

THE BIG PICTURE OF SCRIPTURE THROUGH THE MAJOR AND MINOR PROPHETS

Week 11 - Lamb Selection Day

April 2, 2024

Zech. 9:9 - Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion! Shout, O daughter of Jerusalem! Behold, your King is coming to you; He is just and having salvation, lowly and riding on a donkey, a colt, the foal of a donkey.

This was Proclamation Day. “Messiah the Prince,” as Daniel had described Him in Dan. 9:25...HAD COME! “NOW” was the time! And, what a perfect time to proclaim Himself. Jerusalem was crowded with Jewish people. Why? In Deut. 16:16 we read that God told all Jewish men in the known world to appear before Him in Jerusalem three times each year - at the Feast of Passover (also known as Unleavened Bread [Matt. 26:17]), at the Feast of Weeks (which the Church knows as Pentecost), and at the Feast of Tabernacles. Jewish men often traveled to Jerusalem for these feasts with their families. In Lk. 2:41-42 we read that Mary and Joseph took Jesus to Jerusalem for Passover. The roads were FULL of Jewish pilgrims traveling to Jerusalem before Passover. The Jewish population at Passover swelled to over 2M!!

The day that Jesus rode into Jerusalem on the colt of a donkey was the day that Jewish people called “Lamb Selection Day” – the 10th day of the first month on the Jewish religious calendar. (NOTE: Nisan – Babylonian for the month [Neh. 2:1; Esther 3:7] Abib – Canaanite [Ex. 13:4])

Exodus 12:1-5 tells us that at the first Passover in Egypt, God had commanded the Jewish people to take a lamb into each home on the 10th day of the first month (the month of Abib at that time)...they were to make their count for the lamb according to the size of their household. The lamb had to be a male of the first year...without spot...without blemish. In Deut. 15:21 we read that the animals couldn’t be lame, blind, or have any serious defects. Each family was to scrutinize their lamb to ensure that it was spotless!

The lamb was inspected for 4 days and then if it met the criteria – no blemishes – it was slain on the 14th day of the first month – on the first day of Passover.

In the years following the first Passover in Egypt, the Israelites picked the lamb for their families on “Lamb Selection Day.” All the pilgrims anxiously made their way into Jerusalem either with their lambs brought from home or to SELECT a lamb from those bred and raised at the Tower of the Flock located in Bethlehem Ephrathah (Micah 5:2). On the 10th day of the first month, the lambs that were going to be sacrificed in the Temple for Passover were brought into Jerusalem – to be selected/to be chosen.

The Roman Jewish Historian, Josephus, documented in his work entitled *Jewish Wars*, that at least 256,500 were slain in the Temple for Passover in the years during Jesus’ time on earth until 70 AD when the Temple was destroyed!

On the very day that the entire nation of Israel was selecting their special lamb, Jesus rode into Jerusalem...asking without words, “Will you choose Me as your Passover Lamb?” Jesus rode into His family – to be scrutinized by them for 4 days. AND, they found Him to be blameless – without blemish (Herod, Pilate [Matt. 27:24b; Lk. 23:14-15]; the Sanhedrin [Matt.

26:59]; the thief on the cross [Lk. 23:40-42]; Judas [Matt. 27:4]). Consider: Jesus being found blameless, on the 14th day of the first month, at 9 a.m. in the morning, AS the animal Passover lambs that were spotless were brought into the Temple to be slain, our perfect spotless

2

Passover Lamb, Jesus, was nailed to a wooden cross. And, at 3 p.m., as the last animal Passover lamb was killed in the Temple, Jesus cried out on the cross, “It is finished”...and He gave up His spirit.

On Lamb Selection Day, four days prior to Passover/four days prior to Jesus’ crucifixion... Jesus rode into Jerusalem. How did the people respond to Jesus at His arrival on that day? 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!** God had instructed the children of Israel to gather branches (palm, willow, myrtle) to make booths for the purpose of looking forward to the time when God would dwell with His people? (Lev. 23:40; Neh. 8:15). Branches were gathered at the Feast of Tabernacles. “To Tabernacle” means “to dwell.”

