

THE GOSPEL OF MATTHEW – THE LAST WEEK OF JESUS’ LIFE ON EARTH
Week 6 – He MUST!
February 28, 2023

In our study of Scripture, we are to lay hold of “authorial intent.” What does that mean? Did God mean what He said in the Scripture? God inspired the authors to write what He intended for them to write as God’s plan was unfolding. We are not to place upon any text of Scripture an allegorical/spiritual meaning based on - ??? Based on what we think? According to what?

Not only *can* we take the Bible literally, but we *must* take the Bible literally. This is the only way to determine what God really is trying to communicate to us. Jesus quoted from the OT and it was always clear that He believed in its literal interpretation. Jesus cited from 14 different OT books: Genesis (Mk. 10:

The disciples took Jesus' command literally and went throughout the known world of that time preaching the gospel of Christ and telling them to "believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and you will be saved" (Acts 16:31).

When we decide which parts of the Bible are to be interpreted literally, we elevate ourselves above God. The Bible is God's Word and God meant it to be believed “literally and completely.

While I’ve mentioned several times that the chronology of Jesus’ last week is debatable... do you know what I’ve found by reading articles concerning Jesus’ crucifixion and resurrection... **OR**... what I’ve NOT found? While there is a plethora of historical documents and archaeological documents and Evangelical sermons concerning Jesus’ crucifixion and resurrection, there have only been a few that include God’s calendar for the Jewish people which are based on the dates of FEASTS OF THE LORD!

You have a chart on the Feasts. This is from Leviticus 23 – Scripture – God-breathed – inspired by the Holy Spirit. Is Leviticus 23 truth? Based on three of the spring feasts that God gave to Israel, I have only run across a few articles that teach us the chronology for Jesus’ last week on earth!

Chronology from “Lamb Selection Day” through to the Resurrection:

Nisan 10 - He **MUST** fulfill Ex. 12:1-2 – lambs to be taken into homes on 10th of Nisan; Ex. 12:5 – begin to scrutinize for blemishes

Nisan 11 through Nisan 13 – He **MUST** fulfill Ex. 12:5 – continue to scrutinize

Nisan 14 - He **MUST** fulfill Ex. 12:6 – spotless lamb(s) killed at twilight

Nisan 15 - He **MUST** fulfill Isa. 53:9 & Matt. 27:59-61- buried in a grave

Nisan 16 - He **MUST** fulfill Matt. 12:40 - remain in the grave 3 days/3 nights

Nisan 17 – He **MUST** fulfill Gen. 8:4 & Lev. 23:9-1 – rise from the dead

AND JESUS DID FULFILL THE SPECIFIC FEASTS ON THE SPECIFIC DAY!!

(NOTE: THE ABOVE DATES ENCOMPASS: PASSOVER; UNLEAVENED BREAD;
FEAST OF FIRST FRUITS)

We know that everything about Jesus' suffering is eternally triumphant...because it has been God's plan from eternity past. Rev. 13:8 – Jesus is *the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world*. And we must read it/study it from God's perspective!

2

We can rejoice with Jesus in the cross. The author of Hebrews, writing to Jewish people in the first century, told his readership in Heb. 12:2 to focus on Jesus, Who, for the joy that was set before Him, endured the cross, despising the shame...for us!! We need to abide in Jesus' JOY!

Have you been envisioning Jerusalem in Jesus' day? Over 2.5M Jewish people from the known world converged upon Jerusalem to celebrate Passover which speaks to freedom and deliverance. They had enough of Rome! In Jesus' day tensions were high in the land. The Roman authorities were on the alert esp. at Jewish religious holy days. The people were stirred up. The Jews were filled with thoughts of a conquering King Messiah. Many longed for the Messiah Who would put an end to ROME!

Some did not want the Messiah. These "some" had power and they didn't want any Messiah – even if Jesus was THE Messiah. They didn't want His coming on the scene messing up their status...taking away their power (John 11:48; Acts 4:16)!

Jewish zealots wanted to take matters into their own hands and overthrow the Gentile empire that was oppressing Israel - Rome. Yet, we read in Scripture of God stirring the hearts of several of the Jewish rulers (Jn. 12:42) and many of the Jewish populus coming to faith in Jesus.

