



SERMON NOTES

US N^o. 137

Date: April 14th, 2014

Title: Palm Sunday

1. The back story

a. History

- i. Assyria captures and subjugates Israel in 722BC
 1. Prophets at this time include: Isaiah, Hosea, Micah, Amos, Obadiah, and Jonah
 - ii. Babylon captures and subjugates Judah beginning in 605BC
 1. Temple destroyed in 587BC
 2. Prophets at this time include: Ezekiel, Jeremiah, Daniel, Joel, Nahum, Habakkuk, and Zephaniah
 - iii. Cyrus' victory and his decree allowing the return to homelands in 538BC
 1. Zerubbabel in 537BC
 2. 2nd Temple built from 535-515BC
 - a. Haggai and Zechariah prophesy around 520BC
 3. Esther become queen in 478BC; Purim instituted in 472BC
 4. Ezra comes to Jerusalem in 458BC and reinstitutes the Law.
 5. Nehemiah comes in 445BC and rebuilds the walls around Jerusalem.
 - iv. Greco-Persian wars 492-449BC
 - v. Peloponnesian Wars 477-404BC
 - vi. Alexander the Great, his death and the divided empire beginning in 336BC with his death in 323BC. At his death several of his generals divided the kingdom.
 - vii. Ptolemy (Egypt) v Seleucids (Syria) battle for control from 320-63BC
 - viii. Antiochus & the Maccabees
 1. Antiochus 175-164BC
 2. Maccabean turn Hasmonean Dynasty 164-37BC
 - ix. Rome 63BC – 324AD
 - x. Destruction of Jerusalem under Titus in 70AD
- b. Throughout all of this history, Israel and the Jews have struggled to maintain their own peculiar national identity. Feasts and holidays serve to remind and encourage the people of their hope and unique destiny.
- c. Jesus life and ministry comes at time after God has been preparing His people.

2. The Triumphal Entry

- a. 10th of Nisan (cf. Ex. 12:3-6, Gen. 49:10-12, Zech. 9:9)
 - i. Passover lamb would have been chosen and brought in this day. The lamb was to be shown to be without fault.

- ii. Jn. 11:47-53, *"Then the chief priests and the Pharisees gathered a council and said, 'What shall we do? For this Man works many signs. If we let Him alone like this, everyone will believe in Him, and the Romans will come and take away both our place and nation.' And one of them, Caiaphas, being high priest that year, said to them, 'You know nothing at all, nor do you consider that it is expedient for us that one man should die for the people, and not that the whole nation should perish.' Now this he did not say on his own authority; but being high priest that year he prophesied that Jesus would die for the nation, and not for that nation only, but also that He would gather together in one the children of God who were scattered abroad. Then, from that day on, they plotted to put Him to death." (cf. Jn. 18:14)*
- b. The donkey (cf. Mt. 21:1-3, Mark 11:1-6)
 - i. *"Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion! Shout, O daughter of Jerusalem! Behold, your King is coming to you; He is just and having salvation, lowly and riding on a donkey, a colt, the foal of a donkey. I will cut off the chariot from Ephraim and the horse from Jerusalem; the battle bow shall be cut off. He shall speak peace to the nations; His dominion shall be 'from sea to sea, and from the River to the ends of the earth.'" Zech. 9:9-10*
- c. Meekness and Majesty (cf. Mt. 11:29, Is. 42:1-4, Phil. 2:5-11)
- d. The people offer homage (cf. 2 Kings 9:13, Mt. 21:-7-9)
 - i. *"Hosanna!"*
 - 1. Ps. 72:17-19, *"His name shall endure forever; His name shall continue as long as the sun. And men shall be blessed in Him; all nations shall call Him blessed. Blessed be the LORD God, the God of Israel, who only does wondrous things! And blessed be His glorious name forever! And let the whole earth be filled with His glory. Amen and Amen."*
 - 2. Ps. 118:25-27, *"Save now, I pray, O LORD; O LORD, I pray, send now prosperity. Blessed is he who comes in the name of the LORD! We have blessed you from the house of the LORD. God is the LORD, and He has given us light; bind the sacrifice with cords to the horns of the altar."*
 - ii. The people do not yet fully grasp who Jesus is or what the title *"Son of David"* means. (cf. Mt. 22:41-45, Jn. 12:16-18)
 - iii. Palm branches
 - 1. In the Roman world, the palm branch was a sign of victory. Roman currency communicated the realities of the Roman world with symbols. One of the symbols was the palm branch. That means that when the crowd took up palm branches to greet Jesus, the Romans understood the meaning. It was not only a Jewish idea (going back to the glorious days of Jewish independence), but it was a cultural idea embedded in the larger Roman world of that time.
 - 2. In the world of the Maccabees (164-63BC) Simon entered Jerusalem on a warhorse *"with a chorus of praise and the waving of palm branches."* (cf. 1 Macc. 13.51, Jn. 12:12-13). All of this, of course, in the context of a grand temple cleansing after Antiochus Epiphanes, just as Jesus' entry will be followed by a temple cleansing of His own.

