A HARMONY OF THE FOUR GOSPELS — CHAPTER TWENTY

John 12–16: The Anointing, the Entry, the Farewell Discourse, and the Promise of the Paraclete

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Preface: Continuation of the Fourth Gospel

Chapter twenty covers John 12 through 16 — the final public ministry of Jesus in John's Gospel and the extraordinary five-chapter Farewell Discourse delivered to the disciples in the upper room on the night of his arrest.

John 12 brings the public ministry to its close with the anointing at Bethany, the Triumphal Entry (already covered in the Synoptic harmony but here given through John's distinctive lens), the Greeks who wish to see Jesus, and Jesus's final public appeal and withdrawal. John 13 opens the Farewell section with the washing of the disciples' feet and the departure of Judas. John 14–16 contains five chapters of unparalleled intimacy — the promise of the many rooms in the Father's house, the *"I am the way, the truth, and the life"* declaration, the vine and the branches discourse, the promise of the Holy Spirit as Paraclete, and the warning that the world will hate the disciples as it hated their Lord.

This material has no Synoptic parallel. Nothing in Matthew, Mark, or Luke prepares the reader for the depth and tenderness of the Farewell Discourse. It is the longest single teaching unit in any Gospel and the most intimate extended conversation between Jesus and his disciples in the entire canonical tradition.

Each section is identified by its source: **[John]** throughout.

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Part Nineteen: The Last Public Ministry and the Farewell Discourse

Section 210 — The Anointing at Bethany: John's Account [John 12:1–11]

Jesus therefore six days before the passover came to Bethany, where Lazarus was, whom Jesus raised from the dead.

So they made him a supper there, and Martha served; but Lazarus was one of them that sat at meat with him.

Mary therefore took a pound of ointment of pure nard, very precious, and anointed the feet of Jesus, and wiped his feet with her hair: and the house was filled with the odor of the ointment.

But Judas Iscariot, one of his disciples, that should betray him, saith, Why was not this ointment sold for three hundred shillings, and given to the poor?

Now this he said, not because he cared for the poor; but because he was a thief, and having the bag, took away what was put therein.

Jesus therefore said, Suffer her to keep it against the day of my burying. For the poor ye have always with you; but me ye have not always.

The common people therefore of the Jews learned that he was there: and they came, not for Jesus' sake only, but that they might see Lazarus also, whom he had raised from the dead.

Section 211 — The Triumphal Entry: John's Account [John 12:12–19]

On the morrow a great multitude that had come to the feast, when they heard that Jesus was coming to Jerusalem, took the branches of the palm trees, and went forth to meet him, and cried out, Hosanna: Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord, even the King of Israel.

And Jesus, having found a young ass, sat thereon; as it is written, Fear not, daughter of Zion: behold, thy King cometh, sitting on an ass's colt.

These things understood not his disciples at the first: but when Jesus was glorified, then remembered they that these things were written of him, and that they had done these things unto him.

The multitude therefore that was with him when he called Lazarus out of the tomb, and raised him from the dead, bare witness. For this cause also the multitude went and met him, for that they heard that he had done this sign.

The Pharisees therefore said among themselves, Behold how ye prevail nothing; lo, the world is gone after him.

Section 212 — The Greeks Who Seek Jesus; the Hour Has Come [John 12:20–36]

Now there were certain Greeks among those that went up to worship at the feast: these therefore came to Philip, who was of Bethsaida of Galilee, and asked him, saying, Sir, we would see Jesus.

Philip cometh and telleth Andrew: Andrew cometh, and Philip, and they tell Jesus.

And Jesus answereth them, saying, The hour is come, that the Son of man should be glorified. Verily, verily, I say unto you, Except a grain of wheat fall into the earth and die, it abideth by itself alone; but if it die, it beareth much fruit.

He that loveth his life loseth it; and he that hateth his life in this world shall keep it unto life eternal.

If any man serve me, let him follow me; and where I am, there shall also my servant be: if any man serve me, him will the Father honor.

