

## Who's the guy on the left? – “*And it was night*”

by

Gary Heartsill

<sup>21</sup> When Jesus had said this, He was troubled in His spirit and testified,

**“I assure you: One of you will betray Me!”**

<sup>22</sup> The disciples started looking at one another—uncertain which one He was speaking about. <sup>23</sup> One of His disciples, **the one Jesus loved**, was

reclining close beside Jesus. <sup>24</sup> Simon Peter motioned to him to find out who it was He was talking about. <sup>25</sup> So he leaned back against Jesus and asked Him, “Lord, who is it?”

<sup>26</sup> Jesus replied, **“He’s the one I give the piece of bread to after I have dipped it.”**

When He had dipped the bread, He gave it to Judas, Simon Iscariot’s son.

<sup>27</sup> After Judas ate the piece of bread, Satan entered him. Therefore Jesus told him, **“What you’re doing, do quickly.”**

<sup>28</sup> None of those reclining at the table knew why He told him this.

<sup>29</sup> Since Judas kept the money-bag, some thought that Jesus was telling him, “Buy what we need for the festival,” or that he should give something to the poor.

<sup>30</sup> After receiving the piece of bread, he went out immediately.

...*And it was night.*

John 13:21-30<sup>1</sup> - *The Soldier’s Bible (HCSB)*<sup>2</sup>



Perugino, Pietro (1493-96). Fresco, Convent of the Tertiary Franciscans, Foligno

<sup>1</sup> Date for this paper is September 2017. [The format and highlights for the John quotes are mine - gh]

<sup>2</sup> Holman Christian Standard Bible.

Title: **Who's the guy on the left?**

Scripture: **The disciple Jesus loved**

Picture: The one on Jesus' left?

### Background

This paper is designed to form the basic information to help answer the final exam question in my online course titled "Bible 101." The answer of course is the same person to all three of the examples above. For the sake of being either pedagogical or andragogical (either one will suffice), **whom do you think this person is?**

There are some problems so let me start off with some assumptions:

1. Most of the information will be coming from the Book of St. John as this is not the place to try and reconcile the Synoptic Gospels with the Fourth Gospel. Although it might be mentioned, John 21 is treated as an Addendum to the book and is an edited ending. This means John ends with the first ending in Chapter 20.
2. As most of the commentators on the Book of John do not always agree on their Johannine beliefs, it is prudent to say most of my dear readers will be in the same boat so we will probably disagree too.
3. Course, the idea and task behind this is not necessarily to agree or disagree, but to see if someone can come up with a good answer as to who the Beloved Disciple (BD) is.
4. We should know regardless of who we pick or who we think the Beloved Disciple is, there is no way to prove it - although having a cogent argument for the purposes of this paper will help.
5. This study is not exhaustive – should be – but we'll give it our best shot trying to make it Biblical congruent and theologically pertinent.

Therefore, I have chosen three areas (in no order) to delve into to determine some of the likely candidates.

- A. Will hermeneutically<sup>3</sup> look at what the Scripture says in Jn. 13:21-30 – and maybe a few more verses.
- B. Will look at some paintings of The Last Supper to help with our visual picture of seating arrangement and show how maybe the paintings and scripture agree and disagree.
- C. Promote the idea of a loner or the Beloved Disciple.

### **Who's the guy on the left?**

The real question is the left of whom? Left on the picture, or on the left of Jesus? If you look back at the Perugino painting on page one the BD is probably on the left of Jesus...this painting assumes "a young disciple John" and as some translations say "the disciple whom Jesus loved, was reclining next to Jesus...leaning back against Jesus, he asked him a question...(John 13:23, 25, NIV). For starters review:

<https://christthetruth.wordpress.com/2011/01/18/in-the-bosom-of-jesus-in-the-bosom-of-the-father-a-sermon-on-1-john-11-4/>

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<sup>3</sup> Hermeneutics means looking at the presuppositions and rules of the interpretation of some form of human expression in a written text. I should use the word "exegesis" as this refers to the process of interpreting a text...shucks, we'll just do both!

This Perugino painting explains the “leaning back against Jesus” or portrays the artistic way of painting the expression on canvas, shows the halos on everyone except Judas who is seating across the table with the money bag in his left hand and giving “the eye” to the world – inkling something like “...is he talking to me?” As this may point out one of the problems in interpolating one painting over another, or one translation over another, the “whose on left” idea is just that – an interpolation.

However, the classic painting by Leonardo da Vinci is the scene right after the foot washing and still during the supper. This scene is best captioned “The Betrayal.” Leonardo shows the “young John” on his right (See below). The action and positions of everyone is after Jesus made the statement: **“I assure you: One of you will betray Me!” (HCSB).**



Leonardo da Vinci, *Last Supper*, 1498, tempera and oil on plaster (Santa Maria della Grazie, Milan); (photo: public domain)

