

JESUS IN THE FEASTS OF ISRAEL

Week 6 - Jesus of Nazareth, King of the Jews: His Crucifixion and Resurrection/Feast of First Fruits

Who is Jesus?

He is the Anointed of God, the Messiah/Mashiach, He is the beloved Son of God, the Bread of life, the Light of the world, the bright and morning star, Immanuel – God in the flesh, God with us, the prince of peace, the Son of David, the door – the door at PASSOVER with the blood of the Lamb. . .and much more. . . .

Jesus was crucified on the Feast of Passover (14th of Nisan) and was resurrected on the Jewish Feast of First Fruits (following the Sabbath). Romans 5:8 – *God demonstrated His love toward us in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.* Jesus' crucifixion is such a vivid demonstration of God's unconditional love. Jesus, in His crucifixion, took our judgment/punishment. Jesus saved us from God's wrath. And, in His resurrection, Jesus is our first fruits. Paul tells us in I Cor. 15:20 – *But now Christ is risen from the dead, and has become the firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep.* Jesus' resurrection proved that He is indeed the Messiah of Israel – of the world! If He had not risen from the dead – our faith is in vain/it's empty (I Cor. 15:14).

Who is Jesus TO YOU?

Why did Jesus have to die? What are we asking with that question?

Before we can come to grips with anything God does, we have to first acknowledge that His ways are not our ways, His thoughts are not our thoughts—they are higher than ours (Isaiah 55:8). In addition, Deuteronomy 32:4 reminds us that “*He is the Rock, His works are perfect, and all His ways are just. A faithful God Who does no wrong, upright and just is He.*” Therefore, the plan of salvation He has designed is perfect, just, and upright.

Scripture defines the Gospel for us – the good news: “*Moreover, brethren, I declare to you the gospel. . . that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, ⁴ and that He was buried, and that He rose again the third day according to the Scriptures. . . .*” (I Cor. 15:1, 3-4). Our sinless Jesus bled and died on a cross. The Bible explains why Jesus' death and resurrection provide the only entrance to heaven. In Romans 6:23 we're told that the wages of sin is death. There are consequences for sin. Something has to die because we've sinned. Our God is holy (Lev. 19:2). Overlooking sin would make our holy God unjust. He would then cease to be God. Good works cannot pay for the penalty of our sin. “*All our righteousnesses are as filthy rags*” (Isaiah 64:6b).

God gave the Jewish people the sacrificial system which was observed for approximately 1500 years with morning and evening sacrifices and multiple sacrifices on feast days. The animal died in the person's place. The sacrificial system looked forward to the ultimate sacrifice – Jesus the Messiah, the perfect

Passover Lamb of God! God's perfect Son fulfilled God's perfect requirement of God's perfect law. "*God made Him (Jesus), Who knew no sin, to be sin for us that we might become the righteousness of God in Him*" (2 Corinthians 5:21). Jesus didn't become a sinner. He took our sins upon Him. Jesus is our sin-bearer.

Isaiah foretold Jesus' death through crucifixion. *But He was wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised for our iniquities; the chastisement for our peace was upon Him, and by His stripes we are healed. All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned, every one, to his own way; and the LORD has laid on Him the iniquity of us all.* Between 700 to 800 years later, Isaiah's prophecy was fulfilled in Jesus. Multitudes followed Jesus - to be taught by Him, to be healed by Him. The religious leaders scorned Him. Mobs cried out, "Crucify Him!" Soldiers beat, mocked, and crucified Him. As Isaiah foretold, Jesus was crucified in between two criminals (Isa. 53:9) but was buried in a rich man's tomb (Isa. 53:9). But He didn't remain in the grave. Because God accepted Jesus' sacrifice, He fulfilled another prophecy by raising Jesus from the dead (Psalm 16:10; Isaiah 26:19).

At the last Passover Seder between Jesus and His followers, the Messiah, the perfect Lamb of God, told the redemption story. He told the story of physical deliverance from bondage to slavery which spoke to eternal deliverance from bondage to sin to eternal life. Jesus relayed what had happened at that first Passover in Egypt close to 1500 years prior. . . and then He fulfilled it on the cross the next morning!

Matt. 26:26-28 – "*And as they were eating, Jesus took bread, blessed and broke it, and gave it to the disciples and said, 'Take, eat; this is My body.' Then He took the cup, and gave thanks, and gave it to them, saying, 'Drink from it, all of you.'*"²⁸ *For this is My blood of the new covenant, which is shed for many for the remission of sins.*

The cup of the blood of the new covenant is the cup of redemption that is taken at the Passover Seder. Cup in Scripture often refers to judgment. This was a cup that Jesus could partake of only with outstretched arms on the cross. Jesus became the cup of redemption and poured out His life so that we could be in a right relationship with God.

