

Introduction and Overview

AN INTRODUCTION TO JOHN 13-17

Nearly every word contained in John 13-17 is red. The text is dominated by Jesus' words and His alone. With an exception to Peter's refusal to have his feet washed, the disciples questions concerning the traitor in their midst and Thomas' insistence to see the Father, Jesus has the floor for the entire evening.

This makes this portion of Scripture extremely significant. But that's not the main reason why it's so precious. These chapters record the eve of Jesus' betrayal and crucifixion. They replay the last night of fellowship.

Fully aware of what was to come Jesus spent His final hours in the world speaking into the lives of 11 young Jewish men who had followed Him for the previous three and a half years. He focused all His strength, energy and emotion on making sure that "His own" would be able to stand the onslaught of what was to come before the sunset that next night.

That evening left indelible scars on the heart and mind of the youngest of them, John. Having been so impacted by the wonder of that night, this man, John, would sit down to record, some decades later, what Jesus said to them. The words spoken to them that evening eventually drove all of these young men to shed their blood for their leader in the prime of their lives. John would've died a martyr if given the chance. But the Lord had other plans for him. Writing this Gospel at the end of his life was one of them.

John recorded in his Gospel Jesus' greatest concerns and desires on the eve before His death. We read of what Jesus saw as the most important things to say to His disciples (13-16) and to His Father (17).

If lovingly studied and humbly embraced, these chapters will lead us into the inner sanctums of communion with the One who loved us so well and gave Himself for us. If neglected, we do nothing but disservice to our weak hearts that require these consoling, satisfying and life-giving words.

THE MAIN THEMES OF JOHN 13-17

1. Love (the word "love" is used 6 times in chapters 1-2 and 31 times in chapters 13-17)
2. Glory
3. Trinitarian Fellowship ("Abide in Me," "He will make His abode in You," "He will be with you and in your," etc.)
4. Suffering and Persecution ("...you will be hated...", "...men will put you to death...")
5. Leadership ("You can do nothing apart from Me...", "...bear much fruit..")

AN OUTLINE OF JOHN 13-17

- A. The Banner/Header Over the Whole Section – 13:1
- B. The Washing of the Feet and the Revealing of the Traitor – 13:2-30
 - 1. Jesus Washes the Disciples Feet
 - 2. The Traitor is Identified and Departs
- C. The Upper Room Discourse After Judas' Departure – 13:31-16:33
 - 1. Temporal Separation and Eternal Union – 13:31-14:31
 - a. Announcing His Departure and Peter's Failure
 - b. The Mansions and Eternal Union
 - c. Jesus, the Way, Truth and Life
 - d. Jesus Praying for the Holy Spirit
 - e. Special Comfort to the Disciples
 - 2. The Position, Privilege and Mandate of the Disciples – 15:1-16:15
 - a. The Vine and the Branches
 - b. Abiding in the Love of Christ
 - c. Hated by the World
 - d. The Holy Spirit Testifying of Jesus
 - e. Persecution
 - f. The Mandate of the Holy Spirit & His 2-Fold Work in the World
 - g. The Mandate of the Holy Spirit in the Church
 - 3. Jesus' Conclusion – 16:16-33
 - a. Two Little Whiles: Sorrow Turned to Joy
 - b. The Last Farewell
- D. The Prayer of Jesus – 17:1-26
 - 1. For Himself: Glorify Thy Son – 17:1-5
 - 2. For the Eleven: Their Preservation – 17:6-19
 - 3. For the Eleven: Their Preservation & Consecration – 17:14-19
 - 4. For Us: The Communion of Glory – 17:20-24
 - 5. For Us: The Eternal Glory for all that belong to Christ – 17:24-26