The Feast of Tabernacles (Sukkot) which is the last feast that God gave Israel looks forward to the Millennial Kingdom, the Messianic Kingdom, when God will dwell with man...when the Messiah will reign from the throne of DAVID in Jerusalem (Ex. 25:8; Lev. 23:40). The Jewish people at Passover...before Jesus’ crucifixion...were laying branches on the ground before Jesus. They were longing for the Messiah!! Jesus, in His journey to Jerusalem, was sending a message to the people. And, they were indeed hailing Him as KING...the One Who would DWELL with them in the Messianic Kingdom which they hoped would be at that time!

There’s more...

On this Lamb Selection Day, Jesus linked Himself historically and geographically to a particular event and place in Israel’s past that would resonate with the Jewish people.

In II Sam. 7:16 – God made a promise to King David about his dynasty/kingdom and about the King from David’s lineage Who would occupy the throne in Jerusalem FOREVER! This King would be the Messiah from David’s line. This King Who would come in the future would be “the Son of David.” The people were so desirous of the restoration of the Kingdom on earth that would be established by the Messiah.

Let’s return to approx. 975 BC. At that time, King David was rejected by Israel and driven into exile by his own son, Absalom. Absalom, David’s son, was unwilling to wait for his father’s death. And, he didn’t want to risk a later power struggle with his brothers. And so Absalom plotted and enticed David’s most trusted adviser, Ahithophel, (II Sam. 15:12), to join him and together they led a rebellion against the King (II Sam. 15:12).

In II Samuel 15:13-30 we are told that David had no choice but to flee Jerusalem because *the hearts of the men of Israel were with Absalom*. King David and his household, and his servants fled Jerusalem, weeping as they left. *The king himself also crossed over the Brook Kidron, and all the people crossed over toward the way of the wilderness* (v. 23). They then traveled

EAST of Jerusalem and ASCENDED the rocky road to the Mount of Olives to begin their exile across the Jordan River – EAST of the Jordan – the way of the wilderness. Take note of these geographical locations!

Ziba, an ally of David's, met them "a little past the top of the mountain" (Mt. of Olives) on the East side... David and his followers had already ascended the West side of the Mt. of Olives. They were now on the downhill slope. And NOW Ziba met David with a couple of saddled donkeys for David's household to ride to the place of exile??!! And, on the donkeys were to hundred *loaves* of bread, one hundred clusters of raisins, one hundred summer fruits,

3

and a skin of wine. David had just finished the ascent; they were a little past the top of the Mt. of Olives and THEN they were given two donkeys!?!? (REMEMBER THIS!)

David's escape from Jerusalem into the wilderness very likely took him to Jericho where the ancient road from Jerusalem to Jericho is a narrow, treacherous path along a deep gorge in the Judean wilderness. The deep gorge is the Wadi Kelt and it was known as "the Valley of the Shadow." In Psa. 23 we read David's words, *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.*

In this account of the rejection of King David by his son, Israel was torn by civil war. Eventually, however, the rebels were defeated and Absalom was killed in battle. We remember David's great grief over Absalom's death. He was left nearly inconsolable, crying out, "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 kept His promise to David. Solomon came to the throne in 971 BC and vastly expanded the borders, influence, and wealth of Israel. Solomon built the first Temple and reigned during a time of prosperity and peace. In the centuries that followed, Israel, as a nation – continued to disobey God. The Kingdom was divided. The Kingdom of Israel was taken captive to Assyria. The Kingdom of Judah was taken captive by Babylon and lived under the domination of the pagan Persians, Greeks, and Romans. And, there was no heir of David, no king on the throne. The Jewish people cried out for the golden age of Solomon – which, for them, became the archetype/prototype/model of the Messianic age that would come one day. This is what the Jewish people longed for – for God to restore their nation to what it had been in Solomon's day...for the Messiah to sit and rule on the throne of David in Jerusalem (Psa. 2).

This is the setting for Jesus' triumphal entry. . . .

Fast forward to a spring day in 29 AD (some say 30 AD). The Jewish people continued to yearn for the Messiah. It was 1,000 years since Solomon had been crowned king. AND, it was nearly Passover which speaks to freedom, to God's deliverance! For Jesus, the time had come.

It was the 10th day of the first month. It was Lamb Selection Day in Israel. It was time for Jesus, the PERFECT Passover Lamb, to enter Jerusalem.

