

“No Turn of Events” (Jn. 13:18-30)

1. Sure Prophecy (18-21)
  - a. Surprising (18) Ps. 41:9. Who could have imagined such a literal messianic fulfillment?
  - b. Assuring (19) His testimony of such fulfillment would prove to verify His knowledge and thus His power and wisdom re: their trust in Him viz. v. 20. Hard times are sure to come and our peace will only abide when we see this world as a gym not a resort.
  - c. Troubling (21) Betrayal was certain and Jesus spelled it out. When John used the term “testify” esp. recording Jesus’ testifying, it was a difficult truth e.g. here in v. 21; 3:32; & 7:7. Since Jesus trusted God even when He knew certain extreme pain was to come, how much should we? Our consolation of sacrifice is eternal incorruptible reward!
2. Sobering Perplexity (22-26)
  - a. Informative Synoptics e.g. Mk. 14:19 ‘surely not me?’ It is good to perform sobering self-assessments. It is good that they question their own motives and not assume personal impunity. You are capable of much evil in the right circumstances. God’s grace protects us from many temptations (Mat. 6:13) which would otherwise prove disastrous. If you do not think you are capable of such atrocities, you don’t know yourself nor Scripture or the amazingness of God’s grace.
  - b. Inadvertent Sin? It’s possible they figured that one of them might involuntarily or unwittingly betray Jesus. What is ironic is that Judas’ betrayal seemed implausible to them e.g. v. 29.
  - c. Incognito:
    - i. Revelation w/o Illumination: Jesus gave them enough testimony to verify His authority and prepare them for great trial (re: prediction of Judas’ betrayal cf. 6:70; 13:10, 18, 21); yet He covertly identified Judas so as to avoid their thwarting Judas, as such needed to happen cf. 10:18. Furthermore, they needed to pay attention to his departing discourse coming forthwith and couldn’t be distracted with Judas’ betrayal. Oh what trust Jesus had to be able to give such a calm, assuring, and confident address whilst Judas was fetching the arresting authorities/agents.
    - ii. Significance of Seating: it is likely that Judas was on Jesus’ immediate left and at His back while John was at Jesus’ immediate right, thus in His lap if leaned back. D. A. Carson wrote, “**13:24–25**. Jesus’ blunt prediction that one of the assembled disciples was going to betray him (v. 21) evoked stunned silence (v. 22). Typically, it was Peter who recovered first, and even he was sufficiently cowed that, instead of blurting out his question, he signalled to ‘the disciple whom Jesus loved’ to prompt him to ask the question discreetly. This disciple was reclining next to Jesus, but on his right. Therefore his back was to the Master. The easiest way for him to address Jesus was to lean back until his head literally rested on Jesus’ breast. Neither the footwashing nor this resting of a head on Jesus’ breast would have been possible if Leonardo da Vinci’s conception of the last supper had been correct. Westerners may recoil at the physical proximity of two men. In many parts of the world, of course (e.g. the Philippines, the Arab world), men walk down the street holding hands. This is a sign of friendship, not homosexuality. Men and women in such cultures may *not* hold hands in public: that would be a sign of licentiousness. Addressing Jesus by one of the two titles introduced in v. 14, the beloved disciple quietly passes on Peter’s question.”<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Carson, D. A. (1991). *The Gospel according to John* (p. 474). Leicester, England; Grand Rapids, MI: Inter-Varsity Press; W.B. Eerdmans.

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3. Salvific Providence (27-30)

- a. Judas’ Possession (27) Again, Carson’s insight is helpful: “It is more consistent with the picture of Jesus in this Gospel, and with the course of events in the life of Judas Iscariot, to think of this ‘sop’ as a final gesture of supreme love (*cf.* v. 1).

