



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

## New Testament Survey

### Lesson 12 – Sunday, Monday, and Tuesday of Holy Week

#### The Holy Week in Jesus' Life

Every week of Jesus' life was holy, but the last week in Jesus' life has come to be called Holy Week, no doubt because of the great things He did in that week to make us holy.

First, there was **Palm Sunday** when Jesus entered Jerusalem as the Messiah-King foretold in Old Testament prophecy. He came in a lowly and meek way on a donkey, not as a mighty conqueror on a white horse or elephant. Many Jews from other places were in Jerusalem for the coming Passover, and they called Him "**Son of David**" and "**King of Israel**". They did not fully understand what they were saying; not even Jesus' disciples really understood what was happening until later. (For God's promise to David of an everlasting kingdom, see 2 Samuel 7.)

Jesus knew that the enthusiasm of the people was fickle. He knew that He and His Gospel would be rejected by Jerusalem, so He shed tears as He entered the city. He knew that God's judgment would fall on the city 40 years later, in 70 AD. Even on Palm Sunday the Pharisees and rulers opposed the Messiah God had sent them, and they tried to prevent others from praising Him.

On **Monday** Jesus did two things that symbolized God's judgment on Jerusalem and the Jews. He cursed a fig tree that had nothing but leaves. This was a picture of the religion of Jerusalem that looked good outwardly, but had no good fruit. He also cleaned out the Temple courtyard once more, as He had done before at the very beginning of His ministry.

**Tuesday** was the last big day of teaching in Jesus' life. It was the day the Pharisees, Sadducees, lawyers, and Herodians joined forces to try to trap Him. They wanted Jesus to do or say something for which they could put Him to death. Jesus answered all their questions frankly and truthfully and put them all to shame. He also asked them some questions that they could not answer. Jesus told His last parables on this Tuesday. These parables were spoken against the Jewish leaders. Jesus also very sharply and bluntly warned His disciples against the false religion and hypocrisy of the Pharisees. He spoke eight horrible words of woe against the Pharisees, and then closed His remarks by repeating what He had once said before: "**O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, the one who kills the prophets and stones those who are sent to her! How often I wanted to gather your children together, as a hen gathers her chicks under her wings, but you were not willing!**" (Matthew 23:37, see Luke 13:34).

In Lesson 13 we shall continue to study what Jesus said on this Holy Tuesday, particularly what He said about the destruction of Jerusalem and the end of the world.

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

### **Palm Sunday, April 2, 30 AD**

***The King is coming*** (Matthew 21:1-8; Mark 11:1-8; Luke 19:29-36; John 12:12, 14-18)

Jesus sent two disciples to get a donkey and her colt. Jesus rode the colt into Jerusalem, as prophesied by Isaiah and Zechariah. The people put clothes and tree branches on the road as a carpet for the Messiah.

It was customary for pilgrims to Jerusalem to recite Psalm 118:25-28 and Psalm 103:17 as they approached the Temple for festivals. These words (Hosanna, Blessed is He, etc.) certainly are fitting for this occasion. The Hebrew word “Hosanna” means “Save Us”. The “Blessed Is He” is known as the *Benedictus*. Both the Hosanna and the Benedictus have become part of the standard order of service in many Christian congregations.

***“Stop Them”*** (Matthew 21:9-11, 14-17; Mark 11:9-11; Luke 19:37-44; John 12:13, 19)

Great crowds, including children, sang Hosanna to the Son of David. The Pharisees urged silence, but Jesus refused to quiet the crowds. His hour had come.

Jesus had to weep because He knew their attitude toward Him would result in the total destruction of Jerusalem.

### **Holy Monday, April 3, 30 AD**

***Nothing but leaves*** (Matthew 21:18-19; Mark 11:12-14)

It was not the fig season yet, but this fig tree had leaves already, which usually means it has figs but this tree had no figs. Jesus cursed the fig tree that looked like it should have fruit but had nothing but leaves. This fig tree was a picture of the Pharisees and their hypocrisy.

***Jesus cleanses the Temple for the second time*** (Matthew 21:12-13; Mark 11:15-19; Luke 19:45-48, 21:37-38)

We read about the first cleansing in Lesson 3<sup>1</sup>. Evidently it did not stay cleansed in the intervening months, and it had to be cleansed again. So Jesus again drove out the buyers and sellers from the Temple courtyard.

Notice that during this Holy Week Jesus stayed overnight at Bethany, the town of Mary, Martha, and Lazarus, whom He had recently raised from the dead.

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<sup>1</sup> See ***Jesus cleanses the Temple*** (John 2:13-22) in Lesson 3

## Holy Tuesday, April 4, 30 AD

### ***A fig tree is withered*** (Matthew 21:20-22; Mark 11:20-25)

On their way to Jerusalem early in the morning the disciples saw that the cursed fig tree had dried up. Jesus used this sign to speak about the power of faith and prayer.

Acceptable prayers are spoken with faith and with a forgiving attitude toward others.

