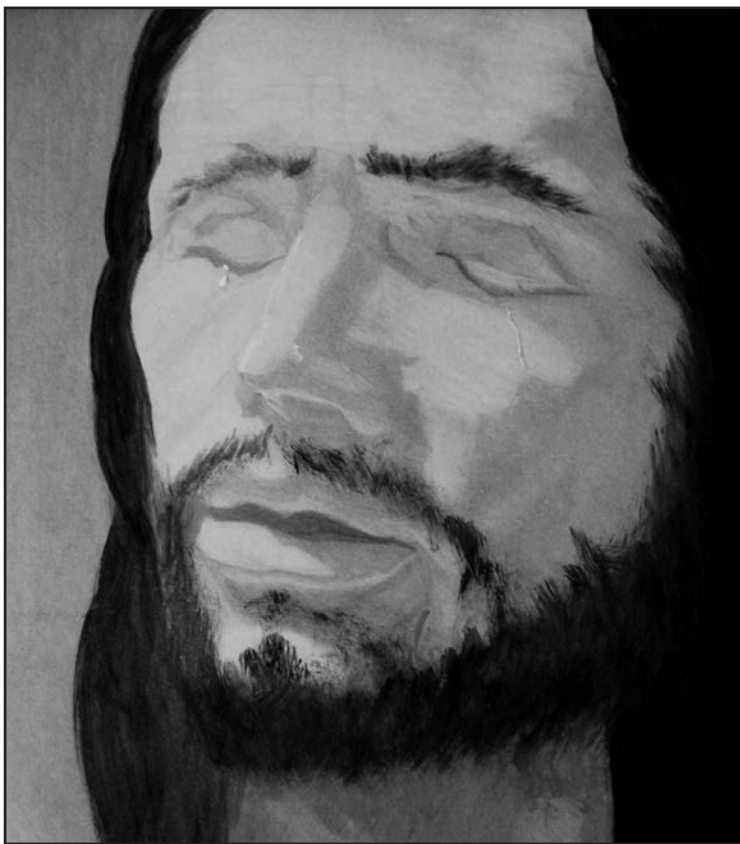


Jesus in
Jerusalem

*“Now as He drew near, He saw the city and wept over it”
(Luke 19:41, NKJV).*



Introduction

The Passover Lamb

Deut. 16:1-8;
Luke 19:45-48;
22:13-20

The Chinese culture loves the color red because it symbolizes good luck and chases away bad luck. According to Chinese legend, a monster used to come out on New Year's Eve, but it was afraid of the color red. So the ancient Chinese used blood to color their doorposts and frames to scare away the monster. Today, on New Year's Eve, they put red paper or cloth on their doors and burn firecrackers to scare away bad luck. Afterward, they sit at their dinner table and eat an overabundance of chicken and fish.

His crucifixion was the climax of the cosmic conflict between good and evil.

The Israelites performed their first Passover by sprinkling lambs' blood on their doorposts and eating roasted lamb before escaping from Egypt. The families who didn't sprinkle the blood lost their oldest son on the night the angel of the Lord passed over their houses. They had to eat the roasted lamb with unleavened bread in positions ready to leave Egypt.

Today, Jewish people celebrate Passover annually to commemorate the leading of God, who miraculously freed them from Egyptian bondage.

The lamb sacrificed at Passover symbolized Jesus, the Lamb of God. So when Jesus participated in Passover, He was celebrating His coming to Jerusalem to die for us (John 1:29, 36; 1 Pet. 1:18, 19; Rev. 12:11). However, this time would be His last Passover on earth. He had " 'eagerly desired to eat this Passover with [His apostles] before [He] suffer[ed]' " (Luke 22:15, NIV). He knew what would happen to Him in a few days to come. He knew the agony He would bear at Gethsemane, the unfair and bloody trial, and the thought of eternal separation from His Father. His crucifixion was the climax of the cosmic conflict between good and evil, freeing His followers from Satan's bondage.

Jesus arose on the first day of the week. Because He lives, we can face all our tomorrows.* We can face the same kind of freedom the Israelites did.

Are you ready to accept Jesus as your Passover Lamb? This week, we will learn about the last week of Jesus' time on earth and how we can accept His saving grace.

* Gaither Vocal Band, "Because He Lives," YouTube, accessed April 1, 2014, <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tpwQO3ckqNI>.

Luke 19:28–31;
John 13:15;
1 Pet. 2:13

Evidence

Jerusalem, O Mighty City

Millions of Christian pilgrims from different races annually visit Israel. Many are eager to get acquainted with where Jesus spent His life. They come to see Nazareth, where He was born, and Galilee, where His ministry began. They also visit the many towns and places where He preached, shared parables, and performed miracles.

