

Jesus Washes the Disciples' Feet

John 13:1-20

The previous chapter begins "six days before the Passover" with Jesus at a dinner as the guest of honor. And the following day Jesus arrives in Jerusalem upon a donkey. Large crowds turn out to see the miracle worker and hail Him as King of Israel. It is at this point that Jesus declares that "The hour has come for the Son of Man to be glorified" (12:23). Now, chapters 13-17 tell us what Jesus said to the disciples the night before His death. These words (all spoken that one evening) are to prepare them for His death and resurrection.

Read and Discuss John 13:1-20 "*Jesus Washes the Disciples' Feet*"

v.1 - This opening verse sets the theme for the next five chapters. The word Love is one of the key terms in chapters 13-17, occurring thirty-one times as compared to only six times in chapters 1-12. Jesus now shows His disciples the full extent (*eis telos*) of His love. Full extent could also be translated "to the last". Love is the laying down (sacrificing in every way) of one's life, and therefore to love completely means to love to the end of one's life. The love that has been clear continues right until the end. In the crucifixion we see the full extent of true love.

Look up: 1 John 3:16 - (additional reading 1 John 4)

The Passover is not only the time but also the occasion for Jesus to pass over from this world to the Father.

v.2- Jesus is going to wash the feet of the one who's been prompted to betray Him. Judas has not yet given in to the temptation (v. 27), but the devil has *prompted* him, or more literally, "put it into his heart." This is the first step in temptation, it is the initial idea. It is best to reject such thoughts immediately while the temptation is at its weakest and one is not yet guilty of sin. Look up: 1 Corinthians 10:12-13

v.4-5 – What beautiful characteristic of Jesus' earthly ministry is displayed in these verses? Look up: Philippians 2:6-8

v.8 - The word part (*meros*) can be used as one's share of an inheritance. If Peter is to have a share with Jesus in His community and eternal life, then he must be washed by Jesus. Look up: 1 Corinthians 6:11, Revelation 7:14

v.10 - People would bathe before going to a special meal, but their feet would get dirty on the way since they wore sandals. It has been said that the "bath" is the cleansing from sin on the cross and that the "foot-washing" would refer to the forgiveness of one's daily sins. This word "wash" is from a word commonly associated with baptism (*louo*) (Acts 22:16; 1 Corinthians 6:11; Ephesians 5:26; Titus 3:5; Hebrews 10:22).

But how can these disciples already be "clean/bathed" when the sacrifice for sin has not yet been offered and the Spirit has not yet been given? Perhaps Jesus is referring to being made clean by His Word (John 15:3). Such cleansing would refer to their receiving the light of revelation that Jesus has offered, accepting Him and His teaching as having come from God (John 17:6-8) and thus becoming one with Him to the extent that this is possible before the cross, resurrection, ascension and coming of the Spirit.

v.12-17 – What is the practical application Jesus is making of this incident? Look up: Romans 12:10, Philippians 2:3

v.13 – How had the disciples confessed their position of subordination to Jesus (as should we)? Look up: Luke 6:46

v.17 – What is the great danger that can be drawn from this verse? Look up: Luke 12:47, James 4:17

v.18 – Some have used this verse to argue *the election* to eternal life. In context however it is clear that Jesus is specifically describing the betrayal of Judas, a close friend, and "*to fulfill the scripture*" (Psalm 41:9). Verses 26-30 validate this interpretation.

Lifting up the foot to expose the sole is an especially offensive gesture even today in the Middle East.

v.19 - The actual betrayal does not begin until verse 27, so these words are spoken by Jesus as a prophecy. Jesus' foreknowledge of the event is more evidence of his divinity, that he is the "I AM". Look up: Exodus 3:14, John 8:58

v.20 - To accept the messenger is to accept the sender. The one who represents Christ by bearing the same self-sacrificing love of God will meet with the same resentful response Jesus met (John 15:18; 16:1-4) but will also be the agent of the same eternal life that comes through knowledge of the Father in the Son by the Spirit.