

He Set His Face to Jerusalem

The Days Were Approaching

After the Lord had returned from the “withdrawals” in the regions surrounding the Galilee, he encountered his brothers. We previously noted how most people enjoy going home and visiting with family. This was not the experience of Jesus. The great works that Jesus had done were not convincing to his own family. Sarcasm oozes from their statements. “Depart from here, and go into Judea...for no one does anything in secret...show yourself to the world.” (John 7:3-4). Ignoring the mockery, Jesus remained in Galilee until the appointed time for him to go to Jerusalem. He was ordained to be in Jerusalem for one specific mission, which was only to take place at one time. Luke had already referred to Jesus’ conversation with Moses and Elijah about his departure (Luke 9:31), and reminds us that the appointed time is coming: “And it came about, when the days were approaching for his ascension, that he resolutely set his face to go to Jerusalem.” (Luke 9:51).

The time until the Lord’s formal entry into Jerusalem (The Triumphal Entry) is generally thought of as including the “Judean Ministry,” and the “Perean Ministry.” We will note the locations of the Lord’s ministry on particular occasions, but will treat these two as one. There are two reasons for this. First there were several occasions in Perea where the Lord went back into Judea. Second, the Gospel writers see this as an interim period in between the Galilean Ministry and the ascension (see texts above).

The God of Israel

Jesus entered the temple in Jerusalem at the time of the Feast of Tabernacles (John 7:11) which is when things were bustling in the great city. At a time when the Spirit of God is thought to have been poured out, Jesus faced his most radical opponents. As such, he confronted them for their hypocritical religious practices (John 7:23). An attempt is made to arrest him, which he avoids. The Pharisees continued to criticize Jesus for coming from Galilee, but little did they know that Jesus was born in Bethlehem. He had fulfilled the prophecy which they thought stood against him (John 7:42). John 7:53-8:11 is not contained in the majority of New Testament manuscripts. Dr. Varner, who is a Greek scholar, has commented that the grammatical construction of the Greek in this section is not typical of John’s writing. Being that this was the time of the Feast of Tabernacles, it is significant that Jesus calls himself the light of the world (John 8). At this time, four golden menorahs were lit until the last day of the feast. While there continued to be much confusion about the identity of Jesus, he had fully disclosed himself: “...before Abraham was born, I AM.” This was nothing less than the claim to be God (Exodus 3:14). This occasioned the second attempt to stone him.

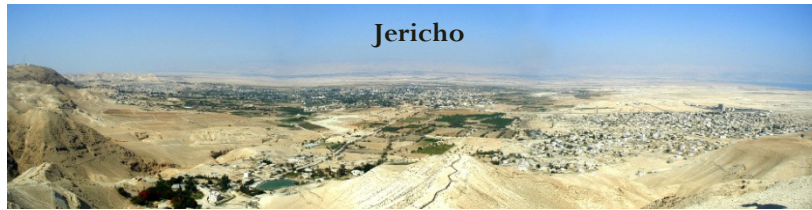
The Seventy

Because things had become so tense between Jesus and the Jews, the Lord commissioned seventy of his disciples to preach throughout the region. We usually think of the disciples as only twelve in number. However, seventy are sent out here, and successfully return. But yet, this was not to be the greatest thing to rejoice over (Luke 10:20). While the powers in Jerusalem were seeking Christ’s destruction, the Lord makes it plain that this was what the kings and prophets of the Old Testament wished to see (Luke 10:24). In other words, the people belonging to Israel’s heritage were looking for what the Pharisees wanted to eliminate.

Equal Before God

The discrimination of races, and of women has often been practiced in the name of Christianity. Between the story of the good Samaritan, and Jesus' visit with Martha and

Mary, we find a stark contrast to any kind of segregation or classification of individuals. You are already aware of the kind of shock that Jesus' story would have caused. To remind you, during this time in the ancient world, women were treated as second class citizens. Jesus' visit with Martha and Mary shows that he thought of women as on the same level as men. You will see this issue rise again. The context is fitting to include how Jesus taught his disciples to pray. God's children address him as "Father." There is no racial or gender distinction before God (Luke 11).



