

The Coming of Zion's King

Dear Ladies, I'm sitting in my family room working on my computer today and thinking how blessed I am to be writing this study for all of you. It brings me so much joy to know that the Lord is using this time to teach me more about him, and then he turns me around to share his word with all of you. What an amazing God we have that he would use something like this Bible Study to bring us all together to share this amazing journey! I am blessed.

The last few weeks reminded us of Jesus' ministry and purpose on earth. In restoring sight to the blind he reveals to us that it is only through him that we can have any understanding of the realm of the Spirit and our Father in heaven. He is the Light that illuminates our path through this dark world on our way home to the Father. And he reminded us through the raising of Lazarus that he is Life. Without him we are destined to an eternity separated from God, and that the Father sent him to restore us to life in Him. We were created for life in him.

This week we move ever closer to Jerusalem and become increasingly aware that Jesus walked that road with silent determination, never wavering from the destiny he knew awaited him. We will spend some time in Bethany and witness Mary tenderly anointing Jesus. We will enter Jerusalem with the Lord to the cheering of the crowds gathering for Passover and awaiting their messiah. And lastly we will weep with Jesus over the future fate of Jerusalem. It will be a poignant week of preparation for the events of Jesus' final Passover.

Anointing of a King

*"It was intended that she should save this perfume
for the day of my burial" (John 12:7)*

This week we are back in Bethany with the family of Lazarus. We find Jesus being honored at a dinner. As we prepare for today's study let's take a few minutes to come before the Lord. *Heavenly Father, as we seek to know your son better, bless us with the discernment to uncover the teachings you have left for us to discover in your word. Bless us with insight and understanding that surpasses knowledge in just our minds, but plants itself deeply in our hearts. Let your word grow in our hearts that we may bear fruit with our hands –Amen.*



Read John 12:1-11 and answer the following questions.

How many days is it before Passover?

Lesson 3 Homework

Who is present at this banquet?

✂ Why do you think Mary pours out a very expensive perfume on Jesus' feet? What do you think is the meaning of this event? (focus on v3, 7-8)

✂ What do Judas' and John's (as the writer/narrator) remarks reveal about Judas?

It is interesting to note that John's recollection of this event is slightly different than how it is recorded in Matthew (26:6-13) and Mark (14:3-9). Both Matthew and Mark state that Jesus' head was anointed with the perfume; but John's focuses on the fact that Jesus' feet were anointed. (Luke also maintains that it was Jesus feet that was bathed in the perfume in Luke 7: 37-38.) While the seeming discrepancy many not have a resolution this side of heaven, what do you think is the significance of Matthew and Mark relating that it was Jesus head that was anointed, while John maintains it was his feet?

Why do a "large crowd of Jews" come seeking Jesus? Who else are they looking for and why?

What plans do the chief priests make, and what motivates their plan?

Did you notice John's description that "*the whole house was filled with the fragrance of the perfume*"? You can just imagine John telling this story and reliving that moment as he remembered those events. It's a beautiful detail remembered and savored. That moment must have been deeply imprinted in the Apostle's memory. Nard was an extremely expensive perfume from northern India, the cost of which could easily be more than a laborer's annual wage. This gift to Jesus was very costly and reveals something of Mary's commitment to him. Bottles of nard would have been rare and exceedingly valuable, not something most people would have lying about the house. One of the commentaries suggests that the nard likely came from Mary's dowry, the wealth she would bring to a marriage. She lovingly, adoringly poured it out on Jesus' feet at the expense of her dowry and marital future.¹ This is not just a kind act

¹ New American Commentary

to honor the Lord. The financial and social sacrifice made by Mary elevates the importance of her act to one of unselfish adoration. Seen in this light, it becomes an expression of devotion to the Messiah and would-be King of Israel. This event takes place (according to John) just prior to Jesus’ Triumphal Entry where he is heralded as King by the crowds welcoming him to Jerusalem. Mary’s extravagant gift of the nard takes on a new significance when we link this anointing to the heralding of the King of Israel. Messiah does in fact mean *Anointed One*. Jesus himself takes this image a step further when he defends her loving gesture by commanding Judas to *“Leave her alone....It was intended that she should save this perfume for the day of my burial.”* This event now no longer signifies the anointing of the King, but the anointing of the King who came to save the world through his death.