Now is my soul troubled; and what shall I say? Father, save me from this hour. But for this cause came I unto this hour.

Father, glorify thy name.

There came therefore a voice out of heaven, saying, I have both glorified it, and will glorify it again.

The multitude therefore, that stood by, and heard it, said that it had thundered: others said, An angel hath spoken to him.

Jesus answered and said, This voice hath not come for my sake, but for your sakes.

Now is the judgment of this world: now shall the prince of this world be cast out. And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto myself.

But this he said, signifying by what manner of death he should die.

The multitude therefore answered him, We have heard out of the law that the Christ abideth for ever: and how sayest thou, The Son of man must be lifted up? who is this Son of man?

Jesus therefore said unto them, Yet a little while is the light among you. Walk while ye have the light, that darkness overtake you not: and he that walketh in the darkness knoweth not whither he goeth.

While ye have the light, believe on the light, that ye may become sons of light.

Section 213 — The Washing of the Disciples' Feet [John 13:1–20]

Now before the feast of the passover, Jesus knowing that his hour was come that he should depart out of this world unto the Father, having loved his own that were in the world, he loved them unto the end.

And during supper, the devil having already put into the heart of Judas Iscariot, Simon's son, to betray him, Jesus, knowing that the Father had given all things into his hands, and that he came forth from God, and goeth unto God, riseth from supper, and layeth aside his garments; and he took a towel, and girded himself.

Then he poureth water into the basin, and began to wash the disciples' feet, and to wipe them with the towel wherewith he was girded.

So he cometh to Simon Peter. He saith unto him, Lord, dost thou wash my feet?

Jesus answered and said unto him, What I do thou knowest not now; but thou shalt understand hereafter.

Peter saith unto him, Thou shalt never wash my feet.

Jesus answered him, If I wash thee not, thou hast no part with me.

Simon Peter saith unto him, Lord, not my feet only, but also my hands and my head.

Jesus saith to him, He that is bathed needeth not save to wash his feet, but is clean every whit: and ye are clean, but not all.

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

So when he had washed their feet, and taken his garments, and sat down again, he said unto them, Know ye what I have done to you?

Ye call me, Teacher, and, Lord: and ye say well; for so I am. If I then, the Lord and the Teacher, have washed your feet, ye also ought to wash one another's feet. For I have given you an example, that ye also should do as I have done to you.

Verily, verily, I say unto you, A servant is not greater than his lord; neither one that is sent greater than he that sent him.

If ye know these things, blessed are ye if ye do them.

Section 214 — The Departure of Judas [John 13:21–30]

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.

The disciples looked one on another, doubting of whom he spake.

There was at the table reclining in Jesus' bosom one of his disciples, whom Jesus loved. Simon Peter therefore beckoneth to him, and saith unto him, Tell us who it is of whom he speaketh.

He leaning back, as he was, on Jesus' breast saith unto him, Lord, who is it?

Jesus therefore answereth, He it is, for whom I shall dip the sop, and give it him. So when he had dipped the sop, he taketh and giveth it to Judas, the son of Simon Iscariot.

And after the sop, then entered Satan into him. Jesus therefore saith unto him, What thou doest, do quickly.

Now no man at the table knew for what intent he spake this unto him. For some thought, because Judas had the bag, that Jesus said unto him, Buy what things we have need of for the feast; or, that he should give something to the poor.

He then having received the sop went out straightway: and it was night.

Section 215 — A New Commandment; Peter's Denial Foretold [John 13:31–38]

When therefore he was gone out, Jesus saith, Now is the Son of man glorified, and God is glorified in him; and God shall glorify him in himself, and straightway shall he glorify him.

Little children, yet a little while I am with you. Ye shall seek me: and as I said unto the Jews, Whither I go, ye cannot come; so now I say unto you.

A new commandment I give unto you, that ye love one another; even as I have loved you, that ye also love one another. By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another.