Why wasn't the entire country going after Jesus in faith - believing He is the Messiah? Had agendas trumped truth? Had their experience trumped their knowledge of God?

And Jesus came into Jerusalem by way of the Mount of Olives! Did they remember that the glory of God had departed from the temple and up the Mount of Olives in Ezekiel's day? In His entry into Jerusalem at "Lamb Selection Day," Jesus, after being hailed as King by many, returned to the temple to the Court of the Gentiles. In the Second Temple (Zerubbabel's which was enhanced by Herod) there were four separate "courts," separated from one another and each designed for a different purpose: the Court of the Gentiles, the Court of the Women, the Court of Israel (or the Court of Men), and the Court of Priests.

The Court of the Gentiles was the outermost courtyard and the only area of the temple where non-Jews were allowed. As its name implies, the Court of the Gentiles was accessible to Gentiles, foreigners, and those who were considered impure. There, worshippers could mill about, exchange money, and buy animals for sacrifices. It was from the Court of the Gentiles that Jesus, on two occasions (John

2:11–12; Matthew 21:17–23), drove out the money changers, declaring, “It is written, ‘My house shall be called a house of prayer,’ but you make it a den of robbers” (Matthew 21:13).

Might Jesus have driven out all those who bought and sold in the temple and overturned the tables of the money changers because God had called Israel to be a witness to the Gentile nations and they were not reflecting Who God is in this outer court where exorbitant prices were charged for the change of money and for the sacrifices? In Isa. 56:7 God called the temple a House of prayer for all nations. ALL nations! ALL the Gentile nations!

3

In Jesus’ day the outer court of the Gentiles was marked off from the inner court where the Jewish people were permitted to go. The separation was noted as “the middle wall of partition” (Eph. 2:14). Beyond this no Gentile could go. The Jewish people had erected a boundary fence, the “Soreg,” between the Court of the Gentiles and the Court of the Israelites with a warning - an inscription promising death to any non-Israelite who passed beyond it into the Court of the Israelites

What were the Jewish people thinking when Jesus rode into Jerusalem on the colt of a donkey? Did they want HIM? There were those, however, who were riveted on the Kingdom of God. And, the Messiah, they believed, was a means to an end. What about us? Do we want God or do we only want His blessings?

Were you aware that when Jesus rode into Jerusalem, He rode in on an unbroken colt of a donkey. Mk. 11:2 and Lk. 19:30 tell us that it was a colt on which no one had sat! It was untamed! Who is this Man Who would ride on such an animal? The Creator of that animal! The Creator of the universe! Perhaps this is a foreshadowing of Millennial conditions on the earth that we find in Isa. 11:6 - *The wolf also shall dwell with the lamb, the leopard shall lie down with the young goat, the calf and the young lion and the fatling together; and a little child shall lead them.*

And, on that day, “Lamb Selection Day” before Passover, Jesus told the Jewish people that they did not know the time of their visitation (Luke 19:44). The Jewish people had been told through the prophet Daniel 9:25 as we mentioned last week.

The book of Daniel then teaches in Dan. 9:26 that the Messiah would be cut off...He would die before the destruction of the second temple in 70 AD. The Jewish people had been given the time when the Messiah would come. And, Jesus came before 70 AD. He came at the prophesied time. What a wonderful truth that we can share with our Jewish friends!

But the nation of Israel, as a whole, missed the time of Jesus' visitation – His coming as Messiah the Prince.

Do we realize that we've been given the time of the death of the Messiah in the Hebrew Scriptures?! Do you see the significance of grasping the big picture of the Bible?

Moving toward Jesus' crucifixion, do we ever ask, why did it have to be this way? Why was the will of God through the Messiah, His beloved One, so severe? The battle rages. Sin is ugly. Sin destroys. Spiritual warfare is in full play...the Seed of the woman against the seed of the serpent (Gen. 3:15)

God's plan was being fulfilled. And, at the cross there was a clash! This is how we need to understand it.

WHY did Jesus have to die? When we ask such a question, are we wondering why God couldn't find "another way" to forgive our sins? Might we be implying that the way He has chosen is not the best course of our action and that some other

4

method would be better. If we are, how are we then defining a "better method"? One that seems right to us?

