

THE GOSPEL OF MATTHEW; YOUR KINGDOM COME...ON EARTH

Week 9 - Jesus' Triumphal Entry/"Lamb Selection Day"

March 23, 2021

Jesus did not just "enter Jerusalem" – He paraded. He paraded like the King that He is. AND, what a perfect time to do so – because Jerusalem was CROWDED with Jewish people (Deut. 16:16). The triumphal entry was preparation for PASSOVER WEEK and for His death and resurrection!

The day that Jesus rode into Jerusalem on the colt of a donkey was the day that Jewish people called "Lamb Selection Day" – 10th day of the month of Nisan - when the lambs that were going to be sacrificed in the Temple for Passover were brought into the city. Exodus 12:3-5 tells us that at the first Passover in Egypt, God had commanded the Jewish people to take a lamb into each home and scrutinize each lamb to ensure that it was without blemish. The lamb was inspected for 4 days and then if it met the criteria – no blemishes – it was slain on the 14th day of Nisan – the first day of Passover.

JESUS rode into Jerusalem on the 10th of Nisan – on Lamb Selection Day! HE rode into His family – to be scrutinized by them for 4 days. They found Him to be blameless – without blemish (Herod, Pilate, the Sanhedrin, the thief on the cross, Judas). And so, Jesus being found blameless, on the 14th of Nisan, at 9 a.m. in the morning, as the animal Passover lambs were being brought into the Temple to be slain, our perfect Passover Lamb Jesus was nailed to a wooden cross. At 3 p.m., as the last animal Passover lamb was killed by the high priest in the Temple, Jesus cried out on the cross, "It is finished" - and He gave up His spirit.

On that Lamb Selection Day – 4 days prior to Passover – when Jesus rode into Jerusalem along with all the animal Passover lambs, how did the people respond to Jesus at His arrival? John 12:12 tells us that the people took palm branches and went out to meet Him. Is that how Jewish people celebrated Passover? Palm branches along with willow and myrtle branches were gathered to make booths for the purpose of looking forward to the time when God would DWELL/TABERNACLE with His people (Lev. 23:40; Neh. 8:15). The Feast of Tabernacles (Sukkot) – the last feast that God gave Israel (the 7th feast of the Lord) 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 – were laying branches on the ground before Jesus. This was NOT how they celebrated Passover. (NOTE: Approximately 200 years earlier of waving of palm branches had become a national symbol signaling the hope that a Messianic liberator was on the scene) Spreading their garments on the street was an ancient act of homage reserved for high royalty (II Kings 9:13). 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!

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Jesus linked Himself historically and geographically to a particular event and place in Israel's past that would RESONATE with the people. In II Sam. 7:16 – God made a promise to King David about a king from his lineage Who would occupy the throne. This King would be – the Messiah. Jews in Jesus' day were longing for the Messiah to come. They were so desirous of the RESTORATION of the kingdom that would be set up by the Messiah

In approx. 975 BC 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. 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. David had no choice but to – get out of Jerusalem - because . . . the hearts of the men of Israel were with Absalom. II Samuel 15:13-14, 23, 30 – David and his weeping entourage left Jerusalem, crossing the Brook Kidron/the Kidron Valley. They then traveled EAST of Jerusalem and ASCENDED the rocky road to the **Mount of Olives** to begin their exile **across the Jordan River** (II Sam. 17:22). Take note of these geographical locations! An ally of David's met them "a little past the top of the mountain" (Mt. of Olives) with saddled donkeys (II Sam. 16:1-2) for David's household to ride to the place of exile. 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.

Here we see in this account of the REJECTION of King David by his SON, that 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, "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. Under Solomon, Israel was prosperous. Solomon built the first Temple and reigned during a time of prosperity and peace. In the centuries that followed, when Israel was taken captive to Assyria and Babylon, and then lived under the domination of the pagan Greeks and Romans, and there was no heir of David on the throne, their cry was for the golden age of Solomon - which 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. This is the setting for Jesus' triumphal entry. . . .

FAST FORWARD. . . to a spring day in 29 AD (some say 30 AD). The people continued to yearn for a Messiah. It was 1,000 years since Solomon had been crowned king. AND – it was nearly PASSOVER – which speaks to God’s DELIVERANCE!

For Jesus, the time had come. It was the 10th of Nisan (see Exodus 12:1ff) – Lamb Selection Day in Israel. It was time for Jesus to enter Jerusalem. (I Cor. 5:7 – “Christ our Passover was sacrificed for us.”). Jesus not only chose the DAY to enter Jerusalem

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– the DAY that would proclaim Who He is as the SUFFERING SERVANT – He 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. 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.

