

THE GOSPEL OF MATTHEW – THE LAST WEEK OF JESUS’ LIFE ON EARTH
Week 4 – His Hour Had Not Yet Come
February 14, 2023

Could the disciples have been so honored that this Rabbi Jesus called them when perhaps, in their youth, they had been rejected by a Rabbi whom they wanted to follow? There was great love and respect for Jesus. Yet, was there confusion as there was so much rejection by many toward this Messiah? Didn’t everyone desire the Messiah’s deliverance? The disciples were growing close to Jesus but they didn’t understand all that He was doing.

Let’s comprehend more of Jesus’ journey toward His final week...

The Feast of Tabernacles in Jerusalem. The Feast of Tabernacles was one of the “pilgrim feasts.” God commanded all Jewish men to attend 3 feasts annually (Deut. 16:16). This Feast of Tabernacles in Jesus’ life proved to be intense! WHY? Jesus was walking toward His HOUR...the hour of His death. But, it was not yet His hour.

This Feast of Tabernacles marked an important turning point in the life and ministry of Jesus. Jesus proclaimed the truth of God to those who gathered. There were over 2 million people in Jerusalem at the Feast of Tabernacles. Jesus spoke boldly. John 7:25-26 - *Now some of them from Jerusalem said, ‘Is this not He whom they seek to kill?’ 26 But look! He speaks boldly, and they say nothing to Him. Do the rulers know indeed that this is truly the Christ?*

John 7:28-30 - *Then Jesus cried out, as He taught in the temple, saying, ‘You both know Me, and you know where I am from; and I have not come of Myself, but He who sent Me is true, whom you do not know. 29 But I know Him, for I am from Him, and He sent Me.’ 30 Therefore they sought to take Him; but no one laid a hand on Him, because His hour had not yet come.*

Great conflict was generated by Jesus’ words. Jesus climaxed His teaching among the 2 million plus with an invitation, *If anyone thirsts, let him come to Me and drink. 38 He who believes in Me, as the Scripture has said, out of his heart will flow rivers of living water.* Jesus gracious invitation brought varying responses.

- John 7:40 - *many from the crowd, when they heard this saying, said, ‘Truly this is the Prophet’*
- John 7:41 - *Others said, ‘This is the Christ.’ But some said, ‘Will the Christ come out of Galilee?’*
- John 7:42-43 - *‘Has not the Scripture said that the Christ comes from the seed of David and from the town of Bethlehem, where David was?’ 43 So there was a division among the people because of Him. What divided them? Knowledge of the Hebrew Scriptures vs. no knowledge of the Hebrew Scriptures.*

- John 7:44-46 – There were those who wanted to seize Jesus to deliver Him to the authorities (chief priests and Pharisees), but when asked why they were unable to do so, they answered, *'No man ever spoke like this Man!'*

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Matt. 16:21 – *From that time Jesus began to show to His disciples that He must go to Jerusalem, and suffer many things from the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and be raised the third day. From what time?* From the Jewish nation's rejection of Jesus spoken out by the Jewish religious leadership [Matt. 12]. From the time Jesus began to focus on instructing His disciples (Matt. 13-16).

Matt. 17 – Jesus took Peter, James, and John with Him up to a “high mountain.” This unnamed mountain is what we call the Mount of Transfiguration today. On this mountain *Jesus was transfigured before them. His face shone like the sun, and his clothes became as white as the light. Just then there appeared before them Moses and Elijah, talking with Jesus* (Matt. 17:2-3).

At the transfiguration, the three disciples had a glimpse of the glory that Jesus had before the Incarnation and that He would have again.

In the Luke 9:28-31 passage re: the Transfiguration we're told a bit more re: Moses and Elijah's conversation with Jesus – Jesus took ... *Peter, John, and James and went up on the mountain to pray. ²⁹ As He prayed, the appearance of His face was altered, and His robe became white and glistening. ³⁰ And behold, two men talked with Him, who were Moses and Elijah, ³¹ who appeared in glory and spoke of His decease which He was about to accomplish at Jerusalem.* Why are Moses and Elijah speaking with Jesus? Moses represents the Law and Elijah represents the Prophets. What's Jesus' connection with Moses and Elijah?

Jesus did not destroy the Law...He fulfilled the Law (Matt. 5:17)...Jesus fulfilled the Law in DYING and paying the penalty for our sin.

John 19:30 – Jesus cried out from the cross, “It is finished!” and He bowed His head and gave up His spirit.

The Law could NEVER redeem.

Rom. 3:20 - *Therefore by the deeds of the law no flesh will be justified in His sight, for by the law is the knowledge of sin.*

Rom. 8:3 - ...*what the law could not do in that it was weak through the flesh, God did by sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, on account of sin: He condemned sin in the flesh,*

Jesus fulfilled His first coming prophecies proclaimed by the Prophets. Focus specifically on Psa. 22 and Isa. 53 re: Jesus crucifixion and resurrection.

