

Valley Bible Church – Life of Christ

FOCUS #7:

THE PASSION WEEK OF JESUS

Monday- Wednesday

- Remember that during the days just this week, Jesus and His disciples had traveled up to Jerusalem with a great crowd of pilgrims going to the city to keep Passover. Jesus and His apostles had arrived at Bethany late on Friday afternoon and turned in to the village to spend the Sabbath with Lazarus and his sisters. The multitude of pilgrims traveling with Jesus had gone on into the Holy City, bearing the exciting message that this Jesus of Nazareth, so hated, feared, and sought after by the Pharisaical leadership of the nation, would in fact be in Jerusalem for the feast - indeed, He would arrive Sunday morning.
- We have already considered the events of the Triumphal Entry, which occurred on Sunday morning. We will now consider the events of the next 3 days of the Passion Week.
- First, it will be helpful to briefly survey the events of each day of that week.

SUNDAY-A day of Messianic Presentation Jesus enters the city of Jerusalem on a colt and is welcomed as a king.

MONDAY/TUESDAY- days of Messianic Proclamation

Jesus enters the Temple, cleanses it, and for two days rules in its precincts, answering the public charges and challenges of all His enemies, and then pronouncing the judgment of God upon those who reject Him.

WEDNESDAY- a silent day

There seems to be nothing recorded concerning this day; Jesus was probably in Bethany with the Twelve, enjoying the protection afforded Him there by His host, Lazarus. The day was perhaps given to preparing for the feast to come on the following day, and to instructing His disciples, preparing Himself for the ordeal soon to come, and giving the nation time to consider the challenge He had set before them early in the week.

THURSDAY afternoon and evening - a time of Messianic Preparation Judas had contracted to betray Jesus to the Sanhedrin; Jesus arranges for His last supper with the disciples, and Judas seizes the opportunity to betray the Lord; after Judas departs, Jesus instructs the disciples carefully.

FRIDAY- a day of Messianic Perfection

Jesus was arrested sometime after midnight on Friday morning, He was tried by the Sanhedrin in a mock trial, and then the decision of that tribunal was "legitimized" at sun-up; after appearing before the Roman procurator, Jesus was crucified between two malefactors; late in the afternoon, His body was removed from the cross and hastily entombed in a borrowed sepulcher.

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SUNDAY - a day of Messianic Pronouncement

Early in the day Jesus resurrected from the dead, thus declaring Himself to be the Son of God with power.

II. "The stone which the builders rejected..." (Mk 11:10) [Last ministries in Jerusalem; final days before His arrest]

Note:

1.) These first two days, Monday & Tuesday of the Passion Week, comprise one of the most amazing periods in the Lord's public ministry. Essentially, what transpires is this:

a.) Messiah boldly cleanses the Temple (as He had done once before much earlier in His ministry), but then...

b.) He claims possession of that place and for two days rules as Sovereign over all of its precincts, and during this time...

c.) Every stratum of official Judaism came and challenged Him publicly, and He withstood and defeated each one.

2.) It is important to see that two basic strands of Jesus' ministry are coming together here; as they do each reaches its crescendo.

FIRST, the claim of Jesus to be the Messiah finds its greatest and boldest expression here, as He controls the Temple in the face of challenges from every stratum of Jewish leadership;

SECOND, the animosity of the Jewish leaders, now piqued horribly by Jesus' actions in the Temple, reaches its most awful extent.

Note: The only reason Jesus escapes that hatred temporarily is that, for the moment, He is the Hero of the multitude.

We will briefly consider the events of these two days (Monday/Tuesday); they constitute one drama, but the two days deserve separate consideration.

MONDAY --the focus is on *Authority*

#154 The barren fig tree is cursed(Mt21:18,19;Mk 11:12-14)

1. The time of this event - early Monday morning, as Jesus and the 12 approach the city of Jerusalem (Mt 21:18)

2. Concerning the event itself--(Mt. 21:18-19)

3. The significance of this event-

- "In this incident, then we find Christ pronouncing judgment on that generation which John had exhorted, 'Produce fruit in keeping with repentance' (Mt 3:8). Like the leafy tree, they

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had given external evidence of being fruitful but on examination they were barren and fruitless. Therefore judgment would have come on that generation." --Walvoord, 378

#155 The SECOND cleansing of the Temple

1. The event itself
2. Some questions concerning the cleansing of the temple:

1.) What was the significance of this event?

Note: During these two days, as Jesus virtually possessed the Temple during the Passover season, he functioned as Messiah more boldly and more clearly than ever in His earthly ministry.