And that final act of love becomes, with a terrible immediacy, the decisive movement of judgment. At this moment we are witnessing the climax of that action of sifting, of separation, of judgment which has been the central theme in John’s account of the public ministry of Jesus ... (3:16–19). So the final gesture of affection precipitates the final surrender of Judas to the power of darkness. The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has neither understood it nor mastered it. (Newbigin, p. 173)

Judas received the sop but not the love. Instead of breaking him and urging him to contrition, it hardened his resolve. At that point Satan (only here mentioned by name; *cf.* v. 2) *entered into him*: the expression probably signifies thorough possession.

*What you are about to do, do quickly*, Jesus tells him in the hearing of all. The Greek *tachion* may, as in 20:4, be a comparative, ‘do *more quickly* (than you were planning)’. If Judas’ descent is complete, he may as well get on with his treachery and be done with it.”<sup>2</sup>

- b. Their Presumption (28-29)
- c. Jesus’ Promotion (27)
- i. He urged Judas to freely do what he had chosen to do.
  - ii. Although commentators point out that Jesus gestured grace and repentance for Judas e.g. honored seat, testifying about receiving Himself (20), and warnings of evil amongst them (11). Some have also suggested that giving Judas the seat of honor and offering the dipped morsel was itself an act of mercy which would induce a sincere soul to humbly repent.
- d. Judas’ Perfidy (30)
- i. Some have suggested he’s not responsible as Satan entered him but he had made his deal previously. Not to say that he could not have repented up to that point but rather than “receive” Jesus (20) and partake of the bread of communion, he chose the bread of betrayal. He was self-serving rather than receiving (*cf.* Mat. 26:23; Mk. 14:20). It seems he was eager to steal (12:5-6), enjoy the honored seat, and take the dipped bread (13:26); not to mention the 30 pcs. of silver.
  - ii. God’s Providence: Satan’s possessing, the disciples’ presumptions, Jesus’ promotion, and Judas’ perfidy were all harmoniously employed for our salvation. This is what the Scripture reveals about man’s volition and responsibility being employed by God’s sovereignty. If God or Satan alone controlled Judas, how could he be responsible?
  - iii. “...and it was night.” Carson one more time: “Judas went out. *And it was night*. Doubtless this is historical reminiscence, but it is also profound theology. Even though ‘the paschal moon was shining at the full’ (Howard, p. 690), Judas was swallowed up by the most awful darkness, indeed by outer darkness (Mt. 8:12; 22:13; 25:30). Judas was heading to his own place (*cf.* 1:5; 3:19–21; Acts 1:25). But in

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Newbigin Lesslie Newbigin, *The Light Has Come: An Exposition of the Fourth Gospel* (Handsel/Eerdmans, 1982).

<sup>2</sup> Ibid. 474–475.

Howard W. F. Howard, ‘*The Gospel according to John*,’ *The Interpreter’s Bible*, vol. 8 (Abingdon, 1952).

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another way it was also the night time for Jesus: it was the hour of the power of darkness (Lk. 22:53).”<sup>3</sup>

Trusting Jesus is the only sure way to joy. Still, a key to confidence and happiness in our walk with Him is tempering expectations. We can't help but have expectations (good or bad), thus we assess our environments and probabilities of events therein in order to make life decisions. This is responsible but we cannot always anticipate events or outcomes. We know that we can trust that Jesus is in control and will work out our sanctification using such common and even unpleasant events. Like Paul, we need to learn to be content in all circumstances (Phil. 4:11). One can be responsible and do what is good in a particular area and still experience tragedy. It is, nevertheless, good to do good as we are stewards of our time, abilities, and resources and will be held accountable for our obedience or lack thereof – not results. We may be perplexed but never in despair (2 Cor. 4:8) hence it is good to take our personal inventory. And even when the Spirit convicts our spirits that we fall miserably short, we cling tighter to His grace and seek to follow Him more closely. Though sinless, Jesus trusted the Father's providence and even urged His betrayer to do the deed “quickly” for it led to His purposes and our salvation.

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<sup>3</sup> Carson, D. A. (1991). *The Gospel according to John* (p. 476). Leicester, England; Grand Rapids, MI: Inter-Varsity Press; W.B. Eerdmans.