

John 13-17: The High Priest's Farewell

Dr. John Bergsma
Professor of Theology
Franciscan University of Steubenville jbergsma@franciscan.edu

The Last Supper Discourse (John 13-17) is a distinct unit in John tied together at the beginning (13) and end (17) by strongly P_____ themes. The intervening chapters (14-16) present an intimate “retreat” between Jesus and his closest collaborators. Jesus’ words have implications for all Christians (all of whom share in his priesthood) but were originally meant for the apostles, and thus have more meaning for the successors of the apostles (bishops) and their collaborators (priests and deacons).

I. John 13: Preparing the Priesthood of the New Covenant for their Ministry

a. The footwashing.

i. Note: Who had to wash their feet in order to perform any ministry?

Ex. 30:19 with which Aaron and his sons shall wash their hands and their feet. 20 When they go into the tent of meeting, or when they come near the altar to minister, to burn an offering by fire to the LORD, they shall wash with water, lest they die. 21 They shall wash their hands and their feet, lest they die: it shall be a statute for ever to them, even to him and to his descendants throughout their generations.”

ii. Previously they had a complete _____:

Lev. 8:6 And Moses brought Aaron and his sons, and washed them with water... [What follows is the full ordination ritual]

b. “If I do not wash you, you have no portion (Gk *meris*) in me” John 13:8

What is the OT background for this phrase? It is almost exclusively

Num. 18:20 And the LORD said to Aaron, “You shall have no inheritance in their land, neither shall you have any portion (meris) among them; I am your portion and your inheritance among the people of Israel.

Deut. 10:9 Therefore Levi has no portion (meris) or inheritance with his brothers; the LORD is his inheritance, as the LORD your God said to him.)

Josh. 18:7 The Levites have no portion (meris) among you, for the priesthood of the LORD is their heritage; and Gad and Reuben and half the tribe of Manasseh have received their inheritance beyond the Jordan eastward, which Moses the servant of the LORD gave them.”

Compare also Deut 12:12; 14:27,29

- c. John 13:10: Jesus said to him, “He who has bathed does not need to wash, except for his feet, but he is clean all over; and you are clean, but not every one of you.”

The “bath” Jesus refers to is often considered to be baptism—a spiritual washing from sin; but what then what is the “foot washing” that remains necessary after baptism, except a spiritual washing from sin on a less comprehensive than baptism? And what would that be?

- d. The foot washing is also an enacted icon of the I_____

II. John 14: A Temple for the New Priesthood

- a. *John 14:1 “Let not your hearts be troubled; believe in God, believe also in me. 2 In my Father’s house are many rooms; if it were not so, would I have told you that I go to prepare a place for you? 3 And when I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and will take you to myself, that where I am you may be also. 4 And you know the way where I am going.”*

- b. Three elements point to T_____ imagery:

- i. F_____

John 2:16 And he told those who sold the pigeons, “Take these things away; you shall not make my Father’s house a house of trade.”

- ii. M_____

Ezek. 40:5 And behold, there was a wall all around the outside of the temple area ... 10 And there were three side rooms on either side of the east gate; the three were of the same size; and the jambs on either side were of the same size. ...17 Then he brought me into the outer court; and behold, there were chambers and a pavement... thirty chambers fronted on the pavement. ... 21 Its side rooms, three on either side...Ezek. 41:5 Then he measured the wall of the temple... 6 And the side chambers were in three stories, one over another, thirty in each story [Total of 90 side chambers!]. There were offsets all around the wall of the temple to serve as supports for the side chambers, ... 7 And the side chambers became broader as they rose from story to story...42:10 On the south also, opposite the yard and opposite the building, there were chambers 11 with a passage in front of them; they were similar to the chambers on the north.... ...13 Then he said to me, “The north chambers and the south chambers opposite the yard are the holy chambers...”

- iii. The P_____

Gen. 28:16 Then Jacob awoke from his sleep and said, “Surely the LORD is in this place (maqom); and I did not know it.” 17 And he was afraid, and said, “How awesome is this place (maqom)! This is none other than the house of God,

and this is the gate of heaven.”

