

The Book of Luke

Jesus in Jerusalem

Lesson #12 for June 20, 2015

Scriptures: Luke 19:28-40,45-48; 20:9-26; Zechariah 9:9; Matthew 21:12-17.

1. The relationship between Jesus and the city of Jerusalem is a fascinating and curious one. He helped David conquer the city and establish it as the headquarters for the Hebrew nation. Then, He finalized it as the religious headquarters for the nation with the building of Solomon's Temple. But, ultimately, He failed to accomplish what He really wanted to do!
2. However, Jesus spent almost all of His life in Galilee and not in Judea. When in Jerusalem, He spent almost all of His time in the temple itself. We know that after being born in Bethlehem, He was taken to Jerusalem for His circumcision and later for His dedication. (Luke 2:22-38) He went to Jerusalem again at the age of 12. (Luke 2:41-50)
3. Only John mentioned Jesus's multiple visits to Jerusalem during His early ministry. It was only John who hinted that Jesus almost certainly visited and worked in Jerusalem many times during the first 1½ years of His ministry while He was working in and around Judea. However, we have almost no information about what He did during that time. (*DA* 231.2)
4. A careful look at the Gospels reveals that almost half of each of the Gospels is dedicated to the final week of the life of Jesus. Surely, that final week should occupy a great deal of our attention as we study the relationship of Jesus to Jerusalem.

It would be well for us to spend a thoughtful hour each day in contemplation of the life of Christ. We should take it point by point, and let the imagination grasp each scene, especially the closing ones.—Ellen G. White, *The Desire of Ages*, p. 83.4. [Bold type is added.]

5. Jesus-God had wept over the city of Jerusalem down through much of the history of the Old Testament. Finally, He appeared as a Human Being and wept over the city once again. It was there where He should have been recognized as the King of the Jews; instead, He was murdered by the very ones He had come to save.
6. Read Romans 5:10, *GNB*. How did the death of Jesus change us from being enemies into friends of God? Could some kind of legal transaction do that? Of course not! Through the life and death of Jesus, we learn the truth about Satan's lies in the great controversy. God had said that sin leads to death. (Genesis 2:17) Satan deceived Eve into believing that was a lie. (Genesis 3:4) Who do we believe? In our daily lives, do we act as if we really believe that sin leads to death? Thus, we can come to trust the One who has always told us the truth. Do we really believe that everything that God says is true? Do we really believe that sin separates us from God and leads to death? (Isaiah 59:2)
7. Read Luke 19:28-40; Matthew 21:1-11; Mark 11:1-11; and John 12:12-19. Despite the fact that Jesus had made it clear that He was going up to Jerusalem to be arrested and killed, (Luke 18:31-34) the disciples and the crowd accompanying Him up that steep and dangerous road from Jericho to Jerusalem were sure that He was about to become the new king of Israel. When Jesus said He was ready to enter the city riding on a colt, the foal of a donkey, (Zechariah 9:9) their hopes were at an all-time high.
8. Why were the disciples so certain that Jesus would become an earthly king? It was what they had been taught all their lives about the Messiah's coming. (*2SP* 110.2-3) When they agreed to follow Jesus and become "fishers of men," they were convinced that they would be honored, respected, and praised as high-level government officials, responsible for getting rid of the Romans. Do you think any of them had the slightest idea that they were

“signing up” to be itinerant preachers for the rest of their lives and, ultimately, martyrs?

9. At His birth, the wise men from the East had announced the coming of the King of the Jews. (Matthew 2:2) At the opening of the final week of Christ’s life, He rode into Jerusalem to shouts of “God the king who comes in the name of the Lord!” (Luke 19:38, *GNB*) While the history of that week seemed to be an utter disaster to the disciples and the other followers of Jesus, it ended in triumph on the cross when Jesus said, “It is finished!” (John 19:30, *GNB*) How could death be a sign of victory? Why was John the only Gospel writer to pen those very important great-controversy words? How many heard those words?
10. Repeatedly, Jesus had spoken to the disciples about the details of His death. (Matthew 16:21-28; Mark 9:31-32; Luke 18:31-34) Jesus was the greatest Teacher this world has ever known. Why couldn’t He explain what was going to happen to Him and what His kingdom was like clearly enough so the disciples could understand it? Or, did He just choose not to do that? It certainly was not what they wanted to hear!