2.) Why did the Sadducees offer no armed resistance to Jesus at this time

-The Sadducees recognized that what they were doing was wrong and realized that the multitudes despised them and the system. Due to the apparent popularity of Jesus (however superficial) they were hesitant to resist Him.

3.) Why did Jesus not cleanse the Temple on Sunday when He arrived there?

--Mark 11:11 by the time Jesus arrived at the temple on Sunday afternoon, "the hour was already late". The sales and abuses happened earlier in the day, and thus the tables were probably already put away and the shops closed down by the time Jesus had arrived on Sunday.

4.) How did this event impact the leadership of the Jews, particularly the Sadducees? Remember that at this time in history the Sanhedrin was composed almost entirely of Pharisees and Sadducees, and that the Sadducees seem to have been had superior numbers and influence at this time. As long as Jesus was moving in the villages and among the synagogues, He was on Pharisaiic territory; the Sadducees were enjoying the frustration of their enemies, the Pharisees. However, when Jesus cleansed the temple on Monday of the Passion Week, He deliberately and irretrievably alienated the Sadducees, and in so doing galvanized the antipathy of His enemies against Him.

#156 Some Greeks would see Jesus; He foretells His Death (John 12:20-50)

TUESDAY MORNING &AFTERNOON --the focus is on *Controversy*

#157 The next morning on way back into Jerusalem the barren fig tree found to have withered (Mt 21:19-22; Mk 11:19-26; Luke 21:37,38) Once in Jerusalem a series of controversies with the leaders of the Jews erupts.

Note: As Jesus carried in the city on Tuesday morning, He returned to the Temple and once again asserted His authority there; indeed, according to Marks description of this two-day period, Jesus "would not suffer that any man should carry any vessel through the temple." The Temple was, of course, crowded for the Passover season and the leaders of Judaism were enraged at the actions of Jesus. However, because Jesus was so admired by those masses, and because those masses were so

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tired of being made merchandise of by those leaders (especially at Passover), the Pharisees and Sadducees were unable to take Jesus (cf. Mk 11:18). Lacking the opportunity to seize and execute Him, and frustrated by the fact that He was admired (if only superficially) by the masses, His enemies attempt to rescue the situation by approaching Him with difficult questions, hoping to catch Him in His words, embarrassing Him before the multitude and perhaps even finding some indictment they could take to the Romans in the attempt to have Him executed.

#158 Jesus' authority is challenged; He appeals to John's baptism to quiet His accusers, then speaks three hard parables (Mt 21:23-22:14; Mk 11:27-12:12; Luke 20: 1-19).

1.) Notice how Jesus' enemies are completely bested before the assembled multitudes again and again throughout these temple controversies; this did nothing to ameliorate the hostility of the leaders toward Jesus.

Cf. Mk 11:33; 12:12; 12:17; 12:34; Lk20:20

2.) The three parables spoken here by Jesus were open and clear statements of condemnation upon the nation of Israel, and they were recognized as such by the rulers, though the common people at first missed the point (Mt 21:41-43; cf. Luke 20:15,16).

a.) The *rebellion* of the nation - the parable of the 2 sons (Mt 21:28-32)

b.) The *retribution* of the nation - the parable of the wicked husbandmen (Mt 21:33-46)

c.) The *rejection* of the nation - the parable of the wedding feast (Mt 22:1-14)

#159 Some Pharisees and Herodians (!) approach Jesus to ask whether it is proper to pay tribute to Caesar; Jesus answers with an illustration drawn from a coin (Mt 22:15-22; Mk 12:13-17; Luke 20:20-26).

Notice the result of this confrontation - Luke 20:26

#160 The Sadducees (who rejected the concept of a resurrection and/or an after-life) approach Jesus with a favorite question concerning the resurrection; He answers them and rebukes them openly for their ignorance of the Scripture (Mt 22:23-33; Mk 12:18-27; Luke 20:27-40)

1.) Notice that Jesus finds Biblical proof of the reality of resurrection and after-life in the account of the burning bush (Ex 3). Concerning this remarkable passage:

FIRST, understand that Jesus was openly debating the Sadducees, who rejected all of the Hebrew Scriptures except the torah (our Pentateuch). Thus, the reason Jesus goes to the incident of the burning bush to prove the doctrine of the immortality of the human soul/spirit (i.e., that men live on after physical death) is very possibly in order to defeat the Sadducees by their own rules, or on their own territory.

SECOND, notice that the argument depends upon Old Testament chronology. That is, by the time Moses stood at the burning bush (1446 BC), Abraham, Isaac & Jacob had been in their graves some 544, 435 & 408 years respectively. Given that, as Jesus affirms, God is not a God of the dead but of the living, and that God said to Moses at the bush, not "I was..." but "I am the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob", the only conclusion to which it is fair to come

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is that those patriarchs, though physically dead, continue to live another life--that thus there is an afterlife, and that thus there is (contrary to the insistence of the Sadducees) a resurrection!