Matt. 26:30 – "*And when they had sung a hymn, they went out to the Mount of Olives.*"

Jesus was arrested by the Romans. A "great multitude" (Matt. 26:47; Mark 14:43) with swords and clubs came to arrest Jesus in the Garden of Gethsemane. John 18:3 describes this multitude as a "detachment of troops." This refers to a cohort of Roman soldiers which equates to 1,000 men at full strength.

In the Garden of Gethsemane. . . . In the garden. . .

In the garden of Eden, man sinned. The curse is placed on man and on the earth in the garden. In the garden, the promise of salvation/redemption is given (Gen. 3:15). In a garden, Jesus was crucified – “Now in the place where He was crucified there was a garden. . . .” (John 19:41).

Matt. 26:59-60 “Now the chief priests, the elders,^[g] and all the council sought false testimony against Jesus to put Him to death,⁶⁰ but found none. Even though many false witnesses came forward, they found none.”

Jesus faced six trials – three religious trials and three civil trials. There were many illegalities connected with the trials of Jesus:

- No trial was to be held during feast time. It was Passover – and Jesus was tried at six trials.
- No trial was to be held at night. Jesus was arrested at night and taken directly to Caiaphas, the High Priest.
- If the death penalty was given, a night must pass before the sentence was carried; however, only a few hours passed before Jesus was nailed to the cross.
- The Jewish people had no authority to execute anyone. There were three religious/Jewish trials (Annas, Caiaphas, Herod).
- The accused was to be given counsel or representation; Jesus had none.
- The accused was not to be asked self-incriminating questions; however, Jesus was asked if He was the Christ.

Jesus will one day judge the world but not before the world judges Him!

Jesus was sentenced to death. He was beaten and mocked. He was led away to Golgotha – place of the skull – to be crucified. Crucifixion was the Roman capital punishment. Criminals were crucified. Crucifixion was forbidden to any Roman citizen no matter how serious his crime. Crucifixion was unimaginably painful and inhumane. Victims of crucifixion could live up to six days! BUT Jesus remained on the cross for six hours. He had to die when He did. He had to be placed in the tomb on the Feast of Unleavened Bread.

On the day after Passover, on the 15th day of Nisan, the children of Israel left Egypt. Egypt is a picture of the world in Scripture (Isaiah 30:1-2 and Isaiah 31:1). The children of Israel, following their redemption/deliverance through the blood of the Passover lambs, were taken out/separated from the world.

Jesus was buried on the 15th day of Nisan. Matt. 27:57 – it was the day after Passover – “in the evening” - that He was buried. In His death He was separated from the world.

When we are redeemed through Jesus blood, God separates us from the world – SANCTIFICATION.

What does the OT teach about being hanged on a tree? Deut. 21:22/23b - “*If a man has committed a sin deserving of death, and he is put to death, and you hang him on a tree, . . . he who is hanged is accursed of God.*”

And because Jesus became a curse for us – we are set free! Gal. 3:13 – “*Christ has redeemed us from the curse of the law, having become a curse for us (for it is written, ‘Cursed is everyone who hangs on a tree’),*”

Criminals who were crucified had their crimes inscribed on a sign which was attached to the cross. The sign over Jesus’ head on the cross:

THIS IS JESUS THE KING OF THE JEWS (Matt. 27:37)

Jesus/Yeshua – God is salvation

King – melech

Jews – Yehudah (praise)

Each of the writers of the Gospels quotes the inscription, the list of crimes. However, each account is different from the others. How do we explain the differences? Firstly, both Luke and John point out that the inscription was printed in Greek, Latin, and Hebrew. The varying accounts may simply reflect variations in language. Secondly, each of the writers, totally inspired by God, exercised his “editorial prerogative” – emphasizing the portion of the inscription he deemed to be most significant. The full inscription, from all the Gospel accounts, reads, “THIS IS JESUS OF NAZARETH, THE KING OF THE JEWS.”

Let’s look at the significance of this wording. In John 19:19 we have the sign noted as JESUS OF NAZARETH, THE KING OF THE JEWS (John 19:19)

Jesus/Yeshua – God is salvation

Nazareth – connotation – germ. Root word: nazar -BRANCH

(Messianic title). This is the Messiah!

