



We are entering into the sixth section in our outline – last Passover to the crucifixion.

In the previous lesson we found the Lord making His way from the northern countryside one final time, teaching and performing miracles along the way.

- The last scene was at Simon the Leper's home with Lazarus, Martha and Mary along with His Apostles sharing a fellowship meal.
- This meal was eaten in Bethany, only a few miles from Jerusalem and the powerful enemies that awaited Him there.

This section is divided into six days.

## **Sunday – April 2**

### **119. Jesus' triumphant entry**

*Matthew 21:1-11; 17; Mark 11:1-11; Luke 19:29-44; John 12:12-19*

Most who came to Jerusalem for Passover were pilgrims who would normally walk. Jesus sends His Apostles to get a donkey for Him to ride on as was prophesied of in Isaiah 62:11; Zechariah 9:9.

- This was to show not only His divine Messianic role,
- And the humility of the Christ (a worldly savior that the Jews were hoping for would have come in on a horse).

The crowds cry out Hosanna ("Oh save" Psalms 118:25, expression of adoration) and lay out cloaks and branches as a mark of respect and honor. Once He arrives at the temple there is no welcoming committee, no honor for Him, no belief from the leaders.

He mourns over the judgment coming upon the city and nation because of this and returns to Bethany to spend the night.

## **Monday, April 3**

### **120. Jesus curses the fig tree / cleanses the temple**

*Matthew 21:12-19; Mark 11:12-19; Luke 19:45-46*

Jesus cursing the fig tree after He had come to it and it had no figs to offer Him is a living parable that reflects what has taken place when Jesus came to Jerusalem and its people, but they had nothing to offer Him (faith and praise). Just as the fig tree will wither and die, so will the nation.

On the second visit Jesus chases the merchants and animals out of the temple. This was the second time He did this. The first was at the beginning of His ministry, the second at the end of it.

Once again He returns to Bethany for the night.

**Tuesday – April 4**

## **121. Lesson on the withered fig tree**

*Matthew 21:21-22; Mark 11:20-26*

Jesus returns to the temple the next day with His disciples and they pass by the cursed fig tree and see that it has completely withered overnight. Jesus' lesson on this is that with faith all things are possible.

- The alteration of nature is not too hard for Him – whether it's withering a tree or casting a mountain into the sea – both are equally easy for Him.
- What seems to concern Jesus most is faith, and if the Apostles have faith, they will do even greater things.

We know that they did do these greater things because later on they saw Jesus resurrect and themselves performed mighty miracles – as well as raised people from the dead.

## **122. Jesus teaches in the temple**

*Matthew 21:23-22:14; Mark 11:27-12:12*

It was the Passover week and there were large crowds in Jerusalem. Jesus' teachings were bound to stir up the people so the Jewish leaders try to neutralize Him by confronting Him. They challenge His authority to cast out the money changers and His reply is to ask them what they believed concerning John the Baptist.

Remember, these confrontations were staged in front of the crowds so the leaders were sensitive to what the crowds heard. As far as John was concerned, if they said he was a prophet Jesus would ask them why they didn't obey Him. If they rejected John openly, the crowds would reject them because they believed he was a prophet. In the end, they said nothing and claimed ignorance.

To this response Jesus tells them three parables.

### **1. Parable of two sons**

A father asks two sons to do something. One says yes but doesn't do it, the other says no but changes his mind and obeys the father.

The point of the parable was to show that the Jewish leaders were charged with a duty that they accepted but didn't fulfill, and those that had previously disobeyed and neglected the task (sinners and Gentiles) would one day obey the Father in their place.

### **2. Parable of the landowner**

Jesus describes wicked vine growers who refuse to pay their dues to the landowner. They would reject or kill all those who would come to collect the rent, even the landowner's son. Finally, Jesus predicts that the landowner will eventually come and punish them. Again, the target and meaning is quite obvious.

### **3. Parable of marriage feast**

A king prepares a feast but none of the guests want to come, they even beat and kill the messengers sent to invite them.

- The king destroys these and in order to have the wedding feast for his son,
- He invites the poor and homeless to be his guests, to wear the wedding guest garments and enjoy the feast.
- One refuses to wear the offered garment and is cast out of the feast.
- Of course the parables were directed at the religious leaders who now were being publicly rebuked by Jesus for their disbelief in Him as Messiah.
- As a result they desire to kill Him.



## 123. Jesus responds to questions

*Matthew 22:15-23:39; Mark 12:13-40; Luke 20:20-47*

While at the temple many come to Him with questions and challenges.

### 1. Pharisees and Herodians concerning taxes

Once the Priests have failed to destroy His credibility the Pharisees along with the Herodians (a group that supported Herod's position as king and feared that Jesus' teachings would upset his delicate hold on power), tried to challenge Him by asking Him if it was in accordance with God's law to pay taxes to Caesar.