Because of their spiritual darkness, even the disciples of Jesus often failed of comprehending His lessons. But many of these lessons were made plain to them by subsequent events. When He walked no more with them, His words were a stay to their hearts.—Ellen G. White, *The Desire of Ages*, 165.2.

11. The idea that Jesus could be arrested and handed over to the Romans and killed in the most shameful way possible was so foreign to the thinking of the disciples that they could not take it in. Do we have any false expectations about the final events of this world’s history and the second coming of Jesus? Could we be as confused about future events as the disciples were about the events surrounding His first coming? The triumphal entry of Jesus into Jerusalem came to a shocking end when He stopped on the brow of the hill overlooking the temple and began to sob uncontrollably. The crowd slowly dispersed, and Jesus went to the temple. He looked around briefly. But, since it was late, He returned to Bethany to spend the night. (Mark 11:11-12)

It was the sight of Jerusalem that pierced the heart of Jesus—Jerusalem that had rejected the Son of God and scorned His love, that refused to be convinced by His mighty miracles, and was about to take His life. He saw what she was in her guilt of rejecting her Redeemer, and what she might have been had she accepted Him who alone could heal her wound. He had come to save her; how could He give her up?—Ellen G. White, *The Desire of Ages*, p. 576.1. (See Hosea 11:7-8.)

12. Read Luke 19:45-48; Matthew 21:12-17; and Mark 11:15-19.

All four Gospels mention the cleansing of the temple. While John speaks of the first cleansing (*John 2:13-25*) taking place during Jesus’ visit to the temple at the Passover of A.D. 28, others narrated the second cleansing at the end of Jesus’ ministry, this time at the Passover of A.D. 31. Thus, the two cleansings of the temple provided a parenthesis to the ministry of Jesus, showing how much He cared for the sanctity of the temple and its services, and how strategically He asserted His Messianic mission and authority. (*Adult Sabbath School Bible Study Guide* for Monday, June 15, 2015.)

The outer court of the temple was supposed to be for the instruction of the Gentiles; however, it had been turned into a market place.

Three years before [at the first cleansing of the temple], the rulers of the temple had been ashamed of their flight before the command of Jesus. They had since wondered at their own fears, and their unquestioning obedience to a single humble [592] Man. They had felt that it was impossible for their

undignified surrender to be repeated. Yet they were now [at the second cleansing of the temple] more terrified than before, and in greater haste to obey His command. There were none who dared question His authority. Priests and traders fled from His presence, driving their cattle before them.—Ellen G. White, *The Desire of Ages*, 591.1-592.0. [Content in brackets is added.]

But, the sick and the children were not afraid. Christ's divinity had flashed through His humanity.