As we follow Jesus' journey to Jerusalem, His final journey to Jerusalem, let's look at His path/route. Following the Mt. of Transfiguration and onward....

Matt. 17:22-23 - *Now while they were staying in Galilee, Jesus said to them, "The Son of Man is about to be betrayed into the hands of men, ²³ and they will kill Him, and the third day He will be raised up." And they were exceedingly sorrowful.*

Matt. 17:24 - ²⁴ *When they had come to Capernaum – remaining in Galilee and continuing to teach.*

Luke 17:11 - *Now it happened as He went to Jerusalem that He passed through the midst of Samaria and Galilee.*

During this time in which Jesus was awaiting His final appearance in Jerusalem, Jesus ministered in Perea, "beyond the Jordan." (See map). During this time tragedy fell

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on a Bethany household where good friends of Jesus, Mary, Martha, and Lazarus lived. NOTE: There are two Bethany's – one near Jerusalem (John 11:1) and one "beyond the Jordan" - Bethabara (John 1:28). Perea was the name of the region "beyond the Jordan." Lazarus became seriously ill. Mary and Martha turned to Jesus for help. They sent a message to Jesus which simply relayed, "Lord, behold, he whom You love is sick." They made no specific request. Jesus' response to the message...He told the disciples, *This sickness is not unto death, but for the glory of God, that the Son of God may be glorified through it* (John 11:4). We have a very clear declaration of the deity of Jesus as He referred to Himself as the Son of God.

⁵ *Now Jesus loved Martha and her sister and Lazarus. ⁶ So, when He heard that he was sick, He stayed two more days in the place where He was. REALLY?? WHY? Jesus tarried to demonstrate that He is indeed the Son of God!*

What is God doing in your life/in my life that seems to be a "REALLY?" moment?

⁷ *Then after this He said to the disciples, "Let us go to Judea again." ⁸ The disciples said to Him, "Rabbi, lately the Jews sought to stone You, and are You going there again?" Jesus answered, "Are there not twelve hours in the day? Was Jesus telling the disciples that this was not yet His hour? Daylight remained...my work has not ended.... ¹¹ These things He said, and after that He said to them, "Our friend Lazarus sleeps, but I go that I*

may wake him up.” ¹² Then His disciples said, “Lord, if he sleeps he will get well.” You don’t have to make that dangerous trek with so many against you just to wake up Lazarus! ¹³ However, Jesus spoke of his death, but they thought that He was speaking about taking rest in sleep. ¹⁴ Then Jesus said to them plainly, “Lazarus is dead. ¹⁵ And I am glad for your sakes that I was not there, that you may believe. Nevertheless let us go to him.” From Jesus’ statement we understand that this miracle was not designed to be a public demonstration but rather authentication to the disciples. And yet...did word spread? ¹⁷ So when Jesus came (to Bethany), He found that he had already been in the tomb four days. Was there a significance re: the fourth day?

Jewish tradition taught that the dead body is not *truly and finally* dead until the fourth day. In the Talmud (Rabbinic commentary) it is written that The soul hovers around the body for three days after death, hoping for re-entrance. But once the body starts to decompose and the corpse changes color, the soul knows there is no going back and departs once and for all. This is extra-biblical Jewish tradition. Scripture nowhere teaches this. But if it reflects the popular opinion or teaching of many Jews back then, it may give added significance to the emphasis on Lazarus being in the grave for four days. Lazarus was dead! Had Jesus resurrected him on day two or three, it could have been cause for some to wonder whether it was merely a resuscitation of some sort instead of a true resurrection. At four days, the period of mourning was in process.

¹⁸ Now Bethany was near Jerusalem, about two miles away. ¹⁹ And many of the Jews had joined the women around Martha and Mary, to comfort them concerning their brother. ²⁰ Then Martha, as soon as she heard that Jesus was coming, went and met Him, but Mary was sitting in the house. ²¹ Now Martha said to Jesus, ‘Lord, if You had been here,

