

# The Betrayal and the Glory – *John 13:18-38*

**Introduction** – Jesus is the Messiah, the great I AM, the Son of Man, the One who ordains all things. This is what John has been revealing through His gospel. God says through Isaiah, *“Thus says the LORD, the King of Israel, And his Redeemer, the LORD of hosts: ‘I am the First and I am the Last; Besides Me there is no God. And who can proclaim as I do? Then let him declare it and set it in order for Me, Since I appointed the ancient people. And the things that are coming and shall come, Let them show these to them. Do not fear, nor be afraid; Have I not told you from that time, and declared it? You are My witnesses. Is there a God besides Me? Indeed there is no other Rock; I know not one.’”* (Isaiah 44:6-8). And yet, what has this omnipotent, omniscient, infinite God ordained? His own betrayal.

**An Ordained Betrayal** (vv18-30) – Following the washing of these disciples’ feet, Jesus disrupts what we might have called “a Hallmark Card moment” by quoting one of those troubling Psalms, so difficult to sing, and a declaration that haunts the disciples, *“One of you will betray Me.”* Jesus is so sure that He tells the disciples beforehand so that when it happens, they will know Who He is (v19 – and we have another “I AM” phrase). So, Jesus ordains the betrayal. But He also says it was prophesied, quoting from Psalm 41:9 (v18). This Psalm may refer to the betrayal of David by his close advisor, Ahithophel during the revolt led by David’s son, Absalom (2 Sam 15-18). The betrayer of this lesser-David also hangs himself in great despair (2 Sam 17:23). And now, that which had been ordained, foreshadowed, and prophesied, is finally commanded openly by Jesus Himself, *“What you do, do quickly”* (v27).

**And Yet a Troubled Soul** – Fully God, yet fully man, Jesus is troubled over this coming betrayal, just as any man would be. It hurts to be wronged, but doubly to be betrayed by a trusted friend. David expressed this in the Psalm, *“Even my own familiar friend in whom I trusted, Who ate my bread, Has lifted up his heel against me.”* Nothing hits in the gut like that of a close friend, partner, spouse, or loved one who uses their position to betray. Judas had walked with the Lord for three years. He may have been reclining at His side as Jesus handed him the piece of bread, a place and act of honor. While we can see what is going on as we hear the story, the others had no idea. This very same disciple who complained over a wasted jar of expensive oil poured over Jesus was willing to sell him away for thirty pieces of silver. Watch and learn from your Savior. When we are betrayed, we may take solace with Him who was more wickedly betrayed. And learn how to love in such times. *“Oh, the admirable meekness of the Lamb of God! Not one angry word fell from his lips. Why are we so full of wrath when we are ill-used?”* - Spurgeon.

**The Path of Glory for Jesus and His Body** (vv31-35) – The betrayal has begun and yet Jesus announces, *“Now the Son of God is glorified, and God is glorified in Him”* (v31). When everything appears to be going wrong, we are to see the glory of God in action. His departure is tied to His glory, for on the cross Jesus is glorified and the Father is glorified in Him in the reversing of the great calamity that fell upon the first Adam when he sinned. Christ on the cross is glorious because there (and only there) His atoning death paid for all the sins of His chosen ones; it is the central moment in all of history. There is a mutual glorification between the Father and the Son in this great act (v32). It shines at the cross and then it shines through the resurrection (Rom 1:4). And so, we are to see that the cross is not just a path *TO* glory, but also a path *OF* glory.

**Love Displayed, Given, and Spread** – If Jesus departs, who will see this glory of the Son and of the Father? The betrayal will bring forth His departure and this is all an act of love - of gracious, unmerited love. This is why Jesus now turns to those who will be His body and gives them a new commandment, *“love one another.”* One might ask, how is this new (Lev 19:18)? But in the same way that the new covenant perfects rather than replaces the old covenant, so the new commandment fulfills the old. And this is how the glory is revealed after the Son departs. God is love and God became incarnate, and when Jesus departs, His body continues with this incarnate love. But it is a love first bestowed upon us and indwells us by the Holy Spirit. The Person of the Holy Spirit will be discussed much in the following chapters. But think of it this way. The Lord lavished His love upon us through the Cross. It comes upon and in us in a Person. And this Person manifests His fruit in us as we live by faith in Him. Jesus commands us to love and then gives us Love in a Person. We are to work out what He is working in (Phil 2:12-13). This is how they will know that we are His body (13:35).

**Distractions and Such** (vv36-38) – Peter, distracted as we would be by these words of Christ’s departure, seems to not even hear the important commands of Jesus. The prophetic predictions seem much more exciting than just “*love one another*” commands. Many men get caught up in theological and eschatological debates who ought to first be focused on following Christ’s simple commands. Peter puts his foot in his mouth, claiming that he would die for Jesus and even how much more faithful he is than the others (“*Even though they all fall away, I will not*” – Mark 14:29, ESV). This is an example of pride before the fall (Prov 16:18). Christ again prophesies, this time to Peter’s great shame (v38) and we see that God’s predestination of all things extends even to the crowing of a rooster. “*We never know how far we might fall if we were tempted...*” – Ryle. And this is because following Christ and reflecting His glory means living in circumstances that look like failure....

**Living in Inglorious Glory** – John was leaning upon Jesus’ bosom (v23) just as the Son is in the bosom of the Father (1:18). He is the beloved disciple, but what does it mean to be a beloved disciple? To live in the love of the Father and the Son, to reflect their glory, is to find oneself living in difficult and messed up circumstances. You will feel inglorious because the love you give will be in small and petty and daily things. And the object of your love will often be to people and in circumstances that are unworthy of that love, that forgiveness, that bearing with. But as we live in this new birth as a true follower of Jesus, filled with His Spirit of love, the glory of Christ will be on display – and that is our chief end.

And finally, though many like Judas will betray Jesus and His people, though many may deny Christ like Peter, Jesus will never betray, never distance, never lose, those He loves – but that takes us to the next chapter in this gospel...