



Provided by the Church of the Lutheran Confession - Board of Missions

## **New Testament Survey**

### **Lesson 11 – On the Way to Jerusalem**

#### **On the Way to Jerusalem**

The events of this lesson very likely took place in February and March of the year of our Lord's death, 30 AD. After Jesus was in Jerusalem for the Feast of Lights/Dedication (Hanukkah) in December, He traveled in Perea. The Jewish leaders were already thinking of killing Him.

While He was in Perea, He heard about the sickness of His friend Lazarus, the brother of Mary and Martha, who lived in Bethany, a suburb of Jerusalem. When Jesus did not go to see Lazarus right away, His disciples thought it was because the Jewish leaders were planning to kill Him. But Jesus was waiting for another reason: He wanted to raise Lazarus from the dead for the glory of God.

Jesus raised Lazarus from the dead after he had been dead for four days. Instead of convincing His enemies, this amazing miracle, only drove them to greater hatred. Remember, that was the point of Jesus' earlier parable of the rich man and Lazarus: if a man does not believe God's Word, neither will he believe even if someone should rise from the dead. The high priest Caiaphas advised the Jewish leaders that the only solution was that one man (Jesus) should die for the people rather than that the whole nation should perish. The Holy Spirit thus used this unbelieving priest to proclaim the Gospel of Jesus' substitutionary death for the world.

Jesus then left Bethany and spent some time in a little town called Ephraim. No doubt He also did some traveling in Samaria and Judea and Perea. As the Passover drew near, however, Jesus made His way for the last time to Jerusalem. On the way He healed lepers, told parables, blessed little children, instructed His disciples about the dangers of wealth, predicted for the third time in plain words His coming suffering, death, and resurrection. He also explained the meaning of His death: that it was to be a ransom for all people. His death was to buy back (redeem) the whole world from its slavery to sin, Satan, and death.

In Jericho Jesus healed two blind men, one named Bartimaeus. In Jericho also He stayed at the home of Zacchaeus, the tax collector who climbed a tree to see Jesus. Zacchaeus was among the many lost now saved by the Lord. Near Jerusalem Jesus told a parable that showed that the Jews were rejecting Him. Jesus predicted that God's judgment would come on them because of their unbelief.

Finally on Saturday, April 1, Jesus reached Bethany. There at a dinner Mary, Lazarus' sister, anointed Jesus' body for His burial, which was less than a week away. Judas Iscariot was already opposed to Jesus, and the Jews were planning to kill both Jesus and Lazarus.

Read the listed passages as you study each of the events below:

***Jesus raises Lazarus*** (John 11:1-54)

Jesus did not come right away when Lazarus was sick, even though his sisters certainly wanted Him to come. Sometimes God also delays answering our prayers for some good reason. Notice that Jesus calls the death of a Christian a falling asleep. Indeed, it is a "sleep" because the voice of Jesus will one day wake us up to eternal life in body and soul. Jesus says wonderful words about how faith in Him overcomes death forever! Lazarus' body was already decaying when Jesus called him forth. Think of that!

In this account we see Jesus' human emotions ("**Jesus wept**" v. 35) and we also see His divine power. Jesus simply said: "**Lazarus, come forth**" (v. 43), and the dead man obeyed. This is the third of Jesus' three great miracles of raising the dead. This amazing miracle strengthened the faith of some, but only hardened His enemies in their hatred of Him and their determination to put him to death.

Caiaphas, the high priest, hated Jesus and wanted Him dead for selfish and sinful reasons. But God used the words of Caiaphas to proclaim the truth of God: that one Man, Jesus, would die for the people – all people – so that we all would not perish because of our sins.

***Only one thanks God*** (Luke 17:11-19)

Ten lepers used Jesus' name rightly by calling on Him in their trouble, but only one used His name rightly by thanking Him for having been healed. How often do we say, "Thank you!" to our Lord and Savior? Ingratitude is one of the most common sins.

***Where is the kingdom?*** (Luke 17:20-21)

The kingdom of God comes in quietness when Jesus' word is spoken. Thus, the kingdom of God was at work among the Jews at this very time, but they couldn't see it. Most Jews wrongly expected the Messiah's kingdom to be a political kingdom of earthly power.

