

# Glad Tidings

“And we bring you good tidings of the promise made unto the fathers...” (Acts 13:32)

Vol. XXXIV

February 18, 2024

No. 07

## Jesus-Feet Washing-The Super Bowl

(Jerry Fite)

The “He Gets Us” campaign paid millions again this year to bring Jesus to the attention of a vast number of people. Millions watching the Super Bowl were able to see a commercial ad designed to unite people, especially Americans who are experiencing divisiveness in a presidential election year. Jesus and feet washing was the hook to grab the viewers’ attention.

When Jesus walked on earth, water in a basin to wash one’s feet was a common part of extended hospitality. Transportation by foot on dusty and muddy roads was the norm in Biblical times. Beginning in Genesis 18:4, fetching water for the washing of feet, and providing replenishing food was hospitable, comforting, and helpful to travelers as they rested. Abraham provided such for important travelers who came his way as they washed their own feet, ate, and rested before proceeding on their journey. Lot provided water for travelers to wash their feet in Sodom, (*Genesis 19:2*); Laban did so in Mesopotamia (*Genesis 24:32*); and Joseph’s steward did the same in Egypt (*Genesis 43:24*).

Washing feet was personal hygiene. When extending the basin of water, it also

communicated welcoming hospitality, in serving others. Abigail, when summoned to David to be his wife, revealed this cultural meaning in washing feet when she “*bowed herself to the face of the earth, and said, ‘Behold, thy handmaid is a servant to wash the feet of the servants of my lord’*” (*I Samuel 25:41*). Humility is being exalted to even a lower level! Abigail, as a professed handmaid, is willing to wash the feet of the servants of David’s house.

When Jesus laid aside his garments, took a girded towel, and filled a basin with water, it was a critical moment. Jesus knew His hour had come to depart this world and reunite with His Father, the eternal God in heaven (*John 13:1-3*). He was teaching his disciples a spiritual truth that had a meaning deeper than the mere physical washing of feet. For Jesus said to Peter, “*what I do thou knowest not now; but though shalt understand hereafter*” (*John 13:7*). When He completed washing all the twelve disciples’ feet, Jesus stated the meaning which tied humility to serving one another. He declared, “*If I then, the Lord and the Teacher, have washed your feet, ye also ought to wash one another’s feet...*” (*John 13:14*). Not only did Jesus want them to

know that their “Lord,” who is above all, is manifesting humility by washing the feet of all His disciples. As their teacher, He is pointing them to wash each other’s feet. Jesus was departing this world not injecting into society a new cultural demand. Feet washing was already understood culturally as humble hospitality being extended graciously to guests. Jesus was teaching his disciples that such humility of washing feet should be carried out among their fellow saints when needed (*cf. I Timothy 5:10*).

The one-minute super bowl ad did not have Jesus washing feet. Painted pictures coupled with the emotional stirring song, “Never Tear Us Apart” provide settings where one sees perceived lawlessness, abortion, cancellation of speech, and effeminate homosexuality glossed over by the humble washing of feet. This was not the purpose of Jesus washing feet.

“We get Jesus” when we abhor that which is evil and cleave to that which is good (*Romans 12:9*). Deliberate taking of innocent human life in abortion is evil (*James 2:11*), parading effeminate (*I Corinthians 6:9*), and practicing homosexuality (*Romans 1:26-27*) is evil and must be abhorred while cleaving to the good revealed in the Scriptures.