

MAY 15-21, 2023

Matthew 21–23; Mark 11; Luke 19–20; John 12

“BEHOLD, THY KING COMETH”

Summary:

Matthew 21. Jesus rides in triumph into Jerusalem—He cleanses the temple, curses the fig tree, and discusses authority—He gives the parables of the two sons and the wicked

husbandmen.

Matthew 22. Jesus gives the parable of the marriage of the king’s son—Pay tribute to Caesar and to God—Worldly marriages endure in this life only—The first commandment is to love the Lord—Jesus asks, What think ye of Christ?

Matthew 23. Jesus pronounces woes upon the scribes and Pharisees—They will be held responsible for killing the prophets—They will not escape the damnation of hell.

Mark 11. Jesus rides into Jerusalem amid shouts of hosanna—He curses a fig tree, drives the money changers from the temple, and confounds the scribes on the matter of authority.

Luke 19. Jesus came to save souls—He gives the parable of the pounds—He rides in triumph into Jerusalem, weeps over the city, and cleanses the temple again.

Luke 20. The chief priests oppose Jesus—He gives the parable of the wicked husbandmen—Render unto Caesar and God that which is theirs—Jesus teaches the law of marriage.

John 12. Mary anoints Jesus’ feet—His triumphal entry into Jerusalem is recounted—He foretells His death—To receive Christ is to receive the Father.

Supplemental Jewish and Holy Land Insights

How do Jews prepare for a burial?

The considerable amount of

supplemental information about Jewish burial practices in the previous lessons carries over to this lesson as well.

Anointing is done as one of the respectful ways of preparing a body for burial. Six days before the Passover that year (*Friday nightfall/Saturday*), Jesus, knowing that Mary of Bethany would not have the chance to prepare His body in death as she and other women surely would have desired to do, appreciated her anointing Him while He was still alive.

“Anointing with oil is a very ancient custom. It was done for both practical and symbolic reasons. The practical use was

cosmetic, to soften and protect the skin, as well as medicinal, to heal various afflictions. Anointing also figured in the coronation of the king, in the ordination of Aaron and his sons as priests, and in the purification of a person suffering from leprosy. These anointings were not for practical purposes but of symbolic value; they symbolized the new rank and power given to the anointed person and they evoked God's blessing on him.” “The anointing oil was holy and made according to a special formula. It could be used for no purposes other than those outlined above. In the case of leprosy, the oil used was not holy. According to the Talmud, the anointing oil was compounded only once in history --- by Moses, who made enough to last for the whole period from the anointing of Aaron

until the residue was hidden away by King Josiah. After that time no anointing took place." "In the case of kings, the whole head was anointed, i.e., covered with the oil, whereas the priests had only a mark made on the head with the oil. For King David and his descendants, the oil was poured out of a horn; for King Saul it was from a phial since "his kingdom was not a lasting one." The kings of the Northern Kingdom of Israel were not anointed with oil but with balsam." (**Encyclopedia Judaica Jr.**)

What is the meaning of the Hebrew word "Messiah?"

"The word messiah literally means "the anointed one." (**Encyclopedia Judaica Jr.**) Mary's affectionate service in anointing Jesus could have been her testifying of His Messiahship. "Anointing with oil was symbolic of change in a person's status. Thus, for example, Aaron was anointed with oil before becoming a priest. Kings were anointed before taking the throne and even brides were anointed with oil before marriage. A person cured of leprosy had to go through a whole purification ritual involving the sprinkling and anointing with oil." "Aaron and his sons were anointed in "holy anointing oil" prepared in the wilderness. Samuel anointed Saul and David with this special oil, and Zadok anointed Solomon. Oil saturated with perfume for ordinary use was called "apothecary's oil" or "precious oil." It was mainly used by women, but men did scent their beards with it. Candidates for Ahasuerus' favors were treated "six months with oil of myrrh and six months with sweet odors and with other ointments of the women" (**Esther 2:12**)." "Josiah was far-sighted. Despite his successes, he heeded Hulda's prophecy and hid the Ark of the Covenant so that it should not be captured when Jerusalem fell. He also hid the anointing oil, prepared in the wilderness by Moses." "The primary feature of the coronation was the

anointing of the king's head with oil by a priest or prophet, the sign of the divine covenant --- that is, he had been chosen as God's anointed." (**Encyclopedia Judaica Jr.**)

What implication did the "Triumphal Entry" have?

