

JOHN 11-21

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WISDOM COMMENTARY

Volume 44B

John 11–21

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A Michael Glazier Book

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*With gratitude for the Wisdom people
who have been my
teachers, mentors, and friends.*

ὑμᾶς δὲ εἶρηκα φίλους

*Sandra M. Schneiders, IHM; Francis J. Moloney, SDB;
Dorothy A. Lee; and Brendan Byrne, SJ*

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Abbreviations

AB	Anchor Bible
ABD	<i>Anchor Bible Dictionary</i> . Edited by David Noel Freedman. 6 vols. New York: Doubleday, 1992
ABR	<i>Australian Biblical Review</i>
ABRL	Anchor Bible Reference Library
AGJU	Arbeitskreis zur Geschichte des antiken Judentums und des Urchristentums
AJEC	Ancient Judaism and Early Christianity
AnBib	Analecta Biblica
ATANT	Abhandlungen zur Theologie des Alten und Neuen Testaments
BDAG	Bauer, Walter, William F. Arndt, F. Wilbur Gingrich, and Frederick W. Danker. <i>Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature</i> . 3 rd ed. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000.
BETL	Bibliotheca Ephemeridum Theologicarum Lovaniensium
<i>Bib</i>	<i>Biblica</i>
BibInt	Biblical Interpretation Series
BibSem	The Biblical Seminar
BMSEC	Baylor–Mohr Siebeck Studies in Early Christianity
BN	<i>Biblische Notizen</i>

BNTC	Black's New Testament Commentary
<i>BSac</i>	<i>Bibliotheca Sacra</i>
<i>BTB</i>	<i>Biblical Theology Bulletin</i>
BZAW	Beihefte zur Zeitschrift für die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft
BZNW	Beihefte zur Zeitschrift für die neutestamentliche Wissenschaft
CahRB	Cahiers de la Revue biblique
CBET	Contributions to Biblical Exegesis and Theology
CBQ	<i>Catholic Biblical Quarterly</i>
CNT	Commentaire du Nouveau Testament
<i>CTR</i>	<i>Criswell Theological Review</i>
<i>DSD</i>	<i>Dead Sea Discoveries</i>
EJL	Early Judaism and Its Literature
<i>ETL</i>	<i>Ephemerides Theologicae Lovanienses</i>
<i>ExpTim</i>	<i>Expository Times</i>
FCNTECW	Feminist Companion to the New Testament and Early Christian Writings
<i>HBT</i>	<i>Horizons in Biblical Theology</i>
HTCNT	Herder's Theological Commentary on the New Testament
<i>HTR</i>	<i>Harvard Theological Review</i>
<i>HUCA</i>	<i>Hebrew Union College Annual</i>
HUT	Hermeneutische Untersuchungen zur Theologie
IBT	Interpreting Biblical Texts
<i>Int</i>	<i>Interpretation</i>
<i>JBL</i>	<i>Journal of Biblical Literature</i>
<i>JBQ</i>	<i>Jewish Bible Quarterly</i>
<i>JECH</i>	<i>Journal of Early Christian History</i>
<i>JSJ</i>	<i>Journal for the Study of Judaism in the Persian, Hellenistic, and Roman Periods</i>
<i>JSNT</i>	<i>Journal for the Study of the New Testament</i>

JSOTSup	Journal for the Study of the Old Testament Supplement Series
<i>JTS</i>	<i>Journal of Theological Studies</i>
<i>LASBF</i>	<i>Liber Annus Studii Biblici Franciscani</i>
LCL	Loeb Classical Library
LG	Lumen Gentium
LNTS	Library of New Testament Studies
LXX	Septuagint
<i>MilS</i>	<i>Milltown Studies</i>
MT	Masoretic Text
<i>NBf</i>	<i>New Blackfriars</i>
NCBC	New Cambridge Bible Commentary
<i>NIDB</i>	<i>New Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible</i> . Edited by Katharine Doob Sakenfeld. 5 vols. Nashville, TN: Abingdon, 2006–2009.
<i>NovT</i>	<i>Novum Testamentum</i>
NovTSup	Supplements to Novum Testamentum
<i>NRTh</i>	<i>La nouvelle revue théologique</i>
NT	New Testament
NTL	New Testament Library
<i>NTS</i>	<i>New Testament Studies</i>
NTSI	The New Testament and the Scriptures of Israel
OT	Old Testament
OTS	Old Testament Studies
QD	Quaestiones Disputatae
<i>RB</i>	<i>Revue biblique</i>
RBS	Resources for Biblical Study
<i>RSR</i>	<i>Recherches de science religieuse</i>
SA	Studia Anselmina
SANT	Studien zum Alten und Neuen Testaments
SBFA	Studium Biblicum Franciscanum Analecta

SBLDS	Society of Biblical Literature Dissertation Series
SBLMS	Society of Biblical Literature Monograph Series
SBLRBS	Society of Biblical Literature Resources for Biblical Studies
SemeiaSt	Semeia Studies
SNTSMS	Society for New Testament Studies Monograph Series
SNTW	Studies of the New Testament and Its World
SP	Sacra Pagina Series
<i>STRev</i>	<i>Sewanee Theological Review</i>
<i>TDNT</i>	<i>Theological Dictionary of the New Testament</i> . Edited by Gerhard Kitteland and Gerhard Friedrich. Translated by Geoffrey W. Bromiley. 10 vols. Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1964-76.
<i>TS</i>	<i>Theological Studies</i>
WBC	Word Bible Commentary
WCS	Wisdom Commentary Series
<i>WO</i>	<i>Die Welt des Orients</i>
WUNT	Wissenschaftliche Untersuchungen zum Neuen Testament
<i>ZNW</i>	<i>Zeitschrift für die neutestamentliche Wissenschaft und die Kunde der älteren Kirche</i>