Jesus not only chose the DAY to enter Jerusalem - the DAY that would proclaim Who He is according to Zech. 9:9 - *REJOICE greatly, O daughter of Zion! Shout, O daughter of*

Jerusalem! Behold, your King is coming to you; He is just and having salvation, lowly and riding on a donkey, a colt, the foal of a donkey. He, as the SUFFERING SERVANT, came lowly as He entered Jerusalem with the lambs that would be slain on Passover.... This is the SUFFERING SERVANT Who will return as KING!

Jesus also chose the ROUTE to Jerusalem. And that ROUTE was King David's path of retreat up the Mt. of Olives and over the Jordan River – BUT IN REVERSE! Jesus communicated to the people at that triumphal entry that He is the perfect Passover Lamb Who would one day sit on David's throne and DWELL with His people and rule and reign from Jerusalem.

4

Jesus and His entourage, including the disciples, began their journey to Jerusalem for Passover and...for Jesus crucifixion...from “beyond the Jordan.” Where is “beyond the Jordan”? It's the place to which David and his household and servants retreated!! Scripture tells us that John baptized “beyond the Jordan.” Check out your map at the end of the handout. Scripture explains that “beyond the Jordan” is the EAST side of the Jordan. John 1:28 – *These things were done in Bethabara beyond the Jordan, where John was baptizing.*

Matt. 19:1 - Jesus had been ministering in Galilee. *Now it came to pass, when Jesus had finished these sayings, that He departed from Galilee and came to the region of Judea beyond the Jordan.* “Beyond the Jordan” – the area to which David had fled in exile. Jesus aligned Himself with King David's retreat!

CONSIDER – Jesus could've traveled due south from Galilee to Jerusalem – it was a straight route south – from Galilee to Jerusalem.

Instead, Jesus took a “left” and crossed the Jordan River to get “beyond the Jordan”...only to recross the Jordan River on His way to Jerusalem.

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 the kingdom. In Mark 10:46 we read that a gathering throng joined Jesus near Jericho (before they began the 3,750 foot ascent to Jerusalem) Word had gotten out – He was coming! And the expectations were clearly MESSIANIC! There were cries of, “Jesus, SON OF DAVID, have mercy on me” (Mark 10:47). “SON OF DAVID” – a title for THE MESSIAH – of Him Who is from the tribe of Judah – the lineage of David!

Luke 19:11 tells us that when they were nearing Jerusalem, the disciples thought that the Kingdom of God would appear immediately. There was no thought of the cross even though Jesus had told them He would be crucified (Matt. 16:21-23). It is here, in the journey to Jerusalem, that Jesus shared a parable with a kingdom theme (Lk. 19:12ff). Jesus told them of a nobleman who went into a “far country” to receive a Kingdom. He told them that this nobleman would RETURN. Jesus would soon depart into heaven (a far country) to receive

His Kingdom – a Kingdom not of this world system - and would return. Included in the parable, Jesus spoke of the rejection of the nobleman. And the throng continued along with Jesus.

In Matt. 21:1-2 we read that at the Mount of Olives at Bethphage/Bethany, a “little past the top of the mountain,” on the East side 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 UPHILL terrain. The two donkeys were a prop – that would send a message to the people. David had received two donkeys (II. Sam. 16:1-2) at the Mount of Olives as he was going into exile – on the Eastern slope of the Mt. of Olives!

We only read of the two donkeys in the book of Matthew. Matthew wrote primarily to the Jewish people. This would have resonated with the Jewish people who knew of King David’s flight out of Jerusalem into the wilderness “beyond the Jordan.”

5

What of the donkeys that the disciples brought to Jesus? The female adult donkey is known as “athown” in the Hebrew which means “to continue, permanence, chieftain, hard, mighty, rough, strength, and strong”. These are words for a leader. According to the Smith’s Bible dictionary, the donkey mentioned in the Gospels is not like the European donkey which is known for its stubbornness. This donkey in Matthew is the Eastern variety. This animal was much desired and known for its patience, gentleness, intelligence, submission, and great power of endurance. It was an animal of peace whereas the horse was an animal for war

The Hebrew word for the male colt is “chamor”. It comes from the root word, “chamar”. Chamar means, “foul, red, and trouble”.

