

THE GOSPEL OF MATTHEW – THE LAST WEEK OF JESUS’ LIFE ON EARTH

Week 1 – WHY THIS WAY?

January 24, 2023

Blurb: The Last Week of Jesus’ Life On Earth

Jesus' last week on earth was certainly the most significant week of His life...as without His death and resurrection, no one...no Jewish person...no Gentile, could be saved. This final week is also dynamic as many OT prophecies were fulfilled. As we seek to know Jesus more intimately and to marvel anew at Who He is, we will understand the "why" of His triumphal entry, the “why” of His last Passover Seder, the “why” of His arrest and trials, the “why” of His death, His crucifixion, His resurrection, and ascension. My prayer is that we will fall in love with Him...perhaps like never before...perhaps for the first time.

Dan. 10:12 - we are told that Daniel set his heart to understand the visions that he had been given and the words from God...as Daniel humbled himself before God!

Dan. 9:20-22 – Daniel was speaking, praying, and confessing his sin and the sin of his people Israel, and was praying about God’s kingdom. As Daniel was praying, the angel Gabriel was sent to Daniel by God...to give Daniel skill to understand!

God desires for us to understand His word!

Consider:

- What do you know about Israel’s history found in Scripture?
- What do you know about God’s plan of redemption from Scripture?
- What do you know about Biblical prophecy?
- What do you know about God from His Word?

If you were asked to teach “The Last Week of Jesus’ Life On Earth,” where would you begin?

When you hear “The last week of Jesus’ life on earth” – what comes into your mind?

The significance of Jesus’ incarnation (God becoming flesh) will never be lost! There is a big picture in the Christmas account from the Bible. The message given to the shepherds revolved around Jesus’ first coming as the shepherds were looking for the “lamb” laid in a manger. The message given to the Magi revolved around Jesus’ second coming as the Magi were looking for the King of Israel! Jesus’ incarnation speaks to the big picture of the Bible: Jesus’ first coming and His second coming. The promise of

Jesus' second coming to earth teaches us that Jesus had to die at the end of His first coming.

The significance of what we call "Christmas" includes the cross! We need to think through the Bible to know the Bible. We can begin to put all the pieces of the Bible in place – for HIS glory and our enjoyment of God and of His Word! The cross is the payment for our sin ETERNALLY! Without the cross, we would be eternally lost!

When we read Psalm 22, what are we observing?

2

Psa. 22:14-18 - I am poured out like water, and all My bones are out of joint; My heart is like wax; it has melted within Me. ¹⁵ My strength is dried up like a potsherd, and My tongue clings to My jaws; You have brought Me to the dust of death. ¹⁶ For dogs have surrounded Me; the congregation of the wicked has enclosed Me. They pierced My hands and My feet; ¹⁷ I can count all My bones. They look and stare at Me. ¹⁸ They divide My garments among them, and for My clothing they cast lots.

(Jot down your thoughts as you consider the entire Bible)

How does the cross compute in Jesus' final week? What was the Jewish capital punishment?

The cross must be in the picture for prophecy to be fulfilled.

In God's grand theme according to Scripture, according to His appointed times, the Messiah must die on the day of the Feast of Passover, at God's appointed time (Lev. 23:5 - *On the fourteenth day of the first month at twilight is the LORD's Passover.*) In Isa. 53:7 we read that the Messiah must be led as a Lamb to the slaughter.

Are we familiar with these specifics? Should we be? WHY?

To be astounded at God's plan of redemption and how each prophecy is fulfilled in detail!

Crucifixion was Rome's brutal capital punishment that was devised by the more brutal Persians. The right to impose Jewish law including the capital punishment of stoning, had been taken away. John 18:31 - *Then Pilate said to them, 'You take Him and judge Him according to your law.' Therefore the Jews said to him, 'It is not lawful for us to put anyone to death,'*

And so, the spikes and the cross beams that were used to bring criminals to judgment under Rome...were awaiting Jesus!

THE CROSS - WHAT VICTORY!

In the book of Revelation, the Apostle John proclaimed that *the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy* (Rev. 19:10b). The true purpose of prophecy is to provide testimony to the person and work of Jesus Christ. Because we know Who He is, we can know Who He was and Who He is moving into the future.

Dr. Charles Ryrie who served as Professor of Systematic Theology and Dean of Doctoral Studies at Dallas Theological Seminary, said, “Prophecy is designed to unfold the loveliness of Jesus.” In our Bible studies, we cannot remove ourselves from prophecy nor do we wish to do so! And that prophecy is not only Messianic prophecy related to Jesus’ first coming that has already been fulfilled...it is also prophecy that is yet to be fulfilled – re: Jesus’ Second Coming!

As we have studied Jesus’ ministry from the beginning of Matthew, have we been enjoying Jesus’ presence as we walk alongside Him? Are we so aware of His living IN US? Have we been caught up in knowing His tenderness, His teaching? Have we realized Jesus’ denial of Himself? Has His making of Himself no reputation (Phil. 2:7) impacted us?

3

Putting hindsight aside, as we read the Gospels, are we comprehending the disciples’ understanding of Jesus? What did the disciples know as they lived and ate and followed their Rabbi and performed miracles in His name (Matt. 10). What did they know of Jesus’ last week on earth? How does God want us to read the Gospel accounts? How does God want us to read the entire Bible?

QUESTIONS

What is your takeaway from this introductory lesson?

What was new to you?

How have you been impacted?

With whom will you share this study?

SUGGESTED HOMEWORK

Reread Week 1 with the Scripture references.

You might consider beginning to write a “Last Week of Jesus” journal including what you are learning and its impact.

Pray that God will bring people into your life who will ask questions about Jesus’ last week as we move toward Resurrection Sunday!

Read Week 2’s handout when you receive it.