Simon Peter saith unto him, Lord, whither goest thou? Jesus answered, Whither I go, thou canst not follow me now; but thou shalt follow afterwards.

Peter saith unto him, Lord, why cannot I follow thee even now? I will lay down my life for thee.

Jesus answereth, Wilt thou lay down thy life for me? Verily, verily, I say unto thee, The cock shall not crow, till thou hast denied me thrice.

Section 216 — The Father's House; I Am the Way [John 14:1–14]

Let not your heart be troubled: ye believe in God, believe also in me. In my Father's house are many mansions; if it were not so, I would have told you; for I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I come again, and will receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also.

And whither I go, ye know the way.

Thomas saith unto him, Lord, we know not whither thou goest; how know we the way?

Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, and the truth, and the life: no one cometh unto the Father, but through me.

If ye had known me, ye would have known my Father also: from henceforth ye know him, and have seen him.

Philip saith unto him, Lord, show us the Father, and it sufficeth us.

Jesus saith unto him, Have I been so long time with you, and dost thou not know me, Philip? he that hath seen me hath seen the Father; how sayest thou, Show us the Father?

Believest thou not that I am in the Father, and the Father in me? the words that I say unto you I speak not from myself: but the Father abiding in me doeth his works.

Believe me that I am in the Father, and the Father in me: or else believe me for the very works' sake.

Verily, verily, I say unto you, he that believeth on me, the works that I do shall he do also; and greater works than these shall he do; because I go unto the Father.

And whatsoever ye shall ask in my name, that will I do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son.

Section 217 — The Promise of the Paraclete [John 14:15–31]

If ye love me, ye will keep my commandments. And I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may be with you for ever, even the Spirit of truth: whom the world cannot receive; for it beholdeth him not, neither knoweth him: ye know him; for he abideth with you, and shall be in you.

I will not leave you desolate: I come unto you. Yet a little while, and the world beholdeth me no more; but ye behold me: because I live, ye shall live also.

In that day ye shall know that I am in my Father, and ye in me, and I in you.

He that hath my commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me: and he that loveth me shall be loved of my Father, and I will love him, and will manifest myself unto him.

Judas (not Iscariot) saith unto him, Lord, what is come to pass that thou wilt manifest thyself unto us, and not unto the world?

Jesus answered and said unto him, If a man love me, he will keep my word: and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him.

He that loveth me not keepeth not my words: and the word which ye hear is not mine, but the Father's who sent me.

These things have I spoken unto you, while yet abiding with you. But the Comforter, even the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and bring to your remembrance all that I said unto you.

Peace I leave with you; my peace I give unto you: not as the world giveth, give I unto you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be fearful.

Ye heard how I said to you, I go away, and I come unto you. If ye loved me, ye would have rejoiced, because I go unto the Father: for the Father is greater than I.

Section 218 — The Vine and the Branches [John 15:1–17]

I am the true vine, and my Father is the husbandman. Every branch in me that beareth not fruit, he taketh it away: and every branch that beareth fruit, he cleanseth it, that it may bear more fruit.

Already ye are clean because of the word which I have spoken unto you.

Abide in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine; so neither can ye, except ye abide in me.

I am the vine, ye are the branches: He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same beareth much fruit: for apart from me ye can do nothing.

If a man abide not in me, he is cast forth as a branch, and is withered; and they gather them, and cast them into the fire, and they are burned.

If ye abide in me, and my words abide in you, ask whatsoever ye will, and it shall be done unto you.

Herein is my Father glorified, that ye bear much fruit; and so shall ye be my disciples.

Even as the Father hath loved me, I also have loved you: abide ye in my love.

If ye keep my commandments, ye shall abide in my love; even as I have kept my Father's commandments, and abide in his love.

These things have I spoken unto you, that my joy may be in you, and that your joy may be made full.

This is my commandment, that ye love one another, even as I have loved you. Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends.

Ye are my friends, if ye do the things which I command you.