#### Khan Academy Remarks (a first Google search)

##### Condition

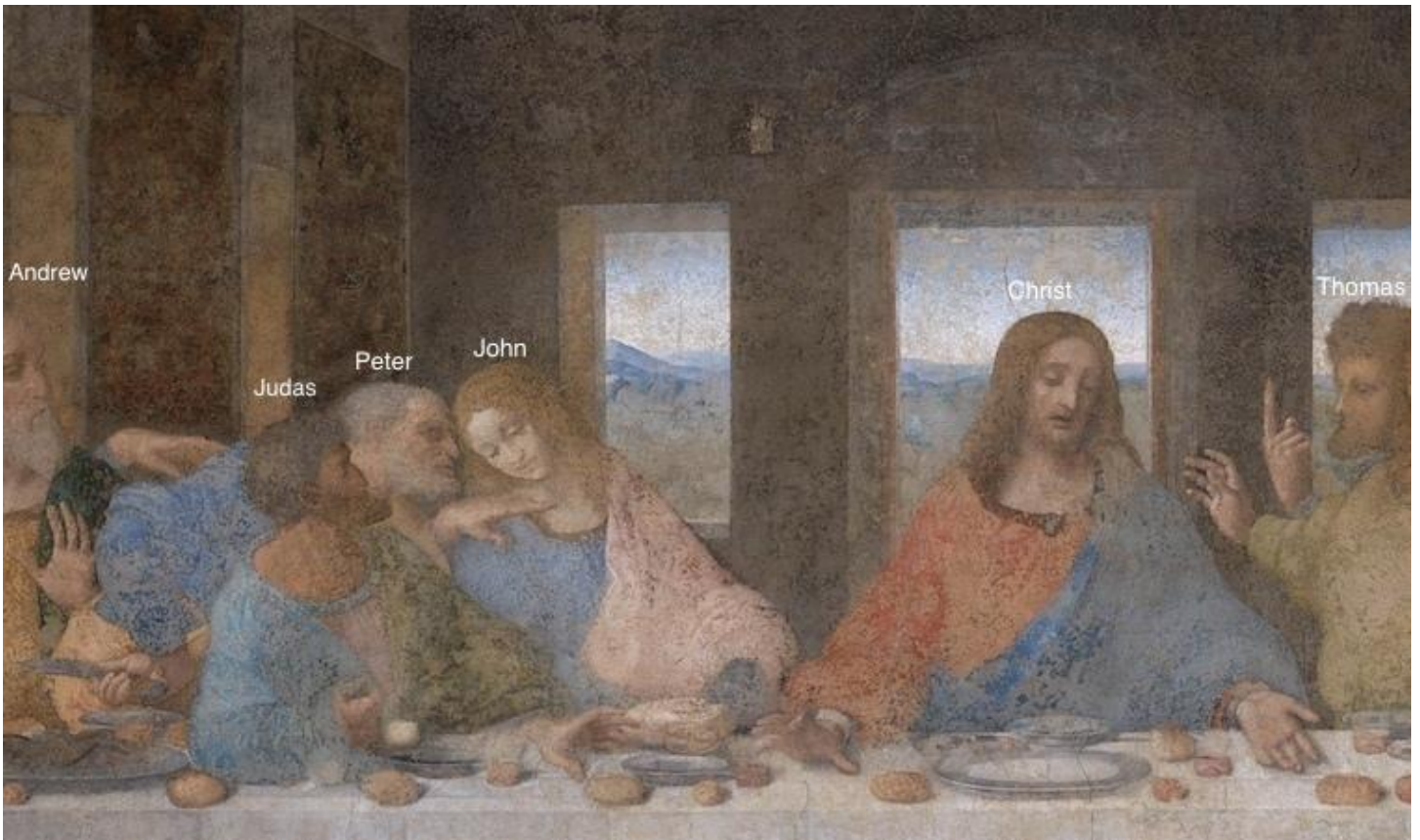
“The *Last Supper* is in terrible condition. Soon after the painting was completed on February 9, 1498 it began to deteriorate. By the second half of the sixteenth century Giovan Paulo Lomazzo stated that, “...the painting is all ruined.” Over the past five hundred years the painting’s condition has been seriously compromised by its location, the materials and techniques used, humidity, dust, and poor restoration efforts. Modern problems have included a bomb that hit the monastery destroying a large section of the refectory on August 16, 1943, severe air pollution in postwar Milan, and finally, the effects of crowding tourists.”

## Suggestions of the heavenly

“The balanced composition is anchored by an equilateral triangle formed by Christ’s body. He sits below an arching pediment that if completed, traces a circle. These ideal geometric forms refer to the renaissance interest in Neo-Platonism (an element of the humanist revival that reconciles aspects of Greek philosophy with Christian theology). In his allegory, “The Cave,” the Ancient Greek philosopher Plato emphasized the imperfection of the earthly realm. Geometry, used by the Greeks to express heavenly perfection, has been used by Leonardo to celebrate Christ as the embodiment of heaven on earth.

Leonardo rendered a verdant landscape beyond the windows. Often interpreted as paradise, it has been suggested that this heavenly sanctuary can only be reached through Christ.

The twelve apostles are arranged as four groups of three and there are also three windows. The number three is often a reference to the Holy Trinity in Catholic art. In contrast, the number four is important in the classical tradition (e.g. Plato’s four virtues).”



Detail, Leonardo da Vinci, *Last Supper*, 1498, tempera and oil on plaster (Santa Maria della Grazie, Milan)

## Apostles Identified

“Leonardo’s *Last Supper* is dense with symbolic references. Attributes identify each apostle. For example, Judas Iscariot is recognized both as he reaches toward a plate beside Christ (Matthew 26) and because he clutches a purse containing his reward for identifying Christ to the authorities the following day. Peter, who

sits beside Judas, holds a knife in his right hand, foreshadowing that Peter will sever the ear of a soldier as he attempts to protect Christ from arrest.”<sup>4</sup> We can see both Judas and Jesus reaching for the plate. With a little more detail Ciampietrino’s painting below is almost a reproduction of Leonardo’s work. We can now place the names of all the disciples noting the use of four groups of three with Jesus in the middle:

<b>Bartholomew</b> <sup>5</sup>	<b>Judas</b>	<b>Jesus</b>	<b>Thomas</b>	<b>Matthew</b>
<b>James (minor)</b>	<b>Peter</b>		<b>James (greater)</b>	<b>Jude (Thaddeus)</b>
<b>Andrew</b>	<b>John - Mary</b>		<b>Phillip</b>	<b>Simon the Zealot</b>



*The Last Supper*, ca. 1520, by Giampietrino

<https://wonderingfair.com/2016/11/21/the-thing-about-judas/giampietrino-last-supper-ca-1520/>

So, you didn’t miss Mary being inserted in the lineup to the right of Jesus? Mary? Well, does this look to you like a woman or a “young” John? Can you believe some commentators have posited the idea of her being the Beloved Disciple? Could she therefore be **the disciple Jesus loved**? “Come and see...”

