

STUDIES IN THE GOSPEL OF JOHN (PART 3)

Study 1

JESUS AND HIS OWN - (Part 1)

John Chapter 13

If you study John's Gospel carefully you will notice the very great difference in tone between **chapters 1-12** and **chapters 13-17**. Why is this? The first twelve chapters deal with the public ministry of Jesus, while the other chapters show us something of the relationship of the Saviour with "**His Own**". Take note of that expression, it is very wonderful. "**Having LOVED HIS OWN who were in the world, He loved them to the end.**" (13: 1) There were many that listened to the WORDS of Jesus and saw His WORKS. There were even those who were healed by His miraculous power. But only of a few could it be said that they were His Own. We shall notice later that they were given to Him "**Out of the world**". (17: 6) In a special way they belonged to Him and He wanted their company.

Look carefully at **verses 1-3** of **chapter 13**. They are very important and provide the background to these chapters. You will notice four facts stated.

1. Jesus knew that the hour of going back to the Father had come.
2. His love was for His own and this could never change.
3. Judas, the betrayer, was possessed by the devil, and ready to betray Him.
4. Jesus knew that God had given everything into His hands.

These four great facts seem to dominate all that He said to His disciples.

We now have the Lord Jesus at the third and last Passover mentioned in John. It is the last Passover, for if you read the parallel passages in the other Gospels, you will discover that Jesus instituted a new feast altogether. The bread and wine which He took, and then gave to His disciples, were to be symbols for a remembrance of Himself and His death for us. The Passover would no longer be necessary, for the Lord Jesus was the Lamb of God who would die once for all time, to bear away the sin of the world. It is important that you grasp this if you are to understand why the Lord Jesus died. (**Compare Luke 22: 14-23**)

The Lord Jesus begins His 'Upper Room' ministry with an act which is wonderful and yet quite amazing. He takes a towel to gird Himself and, having poured water into a basin, washes His disciples' feet. Look at the ACTION. It was an Eastern custom for the slave to wash the dust from the travellers' feet as they entered a room or sat for a meal. Each of the disciples could have felt privileged to wash Jesus' feet, though perhaps they felt they did not need to wash their companions' feet. He was the greatest of them all, yet He performs that lowest, most humble task. That is

the nature of the action He performed. Peter, of course, objected. "**You shall never wash my feet**", he said. (**verse 8**) But he could not eventually refuse to submit, although he remained mystified as to the reason why Jesus did it.

We must not miss the APPLICATION of the action. It seems that there are two main lessons to be learnt.

1. The action of washing His disciples' feet was a REMINDER to them that to be a part of Him and His work they needed to be clean. (**verse 8**) This washing was just a symbol of the deeper cleansing of the life, that the Lord Jesus could perform. Remember, when we accept Jesus as Saviour, His blood has cleansed us from all our sin. (**1 John 1: 7**) But just as the disciples' feet were soiled through walking along dusty roads, so often our daily lives become defiled because of our contact with sin. If Jesus is Lord in our lives, He can, through His Word, cleanse our lives from this defilement. The only way to live a pure and clean Christian life, is to obey the words of the Lord Jesus. (**See John 15: 3**)
2. The second way in which the action of the Lord can be applied is in the EXAMPLE He gives us. Notice what Jesus said in **verse 14**, "**If I then, your Lord and Teacher have washed your feet, you also ought to wash one another's feet.**" He showed His humility and also His care for others - His Own - as He stooped to wash His disciples' feet, We are often too proud and too self-centred to care for the needs of others. So that instead of caring, we criticise; instead of seeking to help those who have problems, we hinder their progress. He was the greatest of them all, yet He humbled Himself and became their servant. Thus He could say to His disciples, "**If you know these things, blessed are you if you do them.**" (**verse 17**) Let us make sure that we seek to follow the example of the Lord Jesus by serving one another.

If you read **John chapters 14-16** you will recognise the spirit of that which we have studied, in all that Jesus said to His Own. He was really having a heart-to-heart talk with them before He went away. They were just ordinary men, subject to failure. One of them was to betray Him, and we read of this in **chapter 13**. How terrible that during the time he was seated at the table with Jesus, Judas decided to betray his Lord. He went out, with Satan in his heart. (**verses 27-30**) Peter also was to deny Him, and all the rest were to forsake Him in His hour of sadness. Yet, the love of the Lord Jesus for His Own was so great, that His last words to them were designed to encourage them, "**In the world you will have tribulation: but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world.**" (**16: 33**) I suggest that you do some further private study in these chapters, then you will realise just how valuable the words of Jesus to His Own were.