No longer do I call you servants; for the servant knoweth not what his lord doeth: but I have called you friends; for all things that I heard from my Father I have made known unto you.

Ye did not choose me, but I chose you, and appointed you, that ye should go and bear fruit, and that your fruit should abide: that whatsoever ye shall ask of the Father in my name, he may give it you.

These things I command you, that ye may love one another.

Section 219 — The World's Hatred; the Spirit of Truth [John 15:18–16:15]

If the world hateth you, ye know that it hath hated me before it hated you. If ye were of the world, the world would love its own: but because ye are not of the world, but I chose you out of the world, therefore the world hateth you.

Remember the word that I said unto you, A servant is not greater than his lord. If they persecuted me, they will also persecute you; if they kept my word, they will keep yours also.

But all these things will they do unto you for my name's sake, because they know not him that sent me.

But when the Comforter is come, whom I will send unto you from the Father, even the Spirit of truth, which proceedeth from the Father, he shall bear witness of me: and ye also bear witness, because ye have been with me from the beginning.

These things have I spoken unto you, that ye should not be caused to stumble. They shall put you out of the synagogues: yea, the hour cometh, that whosoever killeth you shall think that he offereth service unto God.

And these things will they do, because they have not known the Father, nor me. But these things have I spoken unto you, that when their hour is come, ye may remember them, how that I told you.

Nevertheless I tell you the truth: It is expedient for you that I go away; for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you; but if I go, I will send him unto you.

And he, when he is come, will convict the world in respect of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment: of sin, because they believe not on me; of righteousness, because I go to the Father, and ye behold me no more; of judgment, because the prince of this world hath been judged.

I have yet many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now. Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he shall guide you into all the truth: for he shall not speak from himself; but what things soever he shall hear, these shall he speak: and he shall declare unto you the things that are to come. He shall glorify me: for he shall take of mine, and shall declare it unto you.

Section 220 — Sorrow Will Turn to Joy; I Have Overcome the World [John 16:16–33]

A little while, and ye behold me no more; and again a little while, and ye shall see me.

Some of his disciples therefore said one to another, What is this that he saith unto us, A little while, and ye behold me not; and again a little while, and ye shall see me: and, Because I go to the Father?

Jesus perceived that they were desirous to ask him, and he said unto them, Do ye inquire among yourselves concerning this, that I said, A little while, and ye behold me not, and again a little while, and ye shall see me?

Verily, verily, I say unto you, that ye shall weep and lament, but the world shall rejoice: ye shall be sorrowful, but your sorrow shall be turned into joy.

A woman when she is in travail hath sorrow, because her hour is come: but when she is delivered of the child, she remembereth no more the anguish, for the joy that a man is born into the world.

And ye therefore now have sorrow: but I will see you again, and your heart shall rejoice, and your joy no one taketh away from you.

And in that day ye shall ask me nothing. Verily, verily, I say unto you, If ye shall ask anything of the Father, he will give it you in my name. Hitherto have ye asked nothing in my name: ask, and ye shall receive, that your joy may be made full.

These things have I spoken unto you in proverbs: the hour cometh, when I shall no more speak unto you in proverbs, but shall tell you plainly of the Father.

I came out from the Father, and am come into the world: again, I leave the world, and go unto the Father.

His disciples say, Lo, now speakest thou plainly, and speakest no proverb. Now know we that thou knowest all things, and needest not that any man should ask thee: by this we believe that thou camest forth from God.

Jesus answered them, Do ye now believe? Behold, the hour cometh, yea, is come, that ye shall be scattered, every man to his own, and shall leave me alone: and yet I am not alone, because the Father is with me.

These things have I spoken unto you, that in me ye may have peace. In the world ye have tribulation: but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world.