Jesus and his entourage, including the disciples, began their journey to Jerusalem from “beyond the Jordan,” Scripture tells us – from the EAST side of the Jordan. Jesus had been ministering in Galilee. Matt. 19:1 tells us that He departed from Galilee and came to the region of Judea “beyond the Jordan” – again, the area to which David had fled in exile. Consider – Jesus could’ve traveled due south from Galilee to Jerusalem – a straight line. BUT He took a “left” and crossed the Jordan River to get “beyond the Jordan” – only to recross the Jordan River on His way to Jerusalem. Jesus orchestrated His route to communicate that – THE MESSIAH HAD COME! (Reference map on last page of handout)

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 a kingdom. In Mark 10:46 we read that a gathering throng joined Jesus near Jericho (as they began the 3,750 foot ascent to Jerusalem – along a steep escarpment). 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).

Luke 19:11 tells us that when they were nearing Jerusalem, the disciples thought that the Kingdom of God would appear immediately. It’s here that Jesus shares a parable with a kingdom theme – the parable of the ten minas (Lk. 19:12ff). Jesus tells them of a nobleman who went into a far country to receive a Kingdom and tells them that this nobleman would RETURN. Jesus would soon depart into heaven (far country) to receive His Kingdom – a Kingdom not of this world - and would return. Included in the parable, Jesus speaks of the rejection of the nobleman.

At the Mount of Olives (Matt. 21:1) at Bethphage (on the SE slope 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 terrain. The two donkeys were a prop. David had received two donkeys (II. Sam. 16:1-2) at the Mount of Olives as he was going into exile – on the SE slope of the Mt. of Olives!

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. 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!

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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!”

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 day did Jesus ride into Jerusalem? 10th of Nisan. . . He had started 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 – way back right after Moses died - crossed the Jordan into the Promised Land -- on the 10th of Nisan!!! 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). . . . And these stones shall be for a memorial to the children of Israel forever.” THE ARK OF THE COVENANT with the MERCY SEAT on top where blood was always sprinkled from sacrifices – (which spoke to God's presence in the OT) – POINTS to Jesus and His merciful sacrifice for us! That Ark crossed the Jordan with Joshua and the people – way back when – on the 10th of Nisan!!

Was Jesus declaring Himself to the people when He rode into Jerusalem before His crucifixion? Were the STONES crying out – while the people were hailing Him? AND - Who is the STONE that the builders rejected Who has become the chief cornerstone? (Psalm 118:22) JESUS!

Following His triumphal entry, Jesus railed against the scribes and Pharisees calling them hypocrites. And then we hear Him crying out to His people, In Matt. 23:37 we read that Jesus cried out “O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, how often I would have gathered you as a hen gathers her chicks under her wings, and you would not” (Matt. 23:37) Perhaps this cry of Jesus mirrored David's cry for Absalom. “O Absalom, my son, my son. . . .” God called Israel – “My son, My firstborn” in Ex. 4:22 – Moses carried a

message to Pharaoh from God – “Israel is My son, My firstborn. So I say to you, let My son go. . . .” (Hosea 11:1; Matt. 2:15.) Why is Israel called “My son” by God? Israel is God’s unique possession, His inheritance (Isa. 19:25). God chose the nation of Israel to be an instrument of blessing for the world. And Israel’s destiny is wrapped up in the Messiah – God’s Son!

During passion week we see Judas. Here is another link to David’s story.

Judas, like David’s most trusted counselor, Ahithophel, who had advised Absalom on how best to capture and kill the king --- 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 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).

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Jesus’ entry to Jerusalem was triumphal – for the moment. But then the masses who followed Him -- scattered. Some joined the crowd that called for His crucifixion (Matt. 27:20-25; John 18:28; John 19:1-4). Peter denied Him. The disciples fled. John alone was at the foot of the cross on the 14th of Nisan, ON the day of Passover when Jesus was crucified.

In His death, Jesus had succeeded BEYOND anyone's imagination. He left to reclaim a kingdom...His *Father's* kingdom. He *had conquered* sin and death...death, the GREATEST oppressor (NOT Rome) (Heb. 2:14).

Jesus’ death means VICTORY for us. Through His death and resurrection He gives us, those who receive Him, His gift of forgiveness - LIFE – ETERNAL LIFE. Jesus rose from the dead on the day after Sabbath – on Resurrection Sunday which was actually the Jewish Feast of First Fruits (Lev. 23:9-14; I Cor. 15:23; John 12:23). Jesus is our “first fruits” (I Cor. 15:23). Jesus is our GUARANTEE that we who have asked Him for forgiveness of our sin, we who have trusted in Him for salvation, will also be resurrected.

QUESTIONS:

What was new to you re: Jesus’ triumphal entry?

How did this impact you? Will you look at “Palm Sunday” differently? If so – How... Why?

Why did Jesus enter Jerusalem with the animal lambs? Why on Nisan 10?

Why did Jesus follow King David’s route of retreat?

How does Jesus’ triumphal entry fit into God’s plan of redemption?

Is this worth sharing with others?

What are you taking away from this lesson?

SUGGESTED HOMEWORK:

Reread Week 9's handout with Bible references.

Jot down observations and questions and begin to find answers from the text.

Share what you've learned with at least one person.

Let Cathy know if your Jewish friend will be attending the Passover presentation with you on 3/30.

No handout for Week 10 – Passover Presentation.

MAP OF ISRAEL IN NEW TESTAMENT TIMES