Jesus could have ridden on either of the animals, but Jesus chose to enter Jerusalem on the colt instead of the mother donkey. This colt was not yet broken – “on which no one has ever sat” (Lk. 19:30; Mk. 11:2). The CREATOR rode on the not yet broken colt! Of course, the text does not tell us that the colt resisted!

This colt represented “foul and trouble” describing what awaited Jesus and also represented the sins of the world that Jesus would bear. The colt was also described as “red”...perhaps speaking of the shedding of the blood of the Lamb of God. Whereas the adult donkey represented a FUTURE event. Remember that one of the definitions of the adult donkey was “to continue”. This adult donkey foretold the second entry of Jesus into Jerusalem to begin the Millennium.

David’s flight on this section of the road had been marked by weeping and heads covered in sorrow. David’s people tore their robes and cloaks in grief (II Sam. 15:20). Jesus’ followers were exuberant – lining the roadway with their cloaks and palm branches – making a smooth path so unlike the one the barefoot David walked as he fled Jerusalem.

“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!” (Psa. 118:25)

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). Why did Jesus mention the STONES? What STONES? The stones of remembrance that Joshua was told to set up.

What day did Jesus ride into Jerusalem? The 10th day of the first month. Jesus had started His journey to Jerusalem EAST of the JORDAN RIVER...He crossed the Jordan River on that day. . . .

In Joshua 4:19 we read that Joshua and the children of Israel crossed the Jordan into the Promised Land -- on the 10th day of the first month. And, Joshua was instructed by God to set up memorial stones – stones of remembrance. Why? GOD gives us the answer in Joshua 4:4-7 – these stones are 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). The Ark of the Covenant with the Mercy Seat on top where blood was sprinkled on Yom Kippur points to Jesus and His merciful sacrifice for us! That Ark crossed the Jordan with Joshua and the people in approx. 1400 BC on the 10th day of the first month (Josh. 4:19). Jesus crossed the Jordan on His way to Jerusalem to be sacrificed for us on the 10th day of the first month in 29 A.D.

6

Was Jesus declaring Himself to the people when He rode into Jerusalem before His crucifixion? YES!

And, the STONE that the builders rejected Who became the chief cornerstone is JESUS? (Psa. 118:22). Psa. 118:23 – this was from the LORD’s doing and it is marvelous in our eyes.

On that day when Jesus rode into Jerusalem, we hear Him crying out to His people, In Matt. 23:37 *O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, how often I would have gathered your children together as a hen gathers her chicks under her wings, and you would not* (Matt. 23:37). Perhaps this cry of Jesus to Jerusalem/Israel mirrored David’s cry for Absalom. “O Absalom, my son, my son. . . “ God called Israel – “My son, My firstborn” (Ex. 4:22).

During passion week we see Judas. Here is another link to David’s story. Judas, can be likened to David’s most trusted counselor, Ahithophel, who had advised Absalom on how best to find King David...and how to capture and kill King David. Ahithophel 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 (to Absalom re: Daivd) 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 into Jerusalem was triumphant – for the moment (from a HUMAN PERSPECTIVE). Jesus' entry into Jerusalem is FOREVER triumphant from God's perspective!

Yes, the masses who followed Him -- scattered. Peter denied Him. The disciples fled. John alone was at the foot of the cross on the 14th of the first day – on the day of Passover when Jesus was crucified. This was the king? This was restoration? Is this what Jesus' followers were thinking? Where was the kingdom that had been promised to Israel?

This is the unfolding of God's plan of redemption! In His death, Jesus had succeeded BEYOND anyone's imagination. Jesus had conquered sin and death...death, the greatest oppressor (Heb. 2:14). For the believer in Jesus, we can say with the Apostle Paul, *Death is swallowed up in victory.* ⁵⁵ *O Death, where is your sting? O grave, where is your victory?* For the believer, Jesus' death means victory. Through His death and resurrection He gives us, those who receive Him, His gift of forgiveness - LIFE – ETERNAL LIFE.

Yes, it is such a strange way, as the world understands it, to save the world. It's GOD'S WAY... ..and it cost God EVERYTHING!

Let's worship and exalt the suffering Servant Who will be returning as King of Kings/Lord of Lords – all for the glory of God!

QUESTIONS:

New?

Observations?

Questions?

SUGGESTED HOMEWORK:

Reread Wk. 11

Share what you've learned.

Read Week 12 when you receive it.