- This unpopular tax (poll tax) was a token of the Jews' subject status under Rome.
- If Jesus said yes, He would alienate His followers who hated the Roman authority.
- If He said no, they would accuse Him of insurrection.

Jesus simply answers that the tax belongs to Caesar (his face was on the coinage) and giving it to him was no offense to God because it belonged to him.

- But the Lord clarified that what belonged to God must also be rendered unto Him as well.
- Jesus implies here that what belongs to God, however, should not be given to Caesar, and vice versa which sets the limits of where human government leaves off and divine authority continues.

### 2. Sadducees concerning resurrection

The previous question was political in nature, the next is theological.

Sadducees did not believe in resurrection or angels.

- They rejected miracles and did not accept the books of prophets as authoritative.
- They only held to the Pentateuch for their authority (Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, Deuteronomy).

- They present Jesus with a foolish story about 7 brothers each marrying the same woman and ask Jesus which man's wife will she be in heaven.
- The question was meant to mock the idea of the resurrection.

Jesus shows that their disbelief and errors were based on the misunderstanding of the very text they accepted.

He showed that in Exodus 3:6 God referred to Himself as the one who cared for men who were long dead.

- This meant that these men continued to exist before Him in some form.
- This proved the concept of life after death from their own text! (I AM the God of Abraham...)

He also gives them an insight that only God would know: that men don't have wives in heaven because they are like angels in nature (spiritual). Not only does He answer their question on their own terms but He reveals their ignorance in doing so.

### **3. Lawyer's question on the greatest command**

Pious Jews often repeated the Shema (Deuteronomy 6:4-5):

*"Hear O Israel, the Lord is our God, The Lord is One! And you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your might."*

When a lawyer asks Jesus what the greatest commandment is, the Lord repeats the Shema, but adds to this a companion verse in Leviticus 19:18: "You shall love your neighbor as yourself."

- He does this to show that loving God is not only demonstrated in ceremony and temple worship (which was important also),
- but in a very real way acted out as love towards others.
- Our love towards God has an impact on the world only when we love others in His name.

The lawyer agrees with Jesus and the Lord tells him that he is not far from the kingdom (what was missing of course was faith in Him as Messiah).

## 4. Jesus asks them a question

After His adversaries have asked their questions, He asks them a question concerning the Scriptures and what they teach about the Messiah.

- Their concept of the Messiah was that he would be a descendant of the great king David and,
- Much like David, would bring the nation to political and economic greatness.
- Jesus corrects this idea by showing them from Scripture that David himself described the Messiah as a divine being coming in the form of a man through David's lineage. (Psalms 110:1: The Lord said to my Lord).

The Jews understood the implications of this (that Jesus claimed not only to be the Messiah, but the Divine Messiah) and were silenced, not venturing to say another word.

## 5. Jesus' last warning

Once He has finished teaching and responding to them, Jesus rebukes the priests, Pharisees and scribes.

- He reviles them for their pride (wanting the honor of men instead of God),
- Hypocrisy (don't do what they teach),
- Legalism (no grace of God in their teachings)
- And disbelief (killed the prophets sent by God).
- He condemns them and mourns over the city that has rejected Him, and because of this will suffer destruction.

*124. The widow's offering Mark 12:41-44; Luke 21:1-4*

Of course not all Jews were like the leaders: greedy, unbelieving and proud. Jesus commends the love



and generosity of a poor widow who gives all she had as an offering in order to show her faith and trust in God.

- This scene is described to show the tremendous difference between the humble and acceptable servant of God (who had little but gave a lot) and those rejected by God (who were given much but returned nothing).

## **125. Some Greeks desire to see Jesus**

*John 12:20-36*

The final group to come seeking Jesus were Greek converts to Judaism who had little respect among the Jews. Their eagerness to see and hear Him prompts Jesus to offer a prayer in which He:

- Predicts His death again and the fruit it will bear as He is resurrected.
- Hears a voice from heaven answering His prayer to glorify the Father's name.
- Encourages the crowd to believe and warns them of the consequences for not doing so.

After addressing the general crowd He leaves the temple area once again.

## **126. Jesus prophesies concerning the destruction of Jerusalem and the end of the world.**

*Matthew 24:1-42; Mark 13:1-37; Luke 21:5-36*

Jesus brings Peter, James, John and Andrew with Him outside the city to teach them about the things that will come.

- In these long passages Jesus talks about an event in the near future (the end of the Jewish nation with the destruction of the city and temple by the Romans – 70 AD)
- As well as an event in the distant future which would be the end of the world at His second coming.

There are some who interpret these passages as exclusively end of the world scenarios, however, Jesus specifically mentions that these things would happen to the present generation in Matthew 24:34.