Appendix: Notes on Chapter Twenty

On the Anointing at Bethany in John

John's account of the anointing at Bethany (Section 210) differs from Matthew and Mark's account (Chapter 15 of this harmony, Section 163) in several details. John identifies the woman as Mary — Mary of Bethany, sister of Martha and Lazarus — and places the anointing six days before Passover, before the Triumphal Entry. Matthew and Mark place an anointing two days before Passover and identify the host as Simon the leper without naming the woman. Some harmonists treat these as two separate events; others treat them as one event with differing details. This harmony treats them as separate incidents, presenting John's account in its Johannine context.

John alone identifies the objector as Judas Iscariot and provides the parenthetical indictment of his character: *"not because he cared for the poor; but because he was a thief, and having the bag, took away what was put therein."* The detail is precise and damning, and it connects the greed that drove Judas to complain about the ointment to the greed that will shortly drive him to betray Jesus for thirty pieces of silver.

On the Greeks Who Seek Jesus

The arrival of Greeks (*Hellēnes*) wishing to see Jesus (Section 212) is the trigger for one of the most important declarations in John's Gospel: *"The hour is come, that the Son of man should be glorified."* Throughout the Fourth Gospel, Jesus has consistently deflected premature urgency with the phrase "my hour has not yet come" (2:4; 7:6, 8, 30; 8:20). Now, with Gentiles seeking him — a proleptic sign of the universal mission — the hour arrives.

The grain of wheat that must die before bearing fruit is Jesus's single most direct prediction of his own death in John's Gospel, stated in natural and parabolic language rather than the explicit passion-prediction formula of the Synoptics. The principle extends beyond Jesus: *"He that loveth his life loseth it; and he that hateth his life in this world shall keep it unto life eternal."* This is the Johannine version of the Synoptic saying on taking up the cross.

The divine voice from heaven — the third and final such voice in John's Gospel (the first at the baptism, the second at the Transfiguration in the Synoptic tradition, though John does not record the Transfiguration) — confirms: *"I have both glorified it, and will glorify it again."* The crowd hears thunder; Jesus explains it was for their sakes.

On the Washing of Feet

John 13's opening sentence (Section 213) is among the most beautiful in the Gospel tradition: *"having loved his own that were in the world, he loved them unto the end."* The Greek *eis telos* means both "to the end" (temporally — until death) and "to the uttermost" (qualitatively — completely, perfectly). Both meanings operate simultaneously. The washing of feet is John's equivalent of the Synoptic institution of the Lord's Supper — not a replacement for it but an interpretation of it: the Lord who will give his body for his disciples here enacts servanthood in its most concrete and culturally unmistakable form.

Peter's refusal — *"Thou shalt never wash my feet"* — and Jesus's answer — *"If I wash thee not, thou hast no part with me"* — reveals the deeper meaning: the washing is not merely a lesson in humility but a participation in what Jesus is doing for the world. To refuse it is to refuse him. Peter's characteristic overcorrection — *"Lord, not my feet only, but also my hands and my head"* — receives a gentle correction of its own.

The command that follows — *"ye also ought to wash one another's feet"* — is the practical application of the entire Farewell Discourse's central theme: love one another as I have loved you. The measure of the love commanded is the measure of the love demonstrated: a Lord on his knees before his disciples.

On the New Commandment

The command of John 13:34 (Section 215) — *"A new commandment I give unto you, that ye love one another; even as I have loved you"* — is described as "new" not because the commandment to love is new (it appears in Leviticus 19:18, cited repeatedly in the Synoptics as one of the two great commandments) but because its standard is new. The standard is no longer "as yourself" but "as I have loved you." The love of Jesus for his disciples — servant love, self-giving love, foot-washing love, cross-bearing love — is the new measure of the love required among his followers. This is the commandment that Jesus repeats as the single ethical summary of the entire Farewell Discourse (15:12, 17).

On "I Am the Way, the Truth, and the Life"

John 14:6 (Section 216) is the sixth of the seven great *"I am"* sayings of the Fourth Gospel: *"I am the way, and the truth, and the life: no one cometh unto the Father, but through me."* All three nouns — the way, the truth, the life — have been thematic throughout John's Gospel. Jesus has spoken of the truth (8:32: *"the truth shall make you free"*); he has spoken of life (*"I am the bread of life"*, *"I am the resurrection and the life"*); he has spoken of himself as the only legitimate access point (*"I am the door"*). This saying gathers all three threads into a single comprehensive declaration.