Of all the places Jesus visited, Jerusalem is the most significant in terms of His ministry. He had visited the city many times, and what made it an extraordinary place was that in the closing week of His earthly ministry, multiple events took place. This city and this week brought the great controversy between good and evil to its apex. And only Jesus knew what was about to unfold.

We are no different from the multitude in Jesus' time.

On the first day of this week, Jesus made a triumphal entry into Jerusalem on a colt upon which no one had ever ridden. Multitudes of people spread their clothes on the road as they praised God and rejoiced. When Jesus entered Jerusalem, His eyes filled with tears over the city that had been the pride and glory of the Jews, knowing that one day it would be leveled to the ground. Then Jesus went into the temple, drove everything out that defiled it, and returned it to the dwelling place of God. Later that week, He told the parable of the wicked vinedressers. The chief priests and Pharisees knew He was referring to them (Matt. 21:33–46). Finally, at the end of the week, He instituted the Lord's Supper.

We are no different from the multitude in Jesus' time. We turn our eyes upon the Savior and praise His name. Yet we pierce His heart when we talk about church members behind their backs or when we neglect people in need of friendship and a helping hand. We conscientiously look for the warnings of impending attacks from Satan, yet many of us still stumble and fall. We must faithfully submit our lives to Jesus, for it is as Jesus said of Himself, “I have set you an example that you should do as I have done for you” (John 13:15, NIV).

REACT

1. If you had experienced the events that occurred in Jerusalem just before Jesus' death, would you have recognized who He really was? Would you have accepted Him or rejected Him? Why, or why not?

2. What are some principles that will keep you faithful while living in the middle of the great controversy between good and evil?

Logos

Jesus in Jerusalem

Zech. 9:9;
Mark 11:15–19;
Luke 19:28–48

He Came as a King of Peace (Zech 9:9; Matt. 21:4, 5; Luke 19:28–48)

An interesting event occurred during the last week of Jesus' ministry. He entered the city of Jerusalem riding a donkey. This initiated a great celebration welcoming Him as the people's king. At that time in the Middle East, a donkey was a symbol of peace, unlike a horse, which was a symbol of war. Thus, Jesus entering on a donkey demonstrated that He came as the King of Peace.

The people and leaders of Jerusalem were blinded by their traditions.

He Came and Wept (Luke 19:41–44)

This joyful celebration did not last long. It was followed by the weeping response that came from deep within the heart of Jesus. Jerusalem had become the center of Israelite activities up to Jesus' time. Jesus did not come to Jerusalem to be crowned king. He wept over the city because the citizens had failed to see the true meaning of His ministry—to die for them.¹ He knew what would happen to Jerusalem (Luke 19:41–44), and He could see clearly that the citizens would refuse to repent.

Christ, obviously aware that the people and their leaders had hoped for a Messiah who would fix their political matters, wept because He had pity on those who would soon be faced with great punishment. The Greek word for "cry" is *kraugazó*, meaning a loud unrelenting cry—the cry of a suffering soul. Jesus showed not only His feelings but also how crushed God's heart was because of the people's stubbornness to repent and receive His salvation. Today, these people symbolize those in every generation who reject divine, persuasive love.

He Came to Reestablish the Holiness of the Temple (Luke 19:28–48)

Jesus' tears over Jerusalem, His cleansing of the temple, and His enemies who were out to get Him made Him all the more determined to rid the temple of its sins. "The one unifying feature that ties these three accounts (Luke 19:41–44, 45–46, 47–48) together is that they all witness to the failure on the part of official Israel to submit itself to God's rule and the horrible consequences of this. Official Israel, represented by the 'chief priests, teachers of the law and the leaders among the people' (19:47),

misunderstood the purpose of the temple and misused it (19:45, 46). They not only sought to squelch the 'heavenly' praise of their King in their day of visitation (19:39, 40) and refused his rule over them (19:14), but they also increased their guilt by seeking their King's death (19:47, 48). This can only result in a visitation of divine judgment (19:42–44), and knowing this, Jesus wept for Jerusalem."²

The event of cleansing the temple of God showed the public ministry of Jesus' righteous indignation. In His great anger, He drove out the greedy people who were defiling the temple and desecrating its holy purpose. Jesus, within a three-year span, had cleansed the temple twice (John 2:13–25). Following are lessons we can learn from these cleansings.

1. Christ really desires holiness and sincerity in His house. He died because He "loved the church and gave Himself for her, that He might sanctify and cleanse her with the washing of water by the word, that He might present her to Himself a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing, but that she should be holy and without blemish" (Eph. 5:25–27, NKJV).

2. We must worship Him in spirit and truth (John 4:24). The church must be a center of prayer and unity (Matt. 21:13).

3. Our sincere love for God is how we should respond to the sacrifice of Jesus so we should glorify His house through our behavior (1 Tim. 3:15).

