



The Passion of Christ

SOURCE FOR QUESTIONS

Luke 19:28 through 24:53

KEY VERSE FOR MEMORIZATION

“Father, if thou be willing, remove this cup from me: nevertheless not my will, but thine, be done.”
(Luke 22:42)

BACKGROUND

This final portion of the Gospel of Luke covers Jesus' last days on earth. Our text begins with His triumphal entry into Jerusalem and His second cleansing of the Temple. Luke goes on to describe several instances in which the religious leaders challenged Jesus' authority (chapter 20), and then records Jesus' closing teachings regarding future events (chapter 21). Chapter 22 gives a description of Christ's last supper with His disciples, His agony in the Garden, His betrayal by Judas Iscariot, and Peter's denial. In chapter 23, Luke tells of Jesus' trial before Herod, His sentencing by Pilate, and His crucifixion and burial. Chapter 24 concludes the Gospel, recounting Jesus' resurrection, His post-resurrection appearances to His followers, and finally, His ascension into Heaven.

Luke's main purpose in writing his Gospel—to present Jesus as the Savior for all people everywhere—is clearly revealed in this text. By chronicling the details of the price paid for man's salvation, Luke highlighted the importance and relevance of the Good News for all mankind. Jesus' life on earth gave the perfect pattern for a life lived in obedience and accordance with the will of God. Through His death, He paid the price for salvation for all people everywhere. Through His resurrection, He provided overcoming power over sin, death, and Hell. And at His ascension into Heaven, He gave His followers not only a great commission but also a glorious commitment—the promise of the fulfillment of all things that had been written by Moses and the prophets, and the endowment of power from on high.

SUGGESTED RESPONSE TO QUESTIONS

1. In Luke 19:29-38, we read that as Jesus approached Jerusalem, crowds began to acclaim Him as King and to give Him glory and praise. The account of His triumphal entry into the city is one of the few incidents in the life of Jesus which appears in all four Gospels. Clearly, this was a significant event, not only to the people of Jesus' day, but also to Christians throughout history who celebrate Palm Sunday to commemorate

OPENER

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NOTES

that occasion. Why do you think the Triumphal Entry was so significant?

Your group should conclude that this event was significant because Jesus was making public His claim to be the Messiah and King of Israel in fulfillment of Old Testament prophecy. The way He came into the city was important: the King coming on the foal of a donkey was an exact fulfillment of Zechariah 9:9 (see also Matthew 21:5). The time and place were also significant: since the Passover was less than a week away, there were large numbers of travelers coming into the city to join the residents of Jerusalem.

Based on this fulfillment of a prophecy made hundreds of years earlier, the point could be made that God is a God of details. What people may overlook or regard as inconsequential happenings are fore-ordained by God. This could be a time to ask your group to share examples from their own knowledge or experience of times when God worked in the details of a situation.

2. Bible historians note that the view of Jerusalem from the point near the Mount of Olives where Jesus rode into the city would have been one of beauty and splendor, with glimpses of the magnificent Temple, the gardens and elaborate dwellings of wealthy Jews, and the great wall encircling the city. According to Luke 19:41-44, what did Jesus do as He looked out over Jerusalem, and why?

Jesus wept because He knew the terrible judgment that would befall the city in a very short time. He also wept because the people of Jerusalem were oblivious to the conditions by which peace could be obtained—conditions that were hid from their eyes because of the condition of their hearts.

Remind your group that in Leviticus 26:31, God had warned Israel what would happen if they failed to obey Him: “And I will make your cities waste, and bring your sanctuaries unto desolation.” Though this prophecy already had been fulfilled when the Northern and Southern Kingdoms went into captivity, it began to be fulfilled again in A.D. 66 when the Jews revolted against the Roman yoke. The Romans responded by plundering Jerusalem and executing six thousand Jews, prompting a full-scale rebellion. After a lull in military operations because of turmoil in Rome, in A.D. 70 the Roman general, Titus, moved against the rebels in Jerusalem. After a seven-month siege, the armies of Rome prevailed, Jerusalem fell, and the Temple was destroyed. Once again, Israel’s cities were laid waste and her sanctuaries brought into desolation, fulfilling Christ’s sorrowful prediction in our text.

You may wish to discuss with your class Jesus' assertion that Israel "knewest not the time of thy visitation" (verse 44). The Jewish people for the most part had rejected God's offer of salvation through Jesus Christ and as a result, they would endure the

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legal proceeding in history, described in our text, occurred so that God's plan for the salvation of mankind could be fulfilled. The Innocent One was declared guilty not just in one court, but in three. Before whom did those three trials take place? Luke 22:66-71; 23:1-25

The first of Jesus' three trials took place when He was charged with blasphemy before the Sanhedrin, or leaders of Jewish religious law (Luke 22:66-71). The second trial occurred in the court of Jewish secular law represented by Herod (Luke 23:6-12), where He was charged with insurrection or sedition. Finally, He was tried in two appearances before the Roman ruler Pilate (Luke 23:1-5 and 13-25). In each case, the charges brought against Jesus were false and in each case, He was condemned in spite of His innocence.

You may wish to expand the answer to this question by pointing out that Pilate wanted to release Jesus; he felt the accusations against Him were false. However, the crowd clamored for Jesus' death and threatened to report Pilate to Caesar (see John 19:12). History tells us that tensions in the region already had been reported to Rome, and Pilate had been warned that he must keep the situation under control. So to save his own reputation and position, and to appease the mob crying for Jesus to be crucified, he conceded and turned Jesus over to the people. Discuss with your class how often people today will resort to doing something they know is not right based upon self-preservation or the pressure of those around them. Ask, How can we best prepare ourselves to stand for what is right, even when we face rejection, ridicule, or societal pressure to conform?

9. Luke's account of the life of Jesus Christ on earth does not end with the grief and darkness of Calvary. In chapter 24, we find the thrilling account of Jesus' resurrection from the dead and His post-resurrection appearances. The Resurrection is the cornerstone of the Gospel and the central fact of Christian history. What are some of the ways the Resurrection is fundamental to our Christian faith?

Your class will identify a variety of ways that the Resurrection is fundamental to Christianity. Following are some thoughts that could be brought out.

- Because of the Resurrection we have proof that God is personally involved in human history.*
- Because of the Resurrection we know that we serve a God who is alive—One who has power over death and the grave.*
- Because of the Resurrection we know that we too will one day be raised from the dead to live forever with Christ.*
- Because of the Resurrection we have power and authority to preach Christ. Like the*

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- *