

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

Week 2 – The Story of Redemption: The Lamb of God

January 31, 2023

We ended last week with a story of how God’s story opens our eyes and gives us clarity/ understanding. Understanding the unfolding of God’s plan in Jesus’ ministry at His first coming was foretold throughout the OT. It is essential for us, as students of Scripture, to comprehend God’s plan!

We are going to begin to look at the backstory of Jesus’ triumphal entry which the Church knows as Palm Sunday. The Jewish people called that day that Jesus rode into Jerusalem on the colt of a donkey...LAMB SELECTION DAY! And, we’re going to look at the chronology of that day from eternity past to eternity future!!

During Jesus’ life on earth, He was always fully aware of His time.

When Jesus was heard telling His mother, “My hour has not yet come,” what did that mean? Jesus timed elements of His ministry carefully. Jesus knew that He would die (Matt. 12:40....). On some occasions when Jesus performed miracles, He instructed those who were blessed by them not to broadcast what He had done (Matt. 8:4; 9:30; 12:16; 17:9, etc.). WHY? He knew the Jewish religious leadership were tuned into any Messianic movement (John 11:48). Jesus was on a divine timetable...His timetable. While there was a DIVINE TIMETABLE, none of the gospels, present the life of Christ in chronological order. The Holy Spirit did not inspire the gospel authors to communicate an exact chronology of Jesus’ life. And yet, there is much in the gospels clearly pointing to a timeframe!

Let’s look at a chronology/a backstory that sets the stage more clearly for Jesus’ last week on earth. Let’s look at the story of the Lamb in Scripture. Lambs are a major theme in Scripture as it applies to God’s plan of redemption.

References to sheep are found throughout the Bible. Sheep were used as sacrificial animals (Num. 28:4 - ...*one lamb you shall offer in the morning, the other lamb you shall offer in the evening....*)

When the LORD God made tunics of skin and clothed Adam and Eve, which we read in Gen. 3:21 after sin entered the world and after Adam and Eve took it upon themselves to cover themselves with fig leaves...it is strongly suggested by many that God killed a lamb in the clothing of Adam and Eve. When blood was shed through the killing of this innocent animal, would Adam and Eve have remembered? What did they tell their children? We read of Adam and Eve’s two sons in Genesis 4. Abel, of Cain and Abel, brought *of the firstborn of his flock*. Abel sacrificed the best of his flock to the Lord. The Bible does not state specifically that this sacrifice was a lamb. Most Bible scholars, however, agree that it was likely a sheep because of the word *flock*

God's killing of a lamb to cover Adam and Eve's sin set the stage for His plan of redemption for the world. How of God for the plan to be fulfilled when Jesus became the ultimate sacrificial Lamb.

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John 1:29 – *Behold the Lamb of God Who takes away the sin of the world.* Are these words of John the Baptizer revealing? What did the people of that day think about John's declaration? If you were Jewish, you knew! You'd heard and read about the lamb in the scrolls. The Lamb wasn't a new thought to the Jewish people.

Let's visit the Jordan River. Jesus has already been born in Bethlehem Ephrathah. In Matthew 3 Jesus is preparing for His public ministry. We're told in Matthew 3:5-6 that all Jerusalem, and Judea, and all the region around Jordan went to the Jordan River to hear John the Baptizer. These were Jewish people who were flocking to the Jordan River to hear what John was preaching. And, these Jewish people were confessing their sins. These Jewish people were being immersed in the Jordan River. And then Jesus came. Jesus walked from Nazareth in Galilee to the Jordan River – a walk of 60+ miles. And John boldly proclaimed *Behold the Lamb of God Who takes away the sin of the world.*

Where does God first introduce graphically/in neon "the Lamb"? In Genesis 22 God introduced the Lamb. In Genesis 22 we read of Abraham's near sacrifice of Isaac. After waiting for the son of promise, Isaac, promised by God for 25 YEARS, what did God tell Abraham?

Gen. 22:1-7 - *Now it came to pass after these things that God tested Abraham, and said to him, 'Abraham!' And he said, 'Here I am.' 'Take now your son, your only son Isaac, whom you love, and go to the land of Moriah, and offer him there as a burnt offering on one of the mountains of which I shall tell you.' ³ So Abraham rose early in the morning and saddled his donkey, and took two of his young men with him, and Isaac his son; and he split the wood for the burnt offering and arose and went to the place of which God had told him. ⁴ Then on the third day Abraham lifted his eyes and saw the place afar off.*

(Abraham traveled from Beersheba, 45-50 miles to the land of Moriah which would be the future Jerusalem) ⁵ *And Abraham said to his young men, 'Stay here with the donkey; the lad and I will go yonder and worship, and we will come back to you.'* ⁶ *So Abraham took the wood of the burnt offering and laid it on Isaac his son (Can we see Isaac as a type of Jesus...bearing His cross up to Golgotha/Calvary?); and he took the fire in his hand, and a knife, and the two of them went together. ⁷ But Isaac spoke to Abraham his father and said, 'My father!' And he said, 'Here I am, my son.' Then he said, 'Look, the fire and the wood, but where is the lamb for a burnt offering?'*

Gen. 22:8 – *And Abraham said, 'My son, God will provide Himself the lamb for a burnt offering.'* (Hebrew translation)

God promised a LAMB. . .that HE, GOD, would be the Lamb who would be the sacrifice for sin. And this lamb would die in Isaac's place. The Lamb would be a substitutionary sacrifice.

