

# The Last Supper

JOHN 13

*Read John 13:1-20*

- ❖ Jesus' foot washing is only described in John.
- ☞ *Fun fact #1:* The name for Maundy Thursday, when the last supper and foot washing are traditionally commemorated, is derived from the Latin *mandatum*, meaning *command*, referring to Jesus' instruction that the disciples should wash one another's feet.
- ❖ The purity laws required bathing before Passover (Num 19:19). It is possible, if not likely, that Jesus was alluding to this in v. 10.
- 1. There are traditionally two interpretations of the foot-washing passage: (1) Jesus is giving an example of service for his disciples to follow; and (2) Jesus' action is symbolic of his sacrificial death (and even prophetic of his impending humiliating death, in the style of the acted prophecies of Ezekiel and Jeremiah).<sup>1</sup>
  - a. How do you understand Jesus' action this passage—as a symbol, an example, both or neither?
  - b. Was Jesus' example (v. 15) for the disciples only, for clergy, or for all believers? (See 1 Tim 5:9-10.)
- 2. Jesus says in v. 8 that unless Peter permits his feet to be washed, he will “have no part” with Jesus. The word used here means that Peter will have no *heritage* with Jesus, and is the same as that used by the Septuagint for the share of land allotted each tribe of Israel in the promised land (Raymond Brown, *The Anchor Bible Commentary Vol. 29A*). To whom does Jesus' requirement apply?
- ❖ “It was ordinary hospitality to offer guests water to wash their feet after a journey in sandals on dusty roads. A host was not expected to wash his guests' feet for them, but a slave might be assigned this task, or disciples might wash their teacher's feet” (*NRSV Study Bible*).
- 3. Jesus demonstrated a radical role reversal in washing the feet of the disciples.
  - a. Can you think of a what a role reversal like Jesus' foot washing would look like for:
    - (a) College professor and students
    - (b) Construction foreman and workers
    - (c) Medical doctor and residents
  - b. *Have you ever enacted such a role reversal in order to serve someone else (parental examples excluded)? Have you ever been on the receiving end of such an act of service?*

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<sup>1</sup> A rare few have also seen this as the institution of a new sacrament of foot washing.

4. Luke describes Jesus addressing his disciples, saying

Be dressed ready for service and keep your lamps burning, like men waiting for their master to return from a wedding banquet, so that when he comes and knocks they can immediately open the door for him. It will be good for those servants whose master finds them watching when he comes. I tell you the truth, he will...

How does Jesus finish this sentence?

- a. ...dress himself to serve, will have them recline at the table and will come and wait on them.
  - b. ...banish them from his house to a place where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.
  - c. ...invite them as friends to join him at his table.
  - d. ...appoint them as his servants in the next life also; for the servant is not greater than the master.
  - e. None of the above.
5. Jesus ends this earthly ministry by washing his disciples' feet. Read Luke 12:35-40. What (if anything) does Jesus' parable imply about his next coming—how will it differ, and how will it be the same?
6. Luke describes Jesus' emphasis for the need for the servants to be ready for the master's return. Who was ready for Jesus' first coming, and why? Who will be ready for his next coming? How do you anticipate the Christ's return?

 *Fun fact #2:* Augustine and other Latin writers from the 4<sup>th</sup> c., as well as modern Catholic theologians, saw in the foot washing a reference to Penance in v. 10—"he has no need to wash except his feet"—since Penance cleanses sins committed after the baptismal washing (Raymond Brown).

*Read John 13:21-30*

7. Why did the beloved disciple recline on the bosom of our Lord to ask his question?
8. What does the Devil have to gain by putting it into Judas' heart to betray Jesus? What are Satan's goals? What does this imply about what the Devil knew at this time?

*Read John 13:31-38*

9. Untangle vv. 31-32: "Now is the Son of Man glorified." When is the "now"? "...God will glorify the Son in himself, and will glorify him *at once*." To when does this refer?
10. Read Lev 19:18. Why does Jesus refer to his command as "new"?

*Homework:* Compare and contrast Jesus' farewell speech in 13:1-17:26 to his ancestor David's in 1 Chron 28-29. (This will not be graded.)