***God hears*** (Luke 18:1-8)

If even an unjust judge hears a complaining widow after a long time, how much more will our good and just God hear His own children and answer them speedily! In His own way and at His own time Jesus will make all unjust things right. But there is a question Jesus leaves unanswered: When Jesus comes to His people at His second coming, will He find faith on the earth?

***The parable of the Pharisee and the tax collector*** (Luke 18:9-14)

Jesus told this parable for self-righteous people. The Pharisee's "prayer" was a recital of his own good deeds. He thought he was better than others and so he received no forgiveness from God. The tax collector, however, recognized his grievous sins against God and asked God for mercy. He went down to his house "**justified**" (v. 14), that is, declared righteous, pardoned, forgiven.

***Jesus loves children*** (Matthew 19:13-15; Mark 10:13-16; Luke 18:15-17)

Jesus wanted the infants to be brought to Him. The kingdom of God is for infants too. Although Jesus said nothing directly concerning baptism at this time, we generally read this account when an infant is baptized because it emphasizes Jesus' love and concern for little children.

The Baptists and others say we must become adults before we can take part in God's kingdom, but Jesus says that adults must become like children before they can be a part of God's kingdom. What every believer needs is a childlike simplicity of faith.

***The rich young leader*** (Matthew 19:16-30; Mark 10:17-31; Luke 18:18-30)

This man asked an important question: What must I do to gain eternal life? Jesus' answer directed him to God's Law: "**Keep the commandments**" (Matthew 19:17). By saying this, Jesus wanted the man to realize that he had not kept them. But the man insisted that he had always kept the commandments. Then Jesus told him to sell all his goods, give them to the poor, and then follow Him. The man then went away sorrowful; he was not even able to keep the First Commandment, for his riches were more important to him than anything else.

Jesus then shocked His disciples by saying that it was impossible for a rich man to be saved. But Jesus then went on to say that with God all things are possible. Jesus assured His disciples that God would provide for all follow him, both in this life and in the life to come.

***The last will be first*** (Matthew 20:1-16)

In this parable the owner of the vineyard hired workers for a denarius a day (a fair wage for one day at that time). Although his workers began working at various times during the day, the pay for each one was the same: one denarius. Those who worked longest complained, but the owner replied that they should not be angry just because he was generous to those who worked fewer hours. They were receiving what they were promised. So also all believers receive the same gift of eternal life, whether they have been Christians all their lives or were converted only at the last hour of their lives. We are all saved by grace, not by merit.

***"I will die and rise again"*** (Matthew 20:17-19; Mark 10:32-34; Luke 18:31-34)

For the third time Jesus predicts exactly what is going to happen to Him in Jerusalem.

***The cup of suffering*** (Matthew 20:20-28; Mark 10:35-45)

James and John and their mother Salome ask Jesus for a special honor. But Jesus makes no promises to them. The other disciples become angry with James and John because of this request. At this point they did not realize that following Jesus would mean great suffering for them, just as Jesus Himself was about to suffer.

Jesus told His disciples that just as He came to serve, not to be served, so also they should not strive for honor but be willing to serve others. How did Jesus serve us? He gave His life as a ransom, as payment for our sins.

***Two blind men at Jericho*** (Matthew 20:29-34; Mark 10:46-52; Luke 18:35-43)

One of these men was Bartimaeus.

***Zacchaeus, the repentant tax collector*** (Luke 19:1-10)

Take note of the fruits of faith in the life of Zacchaeus after he learned to know who Jesus was.

***The parable of judgment on Jerusalem*** (Luke 19:11-28)

***Mary anoints Jesus*** (Matthew 26:6-13; Mark 14:3-9; John 11:55-12:11)

Mary listened carefully to Jesus when He visited before (Luke 10:38-42). She knew what was going to happen to Him, so she anointed His body for His burial in advance. When Judas and others objected to this “waste”, Jesus defended her.

**Questions**

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1. What reason did Jesus give for delaying His response to Mary and Martha?
2. How was Jesus’ humanity and His deity revealed at the grave of Lazarus?
3. How did God use the words of the high priest to proclaim the Gospel?
4. How does the story of the unjust judge teach us that God answers prayer?
5. Why did the Pharisee in the Temple go home without being forgiven?
6. How did Jesus reveal His love for little children?
7. Why were Jesus’ disciples shocked by what Jesus said about rich people?
8. What does it mean that Jesus came not to be served, but to serve?
9. How are Jesus’ words to Mary being fulfilled at this very moment?