

Jesus' Last Week



SABBATH—JANUARY 29

READ FOR THIS WEEK'S STUDY: Mark 11:1-11; John 13:1-17; John 15:9-17.

MEMORY VERSE: “He [Jesus] said, ‘Now the Son of Man [Jesus] receives glory. And he brings glory to God’ ” (John 13:31, NIV).

A MUSEUM IN ROME shows what might be the earliest picture of the Crucifixion.¹ Unfortunately, the man on the cross has a donkey's head. Another man stands in front of the cross with his arms lifted in worship. Below the picture are these words: “Alexander worships God.” This disgusting picture helps us to understand the shame of the Cross.

The shame of the Cross is not easy for us to understand, because we sing praises to the Cross. But how much sense does it make to worship a man crucified as a criminal in the most shameful and cruel way?

This week, we will learn more about the Man who was crucified on the cross, and about why He had to die this way. Worshiping this Man will make more sense when we learn more about Him.

A LOOK AT THIS WEEK'S LESSON: Why did Jesus not stop the people's support for Him when He entered Jerusalem? What was the attitude² of most Jews toward Jesus? Why was Jesus washing the disciples' feet important?

Study this week's lesson to prepare for Sabbath, February 5.

¹the Crucifixion—Jesus dying on the cross.

²attitude—how people feel about ideas and things.

SUNDAY—JANUARY 30

AN OUTLINE OF JESUS' LAST WEEK (John 15:9-17).

About one-third of the Gospels³ deals with Jesus' last week. This material includes some parables⁴ of God's kingdom and of future judgment.

Today's lesson shows an outline of Jesus' last week from the Sunday or Monday before His death to the following Sunday. On that Sunday, He rose back to life. The events⁵ of Jesus' last week followed God's instructions that the Passover⁶ Lamb was to be killed the evening of the fourteenth day of the first month. (At first, this month was called *Abib* in Hebrew. Later, this month was renamed *Nisan*. Exodus 12:1-6; Exodus 34:18; Esther 3:7.)

Below is an outline of the high points of Jesus' last week:

Sunday (Nisan 9). Jesus enters Jerusalem. Jesus visits the temple. He returns to Bethany.



Monday (Nisan 10). Jesus curses the fruitless fig tree. Jesus cleanses the temple again. Jesus heals the suffering people at the temple. He returns to Bethany in the evening.

Tuesday (Nisan 11). Jesus meets with Greek believers in the temple's outer court; Jesus' last day of public teaching; woes⁷ against the religious leaders; Jesus goes to the Mount of Olives where He talks about the Second Coming; Judas agrees with the priests to betray Jesus.

Wednesday (Nisan 12). Jesus is alone with the disciples.

Thursday (Nisan 13). Jesus prepares for the Passover. Jesus eats the Lord's Supper with His disciples. Judas betrays Jesus. Jesus gives His farewell speech to the disciples. Jesus prays for all His followers. Jesus goes to the Garden of Gethsemane. Jesus is arrested. The events after the Lord's Supper were at sundown⁸ and afterwards. As a result, the day was now the fourteenth of Nisan, or Thursday night.



³the Gospels—the New Testament books of Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John.

⁴parables—short stories that teach a lesson.

⁵events—things that happen.

⁶Passover—Jesus' last week was during Passover. Passover celebrated the night the Israelites escaped from Egypt. Read Exodus 12:21-51. The Passover Lamb symbolized Jesus.

⁷woes—great troubles.

⁸sundown—according to the Jews, the new day begins at sundown.

Friday (Nisan 14). Jesus was taken to Annas, then to Caiaphas, and then to the Sanhedrin.⁹ Peter denies Jesus. Jesus is brought to Pilate, then to Herod's palace, and back to Pilate. Jesus is whipped, sentenced, and crucified.

During Jesus' last week, what point does He focus on? Why is this point so important at this time in His life? What is the message of this point for us? How can you make His point real in your own life?

MONDAY—JANUARY 31

VICTORIOUS ENTRY INTO JERUSALEM; THE TEMPLE CLEANSED (Mark 11:1-11; Luke 19:28-48).

Read Matthew 21:1-11 and John 6:1-15. After Jesus fed the 5,000 people, He left them. In Matthew 21:1-11, He joined the crowd in Jerusalem. Why did Jesus leave the 5,000 people but not the crowd in Jerusalem?

