

### **THREE THINGS TO KNOW ABOUT THE ALL-KNOWING CHRIST**

*13<sup>12</sup>After he had washed their feet and put back on his robe, he sat down again. Then he asked them, Do you understand what I have done to you? 13<sup>13</sup>You call me, Teacher, and, Lord: and you speak correctly; that is what I am. 14<sup>14</sup>If I then, the Lord and the Teacher, have washed your feet, you also ought to wash one another's feet. 15<sup>15</sup>I have given you an example, you also should do as I have done to you. 16<sup>16</sup>I tell you the truth, a servant is not greater than his master; neither is an apostle greater than the one who sent him. 17<sup>17</sup>If you understand these things, you will be blessed if you do them.*

*18<sup>18</sup>I am not referring to all of you; I know whom I have chosen. But this is to fulfill the Scripture, "He who shares my bread lifted up his heel against me." 19<sup>19</sup>I am telling you now before it happens, so that when it does happen you may believe that I am [he]. 20<sup>20</sup>I tell you the truth, whoever receives anyone whom I send is receiving me; and whoever receives me is receiving the one who sent me.*

*21<sup>21</sup>After he had said this, [Jesus] was troubled in his spirit and testified, I tell you the truth, one of you shall betray me. 22<sup>22</sup>The disciples looked at one another, having no idea of whom he spoke. 23<sup>23</sup>One of them, the disciple whom Jesus loved, was reclining at the table in front of Jesus. 24<sup>24</sup>Simon Peter motioned to him and said, Tell us who it is of whom he is speaking. 25<sup>25</sup>He, leaning back on Jesus' chest, asked him, Lord, who is it? 26<sup>26</sup>Jesus answered, It is the one to whom I give this piece of bread after I have dipped it [in the dish]. So after he had dipped the piece of bread, he gave it to Judas, [the son] of Simon Iscariot. 27<sup>27</sup>As soon as [Judas] took the bread, Satan entered into him. Jesus then said to him, What you are about to do, do quickly. 28<sup>28</sup>Now no one at the table knew why [Jesus] spoke [these words] to him. 29<sup>29</sup>Some thought that, because Judas had charge of the money bag, Jesus was instructing him, Buy the things we need for the Feast; or, that [Jesus was telling him] to give something to the poor. 30<sup>30</sup>After he had received the piece of bread, he immediately went out; and it was night. (Jn. 13:12-30)*

### **Introduction**

The shades of the Powell house in Darlington, S.C., were drawn shut. The man of the house was out, patrolling highways as a law enforcement officer. The lady of the house was in, sleeping off her drunkenness.

Joanie took her first drink when she was a teenager. "I had a sip of wine with a group of friends—just to see what it was like. By the time I was 24, I was drinking steadily—beer, whiskey, vodka."

Strangely, it was not the taste of alcohol that Joanie enjoyed. She hated it. But she liked the effect. She felt care free, transported beyond the troubles of raising a family, facing life. Normally, she was able to drink alone and sleep it off, with no one the wiser. When it did interfere with her work, she could always come up with an acceptable excuse. Once, when drinking heavily, she fell in the bathroom and gashed her head. She was hospitalized for several days because of the "household accident," but the incident didn't deter her drinking.

Then one day the LORD spoke to her heart, and what did He tell her?

“That I wasn’t sick, I was a sinner. I had sinned against my family in causing untold heartache. I’d sinned against my employer by lying about my absenteeism. I’d sinned against myself in ruining my mind and body. But most of all I was sinning against the LORD, who loved me and gave Himself for me.” (POWER, 2/3/91, pp. 2-ff.)

In the passage of Scripture presently before us, we meet another person who tried to keep a dark secret—he futilely sought to keep that secret from Christ, even though Christ knew all about it, and even though Christ graciously offered him the opportunity to repent.

We must never lose sight of the fact that Christ is intimately acquainted with every aspect of our lives—He thoroughly knows our every thought, word and deed. As we study this passage of Scripture, let us consider Three Things We Need to Know about the All-Knowing Christ.

