

“Wo unto You, . . . Hypocrites”

Lesson
20
Summary

Matthew 21—23; 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. 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—First commandment: Love the Lord—What think ye of Christ?

John 12:1-8 Jesus pronounces woes upon the scribes and Pharisees—The blood of the prophets shall be required at their hands—They shall not escape the damnation of hell. Mary anoints Jesus' feet—His triumphal entry into Jerusalem recounted.

Supplemental Holy Land and Jewish insights:

More About Anointing: The considerable amount of supplemental information about burial in the previous lesson carries over to this lesson, too. Anointing is done as a respectful way of preparing a body for burial. Perhaps Jesus appreciated Mary anointing Him while He was still alive, 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.

Ancient Custom of Anointing: “. . . 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 . . . symbolized the new rank and power given to the anointed person and they evoked God's blessing on him.” “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. “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.*)

Israelite Kings Rode on Donkeys, Other Kings Rode on Lavish Chariots: The triumphal entry of Jesus was indeed an expression of hope, as many people wanted Him to relieve them of the cruelty of the Romans and the corruption of the Jewish priests. Five days before the Passover, Jesus sent His disciples to the neighboring village of Bethphage to acquire a donkey. They returned with 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 Israelite kings riding into Jerusalem on lowly donkeys that had never before been ridden. Other kings throughout the world ride in lavish vehicles weighted with gold and jewels. To some, this may have implied that Jesus was their King. The people then took branches of palm trees, a well-known symbol of Jewish independence, and cried. “. . . Hosanna: Blessed is the King of Israel that cometh in the name of the Lord.” (*John 12:12-13*)

Palm Sunday and the Passover: His triumphal entry on a donkey's colt down the Mount of Olives and into the Gate Beautiful raised the spirits of the Jews. They wanted a Messiah, and they praised this extraordinary man of miracles. Simultaneously, priests were angered and decided to set in motion a plan to have Jesus executed. The triumphal entry has been called Palm Sunday; and again, it was five days before the Passover that year. Jewish tradition also indicates a connection between a Messiah and riding a donkey. “According to the Talmud, 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 . . .” (*Encyclopedia Judaica Jr.*)

A “Joseph” Messiah Precedes a “David” Messiah: With the inference of a Joseph Messiah preceding a David Messiah, please consider the parable Jesus related in Matthew 21:33-39 and 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 time, we see that the spiritual leadership of Israel was the birthright of Joseph, son of Jacob, yet his brothers schemed to replace him. “. . . Shalt thou indeed reign over us? . . . they hated him yet the more . . . And his brethren envied him . . .” (*Genesis 37:8-11*) 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 . . . conferring upon Joseph . . . the authority to act in the name of God . . . 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