

The Lord's Supper

As Christ came to the last hours before His crucifixion He stood at the point of transition from the ancient Jewish economy to the Christian economy. For centuries Jewish life had centered in the sanctuary and the temple services. Temple sacrifices and services had pointed to some phase of the coming Messiah's ministry. Now the One prophesied had been revealed; and the true sacrifice, which all others had foreshadowed, was about to be made. Type was meeting antitype. The ancient economy would pass away, and a new one would take its place.

At this point Christ introduced a new ordinance to be celebrated by His followers in commemoration of His death and in anticipation of His promised return. Following Paul's example, we call it "the Lord's Supper." 1 Corinthians 11:20.

Closely associated with the Lord's Supper was Christ's service to the disciples when He washed their feet. We shall study first the foot washing and its implications, and afterward the Lord's Supper. The sequence of events during the gathering is discussed in the "Supplementary Material" at the end of this chapter.

I. As a Servant

Christ lived to serve. His whole ministry was marked by acts of kindness, blessing, and loving service. But the Saviour never rose higher in service than when at the close of His earthly ministry He washed the feet of twelve men who had not yet learned the lesson of unselfish service. °Read the story as it is recorded in John 13:2-17. Select verses that—

- (1) Indicate that as He served the Twelve, Jesus was aware of His divinity.
- (2) Give evidence that the foot washing had greater significance than as an act of humility or a lesson in unselfishness.
- (3) Show how Christ emphasized to the disciples that they should recognize His lordship despite His humble service.
- (4) Indicate that Christ's act did not accomplish the same objective for all of the Twelve.

(5) Give evidence that this incident was intended to serve as an example for the disciples of Christ to follow later.

See *The S.D.A. Bible Commentary*, vol. 5, on these verses.

See also quoted portions and references in footnote 1.¹

°Describe what this rite, which now serves as preparation for the Communion service, should mean to the individual Seventh-day Adventist. What spiritual loss is sustained if one absents himself from the preparatory service? Can you see any connection between the cleansing involved in the foot washing and that in baptism? In what condition of life and attitude of mind can one approach the Communion service following the preparation? John 13:10. How is the foot washing related to humility, cleansing, and service?

II. "In Remembrance of Me"

The best-known and most concise description of what took place at the first Communion service is found in 1 Corinthians 11:23-26. Paul was not present when the first service was celebrated, but by inspiration he was directed to establish the ordinance in the churches. 1 Corinthians 11:23. °Read Paul's account, and then fill in details about the occasion from:

*Mark 14:12-17

*John 13:2-17

*John 13:21-35

*Luke 22:14-26

*Mark 14:22-25

There are at least six things that should be noted about the Lord's Supper from the texts cited:

- (1) The event it commemorates.
- (2) Until what time the ordinance will be observed.
- (3) What Christ intends to accomplish through the ordinance.

¹ See *The Desire of Ages*, pages 642-651.

Early Writings, pages 116:2 to 117:1.

The S.D.A. Bible Commentary, vol. 5, pp. 1138, 1139.

"Humility is an active principle growing out of a thorough consciousness of God's great love, and will always show itself by the way in which it works. By taking part in the ordinance of feet washing we show that we are willing to perform this act of humility. We are doing the very thing Christ did, but this is not to be talked of as an act of humiliation. It is an act which symbolizes the condition of the mind and heart."—Ellen G. White, quoted in *The S.D.A. Bible Commentary*, vol. 5, p. 1139 (Letter 210, 1899).

"The performance of the ordinance of humility calls for self-examination. The noble principles of the soul are strengthened on every such occasion. Christ lives in us, and this draws heart to heart. We are led to love as brethren, to be kind, tender, courteous in daily service, having hearts that can feel another's woe."—*Ibid.*