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John 13:18-38 -- Jesus Predicts His Betrayal, Prepares His Disciples

Notes:

Vs. 18 - *I do not speak of all of you. I know whom I have chosen* - In the previous verses, Jesus had been talking about servant leadership. He had just said that those who lived this way would be happy. This is a transition to a new topic, i.e., that of Jesus' betrayer. Happiness would not come to Judas, because of the course he was choosing. Jesus had chosen them all (Lk. 6:12,13). The word for "know" is knowledge by observation, i.e., I have observed, therefore I know. Jesus had been watching their character, as witnessed by their words, actions and attitudes. *but it is that the Scripture might be fulfilled* -- The conjunction is a strong negative comparative, "rather". Not all of you will be servant leaders experiencing happiness, rather one of you will betray Me, in order that the prophecy of Scripture might be fulfilled. *He who eats My bread has lifted up his heel against Me* -- From Psalm 41:9, this verse speaks of a close companion who habitually ate (the word is the same as "gnaw" in Jn. 6:54-58) at His table.

Vs. 19 - *From now on I am telling you before it comes to pass, so that when it does occur, you may believe that I am He* -- The word "He" is not there in the Greek. This is the sixth instance of the "I am" absolute. This construction also occurred in 4:26; 6:20; 8:24,28, 58. In each case, there is either evidence of supernatural power, or an obvious unique claim of some sort. This construction would have stood out in Greek as drawing peculiar attention to the speaker. The allusion to Ex. 3:14 would have also been apparent. Here, Jesus is saying that He will tell them of the events about to unfold so that they might believe that He is the I AM.

Vs. 20 - *Truly, truly* -- Important saying immediately following. *he who receives whomever I send receives Me; and he who receives Me receives Him who sent Me* -- This statement refers back to vs. 16, "a slave is not greater than his master; neither is the one sent greater than the one who sent him". The point of that proclamation was that the servant could expect no greater authority or privilege than his master. Here, Jesus is saying that the messenger carries the authority of the one he represents. The treatment of the messenger will reflect the value placed upon the master by the recipients of the message.

Vs. 21 - *He became troubled in spirit* -- Lit., "He was troubled/agitated in/with/by the S/spirit". It could be a glimpse into how the Holy Spirit was at work within Him. Either way, He was emotionally stirred. *and testified, ... "Truly, truly, one of you will betray Me* -- Definitely a solemn, shocking statement to tell the group.

Vss. 22-27 - This comment left the disciples totally at a loss. *There was reclining on Jesus' breast* -- The customary style of eating in Palestine at the time was to lie obliquely around a low table, with one's head next to the table, and propped up on your left elbow so that your right hand would be free to eat with. Because of the oblique angle, and everyone being positioned on their left side, the head of the person on your right would come to about middle of your chest. *one of His disciples, whom Jesus loved* -- John refers to himself in this way on several occasions in this Gospel (19:26; 20:2; 21:7,20). By speaking of himself in the third person like this, he attempts to maintain some humility, while at the same time honestly reporting the close relationship he had with Jesus. Jesus, like anybody else, had friendships with various levels of intimacy. Even among the twelve disciples, whom He chose from a larger group of followers specifically to be able to spend more time together (Lk. 6:12,13; Mk. 3:14), there were differing levels of intimacy with Him. This is a fact of life to be noticed and accepted. There is only so much of any one person that they can share with others. To be on a less intimate level does not necessarily mean rejection. It may just reflect the limitations of time and energy that the other person has. Among the twelve, there were the inner three, Peter, James, and John (e.g., Mk. 6:37; 9:2; 14:32,33), and of these John seemed to be closest to Jesus of all. *Simon Peter therefore gestured to him* -- Peter signaled to John to find out from Jesus who this traitor was. Without accusing him in front of the group, Jesus indicated to John that it was Judas, son of Simon Iscariot, by discreetly employing an agreed-upon signal, the passing of a dipped morsel of food to the traitor. Customarily, when the host would personally pick out a delicacy from the food and give it to a guest, it was understood as a special sign of friendship and honor. This would have served to hide from the other disciples that Judas was the betrayer, and it also would have been a final appeal of friendship from Jesus toward Judas before he

