

ישוע רוחץ את-רגלי תלמידיו

Yeshua Washes the Feet of His Talmidim

It was the time of Pesach, and Yeshua's Talmidim began to prepare for the Pesach Seder. They acquired a lamb and took it to the Temple where it was slaughtered and its blood pour out upon the altar. Then they took the prepared lamb to the place where they were planning to eat the seder, and built a fire in the courtyard. There they began to roast the lamb over the fire, being careful not to break any of its bones, just as the Torah commanded (cf. Ex 12:8–10). They also had gathered plenty of matzah (unleavened bread), bitter herbs, wine, and other foods necessary for the Pesach Seder.

As the time for the seder approach on that evening of the 14th of the First Month, the talmidim were quite certain that everything was in order—that they had prepared everything necessary for the joyous celebration of the exodus out of Egypt. They were ready to celebrate “the time of our freedom!”



They had secured the upper room of a house in the city of Jerusalem for their Pesach seder. Now it was the custom in the Ancient Near East for the host to assign one of his servants the task of washing the feet of his guests. In the dry climate of Israel, people regularly needed to wash their feet since most of them wore sandals. But in this case, there were no house servants there to wash the feet of Yeshua and His talmidim as they entered. Foregoing this, they each found a place at the table and began the Pesach Seder. When they finally came to the meal itself, Yeshua did a remarkable thing. Taking off His outer robe, he took a towel and a basin of water, and began to go to each of His talmidim and to wash their feet. Kneeling down as a servant would do, He performed the common tasks of a house servant for each one of His talmidim, including Judas whom He knew would soon betray Him!

Well, when Yeshua came to Cephah (Shimon Peter), he protested! Something was definitely wrong with this picture. Why should Yeshua, the Master, be performing the role of a common house servant?! That was beneath Him, and it bothered Cephah. When he questioned Yeshua about this, the Master answered, “Right now you may not understand why I’m doing this, but later on you will understand.” But Cephah continued to protest to Yeshua, and even said “No! Don’t wash my feet!” But Yeshua responded, “If I don’t wash you, you can’t be My disciple!” Realizing that he had made a mistake in his protest, Cephah tried to offer an explanation: “What I meant was don’t just wash my feet, but also wash my hands and my head.” Then Yeshua said, “Peter, you don’t understand. When a person has bathed, he is clean, except for his feet that get dirty as he walks on the road. I only need wash your feet!”

When Yeshua had finished washing the feet of His talmidim, He explained what they were to learn from His actions. He said, “Surely the Teacher is above his students, and the Master is greater than the others in his house. You call me Teacher and Master, and so I am. Therefore, if I have washed your feet, becoming a servant to you, then surely you should be a servant to others.”

In washing the feet of the talmidim, Yeshua was demonstrating something He had taught them earlier: “You know that the rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and their great men exercise authority over them. It is not this way among you, but whoever wishes to become great among you shall be your servant, and whoever wishes to be first among you shall be your slave; just as the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many” (Matt 20:25ff).