- a. It is readily seen that Jesus' triumph is very different from theirs – the cross, not the sword, is His triumphal weapon, just as his regality is seated upon a donkey rather than a warhorse and His goals are different. The Maccabees were aimed at liberating Israel from the nations, focused upon the pollution of the temple by the Greeks (*Antiochus's slaughter of a pig in the temple had occasioned the uprising*). But Jesus' liberation of the temple is a fine counterpoint to that, liberating of Israel and temple for the nations, not least these Greeks who have come up to the Feast to pray after the manner promised in Zechariah 8. Ultimately, the Maccabees became “*kings like the nations*,” but the Messiah is Yahweh's King, and His Lordship of peace transcends the national motivations of the kings of the earth. For His kingdom is “not of this *kosmos*” (cf. Jn. 18.36), and He is what the Maccabees could never be.

iv. Asked to rebuke the crowd (cf. Luke 19:39-40)

1. Ps. 24:7-10, “*Lift up your heads, O you gates! And be lifted up, you everlasting doors! And the King of glory shall come in. Who is this King of glory? The LORD strong and mighty, the LORD mighty in battle. Lift up your heads, O you gates! Lift up, you everlasting doors! And the King of glory shall come in. Who is this King of glory? The LORD of hosts, He is the King of glory. Selah*”

v. Jesus weeps (cf. Luke 19:41-44)

3. The Last Week

a. Sunday the 10th of Nisan

- i. Triumphal entry
- ii. Spent the night at Bethany (chez Lazarus)

b. Monday - Wednesday. Jesus taught daily in the Temple but withdrew each night to the Mt. of Olives (*perhaps at Bethany?*) (cf. x:x-x)

- i. Jesus curses the fig tree (cf. Mark 11:12-14)
- ii. Drove out the money changers (cf. Mark 11:15-17)
- iii. High priests and scribes conspire to kill Jesus. (cf. Mark 11:18-19)
- iv. Greek gentiles come to Jesus. (cf. Jn. 12:20-22) Up until now Jesus' ministry has been directed to the “*lost sheep of the house of Israel*” to prepare them.
 1. Grain of wheat, unless a man loses his life, etc. Voice from heaven. (cf. Jn. 12:23-29)
 2. If I am lifted up... (cf. Jn. 12:31-32)
 3. “*Peoples shall yet come, inhabitants of many cities; the inhabitants of one city shall go to another, saying, "Let us continue to go and pray before the LORD, and seek the LORD of hosts. I myself will go also." Yes, many peoples and strong nations shall come to seek the LORD of hosts in Jerusalem, and to pray before the LORD.' "Thus says the LORD of hosts: 'In those days ten men from every language of the nations shall grasp the sleeve of a Jewish man, saying, "Let us go with you, for we have heard that God is with you."'"* Zech. 8:20-23

v. Mary anoints Jesus for burial (cf. Mt. 26:6-13)

- vi. Caiaphas selects Jesus as the “*passover lamb*” (cf. Jn. 18:13)
- vii. Last Supper on what would have been the beginning of the 14th of Nisan.
- viii. Arrested by Temple guards
- c. Thursday the 14th of Nisan (*i.e. until sunset*)
 - i. Trial
 - ii. Crucifixion and no bones broken.
 - iii. Jesus’ body is laid in the tomb just at the beginning of the 15th of Nisan.
- d. Friday
 - i. Passover
- e. Saturday
 - i. Feast of Unleavened Bread
- f. Sunday
 - i. Feast of Firstfruits
 - ii. Resurrection
- 4. Take-aways
 - a. Q

“Build houses and dwell in them; plant gardens and eat their fruit. Take wives and beget sons and daughters; and take wives for your sons and give your daughters to husbands, so that they may bear sons and daughters—that you may be increased there, and not diminished. And seek the peace of the city where I have caused you to be carried away captive, and pray to the LORD for it; for in its peace you will have peace.” Jer. 29:5-7