

That You May Know The Certainty

LESSON 20: JESUS IN JERUSALEM, PART 1 (LUKE 19:28-20:40)

Jesus had been foretelling what would happen to Him in Jerusalem. After traveling in areas closer to Jerusalem (including Jericho), the time for Him to enter Jerusalem had come. It was now approximately one week before Jesus would be crucified.

JESUS ENTERS JERUSALEM (LUKE 19:28-48)

19:28-40. Jesus began the final part of His journey to Jerusalem, through the small villages of Bethphage and Bethany. He apparently arrived in Bethany (2 miles east of Jerusalem, on the eastern slopes of the Mount of Olives) on Friday before the beginning of the Sabbath and stayed there for two nights (John 12:1-8). Jesus sent two disciples into a village ahead of them to get a donkey's colt that had never been ridden so He could make His entrance to Jerusalem (Matthew 21:1-11; Mark 11:1-11). They found the colt just as Jesus had said and told the owner the Lord needed it (which apparently satisfied him, Mark 11:6). The disciples brought the animal to Jesus, put their clothes (i.e. heavier outer garments) on it (apparently for comfort), and helped Jesus onto it. In this, Jesus fulfilled the prophecy of Zechariah concerning the way the Messiah would enter Jerusalem (Zechariah 9:9; John 12:15-16). Jesus likely entered Jerusalem on Sunday, with people spreading their clothes and palm branches on the road (John 12:12-13). The people were shouting praises to Jesus as King, coming in the name of the Lord ("Hosanna!" or "Lord, save us!," Matthew 21:9), having seen Jesus work many miracles during His ministry! However, some Pharisees wanted Jesus's disciples to be silenced so Jesus would not be acknowledged as the Messiah. Yet, Jesus indicated that the news could not be stopped!

19:41-44. As Jesus approached Jerusalem and saw it, He wept (John 11:35). This city that had been the center for God's people (the Jews) was now full of people who would reject God's visit to them in the Person of Jesus Christ, the Messiah. Because of this, they would not experience the peace God wanted to give them (e.g. through the forgiveness of sin; Isaiah 9:6; Luke 1:78-79; 2:13-14). Instead, God would punish them by allowing enemies to surround them, destroy the city, and kill many of its inhabitants (in 70 A.D. by the Romans, Luke 21).

19:45-48. Perhaps the day after He entered Jerusalem (Mark 11:11, 15), Jesus entered the temple (the court of the Gentiles) and "cleansed" it by overthrowing the tables and throwing out those who were using the temple for buying and selling (perhaps things that would be involved in the sacrifices and Passover feast, John 2:13-17; Mark 11:15-19). They had perverted the place designed for prayer and service to God (Isaiah 56:7) into a place focused on materialism and theft (Jeremiah 7:11, perhaps by charging unfair prices). Jesus also spent time teaching (and healing, Matthew 21:14-17) each day. The Jewish leaders despised Jesus and were looking for a way to kill Him (John 11:57), but they were not able to find a way to do it because all the people were captivated (hung) by His words.

JESUS'S AUTHORITY IS CHALLENGED (LUKE 20:1-19)

20:1-8. One day when Jesus was teaching the gospel in the temple (apparently Tuesday, Mark 11:19-20, 27-33), the Jewish leaders (chief priests, scribes, and elders) challenged His authority (i.e. His right to teach such things, Matthew 21:23-27; Mark 11:27-33), likely to trap Him (Luke 19:47-48). However, Jesus answered by asking them a question about whether the baptism of John was from Heaven or of human origin (thereby identifying only two possible sources of authority). These Jewish leaders now recognized their dilemma. If they confessed John to have been a prophet from God, they knew that meant he was speaking the truth about Jesus as the Messiah (John 1:19-36). However, if they rejected John, the people would stone them because they accepted John as a prophet. So, they instead chose to say they did not know. Knowing their lack of honesty, Jesus also refused to answer their question of Him.

20:9-19. Jesus went on to teach three parables that condemned the Jewish leaders (Matthew 21:28-22:1-14), though Luke only records one. In the parable (Matthew 21:33-46; Mark 12:1-12), a man planted a vineyard and leased it to tenant farmers who would manage it in his absence while he was away for a long time. At harvest time, the owner sent a series of three servants to gather fruit from the vineyard (who were each rejected by the workers). Finally, the owner sent his beloved son, thinking they might respect him. Yet, the farmers decided to kill him so the inheritance would be theirs. Jesus concluded the vineyard owner would come and kill the farmers for this! The people responded that such must never happen. Then, Jesus applied the parable to Himself by quoting Scripture (Psalm 118:22), that the builders rejected the stone that has become the cornerstone (most important in the foundation, Ephesians 2:19-22). Thus, the Jewish

nation had rejected many (i.e. the prophets) but was now rejecting the Messiah and Son of God! This would result in great destruction for them! The Jewish leaders were then more determined than ever to arrest Jesus, but they feared the people.

JESUS ANSWERS QUESTIONS (LUKE 20:20-40)

20:20-26. The Jewish leaders closely watched Jesus and sent people to Him, pretending to be righteous to catch Him in something they could use to hand Him over to the Roman governor (thereby not being held responsible themselves). So, they questioned Jesus (who they claimed to be the Teacher who taught truthfully and impartially) about whether it was lawful to pay taxes to Caesar (Matthew 22:15-22; Mark 12:13-17). Jesus, however, knew their craftiness and responded with truth and wisdom. With Caesar's image being present on the Roman denarius (coin), Jesus commanded Caesar to be given what belongs to him and God to be given what belongs to Him! Their trap had failed, they were amazed and became silent.

20:27-40. A group of Sadducees (a sect of Jews who denied the spirit and resurrection, Acts 23:8) came to question Jesus. They referenced a Mosaic Law that required a man's brother to take his wife if he died childless, to preserve his family line (Deuteronomy 25:5-10; Matthew 22:23-33; Mark 12:18-27). They then painted a scenario in which a woman went through seven brothers, who each died and had no children with her. Then, they asked whose wife she would be in the resurrection. Yet, they were in error (Matthew 22:29). First, Jesus taught there is no marriage in the resurrection (Romans 7:2-3), being instead like angels as spiritual children of God. Second, the resurrection is proven through God's words to Moses at the burning bush (Exodus 3:6, 15), that He "is" (not "was") the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. Thus, they are still living since God is not the God of the dead but of the living – and all are living to Him! The scribes (perhaps Pharisees, Matthew 22:34) agreed with Jesus's answer. None dared to question Jesus further after the way Jesus had answered them all.

CONCLUSION

Jesus triumphantly entered Jerusalem, in fulfillment of Old Testament prophecy. He then spent time in and around the temple, teaching and answering questions meant to trap Him so He would be killed. Through it all, Jesus was using and proving His divine wisdom and love!

DISCIPLESHIP QUESTIONS

How did Jesus enter Jerusalem?

What was the significance of the way Jesus entered Jerusalem?

Why did Jesus weep over Jerusalem as He approached the city?

Why did Jesus "cleanse" the temple?

How did Jesus respond to the question about His authority?

What lessons are taught in the parable of the vineyard owner?

How did Jesus respond to the question about paying taxes?

How did Jesus respond to the question about the resurrection?

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