Throughout most of His ministry (work), Jesus did not try to make Himself famous. He did not encourage big shows of celebration and loyalty. He knew the religious leaders were jealous of Him. So He worked

in a way that let Him finish His healing, teaching, and preaching.

But now He lets this celebration happen. He knows it will lead Him to the Cross. Plus, with such large crowds, many more people will learn about His death and resurrection than if He were quiet.

What did Jesus do the next day and with what results? Matthew 21:12-16.



During the victorious entry into Jerusalem, some people in the crowds shouted, "Blessed is the king who comes in the name of the Lord! May there be peace and glory in the highest heaven" (Luke 19:38, NIV). Jesus' answer to the Pharisees¹⁰ in Luke 19:40-44 showed that He accepted the people's praises of Him. Then, as the King in David's line, the Son of David, He cleansed the temple, calling it "My house" (Matthew 21:13). As the temple's rightful owner, He used His divine¹¹ authority (power) over the temple.

⁹Sanhedrin—the Jewish governing council.

¹⁰Pharisees—religious leaders of Jesus' day who believed a person must keep God's law to be saved.

¹¹divine—of God.

Thus, between the victorious entry, the cleansing of the temple, and His final return to the temple (Matthew 21:23-27), Jesus openly showed His own authority before the people and religious teachers. In His own merciful¹² way, He gave them even more proof that He was the Savior. How would they answer Him?

Some leaders refused to accept Jesus because His claims threatened their power and honor. How do Jesus' claims threaten your power and honor? What should you do about these threats?

Matthew 26:3-5 _____

Mark 14:1, 2 _____

Luke 22:2 _____

Luke 23:27, 28 _____

John 11:48 _____

TUESDAY—FEBRUARY 1

JESUS AND THE JEWS (Matthew 21:23-46).

Jesus put the religious leaders in a trap (Matthew 21:23-27). Then He told a few parables about the future of people who refused to accept Him (Matthew 21:28-46). Matthew 21:45 shows the chief priests and Pharisees believed Jesus had spoken about them. The chief priests and the Pharisees opposed Jesus while most of the Jewish people seemed to support Him.

What do the following verses say about the attitude of most of the people toward Jesus?

Many of the people supported Jesus. This is why the religious leaders were so fearful of Him. If Jesus were just a small-time preacher who had no following, the leaders would not have had to worry about Him. John 11:48 explains that if they left Jesus alone, "all men will believe on him." Clearly, there were many Jews who believed Jesus already. If Jesus were not stopped, many more people would become believers.

Bible scholars¹³ have noted that many laws were broken during Jesus' trial. First, the trial was at night. According to Jewish practice, a trial cannot be held at night, especially when the criminal could get the death sentence. But the religious

¹²merciful—to be full of mercy. Mercy is kindness we do not deserve.

¹³scholars—experts who study a particular subject.

leaders had to hold Jesus' trial at night so they could hide the trial from the people who believed in Jesus.

When Jesus entered Jerusalem, some people asked, "Who is this?" (Matthew 21:10, 11). The crowd answered that He was Jesus. How could those people not have known? Possibly they were Jews who were coming from other countries. They did not know of Jesus' work. So they followed their own leaders and called for Jesus' death. Once the truth about Jesus was known, many Jews did become His disciples (Acts 2:41; Acts 21:20, 21).

WEDNESDAY—FEBRUARY 2

CLEAN FEET (John 13:1-17).

After a day's rest with Jesus, the disciples prepared for the Passover. Jesus knew He was the true Passover Lamb who was to be sacrificed. So He wished to spend the few remaining hours with His disciples for their benefit (profit). How touching are Jesus' words: "I have really looked forward to eating this Passover meal with you. I wanted to do this before I suffer" (Luke 22:15, NIV).

What was one of Jesus' last acts before His death? John 13:1-17. Why was this act so important? What does this act tell us about God's character?



Just before the shame, suffering, and pain of the Cross, Jesus washed the feet of His disciples! Here He is, God Himself, washing the feet of His disciples. He is the One who made the worlds. When we understand who Jesus really is, then we can begin to fully realize how unbelievable it was for Jesus to wash His disciples' feet! What an example of the character of our God! This act shows who we really are, too. By nature, we want to be served by other people rather than to serve other people. Jesus' act was not a rebuke (scolding) just to His disciples. It is a rebuke to us every time we are proud and selfish.