Author's Introduction

We begin with a brief reminder of some of the key themes highlighted in the first volume on John 1–10. The Gospel is a narrative where there is a plot announced in the prologue: that believers will become children of God (1:12) and that there is a force of evil at work to frustrate this goal and keep humanity under the power of “the ruler of this world” (12:31; 14:30; 16:11). Within the narrative the primary character is Jesus, and belief in him draws one into a kinship relationship with God and leads one to “eternity life” (3:15). In the prologue Jesus is introduced as the *Logos* who tabernacles with us (1:14). In the narrative Jesus in his words and deeds acts as divine Wisdom (Gk. *Sophia*) and the primary symbol shifts from tabernacle to temple. Jesus/Sophia speaks to Nicodemus about being born again into the kingdom¹ of God (3:3) and so gains eternity life now. At Cana and in Samaria Jesus acts as the messianic bridegroom offering temple waters of life-giving and healing as Samaria and Judea are united and God’s sanctuary dwells with them (4:40; cf. Ezek 37:26-27).

Then, across the major Jewish festivals of Sabbath (chap. 5), Passover (chap. 6), Tabernacles (7:1–10:21), and Dedication (10:22-39), Jesus/Sophia appropriates the major symbols and rituals of these feasts. The festivals are not replaced; rather, in Jesus/Sophia they experience their fullness in the presence of the “I am” whom they celebrate. Through this public ministry primarily in Jerusalem, some come to believe in him, but

1. See excursus on ἡ βασιλεία τοῦ θεοῦ: The Kingdom of God in Mary L. Coloe, *John 1–10*, WCS 44A (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 2021), 105.

there are others who cannot accept that the authority behind his words and deeds is God, whom Jesus calls “Father.” Even some of his disciples turn from him (6:66) and mount opposition to him (8:31). These former disciples, by choosing not to accept Jesus, align themselves now with children of the devil (8:44). The satanic power of evil works through some of his listeners who attempt to stone him (8:59).

While most of the characters, both believers and nonbelievers, are ethnically Jews, Jesus’s opponents are usually named “the Jews” as if the other characters are not Jews. I have argued that this labelling of the opponents as “the Jews” is a deliberate rhetorical ploy to establish a distinction between the Jesus believers and the Torah-followers at the end of the first century CE, following the destruction of the temple in 70 CE by Rome.² This act brought about the destruction of the central rituals within Second Temple Judaism and propelled Judaism to recast its identity focused on the law and its teaching.

In the final decades of the first century two groups were emerging from a shared faith, shared traditions, shared Scripture, and shared worship of the God of the ancestors. One group was shaping its identity on the person of Jesus, while the other group was shaping its identity around the law. Over the course of two to three centuries these groups would more clearly separate and become known as Christianity and Rabbinic Judaism. The Gospel of John is written at the start of this process, where most believers are Jews, and yet the rhetoric of the Gospel establishes that “the Jews” are “Other” and that the law is their law and no longer “ours.”

2. See the discussion of “the Jews” as a character in the author’s introduction, the essay by Ruth Sheridan at the end of chap. 2, and the excursus on the Feasts of the Jews at chap. 5 in Coloe, *John 1–10*, lxxi–lxxii, 76–81, 137–39.

John 13–17

Sophia's Banquet: Overview

*[My Beloved] brought me to the banqueting house,
and his intention toward me was love. (Song 2:4)*

*Now before the festival of the Passover, Jesus knew that his hour had come
to depart from this world and go to the Father. Having loved his own who
were in the world, he loved them to the end. (John 13:1)*

These words (13:1) announce a major shift from the public ministry of Jesus, known as the Book of Signs (chaps. 2–12), to his final days, known as the Book of Glory (chaps. 13–20 [21]). Passover is approaching, the third Passover according to Johannine chronology (2:13; 6:3); Jesus's hour, referred to frequently in the narrative, has arrived,¹ and the depths of Jesus's love of his own is made clear. God's love for the world (3:16), the Father's love of his Son (15:9; 17:23), and Jesus's love of his friends (15:9) emphasize that love is a leitmotif of this Gospel and will be given heightened focus in these final chapters.² Before offering a

1. John 2:4; 7:30; 8:20; 12:23, 27.

2. A rich analysis of the "love" motif can be found in Francis J. Moloney, *Love in the Gospel of John: An Exegetical, Theological, and Literary Study* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2013), 394–411, here 410.

formal commentary on the text, I begin by examining the nature, genre, and composition of chapters 13–17.

Beginning in chapter 13 and concluding in chapter 17 there is one setting in time and space. Jesus presides at a meal surrounded by “his own.” It is a meal of farewell and so is often likened to other farewell meals in the OT and other noncanonical Jewish literature, and compared with the Testament tradition. But it does not fit comfortably within that genre.³ It is called “discourse,” but chapter 13 is a narrative describing Jesus washing the feet of those at table with him and engaging in dialogue with Peter and Judas, while chapter 17 is a prayer. A discourse more formally begins at 14:1 and ends with chapter 16. While the theme and setting is the departure of Jesus, his teaching looks beyond his personal experience to the future experience of the disciples in his absence. The disciples are mainly silent, with only the occasional question or comment breaking into the narrative (14:5, 8, 22; 16:17, 18, 29), but their presence needs to be kept in view, in spite of their silence. These chapters provide a final interpretation of what is about to happen in Jesus’s arrest and crucifixion. What does the cross mean? Where is God? The discourse chapters provide insight/foresight into the meaning of the cross and resurrection—even if this is veiled in narrative time, until the gift of the Spirit allows deeper comprehension in the light of the Scriptures and the memory of Jesus’s teaching. In one sense, the discourse is best understood in retrospect. This retrospective understanding is particularly important for chapters 13 and 14. These two chapters cannot fully be understood until the “hour” is brought to completion in chapters 19 and 20.

