

What We Believe Lesson 12 – Lord’s Supper and Washing of the Saints Feet
Article 12 of the Church of God Declaration of Faith:
“We Believe in the Lord’s Supper and Washing of the Saints Feet.”

Part 2

Washing of the Saints Feet = Foot Washing: **Biblical Meaning and Significance**

Jesus washing the feet of the disciples ([John 13:1–17](#)) occurred in the upper room during the Last Supper and has significance in three ways.

1. For Jesus, it was the display of His humility and servanthood in forgiving sinners.
2. For the disciples, the washing of their feet displayed a mindset in direct contrast to their heart attitude at that time.
3. For us, washing feet is symbolic of our role in the body of Christ.

Walking in sandals on the roads of Israel in the first century made it imperative that feet be washed before a communal meal. People ate reclining at low tables, and feet were very much in evidence. When Jesus rose from the Last Supper and began to wash the feet of the disciples ([John 13:4](#)), He was doing the work of the lowliest of servants. The disciples must have been stunned at this act of humility and condescension—that Jesus, their Lord and Master, should wash the feet of His disciples. Washing feet was more properly *their* work, but no one had volunteered for the job.

Jesus came to earth not as King and Conqueror but as the suffering Servant of [Isaiah 53](#). As He revealed in [Matthew 20:28](#), He came “not to be served but to serve, and to give His life as a ransom for many.” The humility expressed by Jesus’ act with towel and basin foreshadowed His ultimate act of humility and love on the cross.

Jesus’ attitude was in direct contrast to that of the disciples, who had recently been arguing among themselves as to which of them was the greatest ([Luke 22:24](#)). There was no servant present in the upper room to wash their feet, and it never occurred to them to wash one another’s feet. When the Lord Himself stooped to this lowly task, they were stunned into silence. Peter was profoundly uncomfortable with the Lord washing his feet, and he protested: “You shall never wash my feet” ([John 13:8a](#)).

Then Jesus said something that must have further shocked Peter: “Unless I wash

you, you have no part with me” ([John 13:8b](#)), prompting Peter, whose love for the Savior was genuine, to request a complete washing (verse 9). Then Jesus explained, “Those who have had a bath need only to wash their feet; their whole body is clean. And you are clean, though not every one of you” (verse 10). The disciples had “bathed,” and they were all “clean” but one—Judas, who would betray Him (verse 11).

So, Jesus’ act of washing the disciples’ feet illustrated their spiritual cleansing. Jesus is the One who forgives. Peter and the rest had experienced the full cleansing of salvation and did not need to be bathed again in the spiritual sense. Salvation is a one-time act of justification by faith. What follows is the lifelong process of sanctification: a daily washing away of the stain of sin. As we walk through the world, some of the world’s spiritual filth will cling to us, and that needs to be washed away—forgiven by Christ (see [1 John 1:9](#)). Peter and the other disciples—all except Judas, who never belonged to Christ—needed only this minor cleansing.

When we come to Christ for salvation, He condescends to wash our sins away, and we can be sure that His forgiveness is permanent and complete ([2 Corinthians 5:21](#)). But, just as a bathed person needed to wash his feet periodically, we need periodic cleansing from the effects of living in the flesh in a sin-cursed world. This is sanctification, done by the power of the Holy Spirit who lives within us, through the “washing of water by the Word” ([Ephesians 5:26](#)), given to equip us for every good work ([2 Timothy 3:16–17](#)).

Further, when Jesus washed the disciples’ feet, He told them (and us), “I have given you an example, that you should do as I have done to you” ([John 13:15](#)). As His followers, we are to emulate Him, serving one another in lowliness of heart and mind, seeking to build one another up in humility and love. Part of that humble service is to forgive one another ([Colossians 3:13](#)). When we seek preeminence, neglect to serve others, or refuse to forgive, we displease the Lord. True greatness in His kingdom is attained by those with a servant’s heart ([Mark 9:35](#); [10:44](#)), and they will be greatly blessed ([John 13:17](#)).

Importance of observance of the ordinance:

What believers are doing with the ordinances is commemorating what God is doing, and they are representing in external ceremony what God is doing from His throne of grace and inside believers.

Blessings:

Believers will discover the blessings when they do these practices. Part of having a personal relationship with Christ is doing those things He has asked believers to do, then finding the grace and blessings in the doing.

This is also a means of saying that God's people live by faith. They believe God to fulfill in them that which is being symbolized in the ordinance. It is also a pattern of exercising faith toward God that He is doing what is symbolized in the ordinances.