Gen. 22:10-14 - *Abraham stretched out his hand and took the knife to slay his son. ¹¹ But the Angel of the LORD called to him from heaven and said, 'Abraham, Abraham!' So he said, 'Here I am.'* ¹² *And He said, 'Do not lay your hand on the lad, or do anything to him; for now I know that you fear God, since you have not withheld your son, your only son, from Me.'* ¹³ *Then Abraham lifted his eyes and looked, and there behind him was a ram caught in a thicket by its horns. (A ram? Where's the Lamb?) So Abraham*

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went and took the ram, and offered it up for a burnt offering instead of his son.

¹⁴ *And Abraham called the name of the place, The-LORD-Will-Provide; as it is said to this day, 'In the Mount of the LORD it shall be provided.'* The LORD (Jehovah) will provide – HIMSELF!! Are we asking, 'In what Mount'?

Gen. 22:15-17 - ¹⁵ *Then the Angel of the LORD called to Abraham a second time out of heaven, ¹⁶ and said: "By Myself I have sworn, says the LORD, because you have done this thing, and have not withheld your son, your only son— ¹⁷ blessing I will bless you, and multiplying I will multiply your descendants as the stars of the heaven and as the sand which is on the seashore; and your descendants shall possess the gate of their enemies.*

God promised a lamb! God delivers on His promises. And so, we understand that a future Lamb is spoken of. God would provide a Lamb in the future and that Lamb would be God Himself. The Hebrew in Gen. 22:8 reads, *And Abraham said, My son, God will provide Himself the lamb for a burnt offering.* Throughout the OT, God told the Jewish people to REMEMBER what He had done on their behalf... WORSHIP Him continually... ANTICIPATE what He will do! The children of Israel waited for the Lamb!

Further details at which we should be amazed regarding this Messianic prophecy:

- The land of Moriah – God told Abraham to offer Isaac as a burnt offering on one of the mountains that He, GOD, would tell Abraham.
- "Moriah" means "chosen by Jehovah."
- Mount Moriah in the Old City of Jerusalem is one of the most hotly contested pieces of real estate on earth! WHY? Where is Mount Moriah? It is thought that the top of Mount Moriah today is sitting under the Temple Mount, a 37-acre tract of land where the Jewish temple once stood.

- Approximately 1,000 years after Abraham brought his son, Isaac, to the land of Moriah, God instructed King David to purchase the threshing floor of a man who lived in Jebus, ancient Jerusalem, and to build on that threshing floor an altar to the LORD so that a "plague may be held back from the people" (II Sam. 24:18, 21).

- After David's death, his son, King Solomon, built the Temple in Jerusalem on the same site! II Chron. 3:1 – *Now Solomon began to build the house of the LORD at Jerusalem on Mount Moriah, where the LORD had appeared to his father David, at the place that David had prepared on the threshing floor of the Jebusite.*

- Further note: when the Jews returned to Israel after exile in Babylon, we read in Ezra 5:13-15 that the articles of gold and silver from the first Temple were to

be returned to Israel and carried to the temple site in Jerusalem, ...*and let the house of God be rebuilt on its former site.*

- Mount Moriah/Jerusalem is the largest threshing floor on the globe! A threshing floor is nothing more than a level place of smooth rock or pounded earth located on a hill or on the side of a hill taking advantage of the winds. In the threshing process, the stalks of grain are BEATEN and the grain is separated from the chaff (worthless straw; not edible). The chaff was blown away.

- According to Scripture, threshing is a symbol of judgment (Hosea 13:3).

- In Matt. 3:11-12, using the imagery of the threshing floor, John the Baptizer preached that the Messiah will separate His true followers from those who do

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not follow Him. The true followers of Jesus will be gathered into the kingdom of God just as grain is gathered into barns, while those who reject Jesus will be burned up “with unquenchable fire,” just as the worthless chaff is burned. Again, threshing is a symbol of judgment! Jesus took upon Himself the judgment we deserved, at Golgotha.

- Was Jesus crucified near Mount Moriah? The requirements of the site according to the biblical writers:

- Outside the walls of Jerusalem at the time:

- Heb. 13:11-12 – (re: the sacrificial system) *the bodies of those animals, whose blood is brought into the sanctuary by the high priest for sin, are burned outside the camp* (the encampment where the people lived; the city). ¹² *Therefore Jesus* (the ultimate sacrifice) *also, that He might sanctify the people with His own blood, suffered outside the gate* (a large gate). The Damascus Gate, a large gate, is the gate nearest the two most important Biblical sites in Jerusalem: Golgotha just across the street and Jesus' Tomb, which is 90 meters away (295.275590551 feet).

