





2018



READING JOHN

2018

SEQUENCE

- Reading and reactions
- Last Supper and Lord's Supper
- Structure of John 13
- Commentary
- Links with the Hebrew Bible
- Background in the Synoptic tradition
- And so...
- Prayer

LAST SUPPER AND LORD'S SUPPER

- John's Gospel has a Last Supper (John 13-17).
- John's Gospel has no Lord's Supper (but see John 6).
- The community practiced Eucharist (and Baptism).
- Synoptics: Thursday evening was Passover.
- John: Friday evening was Passover.

LAST SUPPER AND LORD'S SUPPER

	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday
Synoptics	Lord's Supper	Crucifixion		First day of the week
	Eve of Passover	Passover		
John	Last Supper	Crucifixion		First day of the week
		Eve of Passover	Passover	

STRUCTURE OF JOHN 13

A v.1

Jesus' departure

B v.2-3

Judas and the devil

C vv.4-5

preparation for the washing of the feet

D vv.6-12

dialogue with Peter

C* vv.12-20

Explanation the washing of the feet

B* vv. 21-30

Judas and the devil

A* vv. 31-38

Jesus' departure

JOHN 13:1-20

John 13:1 Just before the **Passover** feast, Jesus knew that his **time** had come to depart from this world to the Father. Having **loved** his own who were in the world, he now **loved** them to the very **end**.

- John's third Passover season (it is clearly *not* as Passover meal)
- V. 1 functions as a title, introducing the Passion Narrative (13-19) and the washing of the feet.
- Reversal of the Prologue
- Time = "hour"
- Loved in two verb forms
- To the end = 2 meanings
- Root form: to perfect/complete
- John 4:34; 5:36; 17:4, 23; 19:28, 30

JOHN 13:1-20

John 13:2 The evening meal was in progress, and the **devil** had already put into the heart of **Judas** Iscariot, Simon's son, that he should **betray** Jesus.

- Devil: Jesus replied, "Didn't I choose you, the twelve, and yet one of you is the devil?" (John 6:70)
- Judas: John 6:**71**; 12:**4**, 6; 13:**2**, 26–31; 14:22; 18:**2–3**, **5**)
- Betray: John 6:64, 71; 12:4; 13:2, 11, 21; 18:2, 5, 30, 35-36; 19:11, 16, 30; 21:20
- Paradidomai = both betray and hand over. In early tradition, God is the subject of the verb.
- Subject: **Judas** (x9); the **Jews** (x2); **Pilate** (x1 NB); **Jesus** (19:30 - the handing over of his Spirit).

JOHN 13:1-20

John 13:3 Because Jesus **knew** that the Father had **handed** all things over to him, and that he had **come** from God and was **going back** to God

- Knowledge.
- Handed over (not the same verb).
- Reversal of the incarnation from the Prologue.
- This is the key context for the washing of the feet.

JOHN 13:1-20

John 13:4 he **got up** from the meal, **removed** his outer clothes, took a towel and **tied** it around himself. **5** He poured **water** into the washbasin and began to wash the disciples' feet and to dry them with the towel he had **wrapped** around himself.

- **Rose** 13 times, almost always in reference to the resurrection of Jesus.
- **Took off** 18 times, usually in reference to Jesus' laying down his life.
- **Wrapped** only 3 times, but the links are fascinating (Peter in John 21).
- **Water** 21 times, but the contexts are always illuminating.

JOHN 13:1-20

John 13:4 he got up from the meal, removed his outer clothes, took a towel and tied it around himself. **5** He poured water into the washbasin and began to **wash** the disciples' **feet** and to **dry** them with the towel he had wrapped around himself.

- **Washing** 13 times. (The man born blind in John 9)
- **Wipe** 3 times only. (Mary in John 11-12)
- **Feet** an apparently “innocent” word **14** times (Lazarus in John 11; Mary in John 11-12; Jesus in John 20)
- And she saw two angels in white sitting where Jesus' body had been lying, one at the head and one at the **feet**. (John 20:12)

JOHN 13:1-20

John 13:6 Then he came to **Simon Peter**. Peter said to him, “Lord, are you going to wash my feet?” **7** Jesus replied, “**You do not understand** what I am doing **now**, but you will **understand** after these things.” **8** Peter said to him, “You will **never** wash my feet!” Jesus replied, “If I do not wash you, you have no **share** with me.”

- Peter: representative of the group of disciples.
- Confessed the identity of Jesus (John 6:68-69).
- Will betray Jesus three times, as announced in John 13:35-38.
- Not understanding now is a theme in John’s Gospel.
- “Never” lit. “into eternity” 12 times, with a special meaning.
- Peter has not understood — and cannot understand after the resurrection.
- Share = communion.

JOHN 13:1-20

John 13:9 Simon Peter said to him, “Lord, wash not only my feet, but also **my hands and my head!**” **10** Jesus replied, “The one who has bathed needs only to wash his feet, but is **completely** clean. And you disciples are clean, but not every one of you.” **11** (For Jesus knew the **one who was going to betray him**. For this reason he said, “Not every one of you is clean.”)