THIRD, note that the argument crafted here by our Lord depends upon the tense of a verb recorded in Scripture that, by His day, was already some 1400 years old. In other words, Jesus believed in plenary and verbal inspiration of the Scriptures, and in the providential preservation of those same Scriptures.

2.) Notice the result of this confrontation - Luke 20:40!

3.) It is important to see that the antagonism of the Sadducees developed because Jesus had now invaded their territory, the Temple. For many months, Jesus had been moving among the common people, and because that was the territory of the Pharisees, those Pharisees had been anxious to destroy Him. But the Sadducees had remained aloof (To generate any official action, because of the majority held by the Sadducees on the Sanhedrin at this time, it was necessary to get those Sadducees involved.) In effect, Jesus had set in motion the attitudes of hatred and jealousy that would culminate in His death, and He had done so by means of two distinct and deliberate actions early in the Passion Week: first, in the Triumphal Entry, when He was acclaimed by the common people (the domain of Pharisaic influence), He had brought the hatred of the Pharisees to an intolerable level; second, in His possession of the Temple and public humiliation of the officials there (the Temple being the domain of Sadducaic control), Jesus had brought the animosity of the Sadducees very quickly to an explosive point.

So the notion that the arrest and crucifixion of Jesus took any Person of the Triune Godhead by surprise is simply not consistent with the record of the Scriptures. It was the wickedness and hatred of men that sent Jesus to the cross. In the events of the Passion Week we see the Lord orchestrating events so that that most awful and yet most sublime death does indeed occur--in exactly the Father's timing, and in exact fulfillment of every Old Testament prophecy which foretold such a death.

#161 A Pharisaic lawyer asks a legal question: "Which is the greatest commandment?" (Mt 22:34-40; Mk 12:28-34)

#162 Jesus proves His Messiahship by means of an appeal to David (Ps 110)

Notice that by this time Jesus had seized the initiative; He had completely defeated and silenced His enemies before the multitudes in the Temple and now he goes further, demonstrating from the Old Testament that He was exactly the sort of Messiah for which Israel should have been waiting.

#163 The last public discourse of Jesus: He denounces the Scribes and Pharisees in a series of "Woes" (Mt 23:1-39; Mk 12:38-40; Luke 20:45-47)

#164 Jesus comments on the widow's mite (Mk 12:41-44; Luke 21:1-4)

#165 The **OLIVET DISCOURSE**, delivered in response to the questions of His disciples as they left the city and viewed the Temple built by Herod. (Mt 24,25; Mk 13:1-37; Luke 21:5-36)

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In the sermon, Jesus predicts the total destruction of Jerusalem; then, when His disciples ask Him concerning the "signs" of His coming, Jesus discusses at remarkable length His own Second Coming in Glory, and specifically with the conditions and signs which will immediately precede that glorious coming in power

TUESDAY EVENING & NIGHT --the focus is on *Sinister Intrigue*

#166 Jesus privately foretells His crucifixion (Mt 26:1,2)

Note: The record makes it clear that throughout these last weeks of His ministry, Jesus was carefully and repeatedly foretelling His soon coming death.

However, the New Testament makes it just as clear that the disciples refused to hear when He spoke of such things (cp. Luke 18:30-34).

#167 The Jews plot to kill Jesus as soon as the feast season is passed (Mt 26:3-5; Mk 14:1,2; Lk 22:1,2)

Note:

1.) The assembly described in Mt 26:3 is the Great Sanhedrin of Jerusalem.

2.) Notice what it was that caused the Sanhedrinists to wait until after the Passover to exercise their murderous passions (Luke Mt 26:5; Luke 22:2).

#168 Judas, stung by Jesus' rebuke at the feast in Bethany some 5 days earlier (i.e., last Friday), seeks out the Sanhedrin and bargains to betray Jesus to them (Mt 26:14-16; Mk 14:10-11; Luke 22:3-6)

1.) Notice that both Matthew and Mark record that feast and the rebuke of Judas by Jesus which occurred at that feast in close connection with Judas' decision to betray Jesus; the point is clearly that it was that rebuke which so enraged the unregenerate heart of the counterfeit disciple that he took this most despicable step.

2.) **Important** Exactly what did Judas promise to do to enable the Sanhedrinists to take Jesus? Conveniently betray him in the absence of the multitude.

WEDNESDAY --a quiet day

(no record in the Gospels)