The discourse shows some obvious signs of being developed gradually, even though the final form displays a literary unity.⁴ Chapters 13 and 14 appear to come to a conclusion with the words, “Rise, let us be

3. See the sidebar on the testament tradition on p. 358.

4. Speaking of these chapters as a literary unit does not deny the complex development of the text. This development allows the author to write an initial draft or even drafts before achieving the final form of the narrative. A detailed study of the possible historical development of individual units can be found in Fernando F. Segovia, *The Farewell of the Word: The Johannine Call to Abide* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1991), esp. 283–329. See also John Painter, “The Farewell Discourses and the History of Johannine Christianity,” *NTS* 27 (1981): 525–43. Painter (526) argues for three separate strata within the discourse material written in response to different crises faced by the community: 13:31–14:31; 15:1–16:4a; 16:4b–33. Whatever the historical origins of the material, the final form shows a unified literary structure that needs to include all of chap. 13.

on our way" (14:31), which can lead seamlessly into "After Jesus had spoken these words, he went out with his disciples across the Kidron valley" (18:1). It seems that chapters 15, 16, and 17 have been added to an original two-chapter discourse (13 and 14). There are shifts and changes of themes in these three chapters giving rise to theories of at least one, if not two, further additions by the same author/evangelist; these additions were made necessary perhaps through a lack of understanding by the receiving community, so more clarification is needed, or because of a change in the historical circumstances of the Johannine community. More will be said on this at the beginning of chapter 15.

When we come to this final meal, the Johannine setting is not the same as the "Last Supper" in the Synoptic Gospels. It is not a Passover meal, for this supper takes place the night before the Passover lamb is slain. It is simply a meal. There is no mention of "the twelve" who are named in the Synoptics (Matt 26:20; Mark 14:17; Luke 22:3, 30). Instead of "the twelve," the Fourth Gospel names "his own" (13:1) and his disciples (13:5, 22, 23, 35; 15:8; 16:17, 29). In our imaginative reading it would be an inaccurate understanding of the Johannine Gospel if one limited these disciples only to men or only to "the twelve." Unfortunately Christian art has often shaped the interpretation of this final meal instead of an accurate reading of the text. The meal begins with a statement of Jesus gathering his own and naming them as ones he has loved. Included in this group of beloved ones must be Mary and Martha of Bethany since the text states that these are women whom Jesus loved (11:5), along with their brother Lazarus (11:3). In Mark's Gospel we read of a number of women present at the crucifixion, "looking on from a distance; among them were Mary Magdalene, and Mary the mother of James the younger and of Joses, and Salome. These used to follow [ἠκολούθουν] him and provided for him when he was in Galilee; and there were many other women who had come up with him to Jerusalem" (Mark 15:40-41). Discipleship could be defined by the use of the verb "to follow" (ἀκολουθεῖν). While the Fourth Gospel does not name women as following Jesus, it is obvious that some have, since they are present at the cross: "standing near the cross of Jesus were his mother, and his mother's sister, Mary the wife of Clopas, and Mary Magdalene" (John 19:25). It is highly probable that these women were also at the supper, even if they are not named. Along with the silent presence of women disciples at this supper are likely other silent male disciples such as Andrew (1:40) and Nathanael (1:46-49). In all the mention of disciples in the following discourse and commentary I am presuming the participation of women.

Women at the Last Supper

Including women in this final meal is an important corrective to centuries of excluding women from the table, particularly the eucharistic table. But this is not just a woman's interpretation for ideological purposes; it is also truthful and accurate according to the Gospel narratives and first-century liturgical context of a Passover meal—a household meal.

In reading the Synoptic accounts of the Last Supper literally, there is an appearance that there were only twelve men when we read in Mark, "When it was evening, he came with the twelve" (14:17).⁵ But a literal reading ignores the narrative context where this mention of twelve is included within references to *disciples*: "The Teacher asks, 'Where is my guest room where I may eat the Passover with my disciples?'" (Mark 14:14), followed later by, "They went to a place called Gethsemane; and he said to his disciples" (Mark 14:32).⁶ Matthew, even though speaking of "the twelve" at the table, then writes, "While they were eating, Jesus took a loaf of bread, and after blessing it he

broke it, gave it to the *disciples*" (Matt 26:26).

The narrative context of disciples before and after what is called the "institution narrative," as well as Matthew's inclusion of *disciples*, speaks for a visualization of this scene as Jesus with a group of his disciples, and not the Leonardo da Vinci painting. Added to this, the socio-religious context of a household Passover meal makes nonsense of any imaging of the Last Supper with Jesus surrounded by just twelve men. As a household meal, women, men, and children would have participated.

Recalling this Passover meal, as it would have occurred, and then writing into the narrative the number "twelve" is for the distinctly theological purpose of linking this meal with the original Sinai covenant with Moses and the whole people of Israel. All the Synoptic Gospels describe the cup as "the blood of the covenant," with Luke describing it as a "new" covenant (Luke 22:20). Those not familiar with the Sinai covenant ceremony may not know that as part of the ritual Moses "wrote down all

5. Similarly Matt 24:20: "When it was evening, he took his place with the twelve"; and Luke 22:14: "When the hour came, he took his place at the table, and the apostles with him." Luke equates "the apostles" with "the twelve"; see 6:13; 9:1 with 9:10; 16:1 with 17:5; 22:11, 14.

