

UNDER HIS FEET

The Meaning



FOOTCASE (BOTH IMAGES): BROOKLYN MUSEUM, CHARLES EDWIN WILBOUR FUND, 73.89. CREATIVE COMMONS-BY

Above: First-century footcase from Egypt. A footcase was an additional luxury item for the deceased. On the bottom of the footcase (left inset), the enemies

of the deceased are depicted. Thus when the deceased stands, he crushes his enemies.

Right: Statue of Elijah on Mount Carmel slaying the prophets of Baal.

ILLUSTRATOR PHOTO/ BOB SCHWARTZ (19/11/3)

He is now waiting until his enemies are made his footstool. HEBREWS 10:13, CSB



ANCIENT NEAR EASTERN CULTURES OFTEN REFERRED TO a vanquished foe as being “under the feet” of the victor. Various artwork and iconography commonly depicted the defeated enemies of a triumphant king as being his footstool. The terminology is in both the Old and New Testaments. For instance, Joshua commanded Israel’s military leaders to place their feet literally on the necks of the five defeated Amorite kings before the kings were executed (Josh. 10:25). Joshua explained: “Do not be afraid or discouraged. Be strong and courageous, for the LORD will do this to all the enemies you fight” (vv. 24-25, CSB).

Scripture describes God as the King who conquerors His people’s enemies, placing them under His people’s feet. God placed the enemies of Israel under their feet (Ps. 47:3). The Book of Psalms describes God acting in a similar manner for the messianic, Davidic king. “This is the declaration of the LORD to my Lord: ‘Sit at my right hand until I make your enemies your footstool’” (110:1, CSB).

Paul wrote of Christ’s victory at the end of the age: “Then comes the end, when he hands over the kingdom to God the Father, when he abolishes all rule and all authority and power. For he must reign until he puts all his enemies under his feet. The last enemy to be abolished is death. For God has put everything under his feet” (1 Cor. 15:24-27a, CSB; see also Eph. 1:20-22; Heb. 2:7-8).



A statue of Ramesses II at Luxor, Thebes. Below the pharaoh’s footstool are images depicting peoples he had conquered.



Left: Marble statue of Hadrian with a conquered foe. Dates from the 1st cent. AD.

Below: Lower half of a goddess shown seated on her throne; its base is formed by prostrate captives, 1295–1070 BC; from Egypt.

OTHER SYMBOLIC USES OF FEET IN THE BIBLE

Symbol	Passage	Meaning
1. Remove one’s shoes	Ex. 3:5	A sign of holiness in worship
2. Dig a trench with a foot	Deut. 11:10	Irrigating fields
3. Cover one’s feet	1 Sam. 24:3	Relieving oneself
4. Slip or snare one’s foot	Pss. 9:15; 66:9	Experience a calamity
5. Restrain one’s feet	Ps. 119:101	Obedience
6. Feet that bring good news	Isa. 52:7	A person’s arrival
7. Bare feet	Ezek. 24:17	Mourning
8. Fall at someone’s feet	Luke 17:16	Humble submission/thanks
9. Anoint another’s feet	John 12:3	High honor
10. Wash another’s feet	John 13:4-17	Humility
11. Lay something at one’s feet	Acts 4:34-35	A gift given
12. Shake dust from one’s feet	Acts 13:51	Total rejection of a place
13. Sit “at the feet”	Acts 22:3	To be a disciple of someone



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