## **I. We Cannot Hide Any Sin from Christ’s View**

The scene is the upper room; it is the evening of the Passover Feast. During the meal, the Lord Jesus has shocked the disciples by rising from the table, laying aside His robe, and then stooping down to perform the task reserved for the most menial household servant: He washed His disciples’ feet. Now Jesus is about to shock His disciples again, this time by revealing that there is a traitor among them.

In the process of washing His disciples’ feet, Jesus had assured them, “*You are clean*” (vs. 10.) The custom was for a man, being invited to dinner, to take a bath prior to coming, and then when he arrived at the host’s home he merely needed to have the dust of the streets washed from his feet. Jesus is assuring His disciples that by virtue of their faith in Him they have been washed clean—the forgiving, saving benefits of His sacrificial death will be imparted to them and to us by faith.

But having spoken these words of assurance to His disciples, Jesus adds these ominous words: “*You are clean, but not every one [of you].*” Then there follows the explanation: “*[Jesus] knew who would betray him; that is why he said, ‘Not everyone of you is clean’*” (vs. 11.) Jesus not only knew that one of His disciples would betray Him, but He had full knowledge of which one was the betrayer, as we have been previously informed:

*Jesus knew from the beginning which ones did not believe and who would betray him ... <sup>70</sup>Jesus answered them, Have I not chosen you, the Twelve? But one of you is a devil. <sup>71</sup>Now he was referring to Judas [the son] of Simon Iscariot; for although he was one of the Twelve, he would betray him. (Jn. 6:64b, 70-71)*

Because Christ is all-knowing, it is a tragic folly to try to conceal sinful conduct—in thought, word or deed—from His view. David came to appreciate this fact. In Psalm 32:3-5 he is describing the LORD's dealing with him, seeking to bring him to the point of confessing his sin and repenting of it:

*When I kept silent, my bones wasted away through my groaning all day long; <sup>4</sup>for day and night your hand was heavy upon me; my strength was sapped as in the heat of summer. <sup>5</sup>Then I acknowledged my sin to you and did not cover up my iniquity. I said, I will confess my transgressions to Jehovah— and you forgave the guilt of my sin. (Psl. 32:3-5)*

The Book of Hebrews informs us, *“Nothing in all creation is hidden from God's sight. Everything is uncovered and laid bare before the eyes of him to whom we must give account”* (Heb. 4:13.)

## **II. Christ Graciously Gives Us Opportunity to Repent of Our Sin**

Jesus reveals the presence of His betrayer, but for the present He also conceals the identity of the betrayer. Why? He does so because Jesus mercifully desires for him to reconsider and repent.

The knowledge that one of His own disciples was a traitor did not fill Jesus with personal indignation and the desire for revenge; on the contrary, it caused Him to be *“troubled in his spirit”* (vs. 21.) Contrast our Lord's attitude with that of Mohammed, as related by a former Muslim whose observation of Jesus' forgiving spirit as He hung on the cross may also apply to His treatment of Judas at the time of the Last Supper:

Muhammad, the founder of Islam, many centuries previously, had angrily denounced a couple who opposed him. He had prayed in these words, recorded in the Koran:

Perished be the two hands of Abu Lahab, and he will perish. His wealth and what he has earned shall be of no help to him. Soon shall he enter into the blazing fire, and his wife, too, who goes about slandering. Around her neck shall be a halter of twisted palm fiber.

With this I compared the agony and suffering of Jesus Christ while hanging on the cross. The crown of thorns was thrust on His head; the nails were put through His hands and feet, and scorners spat in His face. His enemies inflicted the severest possible pain and suffering on Him. Yet Jesus prayed these words:

Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they are doing.

What a great contrast in these two prayers! I realized it revealed a great contrast in the two personalities. Muhammad's prayer was merely a human reaction, while Jesus' prayer was a divine reaction. (*POWER*, 3/27/83, p. 3)

As Jesus contemplates what Judas is doing, He has the same reaction as He had on the occasion of the death of His beloved friend, Lazarus:

*When Jesus saw her weeping, and the Jews who had come along with her [also] weeping, he groaned in his spirit and was troubled.* <sup>34</sup>*He asked, Where have you laid him? They said to him, Lord, come and see.* <sup>35</sup>*Jesus wept.* <sup>36</sup>*Then the Jews said, See how [much] he loved him!* (Jn. 11:33-36)

Jesus is grieved that one would despise His love and His kingdom; that one would harbor sin to his own eternal destruction. He was grieved that Judas would do such a thing. He is grieved if you or I should do such a thing.

