

John 13:25

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

He then lying on Jesus' breast saith unto him, Lord, who is it?

Analysis

He then lying on Jesus' breast (ἐπιπесῶν ἐπὶ τὸ στῆθος, epipesōn epi to stēthos)—John leans back onto Jesus' chest, the position enabling quiet conversation. The intimacy is profound; John's head rests where he can hear Jesus' heartbeat. This physical closeness pictures spiritual intimacy available to all believers through the Spirit. **Saith unto him, Lord, who is it?**—direct, simple question. John asks what Peter wanted to know.

John's courage to ask stems from relationship security. He knows Jesus loves him (v. 23), so he boldly inquires. The question is whispered privately—Jesus doesn't yet publicly expose Judas. This gentle handling of the betrayer demonstrates Jesus' mercy even toward those who will destroy Him. Jesus could have shouted the accusation; instead He answers John quietly and gives Judas a final opportunity (v. 26) before the betrayer chooses his own path.

Historical Context

The question and answer occur in whispered conversation, which explains why the other disciples don't hear (Matthew 26:22 shows they all asked "Lord, is it I?"). Ancient dining couches facilitated such private exchanges. John records this detail decades later, emphasizing the privileged communication he shared with Jesus.

Related Passages

Hebrews 11:1 — Definition of faith

Study Questions

1. How does John's physical proximity to Jesus symbolize the intimate relationship believers can have with Christ?
2. What does Jesus' quiet response to John (rather than public exposure of Judas) teach about His mercy?

Interlinear Text

ἐπιπесῶν δὲ ἐκεῖνος ἐπὶ τὸ στῆθος τοῦ Ἰησοῦ λέγει
lying on **then** **He** G1909 G3588 **breast** G3588 **Jesus** **saith**
G1968 G1161 G1565 G4738 G2424 G3004

αὐτῷ Κύριε τίς ἐστιν
unto him **Lord** **who** **is it**
G846 G2962 G5101 G2076

Additional Cross-References

John 21:20 (References Jesus): Then Peter, turning about, seeth the disciple whom Jesus loved following; which also leaned on his breast at supper, and said, Lord, which is he that betrayeth thee?