King – melech

Jews – Yehudah

God, the Branch (the Messiah) is the King of the Jews. What a proclamation!

Crucifixion was the height of man’s inhumanity to man and the height of God’s love for man. Man’s freedom of choice was on display at Golgotha! What an ugly display. God used man’s tainted/polluted freedom of choice to unfold His perfect, divine, and redemptive plan!

At the fall of man in the garden of Eden, God told Adam, “*Cursed is the ground for your sake; in toil you shall eat of it all the days of your life.*”¹⁸ *Both thorns and thistles it shall bring forth for you.*” (Gen. 3:17-18) The earth was cursed at the fall. The Roman soldiers fashioned a crown of thorns with spikes several inches in length and put it on Jesus’ head. The thorns – such a display of the cursed earth – most likely deeply cut into Jesus’ scalp causing bleeding and pain.

And in the midst of the severe flogging He received. . . so that His “visage was marred more than any man, and His form more than the sons of men” (Isa. 52:14). . . and in the midst of the unimaginable pain from the crucifixion. . . what did Jesus cry from the cross? “Father, forgive them for they do not know what they are doing” (Luke 23:34). When we come to Christ in faith and repentance as a result of His drawing us to Himself (John 6:44), He says of us, “Father, forgive them,” and He does!

Matt. 27:45 – “Now from the sixth hour until the ninth hour there was darkness over all the land.” The darkness which accompanied Jesus’ crucifixion reinforced the significance of the crucifixion, as the sins of men were cast upon the sinless only begotten Son of God. Luke 23:45 tells us that the sun was darkened for three hours. The most reasonable explanation is that the darkness was a special miracle.

Matt. 27:46 – And about the ninth hour Jesus cried out with a loud voice, saying, ‘Eli, Eli, lama sabachthani?’ that is, ‘My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me?’ Did God the Father forsake His Son? Why did Jesus cry out these words from the cross? These words served as a harkening back. This was a reminder to observant Jews who knew their Scripture. King David had written these words about the crucifixion of the Messiah in Psalm 22. Jesus was reminding His people that He indeed is the Messiah. He is the One about Whom King David wrote in the Psalm.

AND, it was a reminder to observant/faithful Jews who knew their Scripture that Psalm 22, Psalm 23, and Psalm 24 should be taught and read as a unit. Jesus, by crying out the first verse of Psalm 22, was proclaiming:

- God the Father answered Him. Psa. 22:21 – . . . *You have answered Me.*
- He was reminding the people that God the Father had NOT hidden His face from Him. He heard Jesus. Psa. 22:24 – He has not. . . “*hidden His face from Him; but when He cried to Him, He heard.*”
- He was proclaiming His hope and trust in His loving Father – Psa. 23:4 – “*Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil; for You are with me; Your rod and Your staff, they comfort me.*”
 - Jesus had walked by the valley of the shadow of death on His way to Jerusalem on the 10th of Nisan.
- He was envisioning His triumphant return to heaven – Psa. 24:7-10 – “*Lift up your heads, O you gates! And be lifted up, you everlasting doors! And the King of glory shall come in.* ⁸ *Who is this King of glory? The LORD strong and mighty, the LORD mighty in battle.* ⁹ *Lift up your heads, O you gates! Lift up, you everlasting doors! And the King of glory shall come in.* ¹⁰ *Who is this King of glory? The LORD of hosts, He is the King of glory.*” (Eph. 4:7-10)

John 19:28-30 – After this, Jesus, knowing^[e] that all things were now accomplished, that the Scripture might be fulfilled, said, ‘I thirst!’ ²⁹ Now a vessel full of sour wine was sitting there; and they filled a sponge with sour wine, put it on hyssop, and put

it to His mouth. ³⁰ So when Jesus had received the sour wine, He said, 'It is finished! And bowing His head, He gave up His spirit.

“It is finished” - Jesus’ work was completed – the seed of the woman had CRUSHED the seed of the serpent (Gen. 3:15). Heb. 2:14 – “. . . that through death, He might DESTROY him who had the power of death, that is the devil.”

“It is finished” means:

- “It is finished” is *tetelestai*, an accounting term that means “paid in full.” When Jesus uttered those words, He was declaring the debt owed to His Father was wiped away completely and forever. Jesus eliminated the debt owed by mankind—the debt of sin.
- Jesus had finished the eternal purpose of the cross. It stands today as a finished work, the foundation of our reconciliation to God, paying fully the debt we owe to God. “We owed a debt we couldn’t pay; He paid a debt He didn’t owe.” What love is this? If you were the only one of earth, Jesus would have come to die for you!
- At some point before He cried out **it is finished**, a spiritual transaction took place. God the Father laid upon God the Son all the guilt and wrath our sin deserved, and He bore it in Himself perfectly, totally satisfying the wrath of God for us. In that transaction, God gave us who believed and who would believe, His righteousness (II Cor. 5:21)
 - Rom. 6:23 – “The wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.”

