

# IDENTITY OF THE BETRAYER

## John 13:21–30

### TRAITOR IN THE MIDST (13:21–22)

- "When Jesus had said these things" (NKJV) refers to the effect the betrayal will have on the lives of the disciples (cf. 13:18–19)
  - emotional distress at the thought of a close friend betraying him was not sin (cf. of Jesus, 11:33; 12:27; of disciples, 14:1, 27)
    - he prophesies while eating that one of the disciples will betray him—but doesn't say who (Matt 26:21; Mark 14:18)
  - he has already indicated twice that something is wrong; no one but Judas knew what he was talking about (13:10–11, 18–19)
    - now it's the disciples' turn to be distressed: they kept looking (imperfect tense) at each other perplexed (13:22), discussed among themselves who it might be (Luke 22:23), and then each disciple asked Jesus "It's not I, is it?" (Matt 26:22; Mark 14:19)
      - they were stunned: he caught them completely by surprise—they had no idea who it could be
        - Judas played the game well: he also asked "It's not I, is it?" (Matt 26:22)
  - Jesus gave an ambiguous answer to their question: they all dipped into the common bowl with Jesus (Matt 26:23; Mark 14:20)
    - he is purposely not specific to keep the disciples from hindering the betrayal—in order to fulfill Scripture (cf. 13:18)
    - God decreed Jesus' death by betrayal (Psa 41:9; Luke 22:22; cf. *horizo* used of God's will in Acts 2:23; 10:42; 17:26, 31) and it will come to pass to fulfill Scripture (Matt 26:24; Mark 14:20; Acts 1:16–17)
      - it would be better for unbelievers if they were never born: Judas went to hell (John 17:12)
        - will his eternal punishment be worse than other unbelievers? is Jesus teaching degrees of punishment in hell?
    - the lives of unbelievers are not worth living: the best life has to offer now pales in comparison to the unbearable pain of hell

### WHO IS IT? (13:23–25)

- the beloved disciple is probably John: (1) he reclined in the second place of honor on the right side of Jesus at the last supper (13:23; 21:20), (2) Jesus entrusted his mother to him (19:26–27), (3) he outran Peter to the tomb (20:2–4), (4) he recognized the resurrected Christ at the Sea of Galilee (21:7), (5) he wrote the Gospel of John (21:24)
  - no doubt this title was given to him by others: he's not boasting but is delighting in the love Jesus had for him
  - Jesus loved all of his disciples (13:1; 15:9), but he loved John the most ("the disciple whom Jesus loved" 21:20)
- Peter thought John knew who the betrayer was, nodded to get John's attention, and pressed him for a specific identification—textual variant: Peter asked John who it was (Vaticanus, NASB) or asked John to ask Jesus who it was (Alexandrinus, KJV, NIV)
  - John didn't know, so instead of turning around he leaned back and whispered to Jesus, "Lord, who is it?"

### JUDAS (13:26–27)

- Jesus whispers to John he is going to give the sop to the traitor after dipped it (he did not want the group to know his identity)
  - the sop was a small piece of unleavened bread broken off from one of the flat cakes lying on the table; he dipped it into a bowl of bitter herbs, vinegar, and salt, or into a sauce made of mashed fruit, water, and vinegar, and gave it to Judas
  - one or two disciples (John and perhaps Peter) now know who the traitor is; Judas now knows his plot has been discovered
    - Satan entered into Judas: the same word is used of evil spirits entering into pigs and people (Mark 5:12; Luke 8:30)
  - Judas and the Sanhedrin planned a different time to arrest Jesus: Jesus hastened the time by saying "Do more quickly!"

### JUDAS LEAVES THE UPPER ROOM (13:28–30)

- the disciples did not connect his identification with his dismissal: they did not realize the imminence of the betrayal
  - shops were open on Thursday evening but not on Friday (the Feast Day) or on Saturday (the Sabbath)
    - it was customary to give to the poor on Passover night: the poor gathered near the Temple