Deut. 12:2 You shall surely destroy all the places where the nations whom you shall dispossess served their god... 5 But you shall seek the place which the LORD your God will choose out of all your tribes to put his name and make his habitation there; thither you shall go,

John 11:48 If we let him go on thus, every one will believe in him, and the Romans will come and destroy both our place (topos) and our nation.”

c. What is this Temple that Christ prepares?

Rev. 21:9 Then came one of the seven angels ... and spoke to me, saying, “Come, I will show you the Bride, the wife of the Lamb.” 10 And in the Spirit he carried me away to a great, high mountain, and showed me the holy city Jerusalem coming down out of heaven from God, ... 14 And the wall of the city had twelve foundations, and on them the twelve names of the twelve apostles of the Lamb.

19 So then you are no longer strangers and sojourners, but you are fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God, 20 built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus himself being the cornerstone, 21 in whom the whole structure is joined together and grows into a holy temple in the Lord; 22 in whom you also are built into it for a dwelling place of God in the Spirit.

Yes, it’s heaven, but primarily it’s the C _____ !

III. Jesus--Not an Easy Retreat Master!

a. First intervention: Peter, Prince of Apostles:

John 13:36 Simon Peter said to him, “Lord, where are you going?” Jesus answered, “Where I am going you cannot follow me now; but you shall follow afterward.” 37 Peter said to him, “Lord, why cannot I follow you now? I will lay down my life for you.” 38 Jesus answered, “Will you lay down your life for me? Truly, truly, I say to you, the cock will not crow, till you have denied me three times.

Ouch!

b. Second intervention: Thomas:

5 Thomas said to him, “Lord, we do not know where you are going; how can we know the way?” 6 Jesus said to him, “I am the way, and the truth, and the life; no one comes to the Father, but by me. 7 If you had known me, you would have known my Father also;

Painful!

c. Third intervention: Philip:

John 14:8 Philip said to him, "Lord, show us the Father, and we shall be satisfied." 9 Jesus said to him, "Have I been with you so long, and yet you do not know me, Philip? He who has seen me has seen the Father; how can you say, 'Show us the Father?' 10 Do you not believe that I am in the Father and the Father in me?"

My bad!

d. Fourth intervention: Jude-Thaddeus

21 "He who has my commandments and keeps them, he it is who loves me; and he who loves me will be loved by my Father, and I will love him and manifest myself to him." 22 Judas (not Iscariot) said to him, "Lord, how is it that you will manifest yourself to us, and not to the world?" 23 Jesus answered him, "If a man loves me, he will keep my word, and my Father will love him, and we will come to him and make our home with him..."

Ignore the ridiculous question!

e. Fifth and final group intervention:

John 16:29 His disciples said, "Ah, now you are speaking plainly, not in any figure! 30 Now we know that you know all things, and need none to question you; by this we believe that you came from God." 31 Jesus answered them, "Do you now believe? 32 The hour is coming, indeed it has come, when you will be scattered, every man to his home, and will leave me alone..."

So much for the whole being more than the some of its parts!

IV. Meanwhile, note the following remarkable promises:

a. The Promise of G_____ W_____!

John 14:12 "Truly, truly, I say to you, he who believes in me will also do the works that I do; and greater works than these will he do, because I go to the Father."

i. The apostolic M_____ interpretation

ii. The church's M_____ interpretation

iii. The S_____ interpretation

b. The Promise of Efficacious P_____!

John 14:13 Whatever you ask in my name, I will do it, that the Father may be glorified in the Son;

John 16:23 In that day you will ask nothing of me. Truly, truly, I say to you, if you ask

anything of the Father, he will give it to you in my name.

- c. The Promise of the Charism of T_____!

John 16:13 When the Spirit of truth comes, he will guide you into all the truth; for he will not speak on his own authority, but whatever he hears he will speak, and he will declare to you the things that are to come.

It is important to recognize that this promise is addressed, in the first instance, to the college of a_____, not to each individual b_____!

- d. Never has such an I_____ master given such

I_____ promises to such

I_____ associates!

The point: It's not about _____!