- Peter persists on the physical level, as if the quantity of washing mattered!
- The key is spiritual: Jesus’ disposition is what counts. It is enough to allow yourself to be served.
- Peter “voices” the shocking nature of this teaching.
- Judas again or rather the forces of evil, giving us the true nature of the conflict.

JOHN 13:1-20

John 13:12 So when Jesus had washed their feet and put his outer clothing back on, he took his place at the table again and said to them, **“Do you understand what I have done for you?”**

- V. 12 introduces this second interpretation of the washing.
- Vv. 13-17 are about ruling and serving.
- Vv. 18-20 are again about betrayal.
- The question may seem strange in light of the first interpretation in the previous dialogue.
- Also, the pronouns and verbs are now in the plural, so the whole group is in view.
- We are overhearing a teaching addressed to the later community.

JOHN 13:1-20

John 13:13 You call me ‘**Teacher**’ and ‘**Lord**,’ and do so correctly, for that is what I am. **14** If I then, your **Lord** and **Teacher**, have washed your feet, you too ought to wash one another’s feet. **15** For I have given you an **example** (*hupodeigma*)—you should do just as I have done for you. **16** I tell you the solemn truth, **the slave is not greater than his master**, nor is the one who is sent as a messenger greater than the one who **sent** him. **17** If you understand these things, **you will be blessed if you do them.**

- Keys: Teacher, Lord, servant “do”.
- NB Reversal of roles.
- The beatitude in v.17 corresponds to v.12.
- V.16 is a kind of proverb. A disciple is not greater than his teacher (Luke 6:40; cf. Mt 10:24-25 and Jn 15:20).
- *A fortiori* argument.
- Finally, understanding is not sufficient for blessedness — actual putting into practice is required.
- “Example” is a special word.

EXAMPLE

- Tupos / hypotoposis
- Hypogrammos
- Hypodeigma
- Eikōn
- Charakter

EXAMPLE

hupodeigma

- An example of behaviour used for purposes of moral instruction, example, model, pattern.
- An indication of something that appears at a subsequent time, outline, sketch, symbol.

EXAMPLE

2 Macc 6:27 Therefore, by bravely giving up my life now, I will show myself worthy of my old age **28** and leave to the young a noble **example** (**hupodeigma**) of how to die a good death willingly and nobly for the revered and holy laws. When he had said this, he went at once to the rack.

2 Macc 6:31 So in this way he died, leaving in his death an **example** (**hupodeigma**) of nobility and a memorial of courage, not only to the young but to the great body of his nation.

4 Macc 17:23 For the tyrant Antiochus, when he saw the courage of their virtue and their endurance under the tortures, proclaimed them to his soldiers as an **example** (**hupodeigma**) for their own endurance, **24** and this made them brave and courageous for infantry battle and siege, and he ravaged and conquered all his enemies.

JOHN 13:1-20

John 13:18 “What I am saying does not refer to all of you. I know the ones I have chosen. But this is to fulfil the scripture, ‘***The one who eats my bread has turned against me.***’ **19** I am telling you this now, before it happens, so that when it happens you may believe that **I am he.**

- Judas is again in view.
- Citation from Psalm 41:9, in a free form. Cf. Ps 41:9 Even my close friend whom I trusted, he who shared meals with me, has turned against me. (NET) Ps 40:10 (9) Indeed, the person at peace with me, in whom I hoped, he who would eat of my bread, magnified trickery against me. (LXX).
- True understanding and faith are retrospective in the light of Easter.
- NB: “**I am he**” = egō eimi (cf. 8:24 at the feast of Succoth; 4:26 with the woman at the well.)

JOHN 13:1-20

John 13:20 I tell you the solemn truth, whoever **accepts** the one I **send accepts** me, and whoever **accepts** me **accepts** the one who **sent** me.”

- This verse has always puzzled readers.
- Cf. I tell you the solemn truth, the slave is not greater than his master, nor is the one who is sent as a messenger greater than the one who sent him. (John 13:16)
- Both v.20 and v.16 take us to v.18, on the basis of choosing and sending.
- It does echo synoptic tradition: “Whoever receives you receives me, and whoever receives me receives the one who sent me. (Matt 10:40 and parallels).

HEBREW BIBLE

- In **Second Isaiah** (40-55), God's help to Israel is expressed in three ways: creation/redemption, the vindication of the Servant and the return to Zion.
- There are four **Suffering Servant Songs**: 42:1-4; 49:1-6; 50:4-11 and 52:13-53:12.
- The "servant" is both the individual prophet and all of Israel.
- In context, the suffering of the servant was exemplary, for the benefit of the community (and not substitutionary)
- These mysterious poems proved to be an especially rich resource for early Christian reflection on the cross.

HEBREW BIBLE

First Song: Isaiah 42:1-4

Isa 42:1 “Here is my **servant** whom I support,
my chosen one in whom I take pleasure.
I have placed my spirit on him;
he will make just decrees for the nations.