Could we rename the moment shown in the painting to be at exactly the time Peter asked the beloved disciple? Maybe we could call this painting “Lord, who is it?”

Additional paintings

My research shows Valentin’s painting (see below) with a more intimate setting and having the focus of the head table, more or less, with the people to the immediate left and right of Jesus and showing the “reclining” disciple lying on the table.

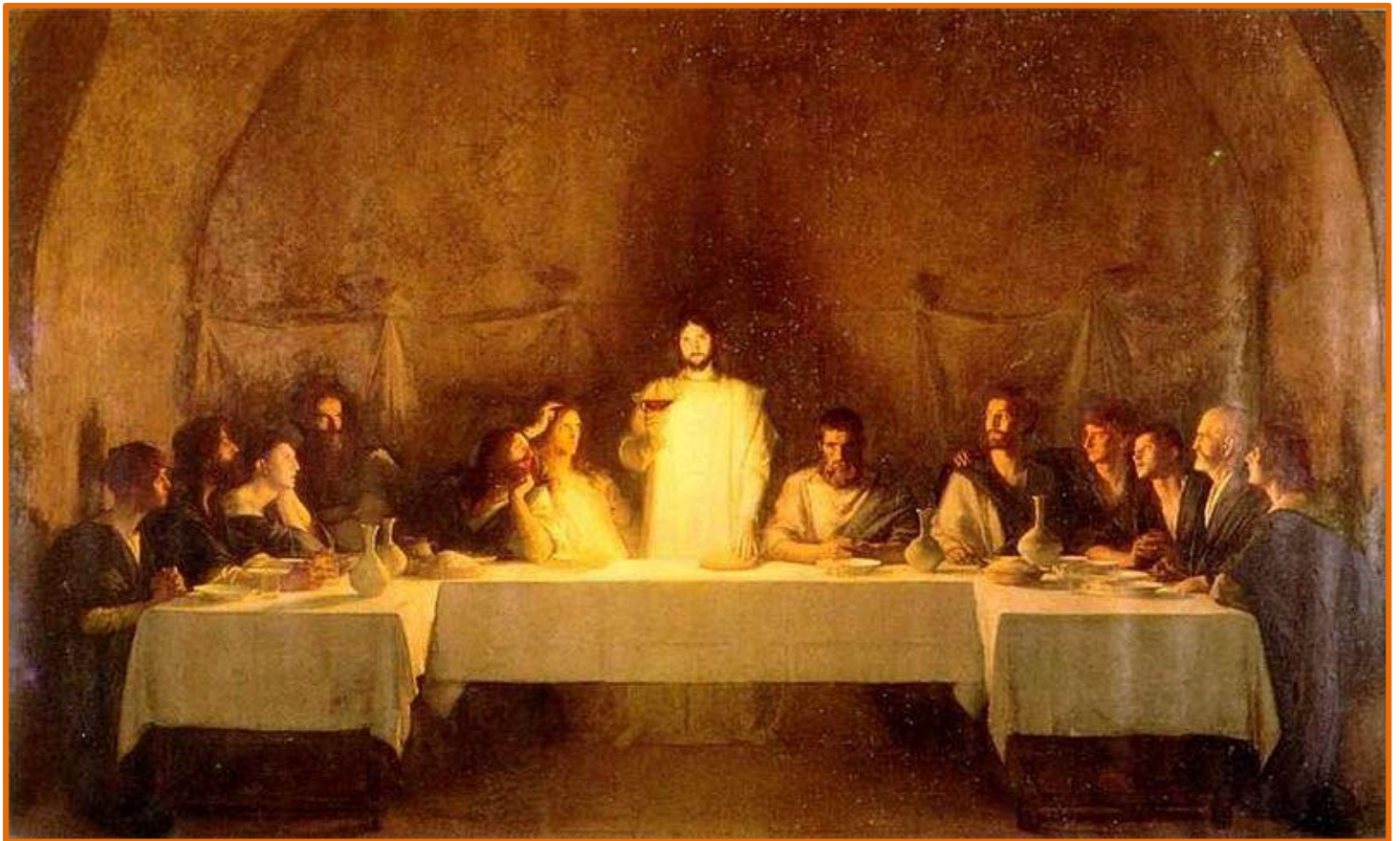
<sup>4</sup> <https://www.khanacademy.org/humanities/ap-art-history/early-europe-and-colonial-americas/renaissance-art-europe-ap/a/leonardo-last-supper>

<sup>5</sup> “Nathanael of John is the Bartholomew of Matthew, Mark, and Luke. There is no real evidence for this conjecture...It is possible that an ideal rather than a real person is meant” (C.K. Barrett, 1978, *The Gospel According to St. John*. Page 184.)