Study 2

JESUS AND HIS OWN - (Part 2)

Read

John Chapter 17

The chapters in John's Gospel which show us the relationship of the Lord Jesus with His Own, end in a very wonderful way. I hope you will read them carefully. They have been a great blessing to many Christians because they say much about the real values of Christian living. The climax of these is reached in **chapter 17** where we find the Lord Jesus praying for His Own. There is no more wonderful a chapter in the New Testament than this!

Before we study **chapter 17**, look again at the various themes in **chapters 14-16**. I suggest that you take words that are repeated and trace them through. Another profitable exercise is to note down 'connected' phrases. For example:

In **chapter 14: 27** Jesus says **"MY PEACE I give to you, not as the world gives, do I give to you."** In **chapter 15: 9** Jesus says **"As the Father loved me, I also have loved you: abide in MY LOVE."** Then in **chapter 15: 11** He speaks of **"MY JOY"** - **"These things I have spoken to you, that MY JOY may remain in you, and that your joy may be full."**

If you think about these things carefully you will realise that the Lord Jesus wants to transmit His love, joy and peace, into our lives. And He implies, with justification, that the quality of these things is unique because they come from Him. The potential enjoyment therefore, of Jesus' blessings in the lives of His Own is indeed tremendous.

Everything that is said and done in these chapters is coloured by the fact that Jesus is going to leave His disciples and go back to His Father in Heaven. In **chapter 14: 2**, He says, **"I go to prepare a place for you."** Then again in **chapter 14: 12**, **"I go to my Father."** Notice each time the Lord refers to this fact. Perhaps most important of all in this connection, is the way in which Jesus emphasised that it was essential for Him to go away because of the coming of the Holy Spirit. In **chapter 16: 7**, He begins to open up this marvellous truth. Yet to His disciples it must have been terrible to think of life without Him. He had been their companion and comforter; the One who walked with them. They had become used to His friendship and it was impossible to imagine life without Him. In **chapter 14: 16**, Jesus says that He **"will pray the Father and He will give you ANOTHER HELPER that He may abide with you for ever"** One of the most vital features of this ministry to His disciples was the way in which the Lord Jesus comforted them with the truth of the coming Holy Spirit. Study carefully all that He said about this wonderful Comforter.

Now we come to this amazing prayer of the Lord Jesus in **chapter 17**. Have you ever wished that you could have listened to Jesus as He prayed? It must have been very moving to hear Him say, **"Father"**. As He prayed, the Lord Jesus was aware that **'the hour'** had come. (**verse 1**) He knew also that His work was finished and that He had glorified God on the earth. (**17: 4**) Only the Cross remained now and it was there that the fulfilment of His mission, to save men and women, would be accomplished. We realise the importance of His prayer as we think of this. The awful suffering of Calvary was before Him and He knew all that this involved. Was He thinking about Himself? No! It is tremendous when we realise that even at this time of

personal crisis, He did not think of Himself, but of His Own. This is love in reality. Jesus knew just how much courage and help His disciples would need and so He prayed for them. There are four requests that stand out in this amazing prayer, and all have to do with the needs of **"His Own."**

1. **KEEP THEM.** He thought of the world they would be living in and of the evil one. He knew the problems and perils they would face. Notice that although He said they were not of the world, even as He was not of the world. (**verse 14**) Yet He did not take them out of it. He prayed instead that they would be kept from the evil one. (**verse 15**) Remember that it is only the power of the Lord Jesus in our lives, that can keep us from the perils of an evil world.

2. **SANCTIFY THEM.** Now He is thinking of their own personal lives and the influences that would spoil them. What does sanctify mean? It means **"set them apart"** - in other words, make them a different kind of people. They were to represent Him in the world when He had gone. It was essential therefore that they should be clean and pure as they lived for Him. So **verse 17** tells us that through the truth of His Word, their lives could be set apart for Him. We need this today. Only through the standards of the Word of God, and our obedience to them, can we be **"sanctified"**.