acted on his scheme. *And after the morsel, Satan entered into him* -- This is the only time where the Scriptures clearly reveal Satan personally coming into someone to control or influence him. (Some think that he had "entered" Simon Peter in Matt. 16:21-23, because Jesus said in His rebuke, "Get behind Me, Satan!" A careful look at the rest of Jesus' words, however, shows that He was still speaking to Peter, so at best it is not clear.) The last recorded encounter that Jesus had had with Satan directly was during the testing in the wilderness (Matt. 4:1-11; Lk. 4:1-13). Luke's record concludes with "and when the devil had finished every temptation, he departed from Him until an opportune time". Now, not only did he suggest the idea to the mind of Judas (13:2), he is himself personally bringing together the enemies of Jesus to destroy Him. *Jesus therefore said to him, "What you do, do quickly."* -- Jesus addresses Satan, commanding him to speedily carry out his scheme.

Vss. 28-30 - These verses explain how it was that Judas had ever been able to leave that room that night. Basically, none of the other disciples knew what was going on, or why he was leaving. *And so after receiving the morsel he went out immediately* -- In response to Jesus' words of dismissal. *and it was night* -- John places this phrase strategically, right after Judas left. It is meant not only to describe the physical surroundings, but also the spiritual dynamics of the Satanic plot that began to unfold. Cf. Lk. 22:47-53.

Vss. 31,32 - *When therefore he had gone out* -- Now Jesus could talk more freely. Things had been set in motion. *Now is the Son of Man glorified* -- To be glorified is to be clearly revealed, to have your qualities, character, and accomplishments made known. The form of this Greek verb in vs. 31, and in its first occurrence in vs. 32, conveys the idea of past completed action, "He was glorified". Setting this in the past would seem to be in conflict with the use of the word "now". The emphasis has to be more on the type of action than on the time of the action. The statement means that at this present time ("now") He is glorified/clearly revealed (at a point in time). Again, He is speaking of the events leading to the crucifixion that were beginning to unfold outside the room they were gathered in. *and God is glorified in Him* -- This has all been at the initiative of God and, therefore, reveals His heart and character as well. *God will glorify Him in Himself, ...immediately* -- The verb changes to the future tense. Christ will not only be made known by what had happened, or was happening at that point in time, but also in the future events yet to develop.

Vs. 33 - *Little children* -- A term of endearment and familiarity that also expresses the relative immaturity and vulnerability of the disciples in their faith. Jesus' attention turns to the needs of these men, as they unknowingly are to face the crises of the next few hours, and of the days to come. The remainder of this chapter through to the end of chapter sixteen are Jesus' words of explanation, counsel, encouragement and preparation for them during this last evening together. *I am with you a little while longer* -- Jesus had spoken these words to the crowds months before (7:33,34; 8:21-24), and again only a few days earlier (12:35,36). Now He is relating them again to His disciples. *You shall seek Me; and as I said to the Jews, I now say to you also, "Where I am going, you cannot come,"* -- He who had been their teacher, master, counselor and friend was going to be unavailable to them. He was going to leave them to go somewhere that they could not accompany Him.

Vss. 34,35 - *A new commandment I give to you* -- What would the "old commandments" have been? The Law of the OT. Jesus was claiming to have authority to add to these commandments given by God. *that you love one another* -- The focus of Jesus' instruction here is to those specifically within the community of believers, not to love all men everywhere in this way. "One another" also is a reflexive pronoun, meaning that the love is to go both ways. As I love, I am to be loved, as well. *even as I have loved you* -- Jesus' own example becomes the model of love in our relationships with one another. *By this all men will know that you are My disciples* -- This is the distinctive mark that true disciples of Jesus are to become evident by. Not our words, our theology, our church buildings, or our religious activities, rather by our giving, serving magnanimous love evidenced within the Christian community. *if you have love for one another* -- The Greek is, "if ever y'all might have (and be having) love in/with/to one another". Notice that whenever this phenomenon might take place, people will experientially know that we are followers of Jesus (e.g., Acts 2:42-47; 4:32-37).

Vss. 36-38 - In Peter's brief interchange with Jesus, we find that the disciples can't follow Jesus now, but they will later. Looking back from our perspective, we can understand that Jesus was referring to His death, and His return to His Father. Peter was not satisfied with Jesus' response, and in typical bravado style insists that He is tough enough and committed enough to face whatever lay ahead, even death. The Lord challenges his overestimation of himself, predicting that in that very night he would even deny that he knew Jesus three times.