6. Similarly Luke 22:39: "He came out and went, as was his custom, to the Mount of Olives; and the disciples followed him."

the words of the LORD. He rose early in the morning, and built an altar at the foot of the mountain, and set up *twelve* pillars, corresponding to the *twelve* tribes of Israel" (Exod 24:4). Here is the meaning of *the twelve* at the Last Supper—not a literal counting of those present, but a symbolic number representing all the people to be gathered into Jesus's covenant-making action to take place through his death the next day.

Along with mistaken and literal readings of this event, there is also the false interpretation of Jesus's words and actions as an "ordination" of *the twelve* into the priesthood—this is how Holy Thursday is often and wrongly celebrated. We know that the community continued to "do this" in celebrating the Lord's Supper for at least a century when there were no priests named as such and no ritual called an ordination. In the New Testament the only priests are Jewish. The letter to the Hebrews applies the symbolism of the Jewish high priest to Jesus—but there are no Christian priests in the first century. Here we need to

be aware that the term "priest" (ἱερεύς) in both Judaism and pagan religions meant an official linked to the killing of an animal in a temple.

Within the New Testament the primary description of Christian worship was the "Lord's supper" (1 Cor 11:20). This was a meal celebrated within a house, and there is no indication who presided over this meal—it may have been the owner of the house, or a travelling missionary, or an early disciple if one was present—all roles that include women.

The first time there is any mention of who led the Eucharist is in the Didache (ca. 100), and in this text the presider is called a "prophet": "But permit the prophets to offer thanksgiving as much as they desire" (Did. 10:7). "Every first fruit then of the produce of the wine-vat and of the threshing-floor, of thy oxen and of thy sheep, thou shalt take and give as the first fruit to the prophets; for they are your chief-priests" (Did. 13:3). Within the New Testament, named women held all of these roles: prophet, householder, travelling missionary, apostle.⁷

7. For more details and discussion of the historical influences that led to the subjugation of women, see Mary L. Coloe, "'A Matter of Justice and Necessity': Women's Participation in the Catholic Church," *Compass: A Journal of Topical Theology* 45 (2011): 13–18. Available at <http://marycoloe.org.au/homepage/Compass%202011%20A%20Matter%20of%20Justice.pdf>.

Testaments

There is a tradition of leaders giving departing words to their followers, known as a “Testament.”⁸ Biblical examples can be seen in Jacob’s final words to and blessing of his sons (Gen 49); Moses’s final words to the people of Israel in the book of Deuteronomy, especially chapter 34; and the prayer of Jesus ben Sirach (Sir 51). But while there are similarities between John 13–17 and the Jewish testament tradition, there are other quite unique features that have been described as “genre bending.”⁹ First, through his passion, Jesus is returning to where he once was; in fact, Jesus never speaks of his approaching death but speaks instead of

his homecoming to the Father (13:1, 3; 14:12; 16:10, 17, 28; 17:11). Second, Jesus’s passion is a process not of death but of glorification.¹⁰ Third, John 13–17 exhibits clearly what has been a feature of this Gospel, namely, the blurring of time and space. Finally, Jesus’s words depart from the traditional “blessing” form and are words of commission, as the disciples are sent as the Father sent Jesus (17:18). In addition to these four features discussed by Harold Attridge, a further unique aspect that sets these chapters apart from the testament tradition is the gift of “another Paraclete” (14:16) to remain with the disciples.¹¹

8. Fernando Segovia provides a helpful summary of the “testament” or “farewell type-scene.” Although the “prayer of a dying hero” is part of the farewell type-scene, Segovia did not include John 17 in this volume because of its length; also he intended to make a detailed study of the prayer in a separate volume. See Segovia, *The Farewell of the Word*, esp. chap. 1.

9. See the discussion in Harold W. Attridge, “Genre Bending in the Fourth Gospel,” *JBL* 121 (2002): 3–21.

10. As George L. Parsenios, “‘No Longer in the World’ (John 17:11): The Transformation of the Tragic in the Fourth Gospel,” *HTR* 98 (2005): 14, says: “For, Jesus does not stand on the threshold between life and death, but on the threshold between life and glorification in new life—the resurrection and ascension.”

11. These features will be discussed further in relation to the Gospel text.

John 13:1-38

Sophia's Gifts

*Sophia will come to meet them like a mother . . . ,
She will feed them with the bread of learning,
and give them the water of wisdom to drink. (Sir 15:1-3)*

There is narrative continuity between chapters 12, 13, and 14. In chapter 12 Jesus was in Bethany, and Mary, the sister of Lazarus, knelt at his feet and anointed them. In chapter 13 Jesus imitates her action by kneeling at the feet of disciples to wash their feet. Then chapter 14 announces the many dwellings in “my Father’s house” (14:2), a term used earlier to refer to the Jerusalem temple (2:16). Prior to entering the temple, footwashing was required. This religious and cultural background needs to be part of an alert reading of John 13.

There are many different views on the sources, history of development, and structure of John 13.¹ Alongside these differing views are opinions

1. For a brief summary of the various approaches to John 13–17 within the past century, see Fernando F. Segovia, *Love Relationships in the Johannine Tradition: Agape/Agapan in 1 John and the Fourth Gospel*, SBLDS 58 (Missoula: Scholars Press, 1982), 82–96. For a discussion on the possible development of this passage from a pre-Johannine narrative to its current form, see Jean Zumstein, *Kreative Erinnerung: Relecture und Auslegung im Johannesevangelium*, ATANT (Zürich: TVZ, 2004), 168–76.

on how to understand Jesus's act of footwashing. The text itself appears to offer two different interpretations:²

1. Verses 6-11 promise understanding of the meaning later, a reference to a time after the events of Jesus's "hour" (see 2:22; 12:16). These verses also suggest that this act of footwashing enables the disciples to participate in Jesus's "hour."³
2. Verses 12-15 then appear to offer a second interpretation—that Jesus's action is a "model" that disciples are to emulate.

