WASHING OF FEET

The ordinance of washing of feet performed by Jesus Christ after the Last Supper with his apostles was a gesture of humility. Amidst discussion of who would be the greatest in the kingdom, Jesus, demonstrating what he had taught, removed his outer robe and performed this menial task, teaching that one who would be a leader must be a servant (John 13:1–8; cf. D&C 58:141). The Joseph Smith Translation adds this explanation about this incident: “Now this was the custom of the Jews under their law; wherefore, Jesus did this that the law might be fulfilled” (JST John 13:10). By this clarification it appears that the washing of feet was an ordinance of the law of Moses.

There is no clear explanation of the washing of feet in the Old Testament, although it is evident that it was a social custom for administering kindness to a guest. The washing of feet is not mentioned in the Book of Mormon, and it is spoken of only briefly in the Doctrine and Covenants in 88:138–41.

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