



Jesus washes the feet of His disciples

John 13:2 – 5

- **John 13:2 – 5 NKJV** “And supper being ended, the devil having already put it into the heart of Judas Iscariot, Simon's son, to betray Him, ³Jesus, knowing that the Father had given all things into His hands, and that He had come from God and was going to God, ⁴rose from supper and laid aside His garments, took a towel and girded Himself. ⁵After that, He poured water into a basin and began to wash the disciples' feet, and to wipe them with the towel with which He was girded.”

It seems peculiar to me that none of the synoptic gospels (**Matthew, Mark and Luke**) speak of Jesus washing His disciple's feet. Only John gives us the picture of the Lord showing His servant heart through this action. Then again, John's gospel is so much different than the other three most every aspect.

John' gospel starts out by saying that the time had come for Jesus to leave this world and go to the Father and now He was going to show the disciples the full extent of His love (**John 13:1**). Jesus, knowing that God had put all things under His power, got up from the meal and prepared Himself to wash the feet of His disciples (**John 13:4**). By this, He took off His outer garments and wrapped a towel around His waist. This would have given the appearance of a servant. Then, after pouring water into a basin, He began to wash the feet of each disciple (including Judas Iscariot) and then dried the feet with the towel that was wrapped around Him.

“⁶Then He came to Simon Peter, and Peter said to Him, “Lord, are You washing my feet?” ⁷Jesus answered and said to him, “**What I am doing you do not understand now, but you will know after this.**” ⁸Peter said to Him, “You shall never wash my feet!” Jesus answered him, “**If I do not wash you, you have no part with Me.**” ⁹Simon Peter said to Him, “Lord, not my feet only, but also my hands and my head.” ¹⁰Jesus said to him, “**He who is bathed needs only to wash his feet, but is completely clean; and you are clean, but not all of you.**” ¹¹For He knew who would betray Him; therefore He said, “You are not all clean.”

Peter is, I believe, not trying to be defiant, but rather respectful of Jesus. For the Savior of the world to wash his feet would be disrespectful and unworthy of His position as Lord/Rabbi/Teacher. The reason for my assumption is the quick deviation from his statement of “never” to “don't just wash my feet, but also my hands and my head.” Peter is determined to not be apart from Jesus. Little does he know that in a few hours, he will deny the Lord three times before the rooster crows.

The process which Jesus takes the disciples through is called 'Ablution.' This is the act of ceremonially washing someone to make them 'clean' in order to perform certain functions and participate in certain rites. The Jewish Virtual Library has this to say about ablution:

"ABLUTION (Heb. טְבִילָה; "immersion"), act of washing performed to correct a condition of ritual impurity and restore the impure to a state of ritual purity. The ritually impure (or unclean) person is prohibited from performing certain functions and participating in certain rites. Ablution, following a withdrawal period and, in some cases, other special rituals, renders him again "clean" and permitted to perform those acts which his impurity had prevented. Ablution must not be confused with washing for the sake of cleanliness. This is evident from the requirement that the body be entirely clean before ablution." ([Jewish Virtual Library](#) – see file for details)

The last sentence in this explanation sheds some light on what Jesus says to Peter in **Matthew 27:10**, "Jesus said to him, **“He who is bathed needs only to wash his feet, but is completely clean; and you are clean, but not all of you.”** The washing Jesus performed for the disciples was to cleanse and consecrate them for their ministries, which was yet to come. That is why Jesus also told Peter that if He were denied the act of washing Peter's feet, he (Peter) would have no part with Him.

The Word of God tells us in all of the gospels that Jesus knew who would betray Him. In the passage above, Jesus makes a statement that not all of His disciples were clean; a direct reference to Judas Iscariot, who has already made the agreement with the Sanhedrin to betray Him for 30 pieces of silver. Knowing that Judas Iscariot had already committed to betray Him (**Matt. 26:15; Mark 14:10–11; Luke 22:3–6**), Jesus still ate the Passover meal and washed his feet with the others.

The account of Jesus washing the feet of the disciples comes before He dismisses Judas Iscariot (**John 13:27**), where Jesus says **“What you do, do quickly.”** Again, how would we have handled that situation, knowing that the one who betrayed us was sitting in the midst of the others? Would we have called him out and made an example of him? Would we have 'sent him packing' as soon as we became aware of the situation? Jesus is not only speaking the things of God with His mouth, but modeling a God-filled lifestyle at the same time. There is an entirely separate sermon just in that thought alone.

Prophecy & Fulfillment

The Messiah would be a servant.

Prophecy

Isaiah 42:1 – 16 "Behold my servant, whom I uphold; mine elect, in whom my soul delighteth; I have put my spirit upon him: he shall bring forth judgment to the Gentiles. ²He shall not cry, nor lift up, nor cause his voice to be heard in the street. ³

A bruised reed shall he not break, and the smoking a flax shall he not quench: he shall bring forth judgment unto truth. ⁴He shall not fail nor be discouraged, till he have set judgment in the earth: and the isles shall wait for his law. ⁵Thus saith God the LORD, he that created the heavens, and stretched them out; he that spread forth the earth, and that which cometh out of it; he that giveth breath unto the people upon it, and spirit to them that walk therein: ⁶I the LORD have called thee in righteousness, and will hold thine hand, and will keep thee, and give thee for a covenant of the people, for a light of the Gentiles; ⁷To open the blind eyes, to bring out the prisoners from the prison, and them that sit in darkness out of the prison house. ⁸I am the LORD: that is my name: and my glory will I not give to another, neither my praise to graven images. ⁹Behold, the former things are come to pass, and new things do I declare: before they spring forth I tell you of them. ¹⁰Sing unto the LORD a new song, and his praise from the end of the earth, ye that go down to the sea, and all that is therein; the isles, and the inhabitants thereof. ¹¹Let the wilderness and the cities thereof lift up their voice, the villages that Kedar doth inhabit: let the inhabitants of the rock sing, let them shout from the top of the mountains. ¹²Let them give glory unto the LORD, and declare his praise in the islands. ¹³The LORD shall go forth as a mighty man, he shall stir up jealousy like a man of war: he shall cry, yea, roar; he shall prevail against his enemies. ¹⁴I have long time holden my peace; I have been still, and refrained myself: now will I cry like a travailing woman; I will destroy and devour at once. ¹⁵I will make waste mountains and hills, and dry up all their herbs; and I will make the rivers islands, and I will dry up the pools. ¹⁶And I will bring the blind by a way that they knew not; I will lead them in paths that they have not known: I will make darkness light before them, and crooked things straight. These things will I do unto them, and not forsake them.

Fulfillment

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