I begin by establishing a structure for the chapter, then I present a narrative reading of the text, and finally I offer an interpretation.

Structuring the Narrative⁴

The initial three verses of chapter 13 are a small prologue introducing the second part of the Gospel, the "hour" of Jesus (chaps. 13–20 [21]), and, more specifically, his final meal (13:1–17:26).⁵ Following this "mini" prologue, the narrative proper starts with the action of Jesus washing the feet of his disciples (vv. 4-5). This action leads into the description of Jesus's final meal (vv. 6-38). The symbolism of the footwashing offers a theological introduction to the discourse and prayer that follow (14:1–17:26).

2. Raymond E. Brown, *The Gospel According to John*, 2 vols., AB 29–29A (New York: Doubleday, 1966, 1970), 2:558–62; Francis J. Moloney, *Glory not Dishonor: Reading John 13–21* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1998), 1–2. For a summary of the discussions on these two views, see John C. Thomas, *Footwashing in John 13 and the Johannine Community*, JSOTSup 61 (Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1991), 11–17.

3. In R. Alan Culpepper's words, "The foot washing scene, therefore, functions metaphorically and proleptically in relation to Jesus' death" ("The Johannine *Hypodeigma*: A Reading of John 13," *Semeia* 53 [1991]: 133–52, here 139).

4. There is no agreement on the structure of this chapter. Although my proposal has been influenced by the work of Frédéric Manns ("Le Lavement des Pieds. Essai sur la structure et la signification de Jean 13," *RSR* 55 [1981]: 149–69), I differ from him in separating the action of the footwashing (vv. 4-5) from the subsequent discussion.

5. Both Manns and Culpepper liken these verses to a prologue; see Manns, "Le Lavement," 151; R. Alan Culpepper, *The Gospel and Letters of John*, IBT (Nashville: Abingdon, 1998), 203. For links between John 1:1-18 and 13:1-3, see Mary L. Coloe, "Welcome in the Household of God: The Footwashing in John 13," *CBQ* 66 (2004): 401.

The brevity of the description of the action (vv. 4-5) is not unusual in this Gospel in which Jesus's deeds are termed σημεῖα (signs, 2:11; 4:34) and a discourse follows the action to interpret the meaning of the signs.⁶ This pattern continues in chapter 13, where, following the footwashing, the rest of the chapter is primarily discourse and dialogue showing a structure of reverse parallelism—A, B, C, C', B', A'. There are two major sections in the chapter: verses 6-20, which move from Peter to Judas, and verses 21-38, which move in reverse from Judas to Peter. Central to both sections are Jesus's teaching and gifts of a model (v. 15) and a new commandment (v. 34).

The diagram below shows this structure:

The Prologue to the "Hour" (vv. 1-3)

The Footwashing (vv. 4-5)

A. Dialogue with Peter (vv. 6-11)

B. Teaching and gift (vv. 12-15)

C. The Betrayer (vv. 16-20)

C'. The Betrayer (vv. 21-30)

B'. Second Teaching and gift (vv. 31-35)

A'. Dialogue with Peter (vv. 36-38)

Although most commentators conclude the footwashing at verse 30, following the departure of Judas, there are sound structural and thematic reasons for including verses 31-38 within the footwashing pericope.⁷ The departure of Judas makes a break between verses 21-30 and what follows, but this break simply concludes the unit (vv. 21-30). Judas's departure sets in motion Jesus's arrest and crucifixion, which are presented in this Gospel as the "hour" of Jesus's glorification (12:23). His departure is the catalyst for Jesus's exultant cry to the Father (13:31), and it follows that Jesus's words to the Father, with their theme of glorification, are necessarily linked to Judas's betrayal and the cross.

6. John 5 and 9 show a similar brief description of Jesus's actions leading into a long discourse.

7. For arguments that tie vv. 31-38 to the discourse material, see, e.g., John Painter, "The Farewell Discourses and the History of Johannine Christianity," *NTS* 27 (1981): 526, 529-30; Brown, *The Gospel according to John*, 2:545-47; Segovia, *Love Relationships*, 136-79.

The discussion with Peter in verses 36-38, in which Peter queries Jesus's statement about following him, parallels the discussion in verses 6-11, in which Peter queries Jesus's action of washing his feet. The reference to the "giving" (δίδωμι) of the commandment in verse 34 recalls the giving (ἔδωκα) of the ὑπόδειγμα ("example, model") in verse 15. Frédéric Manns also argues for the unity of the entire chapter and points to an *inclusio* formed by the use of "lay down, or lay aside" (τίθημι, vv. 4 and 38).⁸ These structural features situate verses 31-38 within the footwashing narrative as the pericope's conclusion. Verses 31-38 look back to the footwashing, and 14:1 initiates an *inclusio* with what follows, marked by the repetition of the phrase "Do not let your hearts be troubled" (14:1, 27). Even though there is no change in scene, time, or characters, 14:1 marks the beginning of a new stage in the discourse.

The Prologue to the "Hour" (13:1-3)

Throughout the first part of the Gospel, there have been many references to a future time called the "hour" (2:4; 7:30; 8:20; 12:23, 27), which is now mentioned here within the context of love. As 12:27 noted, this "hour" brings to a climax the purpose of Jesus's life, which has already been described as a gift of divine love (3:16). Now the fullness of that love is to be shown.⁹ This is Sophia's banquet (Prov 9:1), where Jesus acts as both host and servant with no dichotomy in these roles because it is a meal of love. The prologue to the Gospel stated that "he came to his own [εἰς τὰ ἴδια], but his own did not receive him" (1:11; author's translation); now he gathers those of "his own" (τοὺς ἰδίους) who have received him (13:1). These have been promised that they would be given the "power to become children of God" (1:12), and the mention of "his own" recalls this promise, even as the reader waits to see how the narrative will show this being accomplished. The expression "his own" with its evocation of intimacy, trust, and friendship highlights the enormity of Judas's betrayal (13:2).