John re-creates the scene for us as it was played out on that fateful night (vs. 23): In those days the host and his guests did not sit around the table; rather, they reclined around the table: each one facing to his right, propped on his left elbow, with his right hand free. The position in front of the host (to his immediate right) was the position of great honor—the apostle John occupied that position on this particular night. The position behind the host (to his immediate left) was the position of greatest honor—on this particular night it appears that Judas occupied that position. Note: The words recorded in Matthew 26:25 must have been quietly exchanged: *"Jesus replied, 'The one who has dipped his hand into the bowl with me will betray me' ...* <sup>25</sup>*Then Judas, the one who would betray him, said, 'Surely not I, Rabbi?' Jesus answered, 'Yes, it is you.'"* Peter motioned to John, instructing him to ask Jesus to reveal the identity of the traitor (vs. 24.) John complies by looking up to Jesus and quietly asking, "Lord, who is it?"

Although He gives a clue as to who it is, Jesus at the same time effectively conceals the traitor's identity. Jesus' reply appears to have been quietly spoken to John rather than being loudly proclaimed to all present, *"It is the one to whom I give this piece of bread after I have dipped it [in the dish]"* (vs. 26a.) Jesus then proceeded to dip a piece of bread into the bowl of vinegar and give it to Judas. Such an act was so commonly performed by a host at a banquet among friends that it went completely unnoticed by the disciples; curiously, not even John seems to have picked up the clue. Even from the exchange between Jesus and Judas that followed, none of the disciples were aware of what was transpiring: *"As soon as [Judas] took the bread, Satan entered into him. Jesus then said to him, 'What you are about to do, do quickly'"* (vs. 27.) Some thought Jesus had instructed Judas to go and purchase what was needed for the feast; others assumed that Jesus had given Judas instructions to make a donation to the poor.

Why does Jesus conceal the identity of His betrayer? He does so as one final act of mercy to Judas; affording him one final opportunity to repent before it is too

late. Judas is unmasked by Jesus: *"Then Judas, the one who would betray him, said, 'Surely not I, Rabbi?' Jesus answered, 'Yes, it is you'"* (Matt. 26:25.) False and hypocritical to the end, Judas can ask, "Is it I?" Jesus looks Judas in the eye and in effect replies, "You have spoken the truth. You know that it is you. And I know it, too."

At this point Judas is being protected by Jesus, because Judas is in the midst of some very violent and volatile company. Peter wants to know the traitor's identity; note Peter's conduct in the garden of Gethsemane when the mob came to arrest Jesus: *"Then Simon Peter, who had a sword, drew it and struck the high priest's servant, cutting off his right ear"* (Jn. 18:10.) John wants to know the traitor's identity; note the nickname John and his brother James earned for their volatile tempers: *"James son of Zebedee and his brother John (to them [Jesus] gave the name 'Boanerges,' which means, 'Sons of Thunder')"* (Mk. 3:17.) Note, too, the reaction of James and John when Jesus is spurned by the Samaritans as He makes His way to Jerusalem,

*As the time approached for him to be taken up to heaven, Jesus resolutely set out for Jerusalem. <sup>52</sup>And he sent messengers on ahead, who went into a Samaritan village to get things ready for him; <sup>53</sup>but the people there did not welcome him, because he was heading for Jerusalem. <sup>54</sup>When the disciples James and John saw this, they asked, Lord, do you want us to call fire down from heaven to destroy them? <sup>55</sup>But Jesus turned and rebuked them, <sup>56</sup>and they went to another village. (Lk. 9:51-56)*

Judas is being honored by Jesus. By giving him the position of supreme honor at the supper, Jesus in effect is saying to him, "Don't listen to the devil. Don't be a fool! Instead, repent. Trust Me, and you shall be honored in My Father's kingdom." By His kind gesture in giving Judas the place of highest honor at the table, Jesus is communicating the same thing as is recorded in Revelation 3:21, *"To him who overcomes, I will give the right to sit with me on my throne, just as I overcame and sat down with my Father on his throne."*

