

THE WEEK THAT CHANGED THE WORLD: FROM BETHANY TO JERUSALEM

Texts: Luke 9:18-22; 43-44; Luke 18:31-33; John 19:10,11; I Timothy 1:15

For the next four Sundays, climaxing with Easter, I want to walk us through the final week of our Lord's earthly ministry. There has never been a week in the history of the world that has been more crucial, momentous or pivotal than this week.

We begin with Friday evening, one week before our Lord's death. Jerusalem was a-buzz as people were anticipating Christ's coming to the Passover Feast.

I. THE ANTICIPATION

John 11:55-57; John 12:1, 9-11

There were those longing to see Jesus, hoping this would be the time of the fulfillment of Zechariah 9:9 and 10b: "Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion; shout, O daughter of Jerusalem: behold, thy King cometh unto thee: He is just, and having salvation; lowly, and riding upon an ass, and upon a colt the foal of an ass...and He shall speak peace unto the heathen: and his dominion shall be from sea even to sea, and from the river even to the ends of the earth."

Yet, there is a group, motivated by the hatred of the rulers of the Jews to annihilate Jesus and even Lazarus, whom Christ raised from the dead.

II. THE ANOINTING

John 12:1-8

Judas spoke up, criticizing Mary for her deed, suggesting that her gift might have been sold and given to the poor, not that he was altruistic by any means. The Scripture reveals that he just saw more opportunity for theft being "wasted" on this special anointing of Jesus by Mary of Bethany (John 12:6).

A. The Clock Begins

John 12:1: The Passover and Lord's Supper are now six days away. The northern tribes will celebrate on Thursday. The actual day of the Passover is Friday, exactly one week to the day that our Lord will die upon the cross. All of the disciples are from the north except for one; Judas is from Judea.

B. The Symbol of the Oil

1. It was a bridal gift.

The oil was very valuable; the prospective bride saved it for her wedding day. She would anoint herself and her bed in celebration of the marriage. In symbol, the death of Christ would purchase His bride. Acts 20:28b: "...the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood."

2. It was designated for Christ's death and burial.

John 12:7: "Then said Jesus, Let her alone: against the day of my burying hath she kept this." Joseph of Arimathea and Nicodemus quickly wrapped the body of Jesus with myrrh and aloes and buried him (John 19:38-40), as Mary Magdalene, Mary (the mother of James) and Salome prepared spices and ointments for a more thorough, formal and reverential burial. (Luke 23:55-Luke 24:1). But Mary of Bethany in her

anointing was prescient and had already prepared our Lord for the more formal and reverential burial.

3. It was an act of giving glory to God.

I Corinthians 11:15: "But if a woman have long hair, it is a glory to her: for her hair is given her for a covering." John 12:3: "Then took Mary a pound of ointment of spikenard, very costly, and anointed the feet of Jesus, and wiped his feet with her hair: and the house was filled with the odour of the ointment."

III. THE ANNOUNCEMENT

Luke 19:29-44

Luke 19:38: "Saying, Blessed be the King that cometh in the name of the Lord: peace in heaven, and glory in the highest."

A. The Royal Ride

Luke 19:28-32 shows us that Christ was ever in control, having omniscience, unique only to God. Christ knew where the donkey and her colt were tied (Matthew 21:2). He knew who owned them and how they would respond if told the Master had need of them. It is extremely comforting to know that our Lord knows yesterday; He will help us get past our past. He knows today; He will do more than help us cope--through His power within us, we can overcome any and all of life's difficulties. He knows tomorrow; we need not fear tomorrow, He is already there. That's why He refers to Himself as the great I AM (John 8:58). He is present always. Christ never vacillates in His love. He never falters in His watch-care. He remains under all circumstances the same, "Jesus Christ the same yesterday, and to day, and for ever" (Hebrews 13:8).

In all honesty, God doesn't need anything from man. Yet God in His Divine love expresses it in the anthropomorphic terms of "need." The Master has "need" of a donkey, so he goes to man to express His longing (Luke 19:33, 34). In love he goes to the woman at the well: "And he must needs go through Samaria" (John 4:4). The needful term of "must" is used to express His insatiable desire to redeem mankind to Himself when He says, "...I must preach the kingdom of God to other cities also: for therefore am I sent" (Luke 4:43). We sometimes say to people we love, "I need you." We hear the condescending and most loving tone of our Lord's voice when He steps into our world to "need." In Luke 19:35-38 of this harmonious event (recorded by all four Gospel writers), we notice Luke's Gospel using a different terminology.

1. The Prince of Peace (Isaiah 9:6)

"Blessed be the King that cometh in the name of the Lord: peace in heaven, and glory in the highest" (Luke 19:38). Notice Luke uses the same terminology as he did at Christ's birth! Luke 2:14: "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men." A doctor examines the baby when born, tells the weight, length, and gender, then presents the baby to the parents. Dr. Luke is tying the whole life of Christ together saying this is why He came from the beginning, through His entire short life on earth and now at the ending. He was born the King; He brings peace down to the earth through His cross, and through His resurrection, filling the whole earth with His glory.

2. Sovereignty at Work

We find in Luke 19:39, 40 that Christ will be worshipped for who He is! Had not the people given forth His praises at this time, He declares, "I tell you that, if these should hold their peace, the stones would immediately cry out" (Luke 19:40b). No one

will de-throne Him; no one will usurp Him successfully, and definitely no one will impeach Him. "Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion; shout, O daughter of Jerusalem: behold, thy King cometh unto thee: he is just, and having salvation; lowly, and riding upon an ass, and upon a colt the foal of an ass" (Zechariah 9:9). "Let Israel rejoice in him that made him: let the children of Zion be joyful in their King" (Psalm 149:2).

3. The Tears of the Savior

We read in Luke 19:41-44 that our Lord Jesus weeps over the city of Jerusalem and, in a very real sense, He weeps over the world that is about to reject Him. "Now before the feast of the passover, when Jesus knew that his hour was come that he should depart out of this world unto the Father, having loved his own which were in the world, he loved them unto the end" (John 13:1). He never gives up on us! (Romans 8:38, 39).

Conclusion:

The King of Kings came the first time. Are you ready for His second coming? Hebrews 9:28: "So Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many; and unto them that look for Him shall He appear the second time without sin unto salvation."

-Pastor Pope-