8. Manns, "Le Lavement," 151.

9. At this point I am giving the expression εἰς τέλος, which can be translated "to the end" or "to the full," its qualitative sense. The temporal sense of the root word is most profoundly revealed in Jesus's dying word, τετέλεσται, "It is finished" (19:30). According to Culpepper, "The *double entendre* serves the vital function of linking the footwashing to Jesus's death and interpreting Jesus's action as the culmination of his love for his own." Culpepper, "The Johannine *Hypodeigma*," 136.

John 13:1-3

^{13:1}Now before the festival of the Passover, Jesus knew that his hour had come to depart from this world and go to the Father. Having loved his own who were in the world, he loved them to the end. ²The devil had already put it into the heart of Judas son of Simon Iscariot to betray him. And during supper ³Jesus, knowing that the Father had given all things into his hands, and that he had come from God and was going to God,

Verse 2 contains two serious textual and grammatical difficulties: (1) the time of the footwashing in relation to the meal and (2) the identity of the one in whose heart (καρδίαν) the treachery is conceived. The expression δείπνου γινομένου does not necessarily mean that the meal has begun, and Rudolph Bultmann translates this phrase “on the occasion of a meal.”¹⁰ The meal may not yet have started, but the use of the term “again” (πάλιν) in verse 12 indicates that all have taken their places at the table. If one accepts Bultmann’s translation on grammatical and contextual grounds, one could place the footwashing before the beginning of the meal. This interpretation makes better cultural sense, because it was customary for guests to have their feet washed prior to the meal (cf. Luke 7:44).

R. Alan Culpepper recognizes in verse 2 a Semitic idiom which he translates, “The devil had already made up his mind that Judas should betray him.”¹¹ Culpepper’s rendering makes clear that it is the *heart* of the devil (διάβολος), not Judas, that is the object of “had put into” (βεβληκότος εἰς). This reading also makes sense of verse 27, which reports that the devil entered into Judas “after the morsel.” Furthermore, Culpepper’s translation sets up the contrast between the mind/heart of Jesus (v. 1) and the mind/heart of the devil (v. 2).

10. Rudolph Bultmann, *The Gospel of John: A Commentary*, trans. G. R. Beasley Murray et al. (Oxford: Blackwell, 1971), 465 n. 2. Similarly, Édouard Delebecque, *Évangile de Jean: Texte traduit et annoté*, CahRB 23 (Paris: Gabalda, 1987), 183.

11. Culpepper, “The Johannine Hypodeigma,” 136; see also Moloney, *Glory not Dishonor*, 3 n. 39, and Marianne Meye Thompson, *John: A Commentary*, NTL (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2015), 284–85. For a discussion on this grammatical form and its background in Hellenistic Greek, see Delebecque, *Évangile de Jean*, 183. Delebecque states emphatically, “le cœur n’est pas celui de Judas, mais du diable.” The conjunction ἵνα introduces a new clause about Judas, not linked grammatically to the word heart, καρδίαν.

The Footwashing (13:4-5)

The scene is described very sparsely in two parallel clauses:

[Jesus]

(v. 4) rose from the supper *and* laid aside his garments *and* taking a *towel girded* (διαζώννυμι) himself;

(v. 5) poured water into a bowl *and* began to wash the feet of his disciples *and* to dry them with the *towel* with which he was *girded* (διαζώννυμι).

In full awareness of the “hour” (v. 1), Jesus acts with a solemn and deliberative gesture toward the disciples who have spent time with him. The description of his “laying down” (τίθησιν) and later “taking up” (v. 12, ἔλαβεν) his garments recalls the image of Jesus the Good Shepherd, who is able to “lay down” (τίθησιν, 10:11, 15, 17, 18) and “take up” his life (λάβω, 10:17, 18). The laying down and taking up of life is a free and deliberate act by the shepherd, “No one takes it from me, but I lay it down of my own accord. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it up again” (10:18). These introductory words (13:4-5), overlaid with the words of the Good Shepherd, make it clear “that what follows is not simply a good example in humility but a prophetic action which will reveal the true meaning of Jesus’s loving his own unto the end (13:1) in fulfillment of his mission to bring to completion the salvific intention of God’s boundless love for the world (cf. 3:16-17).”¹²

Footwashing in the NT culture was performed on occasions such as “(1) cultic settings, (2) domestic settings for personal hygiene and comfort, and (3) domestic settings devoted to hospitality.”¹³ By the first century CE, while it may have been most unusual for a host to personally wash the feet of his guests, the action could be seen in the light of Abraham’s hospitality. According to Manns, footwashing had a particular religious significance within Judaism as it recalled the hospitality shown by Abraham in welcoming his divine guests under the oaks of Mamre (Gen 18:4).¹⁴ While the original Hebrew text portrayed Abraham merely

12. Sandra M. Schneiders, “The Foot Washing (John 13:1-20): An Experiment in Hermeneutics,” *CBQ* 43 (1981): 76–92, here 81. The interpretation of this prophetic action will follow below.

13. Thomas, *Footwashing in John 13*, 27. So also Arland Hultgren, “The Johannine Footwashing (13.1-11) as Symbol of Eschatological Hospitality,” *NTS* 28 (1982): 541.