Article 13– Doctrine of the Last Days – Part 1

What We Believe Lesson 13 – The Second Coming & Millennial Reign

Article 13 of the Church of God Declaration of Faith:

We believe in the premillennial second coming of Jesus. First, to resurrect the righteous dead and to catch away the living saints to Him in the air. Second, to reign on the earth for a thousand years.

Definition of eschatology: The term “eschatology” means the study of the “last days.” This term deals with many things concerning the last days:

1. Death of Christ
2. Resurrection
3. Judgment
4. Tribulation
5. Heaven and hell

This lesson is to focus our eschatology on God, and we look forward with expectation to the future events: 1 Corinthians 2:9-10 But as it is written: “Eye has not seen, nor ear heard, Nor have entered into the heart of man the things which God has prepared for those who love Him. But God has revealed *them* to us through His Spirit. For the Spirit searches all things, yes, the deep things of God.”

I. The Second Coming of Jesus Christ

A. Its prominence in the Scriptures:

- One out of every thirty verses in the Bible mentions this doctrine: to every one mention of the first coming, the second coming is mentioned eight times.

- 318 references to it are made in 216 chapters.
- The books of 1 & 2 Thessalonians, and chapters of Matthew, Mark and Luke are devoted to the subject.
- It was the theme of the Old Testament prophets.
- Jesus, Himself, bore constant testimony to His coming again: John 14:3, Matthew 24-25, Mark 13, Luke 21, John 21:22
- The angels, who told of His first coming, bore witness to His second coming: Acts 1:11, Hebrews 2:2
- The Apostles faithfully proclaimed His second coming: Acts 3:19-20, 1 Thessalonians 4:16-17, Hebrews 9:28, 1 John 2:28, Jude 14-15

B. It is the Christian's hope looking forward to His second coming:

- Titus 2:13 Looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Savior Jesus Christ.
- 2 Peter 3:11b-12 what manner of *persons* ought you to be in holy conduct and godliness, ¹²looking for and hastening the coming of the day of God, because of which the heavens will be dissolved, being on fire, and the elements will melt with fervent heat?
- John 14:3 "And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come back and take you to be with me that you also may be where I am."
- Revelation 22:12 "Look, I am coming soon! My reward is with me, and I will give to each person according to what they have done."
- 1 Thessalonians 4:16 "For the Lord himself will come down from heaven, with a loud command, with the voice of the archangel and with the trumpet call of God, and the dead in Christ will rise first."

C. This teaching is the greatest incentive and motivation for consistent Christian living until the Lord returns:

- Luke 21:34-36 admonishes the believer to "take heed to yourselves lest at any time your heart be overcharged with surfeiting, [an intemperate or immoderate indulgence in something (*such as food or drink and drunkenness, pleasures*)] and cares of this life, and so that day comes upon you unawares. Watch your therefore and pray always that you may be accounted worthy to escape all these things that shall come to pass, and to stand before the Son of man."
- 1 John 2:28, 3:3 And now, little children abide in Him, that when He appears, we may have confidence and not be ashamed before Him at His coming. And everyone who has this hope in Him purifies himself, just as He is pure.
- **Question for our life to answer on every occasion:**

“Would I like to have Christ find me doing this when He comes?”

D. It is a doctrine of great comfort to the believer:

- 1 Thessalonians 4:14-18 For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so God will bring with Him those who sleep in Jesus. ¹⁵For this we say to you by the word of the Lord, that we who are alive *and* remain until the coming of the Lord will by no means precede those who are asleep. ¹⁶For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of an archangel, and with the trumpet of God. And the dead in Christ will rise first. ¹⁷Then we who are alive *and* remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And thus, we shall always be with the Lord. ¹⁸**Therefore comfort one another with these words.**
- Question to consider: Why would such a comforting doctrine be spoken against by many, even some Christians?
- Reasons:
 - a. The unreadiness of some believers to meet the Lord
 - b. Preconceived views that deny His second coming
 - c. Extravagant predictions on the time of His coming
 - d. Lack of knowledge of the scriptures.
- The denying or rejection of Jesus’ second coming is of greater ignorance and denial than that of the Jewish Pharisees and Sadducees and Jewish people of today.

