

4. Discuss the emotional relationship between Judas and Jesus. Consider Jesus' agony about the betrayal, and Judas' agony when he realized his action actually led Jesus to his death. Judas was in such despair, he never saw the resurrected Jesus because he could not live with himself over what he'd done.
5. Reread verse 30.



a study of
The Gospel According to John

Summer/Fall 2025

Lesson 16

John 13:1-30

"Is This Any Way for a King to Behave?!"

Cultural Significance of Foot Washing in the First Century

Source: https://biblehub.com/q/Foot_washing_s_biblical_significance.htm

REVIEW:

Ἐγώ εἰμι: **I Am**

John 6:35 "Bread of Life"

John 8:12 "Light of the World"

John 10:7 "Door for the Sheep"

John 10:11 "Good Shepherd"

John 11:25 "Resurrection & Life"

John 14:6 "Way, Truth, & Life"

John 15:1 "True Vine"

VOCABULARY:

Devil: Diabolos (διάβολος) false accuser, devil, slanderer

To the end: telos (τέλος) to set out for a definite point or goal, the point aimed at as a limit, the conclusion of an act or state, a result, a purpose

John 13:2 (NRSVue) "decided": (βεβληκότος εἰς τὴν καρδίαν) Having put into the heart

Satan: Satanias (Σατανᾶς) the Adversary, the Accuser, Satan, the devil

BRIEF HISTORICAL AND CULTURAL CONTEXT:

We are beginning the Passion narrative of John's gospel today. Thus far, we've seen the multi-layered story of Jesus through John's theology. John tells stories that say much more than the words on the page. Keep in mind that every space on papyrus was precious and expensive in the 1st century so every word John writes has meaning. We will look at three levels of this story. *(Most likely there are more, but three is plenty for today.)*

Firstly, it is a story of God getting on his knees to wash dirty, ugly feet.

Secondly, it is a story Judas. Of the thirty verses in John 13, fifteen, one half, of them concern Judas.

Thirdly, it is a story of relationships, friendship, and betrayal.

Before we read our scripture passage, let us get ourselves in a frame of reference concerning kings and slaves.

Read the insert page of scriptural references to Jesus' divinity. After each passage, answer the following:

1. What words or phrases capture your attention or imagination?
2. Summarize this passage in your own words.
3. Are you able to equate Jesus to his cosmic kingship?

In Eastern and Middle Eastern cultures it a sign of disrespect to show the bottom of your foot. The sole is considered the lowest and dirtiest part of the body, since it touches the dirty ground. Revealing the sole to another person, deliberately, is a direct insult.

Read the insert page describing ancient footwashing. After each section, answer the following:

1. What words or phrases capture your attention or imagination?
2. What do you make of the God of the Universe's relationship with the lowest slave?

Read John 13:1-11

1. John's first three verses are his introduction to the story, note the chiasm, and its center.
2. What do you make of the dialogue between Jesus and Peter, and who is clean and who is not? He washed Judas' feet...
3. Note that John inserts Judas (*like a knife*) into a lovely statement by Jesus, why, and why there?

Read John 13:12-17, 20

1. What is it Jesus is asking of his disciples?
2. In light of the footwashing, how might the disciples be feeling about Jesus' words?

This story is NOT about footwashing. It is a picture of the most powerful entity in the universe, dirtying themselves, offering to do a daily, necessary, and much needed menial task.

3. What meaning do these words have for us? We do not need foot-washers. Where does Jesus send us to empty ourselves of ego and "wash feet" (*figuratively*)? What does that look like?
4. What does verse 20 say about the people we serve in Jesus' name?

Keep in mind, at this time all 12 and probably other disciples are dining together. Judas is there and participating in the Seder meal, for which there is a liturgy, and Judas would have stayed and participated until it was finished. Meaning, Jesus washed his feet and served him the wine (the cup of Redemption that is Jesus' blood) and the unleavened Afikoman (representative of Jesus' body). Secondly, Judas can hear what Jesus is saying about being betrayed. He's sitting there. Does he even know Jesus is referring to him? Listen closely to the dialogue...

Read John 13:18-19, 21-30

1. Note the reference to "lifting his heel" in verse 18.
2. Note vv. 22-25, and vv. 28-29. To what do these verses allude?
3. What is the significance of the bread? Why mention it twice? vv. 27 & 30