

JESUS IN THE FEASTS OF ISRAEL

WEEK 4 – LAMB SELECTION DAY/JESUS’ TRIUMPHAL ENTRY

The setting: Jerusalem before Passover. The roads up to Jerusalem (read Psalm 122 and note verse 4 – “. . . the tribes go up. . . .”) are crowded with Jewish pilgrims. In Deut. 16:16 we read that God commanded all Jewish males to appear before Him in Jerusalem specifically at three feasts: Passover, Shavuot/Feast of Weeks, Tabernacles. Jerusalem was the place God had chosen to put His name (II Chron. 6:6)!

At Passover, God communicated a powerful message to the world. At the first Passover, He delivered the children of Israel from Egypt through the BLOOD OF THE PASSOVER LAMB! What is the message at Passover during Jesus’ final week on earth?

At Jesus’ triumphal entry, He did not just “enter Jerusalem” – He paraded. He paraded like the King that He is. And, what a perfect time to do so; Jerusalem was crowded with Jewish people. The triumphal entry was preparation for Passover week and for His death and resurrection! That very day that Jesus rode into Jerusalem on the colt of a donkey was the day that Jewish people called “Lamb Selection Day” – 10th day of the month of Nisan. On the 10th of Nisan the lambs that were going to be sacrificed in the Temple for Passover were brought into the city. Exodus 12:3-5 tells us that at the first Passover in Egypt, God had commanded the Jewish people to take a lamb into each home and scrutinize each lamb to ensure that it was without blemish (Dt. 15:21). The lamb was inspected for 4 days and then if it met the criteria – no blemishes – it was slain on the 14th day of Nisan – the first day of Passover. Jesus rode into Jerusalem on the 10th of Nisan – on Lamb Selection Day! HE rode into His family – to be scrutinized by them for 4 days. They found Him to be blameless – without blemish (Herod [Lk. 23:14-15]; Pilate [Lk. 23:4, 14; Matt. 27:24]; the Sanhedrin [Matt. 26:59-60]; the thief on the cross [Lk. 23:40-42]; Judas [Matt. 27:4]). SO, on the 14th of Nisan, in accord with Exodus 12, because Jesus was found to be blameless (without spot/blemish), at 9 a.m. in the morning, as the animal Passover lambs were being brought into the Temple to be slain, our perfect Passover Lamb Jesus was nailed to a wooden cross. At 3 p.m., as the last animal Passover lamb was killed by the high priest in the Temple, Jesus cried out on the cross, “It is finished” - and He gave up His spirit.

It’s Lamb Selection day prior to Passover. Jesus is riding into Jerusalem on the colt of a donkey. He’s entering Jerusalem along with all the animal Passover lambs. How did the people respond to Jesus at His arrival? John 12:12 tells us that the people took palm branches and went out to meet Him. Is that how Jewish people celebrated Passover? NO! On the Feast of Tabernacles God instructed the children of Israel to gather branches to rejoice before Him – and to look forward to the time during the Millennial Kingdom when He will tabernacle/dwell with them. Jesus, in His journey to Jerusalem, was sending a message to the people. They were hailing Him as King – the One Who would dwell with them in the Messianic Kingdom!

Jesus linked Himself historically and geographically to a particular event and place in Israel's past that would RESONATE with the people. II Sam. 7:16 – God made a promise to King David about a king from his lineage Who would occupy the throne. This King would be – the Messiah. Let's go back to about 975 BC - to a time when King David was rejected by Israel and driven into exile by his own son, Absalom. Absalom plotted and enticed David's most trusted adviser, Ahithophel (II Sam. 15:12), to join him. Together they led a rebellion against the King. David had no choice but to – get out of Jerusalem. II Samuel 15:13-14, 23, 30. David and his entourage left Jerusalem. They traveled EAST of Jerusalem and ascended the Mount of Olives to begin their exile across the Jordan River (II Sam. 17:22). Take note of these geographical locations! An ally of David's met them "a little past the top of the mountain" (Mt. of Olives) with two saddled donkeys (II Sam. 16:1-2) for David's household to ride to the place of exile. Here we see the REJECTION of King David by his SON. David expressed great grief over Absalom's death. He was left nearly inconsolable, "O my son, Absalom, my son, my son, Absalom. If only I had died in your place! O, Absalom, my son, my son!" (II Sam. 18:33)