II. What is meant by the Second Coming of Christ?

A. Personal and visible coming:

- Acts 1:11 [angels] who also said, “Men of Galilee, why do you stand gazing up into heaven? This *same* Jesus, who was taken up from you into heaven, will so come in like manner as you saw Him go into heaven.”
- 1 Thessalonians 4:16-17 For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of an archangel, and with the trumpet of God. And the dead in Christ will rise first. ¹⁷Then we who are alive *and* remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And thus we shall always be with the Lord.
- Revelation 1:7 Behold, He is coming with clouds, and every eye will see Him, even they who pierced Him. And all the tribes of the earth will mourn because of Him. Even so, Amen.
- His second coming will be a bodily, personal and visible coming of the Lord to receive His saints and afterward to reign on the earth.

B. Erroneous views concerning the second coming of Christ:

1. The second coming means Christ's death:

- Death is not what is meant by the events of 1 Thessalonians 4:16-17.
- The second death is the opposite of “the dead in Christ shall rise” from the dead when Christ comes again.
- According to John 14:3 – “Christ comes for us, and not we go to Him; I will come again and receive you unto Myself.”
- 1 Corinthians 15:50-57 – Declares that at the second coming of Christ we overcome death, not succumb to it – Now this I say, brethren, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God; nor does corruption inherit incorruption. ⁵¹ Behold, I tell you mystery: We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed— ⁵² in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed. ⁵³ For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal *must* put on immortality. ⁵⁴ So when this corruptible has put on incorruption, and this mortal has put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written: “Death is swallowed up in victory.” ⁵⁵ “O Death, where *is* your sting? O Hades, where *is* your victory?” ⁵⁶ The sting of death *is* sin, and the strength of sin *is* the law. ⁵⁷ But thanks *be* to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.
- The error of this belief is when we substitute the word “death” for the second coming of Christ in such places where this coming is mentioned.

2. That the second coming means the coming of the Holy Spirit:

- Yes, it's true the Holy Spirit is coming, but that is not the second coming:
- John 14:21-23 He who has My commandments and keeps them, it is he who loves Me. And he who loves Me will be loved by My Father, and I will love him and manifest Myself to him.” ²² Judas (not Iscariot) said to Him, “Lord, how is it that You will manifest Yourself to us, and not to the world?” ²³ Jesus answered and said to him, “If anyone loves Me, he will keep My word; and My Father will love him, and We will come to him and make Our home with him.
- Response:
 - a. Many of the testimonies and promises of the second coming were given after Pentecost: Philipians 3:21 who will transform our lowly body that it may be conformed to His glorious body, according to the working by which He is able even to subdue all things to Himself.

- b. 2 Timothy 4:8 Finally, there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will give to me on that Day, and not to me only but also to all who have loved His appearing.
- c. 1 Thessalonians 4:16-17 For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of an archangel, and with the trumpet of God. And the dead in Christ will rise first. ¹⁷ Then we who are alive *and* remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And thus, we shall always be with the Lord.
- d. 1 Corinthians 15:51-52 Behold, I tell you a mystery: We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed— ⁵² in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed.
- e. At Pentecost - the coming of Holy Spirit - **Christ comes to us**, we don't go to Him.
- f. At the second coming, **He takes us to Himself**, He does not come to us
- g. The events of 1 Thessalonians 4:16-17 did not occur on the day of Pentecost, nor did they occur when the believer receives the Holy Spirit.

3. That the second coming refers to the destruction of Jerusalem:

- Response: The events of 1 Thessalonians 4:16-17 did not take place then.
- John 21:21-23 & Revelation 22:20 were written after the destruction of Jerusalem:
 - Peter, seeing him, said to Jesus, “But Lord, what *about* this man?” ²² Jesus said to him, “If I will that he remains till I come, what *is that* to you? You follow Me.” ²³ Then this saying went out among the brethren that this disciple would not die. Yet Jesus did not say to him that he would not die, but “If I will that he remains till I come, what *is that* to you?” He who testifies to these things says, “Surely I am coming quickly.”
 - He who testifies to these things says, “Surely I am coming quickly.” Amen. Even so, come, Lord Jesus!
- From all the scriptures presented, it is evident that the second coming of Christ is a future event.

C. The need of recognizing the distinction between Christ's coming **for** His saints and **with** His saints:

There is a distinction between the **presence** and the **appearing** of Christ:

- The presence of Christ refers to His coming **for** His saints.
- His appearing is **with** His saints.

- Remember, the second coming of Christ covers a period of time, not a single event or moment.
- The second coming of Christ includes several events: Christ's birth, circumcision, baptism, ministry, crucifixion, the rapture, the great tribulation, the millennium, the resurrection, and the judgments.