HEBREW BIBLE

Second Song: Isaiah 49:1-6

Isa 49:3 He said to me, “You are my **servant**, **Israel**, through whom I will reveal my splendour.”

Isa 49:5 So now the LORD says,
the one who formed me from birth to be his **servant**—
he did this **to restore Jacob** to himself,
so that Israel might be **gathered** to him;
and I will be honoured in the LORD’s sight,
for my God is my source of strength—

6 he says, “Is it too insignificant a task for you to be my **servant**,
to **reestablish the tribes of Jacob**,
and restore the remnant of Israel?
I will make you a **light to the nations**,
so you can bring my deliverance to the remote regions of the earth.”

HEBREW BIBLE

Third Song: Isaiah 50:4-11

Isa 50:10 Who among you fears the LORD?

Who obeys his **servant**?

Whoever walks in deep darkness,
without light,

should trust in the name of the LORD
and rely on his God.

HEBREW BIBLE

Fourth Song: Isaiah 52:13-53:12

Isa 52:13 “Look, my **servant** will succeed!
He will be elevated, **lifted high**, and greatly exalted—

Isa 53:11 Having suffered, he will reflect on his work,
he will be satisfied when he understands what he has done.
“My **servant** will acquit many,
for he carried their sins.

HEBREW BIBLE

John 3:14 Just as Moses **lifted up** the serpent in the wilderness, so must the Son of Man be **lifted up**, etc.

Isa 52:13 “Look, my **servant** will succeed! He will be elevated, **lifted high**, and greatly exalted—

John 12:38 ...so that the word of Isaiah the prophet would be fulfilled. He said, “**Lord, who has believed our message, and to whom has the arm of the Lord been revealed?**”

Isa 53:1 Who would have believed what we just heard? When was the LORD’s power revealed through him?

HEBREW BIBLE

John 11:51 (Now he did not say this on his own, but because he was high priest that year, he prophesied that Jesus was going to die for the Jewish nation, **52** and not for the Jewish nation only, but **to gather together into one the children of God** who are scattered.)

Isa 49:5 So now the Lord says,
the one who formed me from birth to be his **servant-**
he did this to **restore Jacob** to himself,
so that **Israel might be gathered to him;**
and I will be honoured in the Lord's sight,
for my God is my source of strength-

SYNOPTIC TRADITION

Mark 10:41 Now when the other ten heard this, they became angry with James and John. **42** Jesus called them and said to them, “You know that those who are recognised as rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and those in high positions use their authority over them. **43** But it is not this way among you. Instead whoever wants to be great among you must be your servant, **44** and whoever wants to be first among you must be the slave of all. **45** For even the Son of Man did not come to be served but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many.”

Mark 10:35-45 = Matthew 20:20-28

SYNOPTIC TRADITION

Luke 12:37 Blessed are those slaves whom their master finds alert when he returns! I tell you the truth, he will dress himself to serve, have them take their place at the table, and will come and wait on them!

Luke 17:7 “Would any one of you say to your slave who comes in from the field after ploughing or shepherding sheep, ‘Come at once and sit down for a meal’? **8** Won’t the master instead say to him, ‘Get my dinner ready, and make yourself ready to serve me while I eat and drink. Then you may eat and drink’?”

SYNOPTIC TRADITION

Luke 22:24 A dispute also started among them over which of them was to be regarded as the greatest. **25** So Jesus said to them, “The kings of the Gentiles lord it over them, and those in authority over them are called ‘benefactors.’ **26** Not so with you; instead the one who is greatest among you must become like the youngest, and the leader like the one who serves. **27** For who is greater, the one who is seated at the table, or the one who serves? Is it not the one who is seated at the table? But I am among you as one who serves.

STRUCTURE OF JOHN 13

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Jesus' departure

AND SO...

- The washing of the feet is unique to John and of obvious importance to the Gospel writer.
- It was inspired by certain parabolic sayings in the synoptic tradition.
- In form, it is a prophetic gesture.
- In the context, this prophetic gesture has the same “function” as the action and words over the bread and the wine.
- Jesus is articulating his disposition as he faces death.
- Thus, God is serving humanity in Jesus death and resurrection.

AND SO...

- Salvation was an act of loving service.
- In Jesus' death and resurrection, God served humanity — an amazing idea.
- Christian service participates in God's service of humanity in Christ.
- NB: no mention of Adam, original sin, price to be paid etc.

AND SO...

- Healing: John 3:14-15 and throughout
- Love: John 3:16 and throughout
- New creation: John 1:1 and in other places
- **Service: John 13:1-17**
- Liberation: John 1:19 and throughout

AND SO...

- Does such a teaching speak to us today?
- How can I “access” it?
- What kind of disciple should I be?
- What kind of church should we be?

A PRAYER

O God, in the fullness of time, you revealed your love in Jesus the Lord.

On the eve of his death, as a sign of your covenant, he washed the feet of his disciples and gave himself as food and drink.

Give us life at this sacred banquet and joy in humble service, that, bound to Christ in all things, we may pass over from this world to your kingdom, where he lives and reigns with you now and always in the unity of the Holy Spirit, God for ever and ever. Amen.