The claim of exclusive mediation — *"no one cometh unto the Father, but through me"* — is the most absolute exclusivist claim in any Gospel and one of the most contested verses in contemporary theological discussion. In its Johannine context, it is not primarily a statement about the fate of those who have never heard of Jesus but about the identity of the One who makes the Father accessible to those who seek him.

Philip's request — *"Lord, show us the Father, and it sufficeth us"* — and Jesus's response — *"He that hath seen me hath seen the Father"* — is the most direct identification of Jesus with the Father in the Gospel tradition. Not identity of persons, but identity of revelation: to see Jesus is to see the Father, because Jesus is the perfect and complete expression of who the Father is.

On the Paraclete

The promise of the Paraclete (*Paraklētos*, variously translated as Comforter, Advocate, Helper, Counselor) in John 14–16 (Sections 217 and 219) is the most extended pneumatology in the New Testament. The Paraclete appears in four "Paraclete sayings" across the Farewell Discourse:

First (14:16–17): the Father will give another Paraclete who will be with the disciples forever — the Spirit of truth whom the world cannot receive because it cannot see him, but who will dwell in the disciples. Second (14:26): the Holy Spirit sent in Jesus's name will teach all things and bring to remembrance all that Jesus has spoken. Third (15:26–27): the Paraclete sent from the Father — the Spirit of truth who proceeds from the Father — will bear witness of Jesus. Fourth (16:7–15): the Paraclete will convict the world of sin, righteousness, and judgment, and will guide the disciples into all truth, declaring the things that are to come and glorifying Jesus.

The term *Paraklētos* is a legal term — one called alongside to help, an advocate in a legal proceeding. The fourfold function described in these sayings — dwelling within the disciples, teaching, bearing witness, convicting — is the continuation of Jesus's own ministry by the Spirit after the departure. Jesus calls the Spirit "another Paraclete" (*allon Paraklēton*), implying that Jesus himself is the first Paraclete — the one who has been alongside the disciples throughout the ministry.

On the Vine and the Branches

The Vine discourse (Section 218) is the seventh and final *"I am"* saying of John's Gospel: *"I am the true vine."* In the Old Testament, the vine is consistently Israel (Isaiah 5:1–7; Psalm 80:8–16; Jeremiah 2:21). Jesus appropriates the image and applies it to himself: he is the true vine of which Israel was the type and anticipation. The disciples are the branches; the Father is the vinedresser.

The central imperative of the discourse — *"Abide in me, and I in you"* — appears ten times in various forms across John 15 and is the single most repeated command in the Farewell Discourse. The fruitfulness of the disciples depends entirely on the quality of their connection to the vine, not on their own effort. *"For apart from me ye can do nothing"* (15:5) is one of the most absolute statements of dependence in the Gospel tradition.

The love commandment reappears here in its fullest form: *"This is my commandment, that ye love one another, even as I have loved you. Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends."* Jesus then redefines the disciples' relationship to himself: no longer servants but *friends*, because he has made known to them everything he received from the Father. The friendship is grounded in his initiative: *"Ye did not choose me, but I chose you."*

On "I Have Overcome the World"

The final word of the Farewell Discourse (Section 220) — *"In the world ye have tribulation: but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world"* (*Egō nenikēka ton kosmon*) — is spoken before the cross, not after it. The perfect tense in Greek (*nenikēka*, I have overcome) expresses a completed action whose effects continue: the victory is already accomplished, even as the means of its accomplishment (the cross) lies immediately ahead. This proleptic victory — the speaking of the resurrection's reality from before the cross — is characteristic of John's Gospel throughout. The Farewell Discourse is spoken from a perspective that stands, in some sense, beyond time.

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