Jesus’ words to Judas are a stern rebuke. He graciously defends Mary’s actions and points out that, *“you will always have the poor among you, but you will not always have me.”* Jesus was not advocating neglecting the poor. Because of the fallen state of the world, there would always be those in need of care. Jesus’ time on earth was running short, his departure was imminent. There would be time to care for the poor, but for now their focus should be on him and the events to come.

Where ever Jesus went he was sure to draw a crowd. Word had gotten out that he was in Bethany, and with Lazarus, whom he had brought back to life. From all over Israel people were coming to Jerusalem for Passover. Bethany was a short distance from Jerusalem. The story of Lazarus coming back to life surely had spread like a wild fire. We are told that many came to put their faith in Jesus because of Lazarus. This was more than the chief priests could take. They needed to put an end to Lazarus so that he could no longer be living proof of Jesus’ power and claim to be Messiah. Too many people were turning to Jesus, following Jesus, believing Jesus. John’s gospel tells us that *“many of the Jews were going over to Jesus”*. John’s use of *“Jews”* in this context designates Jews not of the general population, but Jews in the sense of those in the ranks of the religious leaders of Israel. Jesus was drawing Jews away from the circle of religious authority, not just the populace at large. Jesus’ popularity was increasing and gaining power. It was perceived by the religious leaders, the Sanhedrin, as an increasing threat to their power, reputation and position. Previously they plotted Jesus’ death, but that would not be enough to tie up the *“loose ends”* of those whose lives were testimony to Jesus’ miraculous works. The chief priests’ blindness and pride caused them to sink deeper into the darkness and depravity of sin. Sin leads to more sin in a downward spiral into a pit of darkness out of which only the light of God can lift us out.

The King Enters Jerusalem

Blessed is the king who comes in the name of the Lord!” (Luke 19: 38)

In our previous passage we saw Mary anoint Jesus with aromatic perfume fit for a king. Today we turn our focus to Jesus hailed as king as he enters Jerusalem, the home of Israel’s king from the time of David. Let’s take a moment to center our thoughts on our beloved King as we prepare ourselves for today’s scripture lesson. *Lord Jesus, help us to see that you are the*

Lesson 3 Homework

Servant King, sent to deliver us from oppression and lead us home to our Father. Give each one of us the heart to understand your word today –Amen.



Read Luke 19:28-38 and answer the following questions.

How was Jesus to enter Jerusalem?

Read Zechariah 9:9-10. What is the correlation between these two passages?



How does verse 10 fit into the crowds' expectation of Jesus being their messiah?

What was the crowds' response to seeing Jesus enter the city on a donkey?

How does the crowd herald Jesus as he comes to the city? What title is he given?

Previously Jesus has avoided just such an event, why does he permit, even welcome, it now?

Jesus arranged to enter Jerusalem riding on a donkey intentionally fulfilling the prophecy of Zechariah 9:9. Israel's King would come to her riding peacefully and humbly on a donkey. Jesus came in peace to claim his kingdom. Great crowds of people would have been coming from all of Israel to Jerusalem for the pilgrim feast of Passover. It was one of the feasts that required the men of Israel to present themselves before God at the temple. Whole families would travel to Jerusalem for this feast.

Jesus had become famous throughout Israel for his teachings, healings and miracles. Everyone knew who he was and what he had done. Many of the pilgrims coming to Jerusalem for Passover had been to Jerusalem a few short months prior to celebrate the Feast of Tabernacles. At the Feast of Tabernacles Jesus proclaimed himself the Light of the World and offered himself as Living Water. Both of these claims carried messianic overtones. The people of Israel had been seeking their messiah. They tried once before to proclaim him king, but it wasn't God's timing. Now was the time for Jesus to enter the city as the Messiah. As he approached the city on the back of a donkey, the crowds recognized him. They responded with the waving of palms (as recorded in Matthew, Mark, and John) and cries of Hosannas. *"Blessed is the king who comes in the name of the Lord!"* Israel's king was coming as it had been foretold. The crowds were looking ahead to an Israel free of Roman tyranny and believed surely Jesus would deliver them. The time was right for Israel to see her king. Jesus wanted to be recognized as Israel's Messiah at this point and allowed and even encouraged it to happen.