3. **UNIFY THEM** - make them ONE. Again the Lord Jesus is thinking of their relationship with one another. In fact, He is not only thinking of them, but of all who would believe on Him in the future, (**verses 20-21**) He prays that they will be ONE. He knew that a divided Church is a weak one, and He also knew that it would be a bad testimony to the world around. He wants us to love one another so that we shall be united in our relationships.

4. **GLORIFY THEM.** Finally, the Lord Jesus thinks of the final outcome - the 'destiny' of His Own. What does He want that to be? Look at **verse 24**, **"That they may behold My glory."** The Lord Jesus prays that those who are His, will be with Him forever. Do you think His prayer will be answered? Indeed it will! Every Christian has the joy of knowing that one day they will be with Christ forever. For nothing less than this will satisfy the Saviour.

Study 3

The Finished Work - His Death

Read

John Chapters 18 & 19

In each Gospel much space is given to the record of the events of the Crucifixion. We have already noted that John does not mention the birth of Jesus. John saw Jesus as the One who came into the world as the **"Word made flesh."** He makes clear to us that God sent His Son into the world. This was a proof of God's love and His willingness to save the world, (**John 3: 16-17**) But what would John's Gospel be if you took away the account of the death of Christ? The fact that He died is a fulfilment of His words in **John 10: 11**, **"I am the Good Shepherd: the Good Shepherd gives His life for the sheep."**

It is good to divide these two chapters up, so as to show the progress of events.

Chapter	18: 1-13	The Prelude
	18: 14-27	The Trial before Caiaphas
	18: 28 - 19:15	The Trial before Pilate
	19: 16-37	The Crucifixion
	19: 38-42	The Epilogue

1. **The PRELUDE - chapter 18: 1-13.** There is one thing that stands out clearly from this account of the betrayal and arrest of Jesus. He went to a place in the Garden where He regularly resorted for prayer. The betrayer knew the place and it is obvious that Jesus did not try to evade him. But **verse 4** assures us that He was in full command of the situation. He knew all things that were to happen. There is a tremendous majesty about the way He deals with this situation. As He meets His betrayer, there is no fear in His face as He looks at Judas. But such is the power of His words **"I AM"** that they fall backwards. It could almost be said that Jesus arrested them! Yet He voluntarily gave Himself up to them, showing His willingness to go to death. From this we can learn that although he was man, yet He showed that He was truly God as well.

2. **The TRIAL BEFORE CAIAPHAS, chapter 18: 14-27.** John does not omit Peter's denial of Christ. Notice where Peter was when he failed the Lord. In the company of His enemies! I always feel that he would have been better not to have warmed himself at their fire. Perhaps he would not then have failed as he did, had he been nearer to Jesus. We can easily fail as Christians if we associate ourselves too closely with those who have no time for the Lord Jesus.

The trial was a farce and a mockery. Both Annas and Caiaphas were wicked men with very little regard for the truth. In other Gospels we are told that false witnesses testified against Jesus but could not agree. Compare **Matthew 26: 57-75**. The charge of the priestly council was that He had committed blasphemy and therefore was guilty of death. Yet His claim to be the Son of God was authentic, and although they spat upon Him and struck Him, His majesty shines through, even in His silence.

3. **The TRIAL BEFORE PILATE, chapter 18: 28 - 19: 15.** Jesus now stands before the Civil Governor, and Pilate is baffled. He knew that to satisfy the Jewish leaders he must condemn Jesus to death. What would you have done? Study this trial carefully for yourself. Pilate seems convinced of Jesus' innocence, yet within himself there raged a battle. He had to decide between being Caesar's friend and being true to his conscience. What a dilemma! **"What then shall I do with Jesus who is called Christ?" (Matthew 27: 22)** This was a relevant question but produced the inevitable climax as the crowds cried out, **"Away with Him, away with Him! Crucify Him"**. (**John 19: 15**) They had been offered the release of either Barrabas or Christ, and they chose Barrabas.

The contrast between Barrabas and Christ could not have been more marked. In **Luke 23: 19** we learn that Barrabas was guilty of sedition (rebellious conduct), and murder. In **John 18: 40** we learn that he was a robber. What had he done with HIS hands? Shed innocent blood, bringing DEATH, and TAKEN that which rightly belonged to others. What about Jesus which is called Christ? He was the **"Prince of Peace"**. What had HE done? His hands had HEALED the sick, GIVEN sight to the blind, and new LIFE to dead men. Yet the very people who had received such gifts from His hands said, **"Away with him"**, and chose Barrabas. So it was that the Lord Jesus, God's Son, was led out to Calvary **"where they crucified Him."** (**verse 18**) Think again of the implications of these two trials of Jesus.