Valentin de Boulogne, 1625-1626 <https://www.pinterest.com/pin/457748749607462551/>

Going back a few pages to the Khan Academy quote “‘The Cave,’ the Ancient Greek philosopher Plato emphasized the imperfection of the earthly realm” I was struck with Dagnan-Bouveret’s painting obviously in a cave and also his focus and attention to the center with Jesus and the two most important disciples to his left and right. Notice the use of light, shadow, and space he incorporates to paint Judas – once you see him he is very difficult to turn away from. Do you see that? What else has he done to make Judas stand out?



*The Last Supper* by Dagnan-Bouveret, 1896 <http://art-now-and-then.blogspot.com/2013/12/pascal-adolphe-jean-dagnan-bouveret.html>

[Why the same ‘glow of gold’ on both Jesus and the person to his right?]

## Scene Location in John for the Betrayal – Some Linear Hermeneutical comments

Chapters 13 – 17 – 15 – 16 – 14 and then 18, 19, & 20 are used in this order to accommodate a more linear and timely approach to the sequence of events. The best example is to look at the ending of Chapter 14 which says **“Get up; let’s leave this place,”** (HCSB) and Chapter 15 starts with Jesus’ comment **“I am the true vine...”**

For an interested reader and to save some time on the reason, let me quote the footnote<sup>6</sup> on the Reordering of the Chapters in John using the direction of my hero Rudolf Bultmann:

<sup>31</sup>  
 “Chs. 15-17 are not in their right place. The order as we have it is partly due to accident, and partly to puzzled attempts to arrange the disordered material as well as possible” (p. 469).  
 “The structure of the whole complex-on the basis of **the new order-is very simple.**  
 13.1-30 records Jesus’ last meal with his disciples; 17.1-26 gives us the farewell prayer; 13.31-35; 15-16.33; 13.36-14.41 contain the farewell discourses and conversations” (p. 461).

So, for the map or outline of the location and the betrayal we begin at Chapter 13:

13:1 “Before the Passover Festival, Jesus knew that His hour had come... 13:5...and he began to wash His disciples’ feet...”

13:21-30 “...When He had dipped the bread, He gave it to Judas...And it was night.”

17 – Petition for Glorification “...the hour has come” (17:1).

15 – “I am the true vine...” (15:1).

16 - “...your sorrow will turn to joy” (16:20), “...the hour...has come” (16:32).

14 - “...I am the way...” (14:6), “We will come...and make Our home” (14:23).

18 – The Passion.

19 – The Crucifixion, Death, Burial.

20 – Easter.

Dodd’s closure<sup>7</sup> from Chapter 13 up to Chapter 18 “the narrative of the Last Supper is now completed by the prediction of treachery among the disciples, the designation of Judas as the traitor, and his departure into the night” and “...the faithful remnant is finally selected out of the unbelieving world. Here we have a clue to the relation between the Book of Signs and the Farewell Discourses in the scheme of the gospel...”

<sup>6</sup> See [www.ghcart.net](http://www.ghcart.net), Gospel of John: Re-Ordered, page 26n31.

<sup>7</sup> C. H. Dodd (1968). *The Interpretation of the Fourth Gospel*. London, England: Cambridge Press.

“Thus the chapters which exhibit the rejection of Christ must be supplemented by chapters which exhibit the blessedness of those who receive Him, and through Him become children of God. These are represented by the loyal group who are left with Jesus when the traitor has gone out” (pp. 402-403). Then after the Farewell Chapters he announces **“Arise, and let us go hence!” (KJV).**

The Last Supper in Chapter 13:1-30 to the revised ending (now in the last Chapter or 14) and with the words in 14:31 constitute the end of Jesus’ earthly work. “The fact that the night is now the background to the prayer that follows and to the farewell discourses portrays once again in the symbolical fashion the truth of 1.5: *‘the light in the darkness shines’*” (το φως στο σκοτάδι λάμπει)(p. 483).

Therefore these five chapters (13, 17, 15, 16, 14) all occur “the day immediately before the Passover feast is intended, that is to say, the 13<sup>th</sup> Nisan. **V. 2** states more exactly the time and place of the event: *‘and supper taking place.’* The meal in question is an ordinary one; as is shown by v. 30, it is in fact the customary main meal in the evening, and not the Passover meal, as in the synoptic account; for it is the 13<sup>th</sup> Nisan, and there is no mention at all of a Passover meal” (Bultmann, pp. 464-465).

The confusion for most of us is trying to harmonize the synoptic gospels with John and as I have said this paper will “lean on” the story in the Fourth Gospel. The other problem is separating or determining dates when the Jews start and end their day at sunset. [Yes, there is an issue of not having 12 hours a day and a Jewish math problem to determine exactly how long a Jewish hour is but this problem is beyond the scope of this paper.] As Bultmann says the 13<sup>th</sup> Nisan and “supper taking place” is somewhere around 6 p.m. on Thursday evening (Nisan 13 till 6 p.m., then it becomes Nisan 14).

#### Review<sup>8</sup> of the Jewish days and John weekend:

**Nisan 13** till 6 – [still **Thursday till 6**] they may have started supper about this time. 13:1 says “before the festival of Passover” so we know it is not yet Friday at 6 p.m. because the feast must take place between 6 p.m. and midnight Nisan 15.

**Nisan 14** at 6 p.m. [**Friday**] (evening) – The Last Supper (in John) takes place (13:1-20). The betrayal is 13:21-31. Then Jesus covers the rest of chapter 13, and then 17, 15, 16, and 14.

At around 9 p.m. (early night) – They go “across the Kidron valley” to the garden (18:1).

Around 12 p.m. (late night) – Jesus’ arrest (18:2-11).

Around 3 a.m. (pre dawn) – Two Jewish hearings and Peter’s denials (18:12-27).