What was finished?

- Believers are not under the authority of the Mosaic Law (Romans 4:13-16; Romans 10:4)
 - The Mosaic Law was temporary (Gal. 3:19)
 - The Law is from God and it reflects Who God is. The Law restores the soul (Psa. 19:7) because it shows us our need – of the Redeemer!
 - The Law is a tutor teaching mankind that we need a Savior (Gal. 3:24).
 - The Law only condemns; it cannot save! (Romans 3:20; Romans 8:3; II Cor. 3:7-11)
- The death of Jesus rendered inoperative the sin-nature’s authority and power to reign over the believer. The believer is dead to sin – free from the domination of the sin-nature. The sin-nature is not dead; however, the believer is dead to it in that he is no longer obligated to obey its demands as he was before he was saved (Romans 6).
- The death of Jesus is the grounds for the believer’s forgiveness and cleansing (I John 1:9). Jesus’ death obtained eternal redemption (Heb. 9:11-12).

- Jesus died not only for the sins that would be committed after His death, but also for the sins committed prior to His death. He died for the sins of NT saints and also for the sins of OT saints (Romans 3:25; Acts 17:30; Hebrews 10:4)
- The death of Jesus meant the spoiling of principalities and powers – He triumphed over them (Col. 2:14; John 12:31; John 16:11; Heb. 2:14).
- Established Him as our Great High Priest (Heb. 9:11-12)
- The blood of Jesus cleansed the heavenly sanctuary (Heb. 9:21-24). The fall of Satan occurred in heaven. Therefore, the heavenly sanctuary needed the cleansing of blood just as the earthly sanctuary needed the same.
- The death of Jesus is the grounds for peace:
 - Between God and man (Romans 5:1).
 - Between Jews and Gentiles (Eph. 2:11-16; Col. 3:11).
 - On this earth (Col. 1:20) – in the Millennial Kingdom (Romans 8:21-22).
- The death of Jesus is the basis for the national salvation of Israel. Some day all Israel will believe on Him (Deut. 30:3; Jer. 31:31-34; Romans 11:25-29). The future national salvation of Israel is the precondition to Jesus' Second Coming (Zech. 12:10-ff).
- The death of Jesus is the basis for the establishment of the Millennial Kingdom (Rev. 5:8-14).

Matt. 27:51-53 – “*Then, behold, the veil of the temple was torn in two from top to bottom; and the earth quaked, and the rocks were split,⁵² and the graves were opened; and many bodies of the saints who had fallen asleep were raised;⁵³ and coming out of the graves after His resurrection, they went into the holy city and appeared to many.*”

The veil of the Temple which separated the Holy Place from the Holy of Holies was torn in two – from TOP to bottom. GOD made the way into His presence; HE opened the way to the Holy of Holies. Each year, prior to the death of the Messiah, only the High Priest could enter and sprinkle blood on the mercy seat during Yom Kippur/Day of Atonement. On that one day each year a sacrifice was offered for the sins of the people as a nation. The tearing of the veil signified that the way into God's presence was open to all through the blood of the Messiah shed on the cross.

JESUS' RESURRECTION/THE FEAST OF FIRST FRUITS

In synagogues today and in Jesus' day, on the Sabbath following Passover (the day prior to Resurrection Sunday), the Song of Solomon was/is read. Jewish people call the Song of Solomon “the Holy of Holies”.

- Song of Solomon 4:6 - *Until the cool of the day, when the shadow flees away, I will go to the mountain of myrrh and to the hill of frankincense.* The Bridegroom was anointed for burial – to die for the bride.

- Song of Solomon 5:1 – “*I have come to my garden, my sister, my spouse. . .*” – which many interpret an invitation to his garden.

The day following the Sabbath of Passover week was the Feast of First Fruits (Lev. 23:9-14). It commemorated the first harvest – the barley harvest. Jewish mindset: as God has given us the first harvest, surely He will give us the next harvest (wheat).