Five days before Passover that year, (*Saturday nightfall/Sunday*) the triumphal entry of Jesus was indeed an expression of hope, as many people wanted Him to relieve them of the often-expressed cruelty of the Romans and the growing corruption of the Jewish priests. Jesus sent His disciples to the neighboring village of Bethphage to acquire a donkey. They returned with two animals, a donkey and its colt. Jesus chose to ride the colt. The sight of a large man riding a small donkey is startling enough. However, the gesture must have called up historical images of honored kings riding into Jerusalem on lowly donkeys that had never been ridden. To some, this may have implied that Jesus was their King. The people, hearing that Jesus was coming to Jerusalem, then took branches of palm trees, a well-known symbol of Jewish independence, and cried as, ". . . they heard that Jesus was coming . . . Hosanna: Blessed is the King of Israel that cometh in the name of the Lord." (**John 12:12-13**) What Christianity calls Palm Sunday was His triumphal entry on a donkey's colt down the Mount of Olives and into the Gate Beautiful. It raised the spirits of the Jews. They wanted a Messiah, and they praised this extraordinary man of miracles. Simultaneously, leading priests were angered and decided to set in motion a plan to have Jesus executed. Riding a donkey's colt was one of the traditions ancient kings of Israel did to symbolize a greater king still to come. Other kings throughout the world ride in lavish vehicles weighted with gold and jewels. "And Jesus, when he had found a young

ass, sat thereon; as it is written, Fear not, daughter of Zion: behold, thy King cometh, sitting on an ass's colt."

(John 12:14-15) "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)**

Jewish tradition also indicates a connection between a Messiah and riding a donkey. "According to the *Talmud* (written biblical Jewish interpretations), the Messiah will be a descendant of the House of David and will be preceded by a secondary Messiah, from the House of Joseph. Folklore has it that he will arrive riding a donkey, although some sources have him arriving triumphantly riding the clouds. A widespread belief was that the Messiah will be born on the 9th of Av, the anniversary of the destruction of the First and Second Temples." **(Encyclopedia Judaica Jr.)**

Who are some other "Messianic" persons Jews anticipate?

With the inference of a Joseph Messiah preceding a David Messiah, please consider the parable Jesus related in **Matthew 21:33-39** and **Matthew 21:42-44**. Paraphrasing, Jesus is saying that the Kingdom will be taken from the "self-appointed priests in Judah" and will be given to another nation that will bring forth fruits. Turning the clock back to Jacob's (name changed to Israel) time, we see that the spiritual leadership of Israel was the birthright of Joseph, son of Jacob, yet his brothers schemed to replace him. "And his brethren said to him, Shalt thou indeed reign over us? or shalt thou indeed have dominion over us? And they hated him yet all the more for his dreams, and for his words . . . And his brethren envied him . . ." **(Genesis 37:8-11)** In Jewish interpretation, *Mashiach ben Joseph*, is a Jewish messiah from the tribe of Ephraim a descendant of Joseph. **(Rabbi Prof. Dr.**

