

# John 13: The New World Order

*A New Baseline*    *base-line: a known measure or position used to calculate or locate  
a set of critical observations or data used for comparison or control*

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John 13.1-17



## *This Decisive Hour*

It was just before the Passover Festival. Jesus knew that the hour had come for him to leave this world and go to the Father. Having loved his own who were in the world, he loved them to the end.

The evening meal was in progress, and the devil had already prompted Judas, the son of Simon Iscariot, to betray Jesus. Jesus knew that the Father had put all things under his power, and that he had come from God and was returning to God; so he got up from the meal, took off his outer clothing, and wrapped a towel around his waist. After that, he poured water into a basin and began to wash his disciples' feet, drying them with the towel that was wrapped around him.



## *A Dispute with Peter*

He came to Simon Peter, who said to him, “Lord, are you going to wash my feet?”

Jesus replied, “You do not realize now what I am doing, but later you will understand.”

“No,” said Peter, “you shall never wash my feet.”

Jesus answered, “Unless I wash you, you have no part with me.”

“Then, Lord,” Simon Peter replied, “not just my feet but my hands and my head as well!”



## *The Clean and Unclean*

Jesus answered, “Those who have had a bath need only to wash their feet; their whole body is clean. And you are clean, though not every one of you.” For he knew who was going to betray him, and that was why he said not every one was clean.



## *What Must Be Understood*

When he had finished washing their feet, he put on his clothes and returned to his place. “Do you understand what I have done for you?” he asked them. “You call me ‘Teacher’ and ‘Lord,’ and rightly so, for that is what I am. Now that I, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also should wash one another’s feet. I have set you an example that you should do as I have done for you. Very truly I tell you, no servant is greater than his master, nor is a messenger greater than the one who sent him. Now that you know these things, you will be blessed if you do them.



From heaven to earth in space, from eternity to weekend in time, from deity to humanity in genre, from cosmic sovereignty to common towel in ministry—we see, once more, what is going on in Jesus’ career from Incarnation to Passion. As in the Prologue to the Gospel, we went from God to flesh (1.1 to 1.14), so now in the Prologue to the Passion we go from “Head” to foot (13.1-13.5). The Footwashing symbolizes, in a literally [common] but sublime way, the deep descent of God, even *to the feet of*, human beings to serve and to rescue them—before ascending to heaven to continue, through his disciples and Spirit, to seek, find, befriend, wash, serve, and rescue the world for whom he came at all (3.16).

F. D. BRUNER, *The Gospel of John*, 750



# The Ultimate Hour

*It was just before the Passover Festival. Jesus knew that the hour had come . . .*

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*“The hour has come for the Son of Man to be glorified. . . . Whoever serves me must follow me; and where I am, my servant also will be.*

JOHN 12.23, 26

*He who was seated on the throne said, “I am making everything new!” Then he said, “Write this down, for these words are trustworthy and true.”*

REVELATION 21.5

- ❖ Every Passover feast for 1500 years—from the initial one in Egypt until last year’s festival in Jerusalem—had pointed to this moment of ultimate fulfillment: every lamb representing the Lamb to be sacrificed for the world, every piece of unleavened bread representing the sinless Bread that has come down from heaven, every cup of wine representing the “blood-sealing” of a promised new covenant.



# What Jesus Knows

*Jesus knew that the hour had come for him to leave this world and go to the Father.*

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*Jesus answered, “Even if I testify on my own behalf, my testimony is valid, for I know where I came from and where I am going. But you have no idea where I come from or where I am going.*

JOHN 8.14

*Nevertheless, God’s solid foundation stands firm, sealed with this inscription: “The Lord knows those who are his,” and, “Everyone who confesses the name of the Lord must turn away from wickedness.”*

2 TIMOTHY 2.19

❖ On this evening, Jesus is supremely conscious of three things:

(1) it was the final hour of his mission (v. 1)

(2) his preeminent position as the Father’s *One-and-Only Authorized Representative*

(3) the plans of the devil and who was going to betray him (v. 11)



❖ What does this mean for us?

- ▶ What is ultimately most important is not what is affecting my life, but this: am I clear about God's timetable and within it, His role for me.
- ▶ Ultimately, it is irrelevant what others think of me or whether they approve of me; all that matters is whether I am fully representing God and fulfilling His purposes for me in a way that will earn His approval.