1. It is helpful if we realize that this passage has 3 historical viewpoints: A panorama of world history that includes the present time when Jesus is speaking, the near future referring to the destruction of Jerusalem in 70 AD, and the end of the world at Jesus' return. (vs. 4-14)



2. Jesus looks ahead to events leading at

the destruction of Jerusalem in 70 AD. (vs. 15-35)

3. He also peers into the distant future to his second coming at the end of the world. (vs. 36-42)

All this is done to prepare His disciples for the near (70 AD) and distant (end of the world) future.

## 127. The last parables

*Matthew 24:43-25:46*

Having given His final teachings and warnings to the Jews along with the preparation of His Apostles concerning the end of the Jewish state, Jesus goes on to tell them parables concerning the following people.

1. The good man and the house
2. The wise and evil servants
3. The ten virgins
4. The talents
5. The sheep and goats



All of these have a similar theme: that one does not know when the judgment is coming but must be ready at all times for final judgment.

## **Wednesday – April 5**

As the sun sets, Jesus is on the Mount of Olives teaching and preparing His Apostles for what is to come. Officially, the next day begins after this and so as the following day emerges we see the Lord continuing to teach and train His Apostles.

## **128. Judas plots to betray Jesus**

*Matthew 26:1-5; Matthew 26:14-16; Mark 14:1-2; Mark 14:10-11; Luke 22:1-6; John 12:36-50*

Of course, after their stinging rebuke, the Jewish leaders agree to kill Jesus as soon as the Passover is complete (avoid crowd reaction and riots).

- Judas plays into their hands by coming to them at this precise moment with a plan to betray the Lord,
- They agree to pay.

In the meantime, the writers say that the crowds were still undecided as to who they believed Jesus was. Many leaders believed but were afraid to acknowledge this openly. Jesus pronounces judgment on all of these by saying that His words will judge them in the end (meaning how they reacted to His teaching will judge them before God).

## **Lessons**

### **1. There will be an end**

The Jewish leaders refused to believe that there would be an end to their nation as Jesus predicted. History shows that they were terribly and tragically mistaken. Jesus has also predicted the end of our world and how to be ready for that. Let's learn from their mistake and believe Jesus when He warns us about this.

## 2. His Word will judge

- Parents won't judge,
- The Law won't judge,
- Our conscience won't judge;

The final judge will be the New Testament.

- How we react to Jesus' words will determine what happens to us in the end.
- The sheep will be the ones who followed Jesus' words,
- the goats will be the ones who didn't think they were important or worth believing and obeying.

Our Bible study is not simply an exercise in learning, it is also an act of preparation for the end.

## READING ASSIGNMENT FOR CHAPTER 12

- 129. Matthew 26:17-19; Mark 14:12-16; Luke 22:7-13
- 130. Matthew 26:20-25, 31-35; Mark 14:17-21, 27-31; Luke 22:14, 21-38; John 13:1-38
- 131. Matthew 26:26-29; Mark 14:22-25; Luke 22:15-20
- 132. John 14:1-17:26
- 133. Matthew 26:30, 36-56; Mark 14:26; 32-52; Luke 22:39-53; John 18:1-12
- 134. Matthew 26:57-68; Mark 14:53-72; Luke 22:54-71; John 18:13-27
- 135. Matthew 27:1-2, 11-30; Mark 15:1-19; Luke 23:1-25; John 18:28-19:16
- 136. Matthew 27:3-10
- 137. Matthew 27:31-44; Mark 15:20-32; Luke 23:26-38; John 19:16-22
- 138. Matthew 27:45-61; Mark 15:33-47; Luke 23:39-56; John 19:23-42
- 139. Matthew 27:62-66

## Discussion Questions

1. Summarize the following actions by Jesus:

- Jesus' triumphant entry (Matthew 21:1-11; 17; Mark 11:1-11; Luke 19:29-44; John 12:12-19)
  - Jesus curses the fig tree/cleanses the temple (Matthew 21:12-19; Mark 11:12-19; Luke 19:45-46)
  - Lesson on the withered fig tree (Matthew 21:21-22; Mark 11:20-26)
  - Jesus teaches in the temple (Matthew 21:23-22:14; Mark 11:27-12:12)
  - Jesus responds to questions (Matthew 22:15-23:39; Mark 12:13-40; Luke 20:20-47)
  - The widow's offering (Mark 12:41-44; Luke 21:1-4)
  - Some Greeks desire to see Jesus (John 12:20-36)
  - Jesus prophesizes concerning the destruction of Jerusalem and the end of the world (Matthew 24:1-42; Mark 13:1-37; Luke 21:5-36)
  - The last parables (Matthew 24:43-25:46)
  - Judas plots to betray Jesus (Matthew 26:1-5, 14-16; Mark 14:1-2; 10-11; Luke 22:1-6; John 12:36-50)
2. Why would Jesus teach us of an end of the world but not tell us when it will occur?
  3. How can you use this lesson to grow spiritually and help others come into a relationship with Jesus?