4. It is important that every true Christian rightly represent the kingdom of God: "Do you not know that the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived. Neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor homosexuals, nor sodomites, nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners will inherit the kingdom of God. And such were some of you. But you were washed, but you were sanctified, but you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus and by the Spirit of our God" (1 Cor. 6:9–11, NKJV).

The people and leaders of Jerusalem were blinded by their traditions. Jesus wept over their condition and their impending fate. He knew what would happen to those who refused Him as their Redeemer. This is also a warning to us who are waiting for the return of Christ. People who are building up a wall of ignorance and stubbornness are separating themselves from His love and commandments.

Don't let Jesus weep over you upon His return.

1. Robert H. Stein, *Luke: The New American Commentary* (Nashville, Tenn.: B&H Publishing Group, 1992), pp. 477, 481.

2. *Ibid.*, p. 486.

Testimony

“Hosanna to the Son of David”

Luke 19:37, 38

“It was on the first day of the week that Christ made His triumphal entry into Jerusalem. Multitudes who had flocked to see Him . . . now accompanied Him, eager to witness His reception. Many people were on their way to the city to keep the Passover, and these joined the multitude attending Jesus. All nature seemed to rejoice. The trees were clothed with verdure, and their blossoms shed a delicate fragrance on the air. A new life and joy animated the people.”¹

“If Jerusalem would but repent, it was not yet too late.”

“The dignitaries of the temple are dumb with astonishment. Where now is the boasted power of priests and rulers over the people! The authorities had announced that whoever should acknowledge Jesus to be the Christ was to be put out of the synagogue and deprived of its sacred privileges. Yet here are the enthusiastic multitude shouting loud hosannas to the Son of David, and recounting the titles given Him by the prophets. As well might the priests and rulers attempt to deprive the earth of the shining face of the sun, as to shut from the world the beams of glory from the Sun of Righteousness. In spite of all opposition, the kingdom of Christ was confessed by the people.”²

“If Jerusalem would but repent, it was not yet too late. . . . Beautiful and unholy city, that had stoned the prophets, that had rejected the Son of God, that was locking herself by her impenitence in fetters of bondage,—her day of mercy was almost spent!

“Yet again the Spirit of God speaks to Jerusalem. Before the day is done, another testimony is borne to Christ. The voice of witness is lifted up, responding to the call from a prophetic past. If Jerusalem will hear the call, if she will receive the Saviour who is entering her gates, she may yet be saved.”³

Today, we must proclaim: “We, His disciples, declare, This is Jesus, the Messiah, the Prince of life, the Redeemer of the world.”⁴

REACT

1. Why did the people of Jerusalem, along with its citizens, the chief priests, and the Pharisees fail to recognize the coming of Jesus?

2. As a “royal priesthood,” how must we live in order to show people that we have hope in Christ’s second coming?

1. Ellen G. White, *The Desire of Ages*, p. 569.

2. White, *The Spirit of Prophecy*, vol. 3, pp. 14, 15.

3. White, *The Desire of Ages*, p. 578.

4. *Ibid.*, p. 579.

Luke 19:28–48

How-to *A Balanced Excitement*

The final days before the cross must have been rather exciting for the disciples. There was a feeling that this time their visit to Jerusalem would be different. Something big was about to happen! Jesus' request to ride a donkey into the city seemed to be an unmistakable sign that He was about to claim David's throne.

We live in exciting times too. Yet, just like the disciples who misinterpreted Jesus' arrival in Jerusalem, we also can be disappointed with the delay of His second coming to earth. Following are some suggestions, which are based on the events surrounding Jesus' last visit to Jerusalem, to bring balance to our excitement.

Make God the focus of your worship.

Praise Him, and be joyful in His presence (Luke 19:37–40). Jesus does not hold people back from welcoming and praising Him. Praising God is important to keep us spiritually positive. Paul wrote that we should rejoice always (1 Thess. 5:16). It is easy to get discouraged with the dreadful, everyday news we hear, but looking to and praising God can put these reports into perspective. Make it a habit to read psalms of praise and to sing praise songs during your daily worship time.

Mingle with people, and attend to their needs (Luke 19:41–44, 47, 48). Jesus chose to be among the people. One of His reasons for going to the Jerusalem temple was to teach and heal people. During His last visit, He wept because He cared for them. In contrast, the scribes and the Pharisees stayed away from the people, thinking they were above the common population. We need to follow Jesus' example when it comes to caring for all types of people, understanding their needs, and using our individual gifts to help fulfill their needs.