God is forever faithful. He kept His promise to David. Solomon came to the throne in 971 BC and vastly expanded the borders, influence and wealth of Israel. Following the division of the Kingdom and the exile of the Jewish people, they longed for their nation to know prosperity and peace as they had known under Solomon. The Jewish people longed for the Messiah to come and to restore to them the Kingdom! FAST FORWARD. . . to a spring day in 29 AD (some say 30 AD). It was 1,000 years since Solomon had been crowned king. AND – it was nearly PASSOVER – which speaks to God's DELIVERANCE!

For Jesus, the time had come. NOW - it was TIME! It was the 10th of Nisan – Lamb Selection Day in Israel. It was time for Jesus, the PERFECT Passover Lamb, to enter Jerusalem. I Cor. 5:7 – "Christ our Passover was sacrificed for us." Jesus chose not only the day to enter Jerusalem, He also chose the route to Jerusalem. That route was King David's path of retreat up the Mt. of Olives and over the Jordan River. Jesus and his entourage, including the disciples, began their journey to Jerusalem from the "beyond the Jordan," Scripture tells us – from the EAST side of the Jordan. Jesus had been ministering in Galilee. Matt. 19:1 tells us that He departed from Galilee and came to the region of Judea "beyond the Jordan" – again, the area to which David had fled in exile. Consider – Jesus could've traveled due south from Galilee to Jerusalem. But He took a "left" and crossed the Jordan River to get "beyond the Jordan" – only to recross the Jordan River on His way to Jerusalem. Jesus orchestrated His route to communicate that – THE MESSIAH HAD COME! The Son of David had arrived! (See map included in handout)

After crossing the Jordan River on His way to Jerusalem, Jesus passed through Jericho which was the first city to be conquered by the children of Israel in Joshua's day – when they were fighting for a kingdom. In Mark 10:46 we read that a gathering throng

joined Jesus near Jericho. Luke 19:11 tells us that when they were nearing Jerusalem, the disciples thought that the Kingdom of God would appear immediately. It's here that (Luke 19:12ff) Jesus shared a parable with a kingdom theme – the parable of the ten minas (Luke 19:12ff). Jesus told them of a nobleman who was rejected and who went into a far country to receive a Kingdom and tells them that this nobleman would RETURN. Jesus would soon depart into heaven (far country) to receive His Kingdom – and would return.

At the Mount of Olives (Matt. 21:1) at Bethphage on the eastern slope of the Mt. of Olives, Jesus sent two of His disciples ahead to unloose two donkeys - a donkey and its colt - for His final entrance. Jesus didn't need the donkeys for transportation. He had already walked across miles of steep terrain. The two donkeys were a "prop". David had received two donkeys (II. Sam. 16:1-2) at the Mount of Olives – on the eastern slope - as he was going into exile.

Jesus' followers were exuberant as Jesus made His way to Jerusalem. They lined the roadway with their cloaks and palm branches. They made a smooth path for Jesus, so unlike the one the barefoot David walked as he fled Jerusalem. They cried, "Hosanna to the Son of David! Blessed is He Who comes in the name of the Lord! Blessed is the coming kingdom of our father David! Blessed is the King of Israel! Hosanna in the highest. "Hosanna" (hosha'na in Hebrew) means, "Save now!"