13. It was on Monday morning of Passion Week that Jesus cleansed the temple for the second time. Why did He bother? A few days later, the curtain of the temple was ripped in two from top to bottom, and the temple was no longer considered by God as the center for worship. But, for some time after the death of Jesus, it continued to be the place where the disciples went to do their preaching to the crowds. (Acts 2:46; 5:42)
14. Read Luke 20:9-19; Matthew 21:33-46; and Mark 12:1-12. What are we supposed to learn from the parable of the Lord's vineyard? This is another example of Jesus presenting His message in the form of a story or parable and allowing the listeners to draw their own conclusions. The Jewish leaders knew that He was speaking about them. But, what about us? Are we faithfully working the Lord's vineyard? Or, are we more like the Sadducees and Pharisees? Hadn't God sent servant after servant (Luke 20:10-12) and prophet after prophet (Jeremiah 35:15) to His people? And yet, in his final speech, Stephen had to ask, "Which of the prophets did your fathers not persecute?" (Acts 7:52)
15. The Bible is a long love story of God for His people. Tragically, so often, that love was rejected. As the people who live in the most privileged time and generation in this world's history—with not only the Bible but also all the writings of Ellen White more readily available than they ever have been—are we rejecting them as God's messages? How are we treating our prophet? How many of us are rejecting Ellen White's counsel and failing to read and follow her advice? Is our behavior any different from the behavior of the scribes and Pharisees in Jesus's day? Why is it that we so often just choose to believe what we want to believe?
16. Read Luke 20:20-26. As we know, the Pharisees and the scribes repeatedly tried to pose questions to Jesus that they thought Jesus could not answer without incriminating Himself. But, we also know that Jesus very cleverly saw through their schemes and gave clever answers so that His adversaries always came out looking shameful.
17. What should we learn about the question of taxation by earthly governments? What a marvelous answer Jesus gave when He said: "Render therefore to Caesar the things that are Caesar's, and to God the things that are God's." (Luke 20:25, *NKJV*) When we live under the protection and benefits of an earthly government, we owe that government our allegiance. But, of course, our ultimate allegiance must go to God and His kingdom solely.

Christ's reply was no evasion, but a candid answer to the question. Holding in His hand the Roman coin, upon which were stamped the name and image of Caesar, He declared that since they were living under the protection of the Roman power, they should render to that power the support it claimed, so long as this did not conflict with a higher duty. But while peaceably subject to the laws of the land, they should at all times give their first allegiance to God.—Ellen G. White, *The Desire of Ages*, 602.4.

18. Can we be good citizens of our current earthly nations and at the same time be good citizens of God's kingdom? (Hebrews 11:10) Will there ever come a time when even in countries like the United States we might find that our government is in conflict with God?

Read Revelation 13:13-18. What will happen when we have an international Sunday law?

19. Read Luke 22:13-20. The Jews had been specifically instructed that they were to celebrate the Passover every year by eating roasted lamb and bitter herbs. (Exodus 12:8) Although we are not told about it, presumably, Jesus and His disciples did the same. Why wasn't that mentioned? But, Jesus also offered them grape juice and unleavened bread as the initiation of a new ceremony that was to replace the Passover.
20. The Passover was to celebrate God's deliverance of the children of Israel from the country of Egypt. In their own power, the children of Israel could never have accomplished that exodus. In the same way, the life and death of Jesus are to provide the means by which we can be redeemed from the slavery of sin.
21. Jesus shed His blood and offered His body as symbols of some very important lessons that we need to learn. It was God's ultimate and most important answer to the question of whether or not sin leads to death. The Lord's Supper was given to remind us of that most important event. (1 Corinthians 11:24-26) *The Adult Sabbath School Bible Study Guide* calls the death of Jesus "God's sole means for our Redemption from sin." What does that mean? Was Jesus "paying" for our sins? Or, did/does His death teach us some important truths that are absolutely essential to our salvation?
22. The life and death of Jesus answered the most important questions that Satan had raised in the great controversy. Those questions had to be answered before we could be sure beyond the slightest shadow of doubt that: 1) All of Satan's accusations against God are completely false, and 2) God Himself can be completely trusted. Does that promote friendship?
23. There are two important lessons that we need to recognize from the Lord's Supper. Christ died for every one of us. As a community, as we partake of the grape juice and unleavened bread, we are sharing Christ's body, recognizing the equality that exists among us.
24. How did/does Jesus's body and blood "purchase" our salvation? It is the meaning of His death that is important. Sooner or later, every human being will discover that there on the cross Jesus died the second death as a direct result of sin—He did not die of crucifixion, blood loss, pain, or having been severely beaten—His death was an example of how the wicked will die in the end. As we look at that awful death, do we want to experience it ourselves? Or, do we want to accept His offer of salvation and eternal life in heaven and in the new earth? At the cross, do we see Jesus burning in an ever-burning hell? Or, did He die of separation from God?