### ***From heaven*** (Matthew 21:23-27; Mark 11:27-33; Luke 20:1-8)

The Jewish leaders asked Jesus for His credentials. Jesus answered them by asking them about John the Baptist. If John the Baptist was from heaven, then they could know where Jesus got His authority, for John testified that Jesus was greater than him. The leaders were afraid to answer Jesus' question. If they said John's baptism was from heaven, that would mean that they should have believed what John said about Jesus. If they said it was from men, that would mean that they disagreed with the common people, who regarded John as a prophet from God.

### ***The parable of the two brothers*** (Matthew 21:28-32)

One brother said he would not work, but he did go work later. This son pictured the tax collectors, who repented at the preaching of John, although their earlier life was sinful. The other brother said he would work, but he did not work. This son pictured the hypocrisy of the Pharisees, who never did repent.

### ***The parable of God's vineyard*** (Matthew 21:33-46; Mark 12:1-12; Luke 20:9-19)

God made Israel His vineyard. He put the people under the priests and the elders (see Isaiah 5 for a similar picture of God and His people). When God sent His Old Testament prophets to demand the fruits from the vineyard, they were beaten or killed. When God sent His Son, they killed Him too (as they would on Friday of this very week). Therefore, the kingdom was taken from the Jews and given to the heathen.

Notice that Jesus is the rejected Cornerstone around which God is going to build His Church. This was already foretold in Psalm 118:22, the same psalm from which we hear the Hosanna and the Benedictus. **"The stone which the builders rejected has become the chief cornerstone"** (Psalm 118:22).

### ***The parable of the wedding feast*** (Matthew 22:1-14)

This parable is similar to an earlier parable about a dinner to which the invited guests refused to come<sup>2</sup>. The difference here is that the feast is a wedding feast involving wedding garments.

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<sup>2</sup> See ***Dinner is ready!*** (Luke 14:1-24) in Lesson 10.

The Gospel is a message that tells us that all things are ready; salvation has been won. But the Jews, who were the ones first invited, refused to come, and therefore the invitation goes out to the Gentiles. But some of them also do not accept the gift of God in Christ, which is pictured by the wedding garment. In order to enter heaven, we need to wear the robe of Christ's righteousness. See Isaiah 61:10.

***Taxes*** (Matthew 22:15-22; Mark 12:13-17; Luke 20:20-26)

In their attempts to trap Jesus in His talk, the Pharisees tried to get Jesus to speak words against the Roman government. They themselves had no love for the Roman government; in fact, they would no doubt have accepted Jesus as their leader if He had led them in a revolt against the Romans. But Jesus was not trapped. His answer solved the problem they raised about paying taxes to Caesar. We are to give to God what is God's, and to Caesar what is Caesar's. With these words Jesus teaches us the principle of the separation of church and state.

***The final resurrection from the dead*** (Matthew 22:23-33; Mark 12:18-27; Luke 20:27-38)

After the Pharisees failed to trap Jesus, the Sadducees made an attempt of their own. The Sadducees did not believe in the resurrection of the dead or in angels or evil spirits and accepted only the five books of Moses as their Bible. When they told a story about a woman who had many husbands in succession, they were trying to poke fun at the idea of the resurrection. Jesus pointed out that there is no marriage in the hereafter. He showed them that the power of God is greater than they think. He also proved the resurrection of the dead from the book of Exodus, a book they accepted. See Exodus 3.

***The greatest commandment*** (Matthew 22:34-40, 46; Mark 12:28-34; Luke 20:39-40)

The Pharisees and Sadducees had failed to trap Jesus. Then a law expert (a scribe) asked Jesus a question about the law. Jesus told him the greatest commandment was the First Table (Love God) and next to it was the Second Table (Love Your Neighbor). The lawyer accepted Jesus' answer, and Jesus told him that he was not far from God's kingdom.

***Jesus' question about David's Son*** (Matthew 22:41-46; Mark 12:35-37; Luke 20:41-44)

Knowing that His enemies did not accept Him as the Christ (the Messiah), Jesus asked how the promised Messiah could be both David's Son and David's Lord at the same time, as Psalm 110 indicates. Do you know the answer to His question?

***Jesus' warning against the scribes and Pharisees*** (Matthew 23:1-12; Mark 12:37-40; Luke 20:45-47)

Since the scribes and Pharisees held positions of authority in the land, Jesus told His disciples to obey the laws of the land, but Jesus told them not to follow the bad example of their leaders. These leaders did not practice what they preached. Their only concern seemed to be the honor and praise they received from the people. Jesus disciples had a better Teacher, Jesus, who was also a good example.

## Questions

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1. Why did Jesus ride into Jerusalem on a colt?
2. Why was it fitting for the Palm Sunday crowd to shout “**Hosanna!**”?
3. List the differences between the first and second cleansing of the Temple in Jerusalem.
4. Why did the Jewish leaders fail to answer Jesus’ question about John?
5. What was Jesus foretelling with His parable of the vineyard?
6. For what purpose were Jesus’ enemies trying to trap Him in what He said?
7. Why did the Jewish leaders fail to answer Jesus’ question about the Son of David?
8. What was the main concern of the scribes and Pharisees?
9. How will life be different for us after resurrection on the Last Day?
10. What was Jesus’ teaching about our duty to the government?