We need to hold unto the truth that 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, Moses, in 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.*"

At His last Passover Seder, Jesus shared the redemption story with His disciples. He shared the first Passover in Egypt when God physically delivered the children of Israel from bondage through the blood of the spotless lambs that were slain. At His last Seder on earth, Jesus revealed that His death is the basis for deliverance from bondage to sin and the basis for eternal life.

At the Passover Seder Jesus recounted the story as only He could do. And then He fulfilled it on the cross!

At His last Seder, Jesus confirmed that the Kingdom of God that was promised to Israel will be in the future – in the Millennial Kingdom. Matt. 26:29 - *I say to you,*

I will not drink of this fruit of the vine from now on until that day when I drink it new with you in My Father's kingdom.

We read in Matt. 26:30 – *And when they had sung a hymn, they went out to the Mount of Olives.* Traditionally, every Passover Seder ends with a song. Often Psalm 115 through Psalm 118 is sung. Psalm 118:24 – *'This is the day the Lord has made, let us rejoice and be glad in it'*! This is what they sang as Jesus made His way to the Garden of Gethsemane and ultimately to the cross for us.

John 18:1 – Jesus and His disciples went out *over the Brook Kidron, where there was a garden, which He and His disciples entered.* “Kidron” means *dusky, gloomy.* The Brook Kidron has been called the Black Brook. WHY? The blood from the altar in the Temple where 256,500 lambs were slaughtered at Passover drained into the Kidron Valley into the Brook.

Between the temple and the garden was the Kidron Valley – a wadi (a wash or ravine) that was dry except for the heavy winter rains, when it could become a pretty wild river.

Josephus wrote of the 256,500 lambs that were slain at the Passover in Jesus' day. What a tremendous amount of blood drained from 256,500 lambs along with the water used in the ritual cleansings in the temple. From the altar where the blood from the lambs was splashed, there was a channel down to the Brook Kidron and through that channel the blood of the Passover lambs was carried away to the Kidron Valley, outside the temple mount walls. Perhaps the Valley and the Brook were named Kidron which means “black” or “gloom” because of its blood-stained river bed and banks.

What were Jesus' thoughts as He walked across that brook? Was He thinking of the blood that He would shed the next day – the blood shed for us?

5

We've seen many “types” of Jesus in the Hebrew Scriptures. We know from reading Lev. 16 that the Lord's goat and the scapegoat at Yom Kippur were types of the Messiah in His work of redemption. In Lev. 16, the scapegoat carried the sins of the people of Israel away to the wilderness...not to be seen again.

When the second temple was built after the Jewish people returned to Israel from exile, there was a two-tiered bridge spanning the Kidron Valley from the Temple Mount to the Mount of Olives. Along this bridge on the Day of Atonement each year a goat symbolically bearing the sins of the people walked. Following Jesus' last Passover Seder with His disciples – He walked this way...the way of the scapegoat. The scapegoat was the sin-bearer that removed the sins of the people of Israel once a year!

John 18:1 - *over the Brook Kidron, where there was a garden, which He and His disciples entered.*

Matt. 26:36-38 - *Then Jesus came with them to a place called Gethsemane, and said to the disciples, 'Sit here while I go and pray over there.'*³⁷ *And He took with Him Peter and the two sons of Zebedee, and He began to be sorrowful and deeply distressed.*³⁸ *Then He said to them, 'My soul is exceedingly sorrowful, even to death. Stay here and watch with Me.'*

As we move forward to Jesus' crucifixion, let's consider the timing of the crucifixion and resurrection. As the Church, when do we celebrate Resurrection Sunday? "Easter is observed on the Sunday following the first full Moon that occurs on or after the March equinox according to the Old Farmers' Almanac!

From its earliest days, the Church annually celebrated the anniversary of Jesus' resurrection at Passover. The first believers in Jesus were Jewish. The early Church was primarily Jewish.

When Constantine became Emperor, one of the purposes of the Council of Nicea in 325 was to settle the date of the resurrection. Constantine did not want Easter to be celebrated on the Jewish Passover. The Council of Nicea accordingly required the feast of the resurrection to be celebrated on a Sunday and never on the day of the Jewish Passover.

What about Jesus' crucifixion? Jesus was crucified on Passover – the 14th of Nisan. Jesus' death has been celebrated by the Church on a Friday. The 14th of Nisan on the Jewish calendar does not always fall on a Friday. Passover is celebrated according to God's calendar which is recorded in Lev. 23! (This year within the Jewish community, Passover begins at sundown on Wednesday, April 5, 2023, and ends at sundown on Thursday, April 13, 2023)

Where do we go with this? Why is there a difference?

