

THRU THE BIBLE EXPOSITION

John: Believing On The Christ, The Son Of God, For Eternal Life

Part XXXVII: Trusting In Christ For His Gracious, Loving Fellowship With True Believers (John 13:31-38)

I. Introduction

- A. John's Gospel expresses the theme that Jesus as the Son of God Incarnate was both Light as opposed to the darkness of evil and that He was full of grace, full of unmerited favor toward sinful man, John 1:4-5, 14-16.
- B. Nowhere in John's Gospels are these unique qualities as evident as in the **contrast** in the *demeanor* of Jesus **BEFORE** the *departure* of *Judas Iscariot* from the Last Supper and **AFTER** *Judas* had *departed*.
- C. We study John 13:31-38 in view of this contrast for insight and edification in our lives today (as follows):

II. Trusting In Christ For His Gracious, Loving Fellowship With True Believers, John 13:31-38.

- A. Before Judas Iscariot had left the Last Supper, Jesus had become "stirred, disturbed, agitated, troubled" (*tarasso*, Arndt & Gingrich, *A Grk.-Eng. Lex. of the N. T.*, 1967, p. 812-813) in spirit, candidly announcing that "one of you shall betray me," John 13:21 KJV.
- B. However, upon the departure of Judas into the night, John 13:31 reports how Jesus, "free from the tension which Satan in Judas had produced" (*Bible Know. Com., N. T.*, p. 321), began to express a very positive, victorious, loving demeanor toward His remaining, true disciples, and that in various ways (as follows):
 - 1. Jesus immediately began to use the words "glorified" or "glorify" five times in John 13:31-32 to show how His special glory would be revealed in His death, and how the Father would also be glorified in it as His love for the world in sending Christ to atone for the world's sins (John 3:16) would become manifest, and of course Christ would be radically glorified at His resurrection and ascension, *Ibid.*, Daniel 7:13-14.
 - 2. Next, Jesus used a term that the Gospels only once record His ever using of His disciples, the term *tekna*, the diminutive form of *tekna* ("children"), calling His grown male disciples, "little children," to express His special, paternal-like love for them in a world where He would be gone from them first in His death and later in His ascension to heaven's glory, John 13:33; *Ibid.*
 - 3. That they might effectively handle the vacuum of His physical absence, Jesus called for His disciples, His "little children," to perform a new commandment, to love one another as He had loved them, John 13:34.
 - 4. In performing this commandment, not only would they nurture and support one another in the Lord's physical absence, but their love would remarkably testify to the entire world that they were Christ's disciples, John 13:35. Incidentally, this single characteristic in the Church acts as its most potent witness to a world starved for God's love -- the witness of Christians loving one another as Christ has loved them!
 - 5. The depth of this love is seen in the conversation that next occurred between Jesus and Peter, Jn. 13:36-38:
 - a. Concerned about Jesus' statement that the disciples would not be able to go where Jesus was about to go (John 13:33), Peter asked the Lord where He was going, John 13:36a.
 - b. Jesus explained that where He was going Peter could not follow Him then, but that he would follow Him later, John 13:36b. The reference here is to Peter's later following Christ in martyrdom, cf. John 21:18-19.
 - c. Peter objected that he could not go with Jesus, adding he would lay down his life for Him, John 13:37.
 - d. Christ then asked Peter if he would indeed lay down his life for His sake, for, truly, truly, Jesus affirmed, that before the cock crowed, Peter would deny Him three times, John 13:38!
 - e. Jesus also knew that all the disciples would faithlessly forsake Him later that night, Matthew 26:31, 56b. Yet, remarkable in all of this awareness is Jesus' great love for Peter and the other men as His "little children" (verse 33) who were to love one another as He loved them, a love that in great unmerited divine favor was fully aware that all of them would forsake Him, and that Peter would deny him three times in spiritual weakness. Nevertheless, the love of Christ for His true flock, with Judas the unbeliever indwelt with Satan now departed, glows brightly amid all the sinful weakness in the true disciples present!

Lesson: *After the departure of the wicked parties in Judas and Satan, Jesus expressed great optimism about the Father's glory and His own glorification at the cross and His resurrection and ascension. He expressed great love for His true disciples, and urged them to express that love to one another to nurture one another in a hostile world and to testify to the lost, and He did all this amid His awareness of the residual sinful weaknesses of His disciples.*

Application: *(1) May we trust in Jesus as the Light and expression of God's abundant grace to be saved, John 20:31. (2) May we spiritually mature to reflect the VAST love, grace and righteousness of our Lord Jesus Christ.*