*But Jesus would not entrust himself to them, for he knew all people. He did not need any testimony about mankind, for he knew what was in each person.*

JOHN 2.24-25

- ▶ The only way (the Jesus-way) to overcome my subjective susceptibility to the negative actions of others is to objectively obey Jesus and show kindness and love to my enemies (see Luke 6.27-36).



# What Jesus Does

*He got up from the meal, took off his outer clothing, and wrapped a towel around his waist . . . and began to wash his disciples' feet, drying them with the towel that was wrapped around him.*

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*Who, being in very nature God,*

*did not consider equality with God something to be used to his own advantage;  
rather, he made himself nothing by taking the very nature of a slave,  
being made in human likeness.*

*And being found in appearance as a man,*

*he humbled himself by becoming obedient to death— even death on a cross!*

*Therefore, my dear friends, as you have always obeyed—not only in my presence, but now much more in my absence—continue to work out your salvation with fear and trembling, for it is God who works in you to will and to act in order to fulfill his good purpose. Do everything without grumbling or arguing, so that you may become blameless and pure, “children of God without fault in a warped and crooked generation.”*



# The True Washing

*Jesus answered, “Those who have had a bath need only to wash their feet; their whole body is clean. And you are clean, though not every one of you.”*

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*For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many.”*

MARK 10.45

*He saved us, not because of righteous things we had done, but because of his mercy. He saved us through the washing of rebirth and renewal by the Holy Spirit, whom he poured out on us generously through Jesus Christ our Savior, so that, having been justified by his grace, we might become heirs having the hope of eternal life.*

TITUS 3.5-7

- ❖ In his actions, Jesus has established a new paradigm, one that fulfills what we have previously referred to as God’s gold standard for everyone of every era: “the righteous shall live by faith (Habakkuk 2.4). Here are the apostolic doctrines of justification and sanctification, rooted in efficacy of Christ’s person and work.



❖ Righteous by faith: part 1 (justification)

- ▶ I am clean through the washing of Christ; that is, I am justified by grace on the basis of Christ's substitutionary atonement for my sins. I am declared righteous by God the Judge when by faith I trust in Christ's death on the cross. God declares me to be fully and finally acquitted of all guilt and imputes to me the merit, that is, the righteous credibility, of the Son of God—thus making me one with Christ: a possessor of his life, a righteous and an eternal life.

❖ Righteous by faith: part 2 (sanctification)

- ▶ The continuing work of salvation is sanctification: the process of being “set apart” from sin, self, and this world and to Christ: growing in faith and Christ-likeness, “making my calling and election certain” (2 Peter 1.3-11). Simply put, it is living the Christ-life through surrender and dependency on him (cf. John 15.3-4).



# If You Want My Blessing

*Now that I, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also should wash one another's feet. . . . Now that you know these things, you will be blessed if you do them.*

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*Whoever serves me must follow me; and where I am, my servant also will be.*

JOHN 12.26

- ❖ Since the beginning of his ministry (the “Sermon on the Mount”), Jesus has been establishing a “new world order”—“*You have been taught . . . but I tell you . . .*” In this final evening, this ultimate hour, he graphically illustrates and emphatically clarifies our relationship to him and our authenticity as his followers.

*Now that I, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also should wash one another's feet. I have set you an example that you should do as I have done for you. Very truly I tell you, no servant is greater than his master, nor is a messenger greater than the one who sent him. Now that you know these things, you will be blessed if you do them.*



- ❖ Authentic faith involves both believing and being taught. Am I allowing Jesus (and by extension others) to point out my selfish, overbearing, and unsanctified ways? Am I submitting myself to him and to others? Do I have a correct-able and teachable spirit?
- ❖ True faith is inseparable from Christlike servitude: *“Whoever serves me must follow me; and where I am, my servant also will be.”* This is one of two authenticating marks that Jesus establishes in his “new world order.” I can’t be like him, nor am I following him, if I am not stooping to serve the needs of others without complaint or qualification. Remember, Jesus washed the feet of his betrayer.
- ❖ Perceived blessing does not necessarily correlate with Jesus’ blessing (cf. Matthew 7.21-23). Following Jesus will always bring us into conflict with what is self-preferable and accommodating. His true blessing is reserved for those who choose the hard work of losing their lives to do his will and have his eternal affirmation.