The King Laments over his City

"...you did not recognize the time of God's coming to you." (Luke 19:44)

Our last passage of scripture follows Jesus as he approaches Jerusalem, hailed as King. As his eyes rest on the city he is overcome with grief as he prophesies over it. It is an emotional moment as we enter the thoughts of our Lord, the King and Prophet of Israel. As we prepare to study this passage, take a moment to reflect and pray over our study today.



Read Luke 19:39-44 and answer the following questions.

What has just happened in the preceding verses (28-38)?

Who was present at this point?

What was the Pharisees' response to this spectacle?



What was the Pharisee's motive in silencing this procession?

What was Jesus' response to the Pharisees and what do you think it means?



Why did Jesus weep over Jerusalem as he approached the city? What was "hidden from their eyes"? What did they not recognize?

- In Luke 13:31-35 recounts a previous time when Jesus lamented over Jerusalem as he entered that city. How does this previous passage add to your understanding of Jesus' prophecy in our Luke passage?
- In 2 Samuel 24: 11-16, the Lord has informed King David that a judgment will come upon Israel for its ungodly behavior. As this judgment comes to pass and the angel of

Lesson 3 Homework

the Lord approaches the threshing floor of Aruanah the Jebusite, what emotion overcomes the Lord? What do you think prompts this response of the Lord? What does the site of the threshing floor of Aruanah the Jebusite become?

The Pharisees protested this very public and very loud spectacle of Jesus entering the city blatantly claiming to be Messiah for all to see. They rebuked him. This Jesus, this false teacher and deceiver (as they chose to believe) was drawing too much attention. He was a threat to the authority of the religious leaders. Now he was publicly proclaiming himself Messiah – he was an increasing threat against Roman authorities. The Pharisees would fear him drawing Roman notice and a Roman response.

Jesus responded, *“I tell you, if they keep quiet, the stones will cry out.”* This is the long awaited day that the Son of God entered Jerusalem. Messiah publicly presented himself to Israel and God the Father wanted it acknowledged. This was a milestone in the fulfillment of the Father’s salvation plan for all creation, all creation rejoiced in it.

Ironically there *would* be a time when Messiah would be silent, the disciples would be silent, the crowds would be silent, but the very rocks, the bedrocks of Jerusalem would cry out. Sadly as Zion’s King presented himself to Israel, it was with the full knowledge that the leaders of the nation would refuse to acknowledge him. He came but would be rejected. When Jesus entered Jerusalem the religious leaders failed to see that the Son of God had entered their midst, the kingdom of God was before them, but they were blind to it. It was hidden from them because they refused to see the Truth before them. Their *choice* not to acknowledge God present among them set them on a road to judgment that history would see fulfilled in the events of 70 AD when Rome crushed and enslaved Jerusalem and Israel once for all.

Personal Reflection:

Think over the passages of scripture from this week. We saw prophecies fulfilled in Jesus’ anointing and entering Jerusalem. With the vantage point of history we saw the judgment that fell on Jerusalem and Israel for their lack of belief, also as prophesied by Jesus. What do these events reveal to you about Jesus’ character? About our Father’s character? When you are confronted by those who don’t know the love and compassion of our God, but do know of his judgments against Israel, and hold those judgments against God, what can you say in defense of your faith? What can you say about prophecies still to be fulfilled? Do you know what prophecies have been made and have yet to be fulfilled? Israel suffered the fate of their *choice* not to believe that Jesus was the fulfillment of prophecy. They *chose* to remain blind despite all evidence to the contrary. How are Christians today choosing that same blindness?