Around 6 a.m. (dawn) – Trial before Pilate, scourging (18:28 – 19:16).

Around 12 p.m. (noon) – Trial concludes about the 6<sup>th</sup> hour on the Day of Preparation before Passover (19:14).

Around 3 p.m. (afternoon) – Crucifixion and Death (19:17-37).

Before 6 p.m. (before sunset) – Burial (19:38-42).

**Nisan 15** at 6 p.m. [**Saturday**] (nothing happens on the Sabbath).

--24 hours go by...

**Nisan 16** at 6 p.m. [**Sunday**] around 6 a.m. (dawn) **Sunday Morning** (John 20.1).

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<sup>8</sup> For a scholastic chart on these days and times by Felix Just, see: <http://catholic-resources.org/Bible/Jesus-Death.htm>  
[Part of the confusion is the astronomical calendar shows Nisan 15 falling on Friday evening/Sat during AD 30 and AD 33 as shown above - and in John. On AD 27 Nisan 15 fell on Thursday evening/Fri.]



## Exegesis of Jn. 13:21-30

Notice first, the deleting of vs. 27a, and then vss. 28 and 29. Both deletions do not change any direction or meaning of the story of the betrayal. The first strikethrough in 27 does away with Satan, Devil, and Snake talk as this word just should be 'evil.' "The statement is much more likely to be based on the Gnostic idea that the *origin* of evil is in evil, an idea which is often expressed in a crudely mythological form (being begotten by the Devil or by an evil spirit)" (Bultmann, p. 321n4). This will offend some folks, and this is fine, but moving on with this devil talk gets us out of a three-level universe of heaven, earth, and hell (devil/Satan "was abandoned as a relic of a pre-scientific mentality" (Harvey, p. 216). I am reminded of Flip Wilson who won more than one award with his expression "The Devil made me do it."

<sup>21</sup> When Jesus had said this, He was troubled in His spirit and testified,

**"I assure you: One of you will betray Me!"**

<sup>22</sup> The disciples started looking at one another—uncertain which one He was speaking about. <sup>23</sup> One of His disciples, **the one Jesus loved**, was **reclining close beside** Jesus. <sup>24</sup> Simon Peter motioned to him to find out who it was He was talking about. <sup>25</sup> So he leaned back against Jesus and asked Him, "Lord, who is it?"

<sup>26</sup> Jesus replied, **"He's the one I give the piece of bread to after I have dipped it."**

When He had dipped the bread, He gave it to Judas, Simon Iscariot's son.

~~27 After Judas ate the piece of bread, Satan entered him.~~

Therefore Jesus told him, **"What you're doing, do quickly."**

~~28 None of those reclining at the table knew why He told him this.~~

~~29 Since Judas kept the money bag, some thought that Jesus was telling him, "Buy what we need for the festival," or that he should give something to the poor.~~

<sup>30</sup> After receiving the piece of bread, he went out immediately.

*...And it was night.*

The second strikethrough or delete with 28 and 29 stem from Bultmann's comment "Vv. 27-29 are often held to be an insertion (whether inserted by the Evangelist into his source, or by the redactor into the Evangelist's text), on the grounds that these verses break the continuity between v. 26 and v.30" (p. 479). I will rely on Bultmann's interpretation of the Greek and go on, as (again) it does not change the crux of the story but does leave out some of the ambiguity about Judas and what Jesus was telling him.

**"...reclining close beside Jesus."**

NRSV – "...was reclining next to him"

The Greek – "was reclining...on the bosom" οἱ, μ . . . (Google Greek).

HCSB (Soldier's Bible) – "...was reclining close beside Jesus"

KJV – "...was leaning on Jesus' bosom"

There are, of course, more translations. Which one do you like? Here is what a few commentators say:

Bultmann says "It is he [beloved disciple] and not Peter who reclines in Jesus' bosom..." (p. 484).

Barrett says "Persons taking part in a meal reclined on the left side; the left arm was used to support the body, the right was free for use. The disciple to the right of Jesus would thus find his head immediately in front of

Jesus and might accordingly be said to lie in his bosom<sup>9</sup>...The custom of reclining at the Passover meal was probably a borrowing from the Roman world, and John, familiar with that world, may simply have described what he thought must have taken place at any meal, independently of an historical tradition about the last supper” (p. 446).

Hoskyns<sup>10</sup> says “The phrase *lying in the bosom of Jesus*, strengthened, as Cyril noted in v. 25 into *lying on the breast* and repeated in its strengthened form I xxi. 20, may only denote the position of the disciple at the Supper. He occupied the position on the right of Jesus. Reclining on his left arm with his head close to his Master’s breast, he was consequently able to hold easy and quiet conversation with Him” (p. 442),

If we take the stance of lying on the bosom this is pretty close to the heart even though some literal schools will tell you (by definition) bosom means “close to” therefore this paper will take the bosom approach. Of course, we immediately have a problem as the first few pictures show the Last Supper with the disciple to the left of Jesus lying on the table. This may work with the tables they were seated in – with the saw horses for legs - but this is not reclining.

Please look back at the pictures and review what the term “reclining’ means.

Then, note in the next picture Mary (The Mary in 4G - the sister of Martha and Lazarus) is anointing Jesus (Jn. 12:1-8). This shows the seating arrangement while reclining and not setting at a table.



<sup>9</sup> Barrett, C.K. (1955). *The Gospel of St. John: An introduction with commentary and notes on the Greek text* (2<sup>nd</sup> ed.). Philadelphia, PA: The Westminster Press.