Jacob Immanuel Schochet, ("Moshiach ben Yossef") Among Jews, this person's origins are debated. Some view it as a rabbinic invention, but others support the view that its origins are in the *Torah* (scriptures). **(D.C. Mitchell, *Messiah ben Joseph* [Newton Mearns: Campbell, 2016]; 'Firstborn *shor and rem: A Sacrificial Josephite Messiah in 1 Enoch 90.37-38 & Deuteronomy 33.17*', *Journal for the Study of the Pseudepigrapha* 15.3 (2006) pp. 211-28)** Jewish tradition also suggests another messianic figure, (one of four) and includes a *Messiah ben David*. The four are mentioned in the *Talmud* (written biblical Jewish interpretations) and in the Book of Zechariah. **(Zechariah 10:6)** The kingdom has been restored with Joseph as the spiritual leader. "The personal visitation of the Father and the Son, choosing Joseph to be the leader of the Dispensation of the Fulness of Times, marked the beginning of this work, and this was supplemented by the visitation of angels and other holy messengers, conferring upon Joseph the powers of the Priesthood, the authority to act in the name of God--to introduce the gospel of Jesus Christ by divine authority to mankind, and by divine direction to organize and establish the true Church of Christ in the latter days." **(Heber J. Grant, *Gospel Standards*, Pg. 16)** When President Heber J. Grant was the living prophet, Latter-day Saint membership amounted to about 500,000 souls. At present count, there are more than 17,000,000 Latter-day Saints. The ratio was 1 member to 5,000,000 on the earth. It is now approximately 1 member to about 400 on the earth. The fruits are being brought forth!

What is the meaning of cursing the fig tree?

Four days before the Passover, (*Sunday nightfall/Monday*); "Now in the morning as he returned into the city, he hungered." **(Matthew 21:18)** Jesus cursed a fig tree, it

did not have the first fruit. In Israel, the fig trees produce in the spring and in the fall. If the first fruit failed, how could there be a second fruit (a second coming)? (Mark 11:12-13) In the “Parable of the Fig Tree” briefly referred to in Matthew 24:32, Mark 13:28, Luke 13:6, Luke 21:29 and the Doctrine & Covenants 35:16, consideration should be given to the growth of fig trees. Repeating, first the fruit appears, then the leaves grow as the tree becomes full of leaves, it is followed by a second fruit. The modern portion of the parable includes, first, the restoration, then the growth of the Church, followed by the second coming of the Messiah.

How timely was the “cleansing” of the Temple?

Three days before Passover, (*Monday nightfall/Tuesday*) according to Jewish biblical tradition, was the annual cleansing of the temple prior to Passover in “purifying of all holy things” as stated in (1 Chronicles 23:28) This may have been typified as Jesus whipped out the money changers, Jesus went into the temple, and . . . cast out them that sold and bought in the temple . . . And would not suffer that any man should carry any vessel through the temple. (Mark 11:14-16) The Gospel interpreters may have meaningfully combined the two events as they referred to Jesus “cleansing the Temple.”

How meaningful is the saying “render unto Caesar” nowadays?

It was likely that two days before Passover that year, Jesus’ teaching “Render therefore unto Caesar the things which are Caesar’s; and unto God the things that are God’s,” is a repeat of former and later statements of belief. Here is a thought from the Old Testament

supplement. Elisha’s continued purpose was to be a servant of God; he even refused payment from Syria’s highest-ranking officer in the Land of Israel. The anomaly is that the children of Israel strongly objected to the Syrian occupying forces. The prophet was probably teaching the same principle that Jesus taught and that has been revealed again in our day. “Then saith he unto them, Render unto Caesar the things that are Caesar’s; and unto God the things that are God’s. (Matthew 22:21) Nowadays, “We believe in being subject to kings, presidents, rulers, and magistrates, in obeying, honoring, and sustaining the law.” (Articles of Faith 12) The faithful young woman, probably serving in Naaman’s household, was a believer and prompted the occupying Syrian officer to come to the prophet to be blessed. Elisha sent a message to do something simple--bathe in the Jordan River. When he finally swallowed his pride, he was blessed! Imagine--the enemy was blessed! Jesus repeated the principle; “But I say unto you, Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you.” (Matthew 5:44) As for Naaman, we don’t know for sure if that resulted in his conversion and it doesn’t matter. The blessing was unconditional. The lesson for the unbelieving Israelites was repeated by the Savior as he said: “And many lepers were in Israel in the time of (Elisha) the prophet; and none of them was cleansed, saving Naaman the Syrian.” (Luke 4:27) Within these thoughts is the cure for hypocrisy. We must love everyone, even those who stray, who believe, worship, dress or speak differently than we do. The Lord loves us ALL, and we are to do the same.