

JOHN 13:1-3 | THE UPPER ROOM: THE HOUR HAS COME

- Verse 1 –
 - Chapters 13-17 take place in the upper room, on the night **before the feast of the passover**. At this time, **Jesus knew that his hour was come**, telling us that there is significance that Jesus dies at Passover. What significance could there be other than the fact that Jesus is the ultimate Passover Lamb? With this, we see much foreshadowing in the original Passover account.
 - It is significant that the time had come for Jesus to **depart out of this world unto the Father**. If we say that “Jesus came to die” we are being shortsighted. Jesus came to go to the Father, sitting at His right hand until the time for the Father to give Him the Kingdom.
 - Jesus was ready to depart **having loved his own which were in the world**. We are not told who **his own** are. It is in the plural and masculine and *His own people* would seem to be the most sensible conclusion. This conclusion would be strengthened by [John 1:11](#), **He came unto his own....**
 - Not only did Jesus love **his own**, but **he loved them unto the end**. The word **end** is τέλος [telos], speaking of the *full extent* of love. Thus not only did the Father love the world ([John 3:16](#)), but the Son loved **his own**.
- Verse 2 –
 - The **supper** is the *Last Supper*, also discussed in the other three Gospels. Contrary to popular opinion, it was not the *Passover* meal (Seder), as verse 1 makes plain. This explains why the word for *unleavened bread* is used in verse 18.
 - The translation of the word γίνομαι [ginomai] as **ended** is confusing on two counts.
 - First, *ginomai* means *to come into existence*.
 - Second, it is *later* in this passage (and in this night) that they actually eat the supper.
 - The Bishop’s Bible, which was the English benchmark for the KJV, also had *ended*. The Geneva Bible also used *ended*, as did William Tyndale’s translation.
 - The Oxford English Dictionary has this entry concerning the verb *ended*: “Also (in Middle English), to perform (religious duties). *Obsolete*.” Since the translations of that era always used *ended*, the meaning of the word must have been different than the meaning today, and likely had something to do with the performance of religious duties. We can be certain that the KJV translators understood that the supper was not *completed*.
 - At this point, the **devil had put into the heart of Judas Iscariot...to betray him**. Because we know that Judas is **Simon’s son**, we know that Judas was possessed by the devil, but not the devil incarnate.
- Verse 3 –
 - John had previously told us that **the Father had given all things into his hands**. See [John 3:35](#) 5:22, and later in [John 17:2](#). Similar words are spoken by Jesus in [Matthew 28:18](#), which are spoken at the ascension. Since Jesus has **all things** in His hands, He certainly *could* have called-off the crucifixion (compare [Matt. 26:53](#)).
 - The writer places this information here because it is his primary testimony about Jesus ([Jn. 20:31](#)) and because of the contrast given in the scene that follows.

JOHN 13:4-17 | THE UPPER ROOM: JESUS WASHES FEET

- Verse 4 –
 - Jesus **riseth from supper**. The definite article is used, so perhaps we would say “from the supper table.” Then Jesus **took a towel, and girded himself**, taking on the role of servant.

- Verse 5 –
 - Jesus **began to wash the disciples' feet**, something which exuded servanthood in the ancient world, and an act which has become one of the most famous of all the acts of Jesus.
- Verse 6 –
 - The pronouns **thou** and **my** are emphatic in the Greek text. The “tone” of the question says, “I should be washing your feet, not you washing mine.”
- Verse 7 –
 - Jesus indicates that a lesson will be learned. That lesson will be explicit in verses 12-14, which we shall consider here.
 - Jesus said **know ye what I have done to you?** (v. 12). Jesus was showing that *if I can do it, so can you*. The Lord instructed **ye also ought to wash one another's feet** (v. 14), **for I have given you an example** (v. 15).
- Verses 8-9 –
 - Peter was unwilling to trust Jesus' words that **thou shalt know hereafter**.
 - This display was so foreign to his thinking that he was not even willing to entertain the thought of Jesus as servant.
 - Peter stated in clear terms, using the Greek double negative, **Thou shalt never wash my feet** (v. 8).
 - Jesus was just as clear in His response, also using the double negative: **if I wash thee not, thou hast no part with me** (v. 8).
 - No part of *what?* Surely Peter would have concluded *no part of the Kingdom*, for the establishment of the Kingdom is what they were expecting.
 - When the Gospel says **no part**, it uses the Greek word μέρος [meros], which is the word that would be used for *boarders*.
 - With these words, Peter was “all in.”
- Verses 10-11 –
 - Jesus uses an illustration that should not be used beyond its intended use.
 - A person who had bathed only needs his feet cleaned (after a walk to a friend's house, for example).
 - Jesus spoke in a manner that was not perfectly clear, saying, **ye are clean, but not all** (v. 10). The disciples could have thought, “our feet are dirty but the rest of our bodies are clean,” or could have thought “most of us are clean but some of us are dirty.”
 - Either way, it leaves a mystery, which the writer (with hindsight) clears up in verse 11, **he knew who should betray him**, and thus the words speak of Judas.
- Verses 12-15 –
 - See note on verse 7.
 - In addition, some groups have built a *foot washing ordinance* from this passage. Jesus clearly says that He has given **an example** for the disciples to follow. Those who have a foot-washing ordinance must do the following:
 - Believe that Jesus spoke of literal foot-washing and not the humble service of which it spoke.
 - Believe that the example and instruction to the disciples of Jesus is to be taken directly by Christians today.
 - I believe that the example of servanthood is beautiful and worthy of imitation for anyone, anytime. I do not believe we have an ordinance (either here or elsewhere).
- Verses 16-17 –
 - In summary of the scene, Jesus makes the teaching clear: as servants, they were not greater than their Lord. As the Lord was willing to be a servant, so should they.