<sup>10</sup> Hoskyns, E.C. (1947). *The Fourth Gospel* (Ed. F. N. Davey). London, England: Faber and Faber Limited.

Here is another example of reclining.



Mary anointed Jesus' feet (no tears in John).

Barrett adds "In any case, so far as historical value is attached to his statement that Jesus and the disciples reclined and did not sit, so far value must be deducted from his statement (v. 1) that the supper took place *before* the Passover" (p. 446).

Therefore, having more or less (for this paper at least) I have determined the disciples reclined for the Last Supper. NOTE: Again, the anointing is in 12:1-8 and here just shows the position. Was not at the Last Supper.

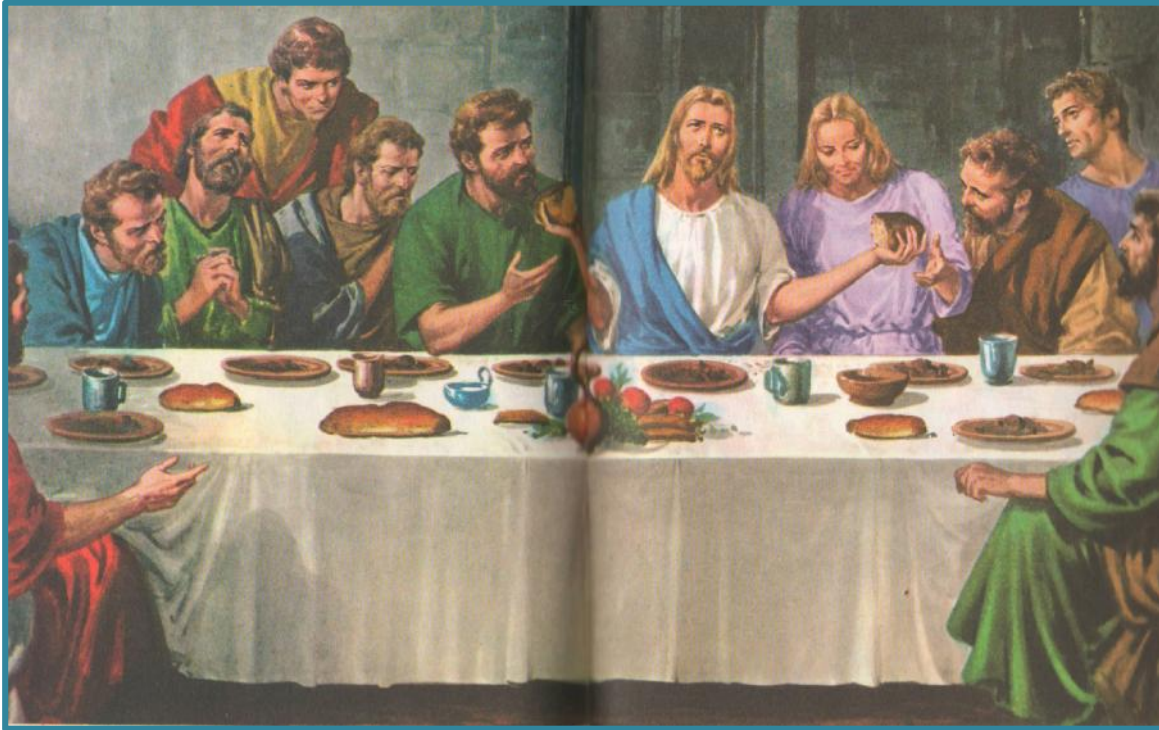
#### The Beloved Disciple – where was he seated?

This may be pretty simple. The 4G says "- the one whom Jesus loved – was reclining next to him" (v. 23). The very first painting by Leonardo shows this person to the right of Jesus. The naming of the disciples in this painting shows Judas, Peter, John, **Jesus**, Thomas, James, Phillip. Hoskyns in the cite above said "He occupied the position on the right of Jesus." The first Leonardo painting shows John to the right of Jesus and, by some, is the Beloved Disciple. Jesus makes his statement one of them will betray him. Hoskyns again says "The disciples, being ignorant of the precise reference of the words (*they were grieved*, Mark, Matthew), merely look at one another, wholly at a loss. Peter and the Beloved Disciple act alone. Peter beckons to the disciple whom Jesus loved and who was lying in His bosom, and bids him make known the identity of the betrayer. The Beloved Disciple, however, has no independent knowledge. But, because of his position, he is able to question the Lord discreetly, and to receive privately and at once the answer that is both a saying and an action" (p. 442).

Below is another painting from my Children's Bible (given to Kelly and Lisa in 1967) which depicts the Last Supper. The text completes the story of the Passover feast or The Last Supper as given in the first three gospels. Jesus washed the feet of the disciples, and then the betrayal was taken from the book of John. The last verse (v. 30b) ends with "And it was night."

Note below the ends are cropped and are a limitation of my scanner but the picture was reproduced to show the person to the left of Jesus which is obviously the Beloved Disciple. The painter portrays Jesus with blond hair and the portrayal of The Beloved Disciple is either a blond young John or perhaps a young someone else.

Up to this point we have discussed The Last Supper with the disciples reclined and seated, The Beloved Disciple shown on both sides of Jesus, and various positions and placement of the rest of the disciples.



The Last Supper in the Children's Bible (both ends cropped)

### Then who is it?<sup>11</sup>

You were asked who you thought the Beloved Disciple was in the first paragraph, so is your choice the same or have you changed your mind?

Is there any way to prove who the Beloved Disciple is or "the one whom Jesus loved"?

Answer: No.

Is there any way to prove which side this person was sitting or reclining on?

Answer: No.

