and urgency of it was that Jesus was leaving them and wanted to make it clear that this was the most important of all His teachings (Lev. 19:18; Deut. 6:5; Matt. 5:43-48; 25:40; Mark 12:28-33; John 15:13; Eph. 5:25).

- *Love one another.* This means sacrificial, unselfish, determined love; the change is from “neighbor” to “one another” to make sure the theme is community. Love confirms the genuineness of Jesus and us as followers! This is also a template on the importance and value of friendships (Mark 12:30-31; Luke 10:27; John 13:34-35; 15:12, 17; Rom. 12:10; 13:8; 14:13; 1 Thess. 3:12; 4:9; 2 Thess. 1:3; 1 Peter 1:22; 1 John 3:11, 3:22; 4:8; 23; 4:7, 11-12; 2 John 1: 5)!
- *Love is/Charity.* The Greek word is *Agape*, which means "self giving" and "sacrificial," that is more concerned with others than self. It was used in Classic Greek literature to refer to someone who was generously favored by a god. It conveys the idea of a person giving all his or her love, or favor, to someone else rather than to self. It is a love that is not earned; in contrast, it is relational and given freely. It also refers to parents giving all of their love to their child. In the New Testament, *agape* love was used to make a similar point, as God gives to each of us all of His love. It is a love that is bestowed without expectations of a response from the other. *Agape* love is also the most common word used both as a noun and a verb in the New Testament. The greatest example of *agape* love is what our Lord Jesus Christ did when He died for our sins. Consequently, God's *agape* love gave us His forbearance and rescue from the punishment that we deserved. Rather than receiving what we should have, we received His favor without earning it. The word *Charity*, used in the KJV and other translations, is a poor word rendering and does not reflect the sacrificial nature of the Greek word (Deut. 6:5; Joshua 24:14 –15; Isa. 44:9-20; Mark 12:28-31; John 3:16; 21:16; Matt. 22:34-40; John 3:16; 13:1, 34-35; 14:1; 15:9; Rom. 1:31; 5:8-10; 8; 12:10; 13:11-14; 1 Cor. 7:32-35; 13; 2 Cor. 1:21-22; 5:5 Gal. 5:5; Eph. 2:4-7; Phil. 2:2; Col. 1:1-6; 3:5, 12-14; , 12-14; 1 Thess. 1:3; 2:8; 3:6; 12; 4:9-10; 5:8-13; 2 Tim. 3:3; Heb. 10:24; 1 John 4:7-12).
- *All men will know that you are my disciples.* When we **love one another**, we prove and exhibit Christ! This is our “mark,” the prime characteristic that makes us friendly and connectable to others, and how we are to be known—by what Christ does with us and calls us to. We are to love one another—period! No strings attached! This is the mold for the form that we use to display God’s love to the world (John 13:34-35; 15:13-17; Gal. 5:22; 1 John 2:10; 3:14-16)!
- *You cannot follow now.* Meaning a temporary restriction, referring to *die* and *all will die* as Peter will after a couple of decades of service; he was martyred in 68 A.D. (John 21:18-19).
- *Rooster crows.* *Roosters were* the ancient alarm clocks, very reliable and consistent so all in ear shot would know when it was sunrise. They crowed in sets or spurts from 12:30 am to 3:00 a.m. or at sunrise, depending on their mood and pecking order, hence why the number varies in the Gospels. *Three times* meant three instances—not a contradiction if you ever lived on a farm, as each Gospel gives different details. This may have been a specific rooster that was well known then. Jesus tells Peter that his denial is imminent even as he is proclaiming his steadfast loyalty! Peter would betray Jesus before the end of that very night (Matt. 26:34-75; Mark 13:35; Luke 22:61)!
- *Disown / deny me three times.* For Judas, it was a deliberate betrayal; for Peter, it was a shameful act, a result from confusion and perhaps cowardice for one who was normally so bold and presumptuous (Matt. 26:24, 33-35; Mark 14:29-31; Luke 22:31-34).

Devotional Thoughts and Applications

Jesus showed His love by taking our place for the wrath and punishment of our sins. He kindly took our interests over His and paid that price through His sinless life and His sacrifice on our behalf. Love takes the initiative, as Christ did with us, and fosters the Fruit of the Spirit and brotherly love that must empower the Christian life and be the beacon for the life of a church! If not, something is terribly off!

Even in the midst of betrayal, Jesus taught what real love is all about—not power or position or pretentiousness or pride; it is the opposite, the emptying of ourselves and the filling of our Lord’s empowerment and precepts to do as He exemplified and to which he called us. For love is more about what is done than what is said; it is about how one is not what one may think he/she is about. Many people go into a leadership role as a means of power and control and to get something by manipulating

others to do their will. Even Christians seek the way of the world, while God's idea of true leadership is a servant ministry model or servant leadership. Where the world will use a whip, God shows us a towel, leading the way and calling us to do the same when we minister and deal with those in the Kingdom and the seeking of others for the Kingdom. **Remember, love confirms the authenticity of Jesus' followers!**

The Essential Inductive Questions (for more Inductive questions see Inductive Bible Study):

1. What does this passage say?
2. What does this passage mean?
3. What is God telling me?
4. How am I encouraged and strengthened?
5. Is there sin in my life for which confession and repentance is needed?
6. How can I be changed, so I can learn and grow?
7. What is in the way of these precepts affecting me? What is in the way of my listening to God?
8. How does this apply to me? What will I do about it?
9. What can I model and teach?
10. What does God want me to share with someone?

Additional Questions:

1. Have you ever had someone you really admired (like a celebrity) let you down? How did you feel?
2. Why would someone who was so close for so long, who shared life and work together turn against another whom they called a close friend? How do some Christians turn against Jesus now? How have you betrayed Him?
3. How does this passage, John 13, contrast true humility and servanthood and pride and betrayal?
4. How have you seen a person's force of will by a misguided and upset mindset or pride and anger just lead to more anger and disillusionment? How can trust and obedience in Christ be the answer? What helps you be truly content?
5. What are some of the views concerning Jesus you have seen other people want? How do you teach and exhibit Christ? What is the best way for you to do this?
6. Why is love so important that it is the prime model we are to use to show God's love to the world? What happens when we do not do this well or at all?
7. How is an unforgiving attitude along with its ugly, rotten fruits choke you off from His wonders?
8. What happens when love is not the prime mark of a Christian? What happens when it is absent from the life of a church?
9. Why is it that when we love much, we will do so much more in our lives and in the lives of others as well? How have you seen this? How can you do this more?
10. How can you put aside the malicious traits of evil, pride, and hurt and embrace others in love? What gets in your way of this? What can you do about it?
11. How does love prove Jesus to the world? How has it been the mark of your life and church? How can it be better? How does love mark you? How should it?
12. How does love confirm the authenticity of Jesus? How does love confirm the authenticity of Jesus' followers? How is love confirmed in you? How should it be? How can you and your church better exhibit the love of Christ?