

Bible Workshop: Readers' comments

Regarding Discussion point 3 on John 13, which poses the question, "What purpose does [the washing of the disciples' feet] serve as an event in the light of Jesus' teaching here?" (Jun. 2005, p. 198), the following comments have been received.

I would like reverently to suggest that the washing of the disciples' feet was a prelude to the greater humility of the cross so soon to come, and was to teach "his own" (v. 1) not to seek to be the greatest (Lk. 22:24) but to recognise that the way of humility and loving obedience was the way of the Father. This love in its pure goodness was shown by Jesus in his complete obedience and loving submission, "even [to] the death of the cross" (Phil. 2:8).

His victory over the flesh, his complete surrender to his Father's will, his absolute trust in his Father, glorify both Jesus and his Father; and the character Jesus revealed, in showing mercy and wonderful

grace in the face of such wickedness of man, also glorified God (Jno. 13:31). The crucifixion of Jesus revealed the furthest extent that the wickedness in man could reach (Acts 2:23). Sin could only bruise him in the heel (Gen. 3:15), and sin was condemned in Jesus' victory, which opened the way for the forgiveness of "his own" for his sake (Isa. 53:11). Jesus showed God's glory on earth, gently teaching "his own" the way to follow in love and humility.

Regarding Discussion point 1, "Discuss the role of satan and the devil in this chapter", the Jewish elders had found that Judas would betray Jesus by aiding them to get him into their power. The inner weakness of Judas responded to their offer of money, for "he was a thief" (Jno. 12:6). The lust for gain became sin, the devil, and blinded his eyes so that he betrayed his master. This showed an utter want of appreciation of our Lord's character and his loving provision for the cleansing of sins. (Taken in part from Brother John Carter's book **The Gospel of John.**)

Frances Gladstone

Lessons from the life of Elijah

13. "Thou hast turned their heart back again" (1 Kgs. 18:36-40)

Stephen Whitehouse

The scene on Mount Carmel now moves to its dramatic climax as, in response to the fervent prayer of Elijah, fire descends from heaven and consumes Elijah's burnt offering. God being vindicated before the people, the false prophets of Baal are put to death by the River Kishon.

THOUGH TERRIFYING scenes of God's judgement may momentarily convince us, often something far greater is required to turn our hearts "in the way of righteousness" (Prov. 8:20; 12:28; 16:31). For a sinner to be truly converted, it is not sufficient merely to observe a miracle, but rather a work must be wrought in their heart by the Word of God. Only by such can one be truly born again (Jno. 3:3,7; 1 Pet. 1:23).

"Elijah the prophet came near"

Finally, after all the patient waiting on Carmel, "it came to pass at the time of the offering of the evening sacrifice, that Elijah the prophet came near" (1 Kgs. 18:36).

The prophet surely deliberately tarried till the time of the evening sacrifice in order to remind the children of Israel of the necessity of fellowship with the worshippers at Jerusalem, their brethren in the south. Though he stood not in the appointed place, he chose the appointed time. And, although the prophet believed he would be answered by fire, he feared not to stand by the altar.

Observe that this faithful servant is now referred to as "Elijah the prophet" (v. 36; cf. Mal. 4:5), rather than "the Tishbite" (1 Kgs. 17:1), or even the "man of God" (vv. 18,24). The man from Gilead now takes on the role of prophet and priest, prophesying concerning the rain from heaven and mediating through the provision of the sin offering for the people.

We again witness Elijah as a wonderful type of the Lord Jesus Christ, for our Master was both "a Prophet" (Deut. 18:15,18; cf. Acts 3:22; 7:37) and "High Priest" (Heb. 3:1; 5:5; 9:11).

Elijah then cried aloud, "LORD God of Abraham, Isaac, and of Israel . . ." (1 Kgs. 18:36). The great prophet brought to mind the solemn