Already Not Yet

The phrase "already, but not yet," is often used to describe the nature of the kingdom of God. By this, it is meant that the kingdom is already here, but not in its fullest form. From the time of Jesus' second encounter with the Pharisees until the Feast of Dedication (December) (Luke 11-13), we see this motif carried out. For the third time, Jesus had been accused of having a demon. However Jesus explains that "the kingdom of God has come upon them" (Luke 11:20). What was taking place before their eyes was the rule and reign of God: the demons are cast out. After this, Jesus was invited to have lunch at a Pharisees' house. Have you ever been a guest, and someone there becomes very outspoken, which makes everyone uncomfortable? Jesus was not being rude, but he did offend the Pharisees and lawyers for their hypocrisy. Though these men were extremely committed to outward deeds, they were as dead people on the inside. For this reason, Jesus warned against hypocrisy, and trusting in wealth (Luke 12). The followers of Jesus are to seek his kingdom first (Luke 12:31). As Jesus taught on the kingdom of God in daily life, he taught on the kingdom to come, and to be ready for it! This is why when he was approached about those who were killed by Pilate (Luke 13), he directly warned all to repent of their sin. When Jesus healed the crippled woman on the Sabbath, he was criticized once again. In response to this, Jesus brazenly pointed out the hypocrisy of the Pharisees, and appropriately related it to the kingdom of God. The kingdom of God is like a mustard seed, which grows into a large tree. Also, it is like leaven, which spreads from one lump. In this way, the kingdom of God was being put on display in the healing of the crippled woman. She had been freed from Satan's bondage. But the kingdom would one day come to dominate the whole earth. The kingdom is already, but not yet.

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At the Feast of Dedication (Hanukkah), Jesus healed a blind man (John 9). We might wonder why Jesus made clay to rub on the man's eyes. This would have broken the Pharisees version of Sabbath law, and so would have the man for washing his eyes (9:14). But the accusation stands alone on Jesus. Notice the Pharisees reason for not believing that he was from God: "...because he does not keep the Sabbath."



The Pool of Siloam is part of a larger channel. The structures around the pool are not identical to the ones in Jesus' day.

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They had complete disregard for a supernatural miracle! They were so bewildered by the miracle that they continued to ask the man how Jesus healed him. They even asked his parents, as if they could find a way to explain that the man had not really been blind. But while they were intimidated by the Jews, they could not deny what had been done to their son. The final response of the man to the Pharisees is humorous. “Well, here is an amazing thing, that you do not know where he is from, and yet he opened my eyes.” (John 9:30). Not having any kind of reasonable response to what had irrefutably taken place, the Pharisees put him out. They were not stupid men, but because they were really the blind ones, they were acting stupid.



Model of the first century Pool of Siloam

The Good Shepherd

In Ezekiel 34, we are given a description of the bad shepherds of Israel. It is the responsibility of a shepherd to feed and protect his flock. In this case, the shepherds were bringing every kind of harm on the sheep. The answer to this problem is the good shepherd, who cares perfectly for his sheep. John 10:1-18 is not a parable. It is an allegory, in which Jesus is portrayed as the good shepherd, and the Pharisees as the robbers. There was no doubt in the Pharisees' minds that he was talking about them. This is why they confronted him again when he was walking in Solomon's portico. When the Lord disarmed their accusation of blasphemy, they could do nothing other than try to grab him. But, as his time was not appointed, they could not seize him.



Solomon's Portico was an area surrounding the courtyard under pillars. It was used for shade in summer and protection from rain in winter.

Beyond the Jordan

When Christ traveled to the other side of the Jordan, he encountered many who had been baptized by John (Luke 13). This point in time until the Triumphal Entry is known as the Perean Ministry. There are times when he went in and out of this region prior to his final entry into Jerusalem. On his way back to Jerusalem, he had been teaching about the kingdom. We find Jesus at another Pharisees' house, where he was closely being watched because it was the Sabbath day. Jesus used this occasion to heal a man, which of course provoked the Pharisees. Jesus continued to teach in the Perean area. This included discipleship, rebuking the Pharisees, and instruction about money (Luke 14:16).

Lazarus, Come Forth

We read in John 11 of Christ raising Lazarus from the dead. Many have observed that Jesus waited to go to Bethany until after Lazarus was dead (11:6). This gave him the opportunity to display his power. No one understood what Christ was about to do. Thomas thought that this was the time

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for Christ to die (11:16). Martha did not realize that the Lord would raise Lazarus that same day (11:24). But only by the power of his words, Jesus Christ called Lazarus from the dead. Jesus' command "Lazarus, come forth," was no mere plea. When Christ intends to accomplish something, he does not fail. Jesus did not ask Lazarus if he wanted to come forth. Jesus did not ask for his permission. Jesus commanded Lazarus to walk out of his grave. This is the last recorded miracle in the Gospel of John. As such, this is a climactic point from John's perspective. As you know, John wrote to show the deity of Christ, of which this is the best example. It should be noted that the Lazarus in this account is not the Lazarus of Luke 16, which is a fictional character, which the Lord used in his teaching. Additionally, we are told that Jesus loved Mary, Martha, and Lazarus (11:5). This shows us again how unconventional Jesus was according to the cultural norms. While the culture viewed women as second class citizens, Jesus did not. The mighty power of Jesus that raised Lazarus from the dead did not convince the Pharisees, who now intended to kill him with greater passion. This is not because Jesus was weak, but because the hardness of their hearts was such that they were first concerned about themselves (11:48). When they were plotting to kill him, the high priest Caiaphas prophesied that Jesus had to die for the nation, but he did not say this from himself (11:51).