- The day after the Song of Solomon was read in synagogues, after sunset, a three-man delegation from the Sanhedrin emerged from the Temple, accompanied by a multitude of observers. They made their way to the Kidron Valley and ceremonially harvested the first stalks of grain. These were the first fruits.
- The grain was brought to the Temple where it was winnowed, parched, and bruised in a mortar.
- The day after Sabbath, the high priest lifted up the harvested first fruits in the Temple – lifting them up/raising them up before the Lord. Jesus rose from the dead following the Sabbath after Passover. I Cor. 15:20, 23 – Jesus is our first fruits. His resurrection guarantees the resurrection of believers in Him.

In the garden, man sinned, the curse was placed on man and the earth in the garden, but in the garden the promise of salvation/redemption was given. In a garden, Jesus was crucified. *Now in the place where He was crucified there was a garden, and in the garden a new tomb. . . .* (John 19:41). John 20:1 – Mary Magdalene came to the garden. In the garden, the curse came upon Eve first (Gen. 3:16-17ff). So, the good news of Jesus’ resurrection came to a woman first.

Mary stood outside by the tomb weeping (John 20:11-12). When she looked into the tomb, she saw two angels in white sitting, one at the head and the other at the feet, where the body of Jesus had been lying. What do we picture? The Ark of the Covenant with the Mercy Seat on top of the Ark.

John 20:16 – as Mary was weeping and telling whom she thought was the “gardener” that her Lord had been taken away and she didn’t know where they had laid Him. If the “gardener” had carried Him away, Mary asked him to tell her. Jesus responded with, “Mary!”

Here, we might say, is a welcoming into the garden – as “the Beloved” welcomed His bride in the Song of Solomon 5:1.

In Genesis, in the garden of Eden, Adam and Eve were driven out of the garden. Following the crucifixion and resurrection, the door is open.

Matt. 27:51b-53 – “. . . and the earth quaked, and the rocks were split,⁵² and the graves were opened; and many bodies of the saints who had fallen asleep were raised;⁵³ and coming out of the graves after His resurrection, they went into the holy city and appeared to many.”

. . . and many bodies of the Saints. . . . Matthew alone mentioned this miracle. Since they appeared to many people, there were ample eyewitnesses who could testify to the validity of the miracle. Nothing more is said. Here is a visible demonstration of Lev. 23:9-14 – first fruits. Jesus was NOT alone in His resurrection.

John 12:23-24 - *“The hour has come that the Son of Man should be glorified. Most assuredly I say to you, unless a grain of wheat falls to the ground and dies, it remains ALONE; but if it DIES, it produces MUCH FRUIT.”*

Jesus is the forerunner of the harvest to come – believers in Him! Jesus’ resurrection is proof of Jesus’ deity. Jesus is the BRANCH – depicting LIFE (Isa. 11:1) – *There shall come forth a Rod from the stem of Jesse, and a BRANCH shall grow out of his roots.*

Jesus is our GREAT HIGH PRIEST (Hebrews 3, 4, 5)! I Cor. 15:17 – If Christ is not risen – our faith is futile – and we are still in our sins! BUT, the author of Hebrews tells us to LOOK UNTO JESUS – the Author and Finisher of our faith – Who for the JOY that was set before Him – endured the cross – despising the shame and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God.

CONSIDER JESUS – lest you become weary and discouraged in your souls.

By the ARM/ZEROAH of the Lord, God delivered the Jewish people from Egypt: Ex. 6:6 – . . . *I will redeem you with an outstretched arm.*

Jesus – the arm/zeroah of the Lord (Isa. 53:1-2) – has redeemed us by His outstretched arms on the cross!

This was God’s plan. It remains God’s plan. It is eternally God’s plan. And, it is glorious!

Who is Jesus to you?

Who are you to Jesus?

SUGGESTED HOMEWORK:

Share with others what you learned re: Jesus’ crucifixion and His resurrection!
Continue to write in your journal.

How have you been impacted by what God has taught you re: Jesus’ crucifixion and resurrection?

How is He molding you?

Who is Jesus to you?

Who are you to Jesus?

How do you view others?

Read Acts 1 & 2 in preparation for next week’s lesson.

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Week 6 – Jesus of Nazareth, King of the Jews: His Crucifixion and Resurrection/Feast of First Fruits

QUESTIONS:

Did you learn anything new about the crucifixion and the resurrection?

How has it impacted/will it impact your love for Jesus?

How will it impact your love for others?

As you approach “passion week,” are you contemplating how you might live out that week differently than past years?

How will you observe Good Friday and Resurrection Sunday this year?

Is it significant to you that Jesus is your great High Priest? If so, how?