

John 13:11

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

For he knew who should betray him; therefore said he, Ye are not all clean.

Analysis

For he knew who should betray him; therefore said he, Ye are not all clean.

This verse explains Jesus's cryptic statement in verse 10. The phrase **he knew** (ἔδει γάρ εἰδει gar) uses the pluperfect form of **oīdα** (oida), indicating comprehensive, settled knowledge existing before the moment—Jesus had always known. The participle **who should betray him** (τὸν παραδιδόντα αὐτόν/ton paradidonata auton) uses present tense, suggesting ongoing treachery—Judas's betrayal wasn't sudden impulse but developing conspiracy.

The verb **παραδίδωμι** (paradidōmi)—to hand over, betray, deliver up—appears repeatedly in the Passion narrative. Judas **paradidōmi** Jesus to the authorities (John 18:2), who **paradidōmi** Him to Pilate (John 18:30), who **paradidōmi** Him to crucifixion (John 19:16). Yet providentially, the Father **paradidōmi** the Son for our redemption (Romans 8:32). Human treachery serves divine purposes.

Jesus's foreknowledge of betrayal intensifies the scene's pathos. He washes the feet of His betrayer. He serves the one plotting His death. This displays both divine omniscience and incomprehensible love—while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us (Romans 5:8). Judas receives the same intimate service as the faithful Eleven, demonstrating that Christ's love extends even to those who reject Him. Yet love spurned becomes judgment. Judas's presence at the foot-washing but exclusion from spiritual cleansing illustrates the tragedy of resisting grace.

Historical Context

John's Gospel emphasizes Jesus's divine knowledge throughout—He knew what was in man (2:25), knew the Samaritan woman's history (4:18), knew from the beginning who would believe and who would betray (6:64). This foreknowledge doesn't cause Judas's betrayal but reveals Jesus's deity. Judas held the disciples' money bag and regularly stole from it (John 12:6), showing long-standing treachery. Jesus's selection of Judas knowing he would betray raises questions addressed by verse 18: 'that the scripture may be fulfilled.' Judas fulfilled Psalm 41:9—'he that eateth bread with me hath lifted up his heel against me.' Satan entered Judas during this very meal (John 13:27), though Judas had already contracted with the chief priests for thirty silver pieces (Matthew 26:14-16). The early church wrestled with Judas's culpability versus divine sovereignty. Church fathers like Augustine argued Judas acted freely yet within God's sovereign plan—a mystery but not contradiction.

Related Passages

Colossians 1:16 — All things created through Christ

Psalm 19:1 — Heavens declare God's glory

Study Questions

1. How does Jesus's foreknowledge of Judas's betrayal yet willingness to wash his feet demonstrate the nature of divine love?
2. What does Judas's proximity to Jesus—sharing meals, hearing teaching, witnessing miracles—yet remaining spiritually unclean warn about external religion?
3. How should the reality that Christ's love extends even to His betrayers shape our understanding of evangelism and treatment of enemies?

Interlinear Text

η̄δει	γὰρ	τὸν	παραδιδόντα	αὐτόν·	διὰ	τοῦτο	εἰπεν
he knew	For	who	should betray	him	G1223	therefore	said he
G1492	G1063	G3588	G3860	G846		G5124	G2036
Oὐχὶ	πάντες	καθαροί	ἐστε				
not	all	clean	Ye are				
G3780	G3956	G2513	G2075				

Additional Cross-References

John 13:26 (Parallel theme): Jesus answered, He it is, to whom I shall give a sop, when I have dipped it. And when he had dipped the sop, he gave it to Judas Iscariot, the son of Simon.

John 13:18 (Parallel theme): I speak not of you all: I know whom I have chosen: but that the scripture may be fulfilled, He that eateth bread with me hath lifted up his heel against me.

John 13:2 (Parallel theme): And supper being ended, the devil having now put into the heart of Judas Iscariot, Simon's son, to betray him;

John 13:21 (Parallel theme): When Jesus had thus said, he was troubled in spirit, and testified, and said, Verily, verily, I say unto you, that one of you shall betray me.

John 2:25 (Parallel theme): And needed not that any should testify of man: for he knew what was in man.