The cheering crowd distressed some of the Pharisees who called out to Jesus and said, "Teacher, rebuke Your disciples." (Luke 19:39) Jesus refused and told the Pharisees that if His followers were silenced, the stones would cry out (Luke 19:40). Stones? What day did Jesus ride into Jerusalem? The 10th of Nisan. He had started EAST of the JORDAN RIVER – He crossed the Jordan River on that day... on the 10th of Nisan. In Joshua 4:19 we read that Joshua and the children of Israel crossed the Jordan into the Promised Land -- on the 10th of Nisan!!! And, Joshua was instructed by God to set up memorial stones – stones of remembrance. These stones were to be "... a sign among you when your children ask in time to come saying, 'What do these stones mean to you?' Then you shall answer them that the waters of the Jordan were cut off before the ARK OF THE COVENANT of the Lord; when it crossed over the Jordan (from the EAST of the Jordan). . . . And these stones shall be for a memorial to the children of Israel forever." (Josh. 4:4-7). The Ark of the Covenant represented the presence of the Lord in Scripture. On the 10th of Nisan in approx. 29 AD, Jesus, God in the flesh, crossed the Jordan River! The Ark of the Covenant with the mercy seat on top where blood was sprinkled from sacrifices on Yom Kippur points to Jesus and His sacrifice for us! Was Jesus declaring Himself to the people when He rode into Jerusalem before His crucifixion? Were the stones, a memorial to God's faithfulness, crying out – while the people were hailing Him? THE Stone was crying out - the Stone that the builders rejected Who has become the chief cornerstone? (Psalm 118:22)!

Following His triumphal entry, Jesus cried out to His people, "O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, how often I would have gathered you as a hen gathers her chicks under her wings, and

you would not." (Matt. 23:37) Perhaps this cry of Jesus mirrored David's cry for Absalom. "O Absalom, my son, my son. . . ."

During passion week we see Judas. . . and we see another link to David's story. Judas, like King David's most trusted counselor, Ahithophel, who had advised Absalom on how best to capture and kill the king, was a traitor. Judas told Jesus' enemies where Jesus could be found. Judas hanged himself (Matt. 27:5). "Now when Ahithophel saw that his advice was not followed, he saddled a donkey and arose and went home to his house, to his city. Then he put his household in order, and hanged himself. . . ." (II Sam. 17:23).

Jesus' entry to Jerusalem was triumphal – for the moment. But then the masses who had followed Him -- scattered. Some joined the crowd that called for His crucifixion. Peter denied Him. The disciples fled aside from John who was at the foot of the cross on the 14th of Nisan, on the day of Passover, when Jesus was crucified. This was the King? This was restoration? Where was the kingdom that had been promised?

BUT JESUS has succeeded BEYOND anyone's imagination. He is VICTORIOUS! He ascended to receive a kingdom which He will set up on earth. And, He has conquered sin and death. Hebrews 2:14 - through death, Jesus destroyed Satan who had the power of death, and through His death, Jesus released the captives.

Jesus' death means VICTORY for us. Through His death and resurrection He gives us, those who will receive Him (His gift of forgiveness) – those who will trust in Him for their salvation - LIFE – ETERNAL LIFE.

Jesus rose from the dead on the day after Sabbath – on Resurrection Sunday which was the Jewish Feast of First Fruits (Lev. 23:9-14; I Cor. 15:23; John 12:23). Jesus is our "first fruits" (I Cor. 15:23). The first fruits were the first part of the harvest. Presenting the first fruits consecrated the entire harvest to God. The first fruits is a pledge/guarantee of the harvest to come. Jesus is our GUARANTEE that we who have asked Him for forgiveness of our sin, we who have trusted in Him for salvation, will also be resurrected!! Jesus ascended into heaven. His return as conquering King is imminent – it's an "any moment" occurrence! Are we ready?

SUGGESTED HOMEWORK:

Reread the handout. Turn to the passages in the Bible. Make observations and ask questions. Find your answers from Scripture.

Journal your thoughts and questions about Jesus' Triumphal Entry.

Share this lesson with someone who doesn't attend this class.

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Week 4 – Lamb Selection Day/Jesus’ Triumphal Entry

QUESTIONS:

What was new to you in this lesson?

Do you see the connection between Jesus’ triumphal entry and King David’s fleeing from Jerusalem? If not, why not?

If you do see the connection, in what way might it bolster your belief in Scripture?

When you read of Jesus being called, “Son of David,” what truths are relayed through that title?

Will this impact your celebration of “Palm Sunday”? If so, how?