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my brother would not have died. ²² But even now I know that whatever You ask of God, God will give You’ ²³ Jesus said to her, ‘Your brother will rise again.’ ²⁴ Martha said to Him, ‘I know that he will rise again in the resurrection at the last day.’ Martha didn’t understand that Jesus would raise Lazarus from the dead then and there. Martha’s words acknowledged her understanding of the OT. ²⁵ Jesus said to her, ‘**I am** the resurrection and the life. He who believes in Me, though he may die, he shall live. ²⁶ And whoever lives and believes in Me shall never die. Do you believe this?’ Jesus declared to Martha that resurrection and eternal life were in Him. ‘Do you believe this?’ Jesus challenged Martha not to debate but to believe! Jesus presented Himself as the champion over death. ²⁷ She said to Him, ‘Yes, Lord, I believe that You are the Christ, the Son of God, who is to come into the world.’ Martha declared that Jesus is indeed the Messiah, the Anointed One. And, Jesus is God in human form among us! From what she knew/believed in the OT, Martha could proclaim that she believed. ²⁸ And when she had said these things, she went her way and secretly called Mary her sister, saying, ‘The Teacher has come and is

calling for you.’ *The Teacher has come* – among His followers Jesus was designated as “the Teacher.” Of the 90 times Jesus was addressed directly in the gospels, 60 times he was called Teacher. himself used the term when he said, “You call me Teacher and Lord, and rightly so, for that is what I am” (John 13:13). Martha spoke of Jesus as “the” Teacher. Jesus is recognized as incomparable. He is not like any other Teacher! How significant it is for a woman to use this term for Jesus? The Rabbis refused to instruct women!

³² *Then, when Mary came where Jesus was, and saw Him, she fell down at His feet, saying to Him, “Lord, if You had been here, my brother would not have died.”* Similar words to Martha’s; no reproach from Jesus perhaps because Mary showed an attitude of devotion and submission by kneeling in adoration before the Lord.

³³ *Therefore, when Jesus saw her weeping, and the Jews who came with her weeping, He groaned in the spirit and was troubled.* ³⁴ *And He said, ‘Where have you laid him?’ They said to Him, ‘Lord, come and see.’* ³⁵ *Jesus wept.* Jesus’ tears were not tears of sorrow for Lazarus. Jesus knew He would raise Lazarus from the dead. Tears perhaps because He was bringing Lazarus back into this fallen world? Tears perhaps because there was much sorrow over death due to sin! ³⁶ *Then the Jews said, ‘See how He loved him!’* ³⁷ *And some of them said, ‘Could not this Man, who opened the eyes of the blind, also have kept this man from dying?’* These seem to be words of genuine sorrow and sympathy. Might they have been truly sad that, Jesus, in all His greatness, could do nothing for Lazarus at this point. Are they perhaps questioning Jesus’ power...asking if Jesus has the power to raise Lazarus from the dead?

³⁸ *Then Jesus, again groaning in Himself* (groaning (Gk - this phrase literally means *to snort like a horse* implying anger and indignation. Such deep emotion seized Jesus! *in Himself* - “And troubled Himself.” deliberately summoned up in Himself the feelings of indignation at the havoc wrought by the evil one and the agony of sin, Jesus was angry

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and troubled at the destruction and power of the great enemy of humanity: death. Jesus would soon break the dominating power of death (Heb. 2:14).

Then Jesus, again groaning in Himself came to the tomb. It was a cave, and a stone lay against it. ³⁹ *Jesus said, ‘Take away the stone’* – lift up the stone. The stone sealing Lazarus’ tomb was not a stone that was rolled away. At Lazarus’ tomb it appears that the cave’s mouth was closed by a large closely-fitting stone which required the strength of many men to move it. *Martha, the sister of him who was dead, said to Him, “Lord, by this time there is a stench (as in a decaying corpse), for he has been dead four days.”*

⁴⁰ Jesus said to her, 'Did I not say to you that if you would believe you would see the glory of God?' Was Martha doubting after she had confessed belief? ⁴¹ Then they took away (to raise up; to lift up) the stone from the place where the dead man was lying. And Jesus lifted up His eyes and said, 'Father, I thank You that You have heard Me. ⁴² And I know that You always hear Me, but because of the people who are standing by I said this, that they may believe that You sent Me.'

⁴³ Now when He had said these things, He cried with a loud voice, 'Lazarus, come forth!' Jesus called Lazarus out of the tomb with a loud decisive tone of authority. Jesus spoke to a dead body as if Lazarus were alive because He is God, who gives life to the dead and calls those things which do not exist as though they did ([Romans 4:17](#)). We need to marvel continually at the power of God Almighty! ⁴⁴ And he who had died came out bound hand and foot with graveclothes, and his face was wrapped with a cloth. Jesus said to them, 'Loose him, and let him go.' The One Who is the resurrection and the life revealed His authority over death by summoning Lazarus from the grave. The one who was dead and could not hear so that he could not respond came out of the grave.

Lazarus did not come out by his own power but by the power of the One Who had commanded him to come out. Jesus performed this miracle to support the faith of the disciples in His person and His power in the face of the opposition of the nation that shortly would put Him to death.