Firstly, non-Jews are not following the Jewish calendar – we're not following the Feasts of the Lord in Lev. 23.

Did Jesus and His disciples and the Jewish people in their day follow the Jewish calendar? YES!!! So, the timing of the crucifixion and the resurrection

need to be calculated according to what transpired when Jesus was crucified and resurrected!

The Gospels place Jesus' death the day before a Sabbath!

And so, we observe Jesus' crucifixion on Friday. BUT, if Jesus died on Friday afternoon, then He would have only been in the grave for two nights.

What did Jesus tell the scribes and the Pharisees?

Matt. 12:40 - *For as Jonah was three days and three nights in the belly of the great fish, so will the Son of Man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth.*

Do we take Jesus at His word?

Let's look at Lev. 23:6-7. We read of Passover on the 14th of Nisan when the lambs would be killed (Ex. 12:6 - *Now you shall keep it until the fourteenth day of the same month. Then the whole assembly of the congregation of Israel shall kill it at twilight.*

Unleavened Bread begins on the 15th of Nisan, the day following the killing of the lambs. AND, we NEED to note that people were to observe the first day of Unleavened Bread as a "holy convocation" and they were to do no work. It was a Sabbath. It didn't need to fall on a Saturday. It needed to fall on the 15th of Nisan!

John 19:31 - *...because it was the Preparation Day, that the bodies should not remain on the cross on the Sabbath (for that Sabbath was a high day), the Jews asked Pilate that their legs might be broken, and that they might be taken away.*

"Preparation Day" was the day before the Sabbath. But, this Sabbath when Jesus was crucified, was a "High Sabbath" – celebrated on the first day of Unleavened Bread.

My view is that Jesus was crucified on Thursday, Friday was the "High Sabbath," and the next day was the regular Sabbath followed by Sunday.

In some of the articles I've read over the years and sermons I've heard, there are few – very few - who write or speak about the "High Sabbath" that week when Jesus was crucified.

John the disciple spoke of the "High Sabbath"

The Jewish day begins at sundown based on the creation:

Gen. 1:3-5 - *Then God said, 'Let there be light'; and there was light. ⁴ And God saw the light, that it was good; and God divided the light from the darkness. ⁵ God called the light Day, and the darkness He called Night. So the evening and the morning were the first day.*

I'm suggesting...

14th of Nisan began Wednesday at sundown the year Jesus was crucified

After sundown – Jesus' last Passover Seder, time in the Garden of Gethsemane, Jesus' arrest, Jesus' trials

Thursday morning on the 14th of Nisan – Jesus' crucifixion ON the day of Passover – 9 a.m. to 3 p.m.

Passover lambs were slain in the Temple. Jesus' died at

3 p.m. – still the 14th of Nisan. At this time Jesus' soul was in Sheol/Hades.

1st day in the grave

7

15th of Nisan (Matt. 27:57) at sundown, Thursday night – Jesus was buried in Joseph of Arimathea's tomb.

1st night in the grave

15th of Nisan on Friday BEFORE sundown – Jesus' body remained in the grave

2nd day in the grave

16th of Nisan at sundown, Friday night – Jesus' body remained in the grave

2nd night in the grave

16th of Nisan, Saturday BEFORE sundown – Jesus' body remained in the grave

3rd day in the grave

17th of Nisan at sundown, Saturday night – Jesus' body remained in the grave

3rd night in the grave

John 20:1 - *Now the first day of the week Mary Magdalene went to the tomb early, while it was still dark, and saw that the stone had been taken away from the tomb.*

HE IS RISEN!!!!

QUESTIONS

What was new to you? WHY is it new?

So what? Is this significant? If so, WHY?

If you're marveling at God, WHY?

What are your questions?

Did you have V8 moments?

Is this worthy of sharing? How will you share this lesson?

SUGGESTED HOMEWORK

Reread Week 6 with Bible references.

Continue in your journal. Note your V8 moments. Note what impacted you and why.

With whom will you share this aspect of Jesus' crucifixion and resurrection? To whom (a non-believer perhaps) may it be striking?

Read Week 7 when you receive it.