- Matt. 27:32 - *Now as they came out, they found a man of Cyrene, Simon by name* (along a public road). *Him they compelled to bear His cross.*

- Mark 15:21 - *They compelled a certain man, Simon a Cyrenian, the father of Alexander and Rufus, as he was coming out of the country* (and heading toward the city) *and passing by, to bear His cross.*

- Mark 15:27-29 - *With Him they also crucified two robbers, one on His right and the other on His left.* ²⁸ *So the Scripture was fulfilled which says, “And He was numbered with the transgressors.”* ²⁹ *And those who passed by blasphemed Him, wagging their heads and saying, “Aha! You who destroy the temple and build it in three days,* (passed by on the public road outside Jerusalem).

- In a garden. John 19:41- *Now in the place where He was crucified there was a garden, and in the garden a new tomb in which no one had yet been laid.*

- Near the city. John 19:20 - ... *the place where Jesus was crucified was near the city;*

○ Golgotha, meaning “place of a skull” (Matt. 27:33 - *And when they had come to a place called Golgotha, that is to say, Place of a Skull,*

I’m suggesting that Jesus could very well have been sacrificed at this same location! God showed Abraham the specific location to sacrifice Isaac. Gen 22 serves as a picture; it foreshadows the Lamb Who was the ultimate sacrifice. And, in that Mount Moriah region, God brought peace to hearts that would receive the Lamb of God’s gift of eternal peace!

The Lamb is reintroduced in Exodus 12 at the first Passover in Egypt.

Ex. 12:1-7 - *Now the LORD spoke to Moses and Aaron in the land of Egypt, saying, ² “This month shall be your beginning of months; it shall be the first month of the year to you. ³ Speak to all the congregation of Israel, saying: ‘On the tenth of this month every man shall take for himself a lamb, according to the house of his father, a lamb for a household. ⁴ And if the household is too small for the lamb, let him and his neighbor next to his house take it according to the number of the persons; according to each man’s need you shall make your count for the lamb. ⁵ Your lamb shall be without blemish, a male of the first year.... ⁶ Now you shall keep it until the fourteenth day of the same*

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month. Then the whole assembly of the congregation of Israel shall kill it at twilight. ⁷ And they shall take some of the blood and put it on the two doorposts and on the lintel of the houses where they eat it.

Here the lamb is reintroduced. God provides a lamb for each family/household – but God specifically states that the lamb is according to each man’s need.

At the first Passover, lambs were brought into each home. The lambs lived with the families for four days and were scrutinized. Then God told the people to kill the lambs. The blood of the lamb was smeared on the lintel and doorpost of each home that observed the Passover instructions...that obeyed God! And what did God do for those who obeyed His instructions? For those who killed the lamb and applied its blood to the doorposts and lintels of their homes, God physically delivered/rescued them out of bondage to slavery in Egypt and set them upon the path to the Promised Land.

In Isaiah 53 that Lamb is identified. The Lamb is Jesus the Messiah Who would be crucified. Isa. 53 was written 700-800 years before Jesus’ incarnation. *He was wounded for our transgressions; He was bruised for our iniquities; the chastisement for our peace was upon Him and with His stripes we are healed. . . He was led as a lamb to the slaughter and as a sheep before its shearers is silent, so He opened not His mouth. . .”* (Isa. 53:5-7)

Isa. 53:10 (NASB) – *But the LORD desired to crush Him* (this was/is God’s plan!!), *causing Him grief; if He renders Himself as a guilt offering*, Jesus, God the Son, was willing from eternity past Rev. 13:8 tells us that Jesus is *the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world*.

And so, we read in John 1:29 – *Behold the Lamb of God Who takes away the sin of the world.* Jewish people in Jesus’ day would’ve said...Here is the Lamb we’ve been ANTICIPATING – He’s here!

In Revelation 5 we are given a most powerful image of the triumphant Lamb Who is revealed as the suffering, resurrected, and worthy!

Rev. 5:6, 11-12 - John the Apostle said, *And I saw* (in the throne room of God) *between the throne...and the elders a Lamb standing, as if slaughtered...¹¹ and I heard the voices of many angels around the throne and the living creatures and the elders; and the number of them was myriads of myriads, and thousands of thousands, ¹² saying with a loud voice, ‘Worthy is the Lamb that was slaughtered to receive power, wealth, wisdom, might, honor, glory, and blessing.’*

Rev. 22:1, 3 – John wrote, *And he showed me a pure river of water of life, clear as crystal, proceeding from the throne of God and of the Lamb.... ³ And there shall be no more curse, but the throne of God and of the Lamb shall be in it, and His servants shall serve Him.*

GLORY HALLELUJAH!!!!!!

QUESTIONS

What was new to you?

Were you impacted? WHY?

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How would you summarize this lesson?

With whom will you share this lesson?

Will you dig further into Scripture using this lesson as a springboard? Cross reference!

Don’t use commentaries.

SUGGESTED HOMEWORK

Reread Week 2’s handout w/ references.

Continue writing in your journal (if you’ve started a journal) re: impactful Scripture and how you are marveling at God!

Pray that God will bring people into your life w/ whom you can share.

Read Week 3 when you receive it.