Make God the focus of your worship (Luke 19:45, 46). When Jesus came to Jerusalem, the temple was being misused as a way to make a profit. This ignited Jesus' indignation and motivated His desire to clean it up. Are we focused on God during the worship service or church activities? Do we use our talents to praise Him or to show off our skills? Are we strengthening each other or gossiping about each other? Reflect on your motivation, and find ways to make sure God is glorified in all of your activities.

REACT

1. Which other lessons from Jesus' last days in Jerusalem can you apply to your life while you wait for His soon return?
2. How can you get your church to be more excited about Jesus' return?

Danny and Rachel Handoko, Eindhoven, Netherlands

Opinion

Jesus Christ Superstar

Luke 9:51;
19:28–40, 45–48;
20:9–26; 22:13–20

He was a superstar in His time. He performed miracles, multiplied food, raised people from the dead, and threw out demons. His authoritative teachings were different from what the religious leaders taught. He would be the people's Savior from the pain and agony of their past suffering. He would be their King. He would bring back the glory of Israel like King David and King Solomon did. He was, after all, Jesus Christ.

He had to be destroyed, because He was becoming too popular.

Jesus knows everything because He is omniscient. He knew that His journey to Jerusalem would cost Him persecution and death. Even so, He was determined to go there.¹ He obeyed His Father's will. He knew that He would be praised as a king, not because they believed He was the Savior or believed His teachings to be true, but merely because of His miracles. His miracles made them deaf to the words of the prophets and blind to His real mission. When it became apparent that Jesus was not going to fulfill their hopes, those who praised Him became those who crucified Him (Luke 19:38).²

The religious leaders and the leaders in politics, commerce, and law hated Jesus. He was the victim of the most horrific conspiracy that has ever taken place. Why? They had several reasons for wanting to get rid of Him. He had disrupted business in the temple by driving out the merchants. He was preaching against the injustice of the legal system, and His teachings often favored the poor over the rich. Furthermore, His great popularity was in danger of attracting Rome's attention, and the leaders of Israel wanted as little as possible to do with Rome (Luke 19:47).

He had to be destroyed, because He was becoming too popular. The evil plan was being prepared. Another horrific fact was that one of the disciples who had been with Him for three years would betray Him. He knew it all, but He was determined to go to Jerusalem because the ultimate fate of so many people required that He do so.

It was all part of the plan to win the great controversy against Satan. And Jerusalem was to be the arena where this was to happen. He was Jesus, the most controversial Figure of all time. He was more than just a star. He *is* the Superstar.

1. "Commentary on Luke 2:51," *New Living Translation* (Wheaton, Ill.: Tyndale House Publishers, Inc., 2004), p. 1570.

2. *Ibid.*, p. 1595.

Luke 23:21

Exploration “Crucify Him!”

CONCLUDE

Jesus’ last week of earthly life unfolded in Jerusalem. What tumultuous events marked that week: His triumphal entry, Jesus weeping over the indifferent city, the cleansing of the temple, the scheming and the plotting against Him, the pathos of the Last Supper, the agony of Gethsemane, the mockery of a trial, the Crucifixion, and, finally, the Resurrection. Never before and never since has any city witnessed such a progression of history, a progression that brought the cosmic conflict between good and evil to its climax, even though no one but Jesus understood the significance of what was unfolding.

CONSIDER

- Choosing one or two of the nine events listed in the paragraph above to learn more about. The book *The Desire of Ages*, chapters 63–81, is a good place to start. As you read, imagine being there yourself. What do you hear? How do you feel? What are your innermost reactions to what is happening to your Savior?
- Getting together with some friends for Friday night vespers to discuss the events leading up to the Crucifixion. Include in your discussion how each of these events can positively affect your relationship with Christ.
- Creating a poster depicting one of the events that occurred during Jesus’ last week. Let the sights, sounds, and even the smells guide you as you portray the event.
- Using the ACTS (adoration, confession, thanksgiving, and supplication) prayer format as you read or think about any portion of Jesus’ last week of earthly life.
- Singing one of the following songs from the *Seventh-day Adventist Hymnal* during one of your private worships or with a group of friends for Friday night vespers: “O Sacred Head Now Wounded” (no. 156), “Were You There?” (no. 158), “Christ the Lord Is Risen Today” (no. 166).
- Baking bread and pressing juice for a Friday evening vesper service and meal to celebrate the resurrection of Christ. As you prepare these two items, think about the symbolism behind them.
- Looking at the stars in the night sky as you ponder the wondrous love of God and Christ that motivated Them to devise the plan of salvation.

CONNECT

Isaiah 53.

The Seventh-day Adventist Bible Dictionary, s.v. “Crucifixion.”

Cahleen Shrier, “The Science of the Crucifixion,” <http://www.apu.edu/articles/15657>.

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