Christ is all-knowing, but He graciously gives men the opportunity to repent of sin. Note 2 Peter 3:9, where the Apostle Peter assures us, *"The LORD is not negligent about keeping his promise ... He is patient with you, not wanting anyone to perish, but everyone to come to repentance."* But note carefully that when Judas thrust away Jesus' final offer of mercy, a terrible thing happens: Jesus released him to the devil. The devil was operating in Judas' heart. Up to this point, the devil was instigating him: *"It was during supper, and the devil had already put it into the heart of Judas Iscariot, Simon's son, to betray [Jesus]"* (Jn. 13:2.) But now when Jesus gives Judas the bread—seeing no repentance—Jesus also gives him over to the devil: *"As soon as [Judas] took the bread, Satan entered into him"* (Jn. 13:27a.) According to verse 30, Judas immediately departed, *"and it was night."* The physical darkness all the more illustrates and accentuates the spiritual and eternal darkness into which Judas now departs. Judas was fully aware of what

has transpired between himself and Jesus: he spurned Christ's offer of mercy, he chose not to repent.

Christ is all-knowing, but He graciously gives a man the opportunity to repent of his sins—if you harbor sin in your life, do not spurn Christ's gracious offer. Let us be careful to heed the counsel of the Apostle Paul:

*... do you show contempt for the riches of his kindness, forbearance and patience, not realizing that God's kindness [is intended to] lead you to repentance? <sup>5</sup>But because of your stubbornness and your unrepentant heart, you are storing up wrath against yourself on the day of God's wrath, when his righteous judgment will be revealed. (Rom. 2:4-5)*

### **III. Christ will Make a Final Exposure and Separation if There is No Repentance**

At the time, none of the other disciples knew what Judas had gone out to do—but in just a few hours they all would know. When the mob came out to the Garden of Gethsemane to arrest Jesus, Judas was standing with them:

*Now Judas, who betrayed him, knew the place, because Jesus had often met there with his disciples. <sup>3</sup>So Judas came to the grove, guiding a detachment of soldiers and some officials from the chief priests and Pharisees. They were carrying torches, lanterns and weapons. <sup>4</sup>Jesus, knowing all that was going to happen to him, went out and asked them, Who is it you want? <sup>5</sup>Jesus of Nazareth, they replied. I am he, Jesus said. **(And Judas the traitor was standing there with them.)** (Jn. 18:2-5)*

Christ is all-knowing, and He will make a final exposure and separation. Note the promise and the warning He issues in Matthew 25:31-34,41,

*When the Son of Man comes in his glory, and all the angels with him, he will sit on his throne in heavenly glory. <sup>32</sup>All the nations will be gathered before him, and he will separate the people one from another as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats. <sup>33</sup>He will put the sheep on his right and the goats on his left. <sup>34</sup>Then the King will say to those on his right, Come, you who are blessed by my Father; take your inheritance, the kingdom prepared for you since the creation of the world ... <sup>41</sup>Then he will say to those on his left, Depart from me, you who are cursed, into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels. (Matt. 25:31-34,41)*

The Lord Jesus declares, *"there is nothing hidden that will not be disclosed, and nothing concealed that will not be known or brought out into the open"* (Lk. 8:17.) The Book of Proverbs asserts, *"The backslider in heart shall be filled with his own ways"* (Prov. 14:14a.) That is to say, sin cultivated in the heart shall finally dominate the life. A man may depart from God in the secret recesses of



his heart, totally unbeknown to those around him and unobserved by them. But in time, his life will become filled—or, dominated—by the sin cultivated in secret.

## **Conclusion**

We must never lose sight of the fact that Christ is intimately acquainted with every aspect of our lives—He thoroughly know our every thought, word and deed. Christ is all-knowing; therefore, we cannot hide any sin from His view. Christ is all-knowing; but He graciously give us the opportunity to repent of any sin that we may be harboring in secret. Christ is all-knowing; and He will make a final exposure and separation, if there is no repentance. Christ is all-knowing; therefore, the best thing to do is join the Psalmist as he prays, *“Search me, O God, and know my heart. Test me, and know my thoughts. <sup>24</sup>See if there is any wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting”* (Psl. 139:23-24.)