

GOSPEL OF JOHN 13 A (1-2)

Introduction Chapters 13-17 (Bp. Gerasimos)

- ❖ These events take place in the days before the Cross
- ❖ These events are described differently from (Matthew, Mark and Luke) where the emphasis is on the betrayal of Judas, John describes few details of the Mystical Supper.
- ❖ Chapters 13-17 represent the mystagogical teachings of Jesus, as the disciples are being initiated into the understanding of the mystery of the Incarnation, the death and resurrection of Christ and the coming of the Holy Spirit.
- ❖ Mystagogy connects the *past, present and future* events and weaves them into a synthesis.
- ❖ This section is read in its entirety on Holy Thursday evening as the First of the 12 Gospel Readings

Outline:

The Mystical Supper – 13:1-30
The farewell discourses of Jesus (13:31-16:33)
The hierarchical Prayer of Jesus (17:1-26)

Fr. Behr:

- ❖ The Passover is the only feasts mentioned in the Synoptics (Matthew, Mark Luke).
- ❖ John frames his Gospel around feasts celebrated in the Temple, John mentions six different feasts during his life.
- ❖ After these 6 feasts – His crucifixion which takes place on the *Day of Preparation* for the Passover followed by Christ appearing on the *First and Eighth Days*.

“What follows (13:1) prepares the way for Jesus to allude to the Temple in new ways...the foot washing, which is necessary if His disciples are to have a ‘part of Him (13:8)’ cleanses them for entry into the new Temple, the Temple which is Jesus Himself, so to be part of the Temple and all that entails, including laying down one’s life, as Peter eventually does...”

“...heaven and earth touch upon the cross; as clay is lifted up from the earth into heaven, heavenly bread, Christ’s life-giving flesh, is brought down from heaven. Heaven is ...the Life that is invisible to the world...the cross reveals heaven as the realm of life inhabited by all those who live...before the Passion Jesus Christ is known by certain observable properties...from human perception (a carpenter, teacher etc.) yet ascending through the cross into the heavens and God, a consuming fire, He is known as the Word of God and His body, remaining what it is by nature, is now known by the properties of God, beyond space and time of our world. Pascha is both *pathos* and *passage*, the hour in which Christ departs from this world to the Father (13:1), no longer present in a body seen by the world, though in the world this remains veiled as bread.”

St. Augustine: “As the Greek word *paschein* means to *suffer*, Pascha has been supposed to mean suffering (*pathos*) but in its own (original language), that is Hebrew, Pascha means Passover.

¹Now before the feast of the passover, Jesus, knowing that His hour had come that He should pass over from this world to the Father, having loved His own (St. Cyril. All things made by Christ are *His own*), **those in the world, He loved them to *the end*.**

“But it is our whole faith that by His own death Christ changed the very nature of death, made it a *passage* – a *Passover*, a *Pascha* – into the Kingdom of God, transforming the tragedy of tragedies into a victory. (Fr. Schmemmann, Great Lent).”

⁷Purge out therefore the old leaven, that ye may be a new dough, even as ye are unleavened. For also Christ, our Passover, was sacrificed for us; [1 Cor. 5:7]

Saint Bede: “Passover derives its ancient name from the Lord’s passing over on this day through Egypt, striking the firstborn of the Egyptians [Ex. 12:11, 12, 23-27] and freeing the children of Israel, and from the children of Israel’s passing over on that night from their slavery in Egypt [Ex. 14:21-29], in order that they might come to the land which had once been promised to their heirs as one of peace. Mystically it signifies that on this day our Lord would pass over from this world to His Father; and that, following His example, the faithful, having cast off temporal desires, and having cast off their slavery to vices by their continual practice of the virtues, should pass over to their promised heavenly fatherland.” [“Homily II.5, Holy Thursday,” *Homilies on the Gospels*, Bk. Two, 43, 44.]

Saint Chrysostom: “What is, ‘He loved them to *the end*’ (εἰς τέλος) means that he left nothing undone that one who greatly loved should do.”

Saint Bede: “He loved them so much that by that very love He would end His bodily life for a time, and He would soon pass from death to life, from this world to the Father. ‘Greater love has no one than this, that one should lay down his life for his friends [Jn. 15:13].’ Hence each passing over—that under the law, and that under the Gospel—was consecrated with blood, the former with the paschal lamb, the latter with ‘Christ, our Passover, Who was sacrificed for us [cf. 1 Cor. 5:7]’; the latter with His blood poured out on the Cross, the former with its blood sprinkled in the manner of a cross in the middle of the lintel and the middle of the door posts.” [Ib., 44.]

Saint Justin Martyr: “The mystery of the lamb which God ordered you to sacrifice as the passover was truly a type of Christ, with whose blood the believers, in proportion to the strength of their faith, anoint their homes, that is, themselves....”

²And supper having taken place—the devil already having put into the heart of Judas Iscariote, Simon’s son, that He should deliver Him up—

Origen: “It seems to me that the Evangelist has not preserved the literal sequence of washing in these words that he might raise our understanding to the spiritual sense of the things in the passage, since those who need to wash their feet, wash them before supper and before they recline to eat.”

Origen: “Consistently with this you might say of each of those wounded in the heart by the devil, the devil already having put it in the heart of so-and-so that he should commit fornication...fraud...should submit to idolatry...the one that is not armed with the shield of faith, by which shield of faith one can quench not one or two, but all the fiery darts of the wicked one.”