Jesus gave His disciples a needed lesson in humility (humbleness) and servanthood. But what spiritual lesson was Jesus teaching through the foot washing? John 13:10.

Jesus was talking about postbaptismal sin.¹⁴ People who have been

¹⁴postbaptismal sin—sin that is done after baptism.

baptized (bathed) do not need to be rebaptized after each sin. Foot washing is a symbol of our repentance,¹⁵ cleansing, and forgiveness of sins we have done after we have been baptized.

Most people do not find foot washing pleasant. This is why many churches do not practice Jesus' command in John 13:14, 15. But foot washing was not meant to be "pleasant." Why not? What other "unpleasant" things does God ask us to do?

THURSDAY—FEBRUARY 3

THE GARDEN OF GETHSEMANE (Matthew 26:36-44).

Jesus entered Gethsemane with His three closest disciples and asked them to pray and watch so they would not enter into temptation. What prayer did He then pray to God three times? What was the cup? Why did Jesus decide to accept this cup? Matthew 26:36-44; Mark 14:32-42; Luke 22:39-44.

Jesus Christ was pleading for strength to save lost and guilty people. But people were accusing Him of treason¹⁶ and treachery (lying). Satan

worked hard to discourage Jesus. Judas was leading a mob of religious leaders to arrest Him. But the disciples slept.

Jesus' heart was so deeply burdened with grief that "His sweat was like drops of blood falling to the ground" (Luke 22:44, NIV). But He decided to drink the bitter cup of our guilt and shame that He might give us the sweet drink of His innocence and mercy. For us, He emptied the cup of God's punishment to offer in its place the cup of peace with God.

What made Jesus' suffering in Gethsemane almost too hard for Him? 2 Corinthians 5:21; Isaiah 53:10; Zechariah 13:7.

"The horror of great darkness surrounded Jesus. The sins of the world were upon Him. He was suffering as we should suffer for breaking God's law. Here was the scene of temptation. The light of God was fading from Jesus' sight. He was passing into the hands of Satan. In His great suffering Jesus lay flat on the cold earth. He was feeling His Father's frown. Jesus had taken the cup of suffering from the lips of guilty people. He was going to drink the cup Himself so He could give us the cup of blessing. God's punishment that would have fallen upon us was now falling upon Jesus. It was in Gethsemane that the

¹⁵repentance—being sorry for your sins, wanting to stop sinning, and turning away from your sins.

¹⁶treason—to act as an enemy of your country.

mysterious cup shook in His hand with great temptation.”—Adapted from Ellen G. White, *Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 2, p. 203.

Why do you think Jesus would ask God to take the cup of suffering from Him? What does this tell us about Jesus' human nature? What comfort can we learn from the fact that even Jesus fought against doing God's will?

FRIDAY—FEBRUARY 4

ADDITIONAL STUDY: Read Ellen G. White, *The Desire of Ages*, pp. 685–694; *Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 5, pp. 200–205.

“Never before in His earthly life had Jesus let the people show such support for Him. He clearly knew their support would bring Him to the Cross. But He wanted . . . to call attention to the sacrifice that was to bring to a grand close His mission to a fallen world. While the people were meeting in Jerusalem to celebrate the Passover, Jesus was setting Himself apart as an offering of sacrifice. His death would need to be a subject of deep thought and

study in His future church. Every fact connected with His death should be proven true without any doubt. It was necessary that at this Passover all the people should see Jesus. The things that happened before His great sacrifice must call attention to His sacrifice.”—Adapted from Ellen G. White, *The Desire of Ages*, p. 571.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

1. Why do the Gospels focus so much on the last week of Jesus' life?
2. Read Ellen G. White's quote from Thursday's study. In your own words, write what she is saying. In class on Sabbath, let different people read what they wrote. What is Ellen White's most important message? Why is that message so important to all we believe as Seventh-day Adventists? How does this quote catch the important message of the gospel?
3. If the disciples had learned more from Jesus' spirit of sacrifice before He died, how would their work for Him have improved? How can learning from Jesus' spirit of sacrifice improve your work for Him?