

John 13:10

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Jesus saith to him, He that is washed needeth not save to wash his feet, but is clean every whit: and ye are clean, but not all.

Analysis

Jesus saith to him, He that is washed needeth not save to wash his feet, but is clean every whit: and ye are clean, but not all. Jesus corrects Peter's misunderstanding with crucial theological distinction. **He that is washed** (ὁ λελουμένος/ho leloumenos) uses the perfect passive participle of λούω (louō)—to bathe the whole body—indicating completed action with ongoing results. This person **needeth not** (οὐ χρείαν ἔχει/ou chreian echei) further bathing, only to **wash his feet** (νίψασθαι τοὺς πόδας/nipsasthai tous podas), using νίπτω (niptō), the verb for partial washing.

The distinction maps onto Christian soteriology with precision. The complete bath (λούω) represents justification—the once-for-all cleansing from sin's guilt through Christ's blood (Titus 3:5, 'washing of regeneration'). The foot-washing (νίπτω) represents ongoing sanctification—daily cleansing from sin's defilement through confession and Spirit-empowered growth (1 John 1:9, 'If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us'). Believers are definitively cleansed (clean every whit—καθαρός ἔστιν ὅλος/katharos estin holos), yet require continual cleansing from worldly contamination.

The phrase **ye are clean, but not all** (ὑμεῖς καθαροί ἔστε, ἀλλ' οὐχὶ πάντες/ hymeis katharoi este, all' ouchi pantes) introduces the sobering reality of Judas's presence. Among the Twelve, eleven had experienced regeneration's bath; one

remained spiritually filthy despite outward proximity to Christ. External religious participation doesn't guarantee internal transformation.

Historical Context

First-century bathing customs illuminate Jesus's metaphor. After visiting the public baths (thermae), a Roman would return home with clean body but dusty feet from walking unpaved streets. Only feet required washing, not re-bathing. Jesus takes this common experience and transforms it into spiritual truth. Jewish purification rituals similarly distinguished complete immersion (mikveh) from partial washing. The once-for-all nature of justification contrasted with the Levitical system's endless repetition of sacrifices—a distinction Hebrews 10:11-14 emphasizes. Jesus's reference to one unclean disciple anticipates verse 11's explanation about Judas. Despite three years with Jesus, witnessing miracles, hearing teaching, Judas remained unregenerate—a warning against presuming external religion equals internal reality. The early church applied this verse both to initial baptism (the bath) and ongoing confession of sin (the foot-washing), seeing sacramental and pastoral implications.

Related Passages

Romans 2:1 — Judging others

Matthew 25:31 — Final judgment

Colossians 1:16 — All things created through Christ

Psalm 19:1 — Heavens declare God's glory

Study Questions

1. How does understanding the distinction between definitive cleansing (justification) and ongoing cleansing (sanctification) affect your assurance of salvation and pursuit of holiness?
2. What 'dust' accumulates on believers' feet through daily living in a fallen world, and how does Christ provide for its cleansing?

3. What does Judas's presence among the disciples—outwardly identical but spiritually unclean—teach about the dangers of mere external religion?

Interlinear Text

λέγει αὐτῷ ὁ Ἰησοῦς Ὁ λελουμένος οὐ χρείαν ἔχει
saith to him Jesus He that is washed not needeth G2192
G3004 G846 G3588 G2424 G3068 G3756 G5532

ἢ τοὺς πόδας νίψασθαι ἀλλ' ἔστιν καθαροί ὅλος·
save his feet to wash but is clean every whit
G2228 G3588 G4228 G3538 G235 G2076 G2513 G3650

καὶ ὑμεῖς καθαροί ἔστε ἀλλ' οὐχὶ πάντες
and ye clean are but not all
G2532 G5210 G2513 G2075 G235 G3780 G3956

Additional Cross-References

John 15:3 (Parallel theme): Now ye are clean through the word which I have spoken unto you.

2 Corinthians 5:17 (Parallel theme): Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new.

2 Corinthians 7:1 (Parallel theme): Having therefore these promises, dearly beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God.