14. Manns, “Le Lavement,” 160.

John 13:4-5

⁴got up from the table, took off his outer robe, and tied a towel around himself. began to wash the disciples' feet and to wipe them with the towel that was tied around him.
⁵Then he poured water into a basin and

providing water for his guests to wash their own feet,¹⁵ by the first-century Testament of Abraham, this tradition had developed to present Abraham himself washing the feet of the guests as an act of gracious hospitality.¹⁶ Culturally, and within the Jewish religious traditions, there is evidence to suggest that a first-century community would understand the footwashing first as a gesture of hospitality and welcome.

Footwashing also had a cultic purpose, for it was necessary to wash one's feet before entering the precincts of the temple. The Mishnah records that a person could not enter the Temple Mount with staff, sandals, wallet, "or with the dust upon his feet" (m. Ber. 9:5). This cultic purpose predates the compilation of the Mishnah since the first-century Jewish philosopher Philo offers a number of comments on the practice of footwashing prior to entering the presence of God: "one should not enter with unwashed feet on the pavement of the Temple of God" (*QE Sup* 2.1.2). In a treatise on special laws commenting on the washing of the sacrificial victim Philo transfers the significance of the washing to the person offering the sacrifice. "By the washing of the feet is meant that his steps should be no longer on earth but tread the upper air" (*Spec. Laws* 1.207). These comments indicate that footwashing was a customary gesture in the first century prior to entering the temple, which the Mishnah will later encode.¹⁷ The precedent for washing one's feet prior to entering the temple was established in Moses's instructions that Aaron and his sons should wash their hands and feet prior to entering the tent of meeting or approaching the altar (Exod 30:17-21; cf. 2 Chr 4:6; Ps 25:6).

15. "Let a little water be brought, and wash your feet, and rest yourselves under the tree" (Gen 18:4).

16. "Then Abraham went forward and washed the feet of the Commander-in chief, Michael. Abraham's heart was moved and he wept over the stranger" (T. Ab. 2:9).

17. This same conclusion is reached by Herold Weiss with regard both to Hellenistic synagogue practice and also the Jerusalem temple: "The notion that in order to walk on the pavement of the temple disciples were supposed to have washed their feet was a well-established and recognized one in the Judaism of the second temple" ("Foot Washing in the Johannine Community," *NovT* 21 [1979]: 298-325).

In discussing footwashing as a gesture of welcome into a house and also as the prelude to entering the temple, the artistry of the Fourth Evangelist is apparent, for these two aspects of “house” and “temple” come together in Johannine theology. In the OT, the most frequent name of the temple was the “house of God,”¹⁸ and Jesus calls the temple “my Father’s house” (2:16). Following the footwashing in chapter 13, Jesus will explain to his disciples the meaning of “my Father’s house/hold” (14:2 and following). Washing the feet of the disciples he loved (chap. 13) prepared them for entering into the Father’s house/temple (14:2) described in the following chapter.¹⁹

A. First Dialogue with Peter (13:6-11)

The meaning of Jesus’s action is not clear to the disciples, and Peter’s words could well voice the discomfort of the entire group, “Lord, *you* wash my feet?” Peter’s difficulty is not with having his feet washed *per se* but with having them washed by Jesus. Peter perceives this as a degrading act for Jesus to perform, for it was customary that a slave would bring a bowl of water and a person would wash his or her own feet.²⁰ Jesus then states that his action will not be understood until a “later” time (v. 7).

On several occasions in the narrative, there have been indicators that the participants in the story will not fully understand their experience until after Jesus’s death and resurrection (2:22; 12:16).²¹ In both cases understanding occurs as a recollection, a remembering, and both cases also involve the Scriptures. This retrospective understanding is seen as a particular function of the Paraclete, who will “teach you everything, and remind you of all that I have said to you” (14:26). It is only in the “later” post-Easter time, when the community has the gift of the Paraclete, that the fullness of understanding will be possible. Jean Zumstein comments, “The Paraclete is the memory of Jesus in progress, the post-Easter ret-

18. The terminology בית יהוה (*bayt YHWH*) occurs 231 times while the expression הכיל (*hekal*) occurs sixty times.

19. Remember that the Gospel was written without chapter divisions, so the footwashing flowed seamlessly into “my Father’s house” (14:2).

20. In the scriptural instances, a person usually washes his or her own feet, whereas in the Greco-Roman world this act of washing would be done by a slave. See Thomas, *Footwashing in John 13*, 35–42, 46–56.

21. See also 8:27; 10:6.

John 13:6-11

⁶He came to Simon Peter, who said to him, "Lord, are you going to wash my feet?" ⁷Jesus answered, "You do not know now what I am doing, but later you will understand." ⁸Peter said to him, "You will never wash my feet." Jesus answered, "Unless I wash you, you have no share with me." ⁹Simon Peter

said to him, "Lord, not my feet only but also my hands and my head!" ¹⁰Jesus said to him, "One who has bathed does not need to wash, except for the feet, but is entirely clean. And you are clean, though not all of you." ¹¹For he knew who was to betray him; for this reason he said, "Not all of you are clean."

respect upon the incarnate Christ."²² In this pericope, the disciples will grasp the meaning of Jesus's act of footwashing only after his death.

In response to Peter's objection, Jesus begins to unfold the meaning *he* gives to this action. "Unless I wash you, you have no share [μέρος] with me" (v. 8). The term used here, μέρος, implies the sense of "share in my inheritance," "participate with," or "be drawn into my destiny."²³ Footwashing is an invitation to the disciples to become participants with Jesus in his "hour." As he, with deliberate foreknowledge, moves from this world to his Father, they too are invited to be involved. That the term μέρος involves Jesus's future death, presented as his departure (v. 1), is born out in the parallel section. Jesus says to Peter, "Where I am going, you cannot follow me now; but you will follow afterward" (v. 36). The "now" is the "hour" of Jesus, but by having a part/μέρος with him, disciples will also be included, in ways they do not yet understand.