Does the Bible say for sure who this person is?

Answer: No.

Do we as believers really have to have "the truth" as to who this person is?

Answer: Not really.

Do we put all our eggs in one basket by making the claim that this person is or is not one of the choices?

Answer: No.

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<sup>11</sup> For v. 13:23 on the BD "The figure of the beloved disciple is encountered here for the first time"...again "in 19:26 at the cross, and in 20.2-10 in the Easter history, beside Peter...If the redactor is right, the Evangelist is portraying himself in the figure of the beloved disciple, and at the same time asserting that he is an eyewitness...For it cannot be maintained that the beloved disciple, as the Evangelist uses the term, is a particular historical figure...The beloved disciple rather is an ideal figure..It is he and not Peter who reclines in Jesus' bosom, and can mediate Jesus' thought" (Bultmann, pp. 483-484).

We should be able to see the parallel verses for both the beloved disciple and Mary Magdalene.

Is it possible for a person like Mary Magdalene to be the Beloved Disciple?

Answer: Yes.

This paper is now focused on making a quantum jump in basic Biblical interpretation stemming from the issue there is a lot of ambiguity in the Word. We don't have the full picture. We don't have the un-garbled Word. We don't have the tape to play it back and see just exactly who sat next to who and who exactly was "the one whom Jesus loved" (we don't even have any selfies...).

Actually I do have a painting depicting the exact spot for Mary Magdalene – reclining on the bosom of Jesus!



(Cleverly done - someone who believes like I do...)

**You now have a choice** in reading, or not reading, the rest of this paper because I am going to – after all the hints – make the claim: Mary Magdalene (MM) was the one whom Jesus loved; she was the Beloved Disciple; she was also the author of the Fourth Gospel.

Yes, these are certainly minority opinions – and I agree – not many of us standing in this corner for MM.

Will I be able to prove any of these claims?

Answer: No.

Will I be able to convince very many people about these titles for Mary Magdalene?

Answer: No.

Are there others who have similar suggestions as to the possibility of these titles being bestowed on MM?

Answer: Yes.

Therefore, here is a short non-conclusive view of the idea that MM could have been "the One" to have met the criteria for these three titles. We all will read Scripture differently. All Scripture is read differently. This

reading is a possibility and the suggestions will help fill in what might have been – could have been – and to some of us, at least, possible (believable).

Jaime Clark-Soles<sup>12</sup> discusses the Marys in John: “John names three Marys: Mary, the sister of Lazarus and Martha.; Mary Magdalene (19:25; 20:1, 11, 16, 18); and Mary, the wife of Clopas...Though Jesus’ mother appears in the Gospel, John never names her.

“By reviewing the data, we find that there is no Mary who is a prostitute, and the only Mary who anoints is not Magdalene but Martha’s sister and only in John” (p. 42). She goes on to discuss the idea of “harmonizing” as this creates “a character who never actually appears in Scripture!” Pope Gregory the Great in a sermon in 591 declared “She whom Luke calls the sinful woman, whom John calls Mary [of Bethany], we believe to be the Mary from whom seven devils were ejected according to Mark” ...

“The harlotization of Mary Magdalene (not to mention the Samaritan woman of John 4) has done damage to Mary Magdalene and the legacy the authors intended for her and has, at the very least, contributed to the church’s ongoing negative view of women, their leadership in the church, and the nature of female sexuality” (p. 42).



MM: Mystic of the Church

<sup>12</sup> I was lucky enough to audit Dr. Clark-Soles’ class in 2014 at Perkins titled “The Gospel of John” and her book is: Clark-Soles, Jaime (2010). *Engaging the Word: The New Testament and the Christian Believer*. Louisville, KY: WJK Press.

We therefore will be concerned with the Gospel of John Mary Magdalene and not the Catholic St. Mary Magdalene in spite of all the wonderful paintings and other contributions she is noted for and sainted for in the Roman Catholic Church.

Let me pause to say I will be bouncing around in the Fourth Gospel to buttress my argument “and prove without a doubt” (just kidding) that Mary Magdalene was the ‘one whom Jesus loved.’ Let us look at Jesus picking his disciples, MM at the Easter scene, connect the stories with the Samaritan woman, and to end with a few comments on the author of the Fourth Gospel.

Reading in the first chapter of John, John the Baptist was standing with two of his disciples. One was Andrew but who was the “other” unnamed one? Could this person have been Mary Magdalene? Some would like to have seen her introduced earlier and have been active in the story but this may have been by design of the author or we may not have all of John to read. Jane Schaberg<sup>13</sup> suggests this ‘other’ could have been MM.



Artist Anthony van Dyck [Pinerest image]. Mary Magdalene first appears at the foot of the cross in Jn. 19:25.

Reading about this foot of the cross scene below is from The Soldier’s Bible (HCSB) and has the mother of Jesus, his mother’s sister, Mary Magdalene, and the disciple He loved.

<sup>25</sup> Standing by the cross of Jesus were His mother, His mother’s sister, Mary the wife of Clopas, and Mary Magdalene. <sup>26</sup> When Jesus saw His mother and the disciple He loved standing there, He said to His mother, “Woman, here is your son.” <sup>27</sup> Then He said to the disciple, “Here is your mother.” And from that hour the disciple took her into his home.

<sup>13</sup> Jane Schaberg (2006). *Mary Magdalene Understood*. New York, NY: Continuum.