⁴⁵ Then many of the Jews who had come to Mary, and had seen the things Jesus did, believed in Him. ⁴⁶ But some of them went away to the Pharisees and told them the things Jesus did. News of the raising of Lazarus quickly spread throughout Jerusalem and came to the attention of the chief priests who were Sadducees, and the Pharisees. A meeting of the Sanhedrin was called. The Sanhedrin was the ruling body of Israel. ⁴⁷ Then the chief priests and the Pharisees gathered a council and said, 'What shall we do? For this Man works many signs. ⁴⁸ If we let Him alone like this, everyone will believe in Him, and the Romans will come and take away both our place and nation.'

What are we observing in these two verses? What is this council voicing? They acknowledged Who Jesus is and their own agenda was standing in the way of their believing in Him! The Holy Spirit had convicted them. The Sanhedrin knew the truth of the Messiah as the Holy Spirit had revealed Him and His work to them. They rejected and in so doing they blasphemed against the Holy Spirit.

Matt. 12:31-32 – Jesus had told the Jewish religious leadership when they rejected Him as the Messiah...when they rejected what they knew to be true!!! ...*the*

blasphemy against the Spirit will not be forgiven men. ... whoever speaks against the Holy Spirit, it will not be forgiven him, either in this age or in the age to come.

The restoration of Lazarus proved beyond any shadow of doubt that Jesus was the Messiah. The evidence was so great that the Sanhedrin said, *If we let Him go on like this, everyone will believe in Him.* The Sanhedrin thought that if the nation accepted Jesus as Messiah and He set up a kingdom as He said He would do, Rome would move to crush this kingdom and the nation would be destroyed,

John 11:49-52 - ⁴⁹ *And one of them, Caiaphas, being high priest that year, said to them, 'You know nothing at all, ⁵⁰ nor do you consider that it is expedient for us that one man should die for the people, and not that the whole nation should perish.'* ⁵¹ *Now this he did not say on his own authority; but being high priest that year he prophesied that Jesus would die for the nation, ⁵² and not for that nation only, but also that He would gather together in one the children of God who were scattered abroad.*

The High Priest proposed that it would be better for Jesus to die than for all of them to die at the hands of Rome. This was formally presented to the Sanhedrin.

Caiaphas did not realize the prophetic significance of these words: Jesus would die for the Jewish nation and not only for that nation but also for the scattered children of God.

While Caiaphas proposed the death of Jesus as a solution to the immediate political problem, God purposed His Son's death as a solution to the problem of the sin of the whole world.

⁵³ *Then, from that day on, they plotted to put Him to death. ⁵⁴ Therefore Jesus no longer walked openly among the Jews, but went from there into the country near the wilderness, to a city called Ephraim, and there remained with His disciples.*

What a curious reversal of custom: Normally the authorities go after killers on the loose, but here they were concerned about someone who went around raising the dead.

Ephraim was north of Jerusalem, close to Samaria.

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Typical tombs in Jesus' day were caves or excavations cut into a rocky cliff. An opening into the side of a cliff might lead into a crypt of several rooms used by different families. There would be an outer chamber and an inner chamber. In the outer chamber the body would be laid out on a waist-high bench or shelf cut into the rock and be prepared.

The Jewish custom was not to embalm the body but to use the spices to counteract the repulsive odors from decomposition of the body. They would wrap the body in cloth/linen cloth/swaddling cloth and add spice in the layers and folds.

The Jews did not wrap the body tightly like Egyptian mummies, but loosely with the head wrapped separately. And so, Lazarus could move out of the tomb before he was unwrapped.

The first burial noted in Scripture is that of Abraham, interred (laid to rest) in the tomb of Sarah, his wife, later followed by their children and grandchildren. (Machpelah – tomb/ cave of the Patriarchs – Gen. 23:17-18; Gen. 25:9-10).

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Archaeologists have found family burials in caves and rock-hewn tombs from the OT period with over 100 individuals interred in a single tomb.

After the flesh of the corpse had decayed, the bones were collected and placed into a repository hewn beneath one of the burial benches. Ossuaries were often used – chests in which the bones of decayed corpses were collected.

The poor could not afford a rock-hewn tomb. The poor were buried in common graves dug into the soil (II Kings 23:6; Jer. 26:23) or buried in vertical shafts within designated fields (Potters Field – Matt. 27:7).

QUESTIONS

Any V8 moments?

What impacted you?

How did Jesus impact you?

How can you explain Jesus to someone from John 11?

What's the "So what?" re: this lesson? What has impacted you?

What are your questions?

SUGGESTED HOMEWORK

Reread Week 4 with the Bible references.

Add to your journal noting what you're learning and how it's impacting you.

Esp. during this season leading to Good Friday and Resurrection Sunday and Passover, share this lesson or part of it with someone.

Read Week 5 when you receive it.