4. **The CRUCIFIXION, chapter 19: 16-37.** There are many factors about the events of the cross which we could study. So many things happened in a brief space of time, and each

of the Gospel writers captured different aspects of it. One very interesting series of thoughts you could follow through is the seven sayings of the Lord Jesus while He was on the cross. Each Gospel records some of them. For our study of John's Gospel the most important is found in **verse 30, "it is finished."** Here was a cry, not of defeat, but of VICTORY. John stresses in his Gospel, the importance of the work which Jesus came to do.

We noticed in **chapter 17** that it was the work which God, His Father, gave Him to do. His work was to provide salvation for sinful men and women, and it was only through His death on the Cross that He would accomplish this. We can learn that it was not only a work to save men, but it was also to satisfy God. So, as the end drew near in the awful circumstances of the Cross, the Lord Jesus showed that He was still in control. He was laying down His life and as the culmination was reached, He cried **"Finished"**. Then He quietly bowed His head in death. Remember, it was only a finished work that could give us complete salvation and Jesus brought this about at the Cross.

5. **The EPILOGUE, chapter 19: 38-42.** Here is a beautiful ending to the story. Cruel, brutal hands nailed Jesus to the tree. But kind, friendly and loving hands took His body, embalmed it and tenderly laid it in a garden tomb. Joseph of Arimathea shines as a man who could prove his dedication to the Lord at the right time. Let us conclude our study today by looking at Nicodemus and Joseph, and seeing that at the hour of His death, the Lord Jesus was loved by His Own. We are among those today who love Him because He first loved us.

Study 4

The Final Triumph - His Resurrection

Read John Chapters 20 & 21

Have you ever thought how different the Gospels would be if they ended with the record of the crucifixion? You would have the picture of an amazing life, lived by the Lord Jesus. There would be the miracles and even mystery surrounding some of the incidents. You would doubtless be convinced of the perfection of the life of Jesus. But then the tragedy of His death would be paramount and the terrible darkness of the circumstances would perhaps defy explanation. Over the cross you would want to write the question, 'Why did He die?' 'Was it a mistake?' 'Was it just a waste of a life, made all the more wasteful because He was so wonderful?' Just imagine for a few moments, the gloom of the Crucifixion without the Resurrection. It is almost unthinkable! The Apostle Paul contemplates the effects of this when writing to the Corinthians. Read carefully what he says in **1 Corinthians 15: 12-19**.

John's record of the resurrection and of that which followed is quite outstanding. It seems to be designed to deal with the problems of those who were the victims of various ills because the Lord Jesus had left them, and for each the ANSWER is in the RESURRECTION. **Chapters 20 & 21** can be divided into six sections. We can study each of these sections with the glorious certainty of the resurrection in our minds. And we can ask ourselves again how it would all have ended if the Saviour had not appeared again ALIVE. Let us look at each section carefully and remind ourselves at each stage that **JESUS IS ALIVE**.

1. **DEMONSTRATION OF POWER, chapter 20: 1-10.** The actual facts of the resurrection do not take long to tell. It was early morning on the first day, the day after the Sabbath. This is particularly significant for, in future days, the Christian Church was to hold the first day of the week in special regard. However, the focal point at this time was an EMPTY TOMB. It was left to Peter and John to run to the tomb and, looking inside, find every evidence of resurrection. The body of Jesus was not there! Other Gospels speak of the angels and what they said. John omits these details and instead, declares his belief in what he saw. Faith is essential if the resurrection is going to have any meaning for us. (See *Romans 10: 9*)

2. **MARY'S DESPAIR, chapter 20: 11-18.** Mary Magdalene had special cause to love Jesus. It was through Him that she had experienced a miraculous deliverance from Satan's power. If "*her Lord*" had died, life had no more meaning for her. She stood near the tomb weeping. In her despair she heard the Voice, and through her tears she said, "*They have taken away my Lord.*" It was not until her name was called that her tears were dried, and she turned to face the Risen Lord Jesus. Sorrow and despair were instantly banished! Today, we can derive great comfort from the fact that because JESUS IS ALIVE despair and hopelessness are banished by His presence.