On His Way

We find one more occasion where Jesus journeys north. Luke 17:11 tells us that Jesus was on his way to Jerusalem, having been somewhere in Samaria and Galilee. This is no doubt in part a strategy to avoid the Pharisees who would have already had him condemned to death. But as we know, his time was not yet appointed. During this time, we find another situation where favor is given to an outcast of society. Among the ten lepers that Jesus healed, only the Samaritan returned to give thanks. That Jesus did not come to save the self-righteous is continually being reinforced. We find additional examples of this during Christ's approach to Jerusalem. The Pharisee who exalts himself is justified, but the tax-gatherer is (Luke 18:9-14). Children are used as an example of those who belong to God's kingdom. It is hard for a rich man to enter the kingdom (Matthew 19, Mark 10, Luke 18). When the mother of James and John asks for a privileged place for her sons in the kingdom, Jesus promises them suffering (Matthew 20, Mark 10). The first will be last, and the last will be first.

By the time the Lord reached Jericho, many people were following him. He was stopped by two blind men who were crying out for healing (Matthew 20, Mark 10, Luke 18). Matthew tells us that there were two men, and Luke tells us that one of them was named Bartimaeus. (We are also told that the onlookers around them were telling the blind men to be quiet.) But they believed that Jesus could heal them. This is faith. These men did not care what other people had to say. They believed that Jesus could make them well, and they cried out until he would. Also notice that they referred to Jesus as the son of David. Perhaps they had Psalm 110:1 in mind. Next we find Zaccheus the tax-collector. Unlike Levi, Zaccheus collected taxes and became rich from it. His repentance is shown by his desire to give back what he had wrongfully taken. When the Lord approaches Jerusalem through Jericho, Zaccheus desires greatly to



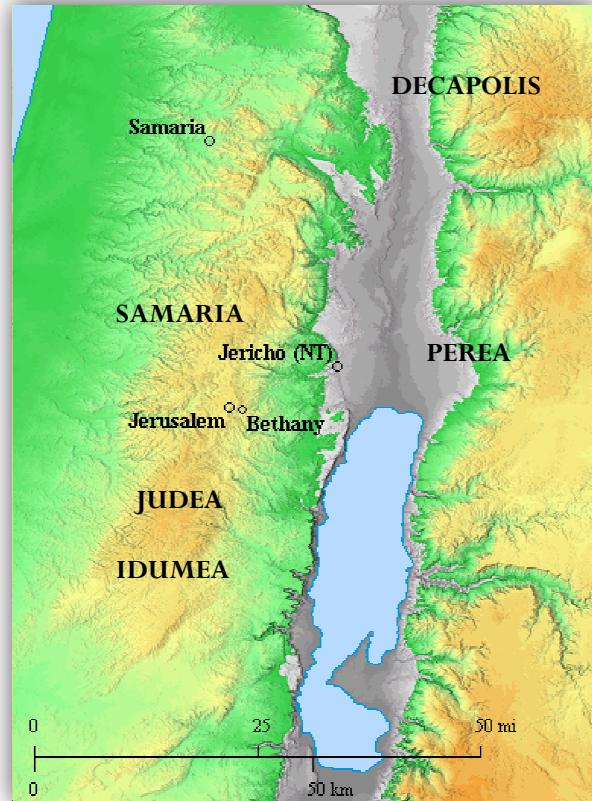
A sycamore tree in Jericho.
Zaccheus did not wear tank tops.
They show too much armpit hair.

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see. Because he was short, he was climbed a tree to see Christ. As the Lord made his last stretch toward Jerusalem, he taught those around him a parable which illustrates the kingdom of God. The crowd had expected the kingdom to immediately appear, but they had the wrong idea. We will see that this was still the case when the Lord entered Jerusalem.

But Jesus called them to himself, and said, "You know that the rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and their great men exercise authority over them. It is not so among you, but whoever wishes to become great among you shall be your servant, and whoever wishes to be first among you shall be your slave; just as the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life a ransom for many."

Matthew 20:25-28



Reading Assignment

2 Corinthians 8-16

Romans 1-12

Greek	Pronunciation	English	Part of Speech
qanato~	than-aa-toss	death	noun
aijwn	ay-own	an age	noun
duo	duo	two	adjective
ajfi hmi	aphee-ay-me	I let, permit, forgive	verb
pol i~	paw-lis	city	noun
nekro~	nekros	dead	noun