

Sandal strap

I was reading Acts 13 and verse 25 caught my eye.

25 And as John was finishing his course, he said, 'Who do you think I am? I am not He. But behold, there comes One after me, the sandals of whose feet I am not worthy to loose.'

The question came to me; Why would John want to loosen Jesus' sandals?

I decided to combine the four Gospel text's for maximum detail, and ended up with :
Now all the people were in expectation, and all reasoned in their hearts about John, whether he was the Christ or not. They asked him, saying, "Why then do you baptise if you are not the Christ, nor Elijah, nor the Prophet?" John answered, saying to all, "There stands One among you whom you do not know. He is mightier than I, and coming after me, is preferred before me. I am not worthy to either stoop down and loosen His sandal strap or carry His sandals. I indeed baptise you with water unto repentance, but He will baptise you with the Holy Spirit and fire. His winnowing fan is in His hand, and He will thoroughly clean out His threshing floor, and gather the wheat into His barn; but the chaff He will burn with unquenchable fire."

Searching I discovered Deuteronomy 25:5-10 regarding marriage duty of a surviving brother.

- 5 "If brothers dwell together, and one of them dies and has no son, the widow of the dead man shall not be married to a stranger outside the family; her husband's brother shall go in to her, take her as his wife, and perform the duty of a husband's brother to her.*
- 6 "And it shall be that the firstborn son which she bears will succeed to the name of his dead brother, that his name may not be blotted out of Israel.*
- 7 "But if the man does not want to take his brother's wife, then let his brother's wife go up to the gate to the elders, and say, 'My husband's brother refuses to raise up a name to his brother in Israel; he will not perform the duty of my husband's brother.'*
- 8 "Then the elders of his city shall call him and speak to him. But if he stands firm and says, 'I do not want to take her,'*
- 9 "then his brother's wife shall come to him in the presence of the elders, remove his sandal from his foot, spit in his face, and answer and say, 'So shall it be done to the man who will not build up his brother's house.'*
- 10 "And his name shall be called in Israel, 'The house of him who had his sandal removed.'*

This hardly seemed relevant, but then I remembered in Ruth 4:7-10 regarding Boaz redeeming Ruth from the close relative.

- 7 Now this was the custom in former times in Israel concerning redeeming and exchanging, to confirm anything: one man took off his sandal and gave it to the other, and this was a confirmation in Israel.*
- 8 Therefore the close relative said to Boaz, "Buy it for yourself." So he took off his sandal.*

- 9 *And Boaz said to the elders and all the people, "You are witnesses this day that I have bought all that was Elimelech's, and all that was Chilion's and Mahlon's, from the hand of Naomi.*
- 10 *Moreover, Ruth the Moabitess, the widow of Mahlon, I have acquired as my wife, to perpetuate the name of the dead through his inheritance, that the name of the dead may not be cut off from the brethren and from his position at the gate. You are witnesses this day."*

Now the mention of John removing Jesus' sandal makes perfect sense.

John was in the process of redeeming God's people to Him, through baptism unto repentance. Fulfilling, *'that their names may not be blotted out of Israel'* and *'that the name of the dead may not be cut off from the brethren and from his position at the gate'* (status in life).

Jesus being the Son of God, was the closest relative to God the Father present in front of the witnesses. However John knew that Jesus would become the ultimate redeemer for all the chosen people of God, and that is why he only made mention of the reference to sandals.

It's also interesting to see that John knew then, what would take place later after the crucifixion of Christ (redemption of sinners and the gift of the Holy Spirit poured out) and what will take place on the judgement day of Christ.

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