3. **THE DISCIPLES' DREAD, chapter 20: 19-23.** In the Upper Room were gathered a bunch of frightened disciples. They were afraid to face the Jews now that their Master and Leader had died. Their minds and hearts were in a turmoil. It was into such circumstances as these that the Lord Jesus came and said, "*Peace be with you.*" Because of His risen power He had passed through the closed door. Immediately there is a change in the atmosphere. "*Then the disciples were glad when they saw the Lord.*" Very soon these fearful disciples would be preaching the Risen Lord. For us too, the fact that JESUS IS ALIVE should remove our fear and help us stand for Him.

4. **THOMAS'S DOUBT, chapter 20: 24-29.** Thomas represents in his outspoken doubts, the reactions of many people today to the facts of the resurrection. "*Unless I see ... I will not believe.*" The Lord Jesus was more than kind to Thomas, and as Thomas becomes convinced of reality, he bows in worship and exclaims, "*My Lord and my God.*" Faith in the resurrection brings a sense of reality, and as Christians we can know with assurance the presence of the Lord Jesus day by day.

5. **THE DISCIPLES' DESTITUTION, chapter 21: 1-14.** *Verses 1-5* seem strange, but they give us a picture of the effect on the disciples, of the events surrounding the Crucifixion. They seem to have given up the fight altogether, and return to their former occupations. Peter says, "*I am going fishing*". But when they see the Lord on the shore, things change. Around a coal fire, with food provided by the Lord Himself, their future occupation is settled. The fact that Jesus was there made all the difference. They did not go back to fishing again. It is good for us to realise that the fact that JESUS IS ALIVE, can give our lives real purpose and direction.

6. **PETER'S DISTANCE, chapter 21: 15-24.** I wonder how far Peter felt himself to be estranged from the Lord after he had denied Him. Perhaps he thought that the Saviour could

never love him again. The Gospel of John ends with a very moving interview between Jesus and Peter. Three times the Lord Jesus asks Peter if he loved Him. Deep into Peter's heart the words of Jesus probed, until he comes right near to His Lord again, "*Lord You know all things, You know that I love You.*" The breach was healed by contact with the living Saviour. Think what it would have meant to Peter alone, if the death of Jesus was the end!

We conclude our study of the Gospel by reminding ourselves of John's reason for recording these events. "*That you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing you may have life in His name.*" (*John 20: 31*) Yet everything that we have learned, draws its power from the fact that the Saviour who came and died for our sins, is **ALIVE TODAY**.

Questions

Study 1

Jesus and His Own - Part 1

1. What is the difference between *chapters 1 - 12* of John and *chapters 13 - 17*?
2. Why was the Passover feast not needed any more?
3. What did the action of washing the disciples' feet reveal, as to the character of the Lord Jesus?
4. What was this washing a symbol of to the disciples?
5. How can we show in our Christian lives that we follow this example of the Lord Jesus?

Study 2

Jesus and His Own - Part 2

1. Why was it essential for the Lord Jesus to go away?
2. Find the names used for the Holy Spirit in *chapters 14 - 16*.
3. What was the main purpose of Jesus' prayer in *chapter 17*?
4. What is meant by being "*sanctified*"?
5. What will the destiny be of those who belong to the Lord Jesus?

Study 3

The Finished Work - His Death

1. In what way were the words of the Lord Jesus in *John 10: 17, 18* fulfilled when He died?
2. How was the majesty of the Lord Jesus shown at the time of His betrayal?
3. What charge did the Jews lay against Jesus when they brought Him before Caiaphas?
4. Why was Jesus' trial before Caiaphas a farce?
5. What did Jesus mean when He said, "*It is finished*"?

Study 4

The Final Triumph - His Resurrection

1. With the help of Paul's reasoning in *1 Corinthians 15* say why it was essential for Jesus to rise from the dead.
2. Why were the disciples afraid of the Jews?
3. Why could the disciples go out and preach fearlessly after *chapter 20: 19-23*?
4. What did Jesus mean by the words He spoke to Thomas in *chapter 20: 29*?
5. Give three reasons why you are happy that Jesus is **ALIVE** today.