B. Jesus's First Teaching and Gift (13:12-15)

The next section (vv. 12-15) and its parallel (vv. 31-35) introduce the idea of gift giving. In verses 12-15, Jesus says, "I have given [ἔδωκα] you

22. "Der Paraklet ist die im Vollzug begriffene Anamnese Jesu, die österliche Retrospektion des inkarnierten Christus" (Jean Zumstein, "Der Prozess der Relecture in der Johanneischen Literatur," *NTS* 42 [1996]: 394-411, here 410). Zumstein also notes that the small prologue (13:1-3) establishes that the footwashing needs to be understood retrospectively in the light of "the hour." See Zumstein, *Kreative Erinnerung*, 166.

23. Brown, *The Gospel according to John*, 2:565.

John 13:12–15

¹²After he had washed their feet, had put on his robe, and had returned to the table, he said to them, “Do you know what I have done to you? ¹³You call me Teacher and Lord—and you are right, for that is what I am. ¹⁴So if I, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also ought to wash one another’s feet. ¹⁵For I have set you an example, that you also should do as I have done to you.

a model,”²⁴ and he teaches, “what I have done, you also do” (v. 15). The parallel unit concludes with Jesus’s giving (δίδωμι) a new commandment, “love each other as I have loved” (v. 34). A more precise translation shows this parallelism:

A model I have given to you	A new commandment I give to you—love one another
so that just as I did to you	so that just as I loved you
you also will do. (v. 15)	you also will love each other. (v. 34)

The two “gifts” link both units, as do Jesus’s instructions—“as I have done [καθώς] you also do” (vv. 15, 34); “wash each other’s feet” (v. 14); “love each other” (v. 34).

Jesus instructs the disciples that they too should wash each other’s feet, that what he has given them is a “model” (ὑπόδειγμα)—though what he means by this is not yet clear to them. In the New Testament, the term ὑπόδειγμα is found only here (John 13), in Hebrews (4:11; 8:6; 9:23), 2 Peter (2:6), and James (5:10). In these texts, it is usually translated as “example,” which is commonly understood in ethical terms as a good example of humility or a model of exemplary death.²⁵ But it has a further usage in the Old Testament, which I consider to be even more significant for understanding why the Gospel uses this term to describe Jesus’s action.

24. The NRSV translation “set you an example” does not accurately reflect the Greek ὑπόδειγμα γὰρ ἔδωκα ὑμῖν, “I have given a model to you.”

25. In his discussion of the term ὑπόδειγμα, Culpepper cites a number of passages in Jewish literature, where the word is used “to exhort the faithful to mark an exemplary death”: 2 Macc 6:28, 31; 4 Macc 17:23; Sir 44:16. See Culpepper, “The Johannine Hypodeigma,” 142–43; also Heinrich Schlier, “ὑπόδειγμα,” *TDNT* 2 (1964): 32–33.

In looking to the OT background the words παράδειγμα and ὑπόδειγμα are interchangeable,²⁶ and in the LXX we find them used in two senses. They can be used to describe human behavior, and so Enoch is presented as an example of repentance (Sir 44:16), and similarly the Maccabean martyrs are held up as examples in their fidelity unto death (2 Macc 6:28, 31; 3 Macc 2:5; 4 Macc 6:19; 17:23).²⁷ This is the meaning discussed by Culpepper.

Apart from these usages, which refer to human behavior, there is a further use where the terms acquire the sense of a physical “model” or prototype from which something is to be built. Moses is shown the pattern (παράδειγμα) of the heavenly tabernacle and its furniture, which he is to make (Exod 25:9). David gives Solomon the model (παράδειγμα) of the temple that he is to build (1 Chr 28:11, 12, 18, 19). Similarly, Ezekiel is shown a vision of the temple as the model (ὑπόδειγμα) of the new house of God (42:15).²⁸ It is this meaning of ὑπόδειγμα as a prototype or physical model of the tabernacle and Father’s House that I believe lies behind the Johannine use.²⁹

C and C'. The Betrayer (13:16-20, 21-30)

The pivotal units in each parallel part concentrate on Judas, the betrayer. The *inclusio* formed by the double “very truly, I tell you” and the repetition of “the one who sent” (vv. 16, 20) indicate that verses 16-20 are a unit. In the center of both units the emphasis is on Judas’s betrayal by eating the bread Jesus offers (vv. 18, 26). When the psalm (Ps 41:10) is cited in verse 18, the evangelist has made a significant change in the text. The Greek version of the Psalm reads, ὁ ἐσθίων ἄρτους μου, “the one *eating* [ἐσθίων] my bread,” while the Gospel reads, ὁ τρώγων μου τὸν ἄρτον, “the one who *ate* [τρώγων] my bread.” The Gospel’s use of the

26. Schlier, “ὑπόδειγμα,” 33. According to Schlier, the LXX “often employs ὑπόδειγμα and παράδειγμα as alternatives.”

27. A similar sense relating to human behavior is found in Jeremiah 8:2 and Nahum 3:6, where παράδειγμα is used in the sense of public shame or exposure.

28. “When he had finished measuring the interior of the house, he led me out through the East gate and measured the model [ὑπόδειγμα] of the house around the outside” (Ezek 42:15, author’s translation).

29. Jesus’s identity as the living dwelling place or temple of God has been a dominant theme across the Gospel and this theme will be continued in John 14. See Mary L. Coloe, *God Dwells with Us: Temple Symbolism in the Fourth Gospel* (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 2001).

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