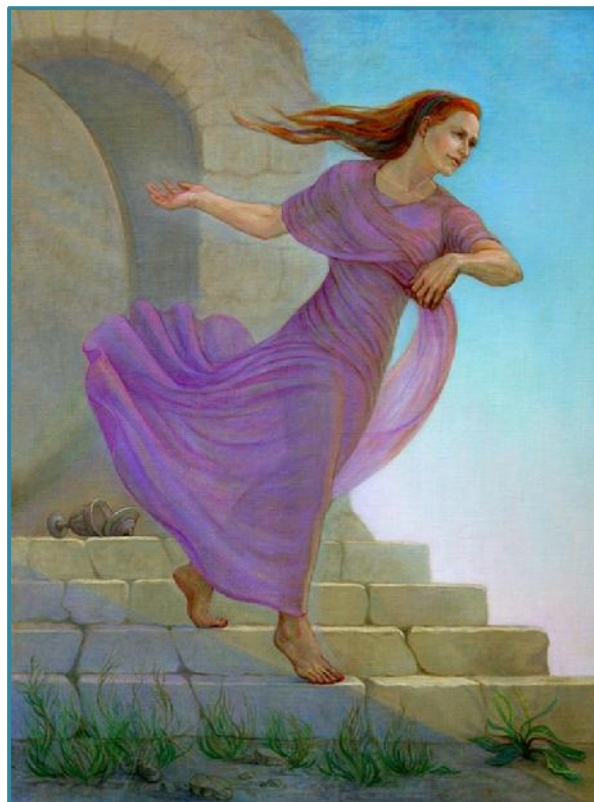
“To return now to the scene at the foot of the cross, it is striking that Jesus, after speaking to his Mother, does not say to the disciple, ‘Son, behold your mother’ but simply ‘Behold your mother.’ There is no specifically masculine address to the disciple” (pp. 241-242).

“The conclusion I want to draw from this exegesis is that in this one scene, which is the most crucial in the Gospel for the identification of the Beloved Disciple, it is not at all certain that the Beloved Disciple is male. In fact...the natural reading of the text would be that the Beloved Disciple in this scene is either one of the two named women disciples who were with the mother of Jesus in the Johannine scene or the two of them together” (p. 242).

“Like the Beloved Disciple, she appears in the Gospel only after the beginning of ‘the hour’ of Jesus’ glorification. She is the only figure in the Gospel who, by name, is presented as a witness of the death of Jesus, the discoverer of the empty tomb, and the recipient of the Easter protophany and the only individual apostolic commission of the risen Jesus. If there is an eyewitness source behind the Fourth Gospel, the most clearly designated embodiment of that role in the text itself is Mary Magdalene ” (p. 243).

## Easter

If we go back to the end of the Scripture on page one is says “And it was night” (13:30). The story in Chapter 20 has Mary Magdalene going to the tomb and seeing the stone had been removed. ***It was still dark.*** She then ran and got Peter and “the other disciple” and after they looked at “the cloth<sup>14</sup> that had been on Jesus’ head” Peter left but the other disciple believed. And we know how the rest of the story went and how Mary Magdalene became “The Witness” and the first Apostle.



**“I have seen the Lord!”**

<sup>14</sup> Think Exodus 34:33 with the veil Moses put over his face.



## Post Resurrection Story – the author

My teacher told us in her Gospel of John course at Perkins, while discussing Chapter 4 about The Samaritan Woman,<sup>15</sup> “If this story were ever removed from John, I would cease to be a Johannine scholar.” As I have said before this story is my most favorite one in the Bible – a lot of us have been intrigued by this woman. Schneiders says “The Samaritan woman in chapter 4 is certainly the most theologically sophisticated interlocutor of Jesus in the Fourth Gospel.”

[Why am I asking about the Samaritan Woman here at the end of the paper? – test question...]

“I do not think we will ever know with certainty the identity of the evangelist, because the evangelist does not want us to know it and is a good enough writer to keep us from finding it out...this character might be the evangelist’s literary self-portrait” (p. 251).

Schneiders asks “Is the Samaritan woman the evangelist’s textual alter ego?” ...“My conclusion is that this episode is an account of the postglorification entrance of the Samaritans into the Johannine community, narratively read back into the lifetime of the earthly Jesus” (p. 252).

“...she does not simply tell them who Jesus is but poses the question, ‘Can this be the Messiah?’ This, in fact, is exactly what the evangelist does in the Gospel, that is, presents the words and works – that is, the sign – of Jesus and leave the readers with the challenge to come and see, to decide whether to believe that this is indeed the Messiah, the Son of God, the Savior of the World, so that they may have life in his name (cf. 20:30-31) (pp. 251-252).

\*\*\*closing comments\*\*\*

Bless you for reading about Mary Magdalene who possibly could be the Beloved Disciple, the one who Jesus loved, and the author of the Fourth Gospel. I have had this suspicion for a long time...especially while reading about her in chapter 4 (a man couldn’t write a story like this...well, maybe, maybe not). The Fourth Gospel would not be the Fourth Gospel without this story of Jesus and the lady at the well.

Actually, we are lucky to have 4G (John) at all, in my opinion, as to think how far woman (wo/man) have come and they let a book written by a female get canonized? God is the only one to get credit for this Gospel showing up in the NT. Can you imagine what the world would look like if we only had what the Synoptic Gospels and Paul had to say about Jesus?

No, I won’t brush this aside but will say thanks for what we have in 4G and what we believe: ***the light in the darkness shines.***

And thanks to Mary Magdalene for winning the race...she outran Peter to the grave.

Jesus loves her and so do I.

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<sup>15</sup> See also: Jaime Clark-Soles (2016). *Reading John for Dear Life: A Spiritual Walk with the Fourth Gospel*. Louisville, KY: WJK Press. Page 34.