To eat the flesh and drink the blood of Christ is to receive Him as a personal Saviour, believing that He forgives our sins, and that we are complete in Him. It is by beholding His love, by dwelling upon it, by drinking it in, that we are to become partakers of His nature. What food is to the body, Christ must be to the soul. Food cannot benefit us unless we eat it, unless it becomes a part of our being. So Christ is of no value to us if we do not know Him as a personal Saviour. A theoretical knowledge will do us no good. We must feed upon Him, receive Him into the heart, so that His life becomes our life. His love, His grace, must be assimilated.—Ellen G. White, *The Desire of Ages*, p. 389.3; *MLT 275.2*.

25. Evolutionists and atheists have stated repeatedly that everything that has happened in the history of our world is merely a result of physical processes. They have said that there is no ultimate meaning to anything. That might make you feel depressed. And how should you respond if you feel depressed? We have medicines for that! Aren't you glad that all Christians do not have to depend on medications for their happiness? Jesus said repeatedly

that if we follow Him, we will be blessed or happy. Isn't that a better solution than Prozac?

26. When Jesus agreed to participate in the triumphal entry into Jerusalem, wasn't He just feeding the false hopes of the Jewish people including His disciples? Or, was He intentionally drawing as much attention to Himself as possible so that the Jewish leaders could not secretly arrest Him and kill Him without people noticing and without a lot of questions being asked?

Many minds were busy with thoughts started by the scenes of Calvary. From the crucifixion to the resurrection many sleepless eyes were constantly searching the prophecies, some to learn the full meaning of the feast they were then celebrating, some to find evidence that Jesus was not what He claimed to be; and others with sorrowful hearts were searching for proofs that He was the true Messiah. Though searching with different objects in view, all were convicted of the same truth,—that prophecy had been fulfilled in the events of the past few days, and that the Crucified One was the world's Redeemer. Many who at that time united in the service never again took part in the paschal rites. Many even of the priests were convicted of the true character of Jesus. Their searching of the prophecies had not been in vain, and after His resurrection they acknowledged Him as the Son of God.—Ellen G. White, *The Desire of Ages*, p. 775.1. (See Acts 6:7; 15:5.)

27. When Jesus went to the ancient Jewish capital of Jerusalem, we know what happened. Will Jesus come to the Seventh-day Adventist Church in our generation? If He came to your church or even your home today, how would He be received? Would you need to clean things up before you would be happy to welcome Him?
28. Jesus cleansed the temple courtyard because He knew that God's original plan was for that courtyard to be used for the benefit and education of the Gentiles as they observed how the Jews worshiped God. Since the Jews were certain that the Gentiles were lost anyway, they thought they were free to use the "Gentile" court as a marketplace. What a travesty!
29. Can we distinguish clearly between the meaning of the Passover and the meaning of the Lord's Supper? The Passover looks back to the exodus from Egypt. The Lord's Supper looks forward to the reunion at the second coming. The Passover involved sacrificing a lamb; the Lord's Supper requires only unleavened bread and grape juice.
30. In July of 2015, the General Conference Session of Seventh-day Adventists will take place in San Antonio, Texas. It will be primarily a business meeting and a time to choose new officers. But, there will be a great deal of pomp and "bragging" as the various divisions report what they have accomplished in the last five years. What do you think Jesus would have to say if He were to present His evaluation of our progress over the last five years?
31. Read Ezekiel 9; 6:11; and 21:6. The book of Revelation suggests that this sighing and crying for the abominations done in the city in ancient times will be a foretaste of what will happen at the end of time. Will it, once again, be true that only those sighing and groaning over the sins being committed among God's people will receive God's mark or seal?
32. Read Philippians 2:5-11. What do these verses tell us about the condescension of Jesus in coming to our world? Are we ready to follow the Lamb wherever He leads? (Revelation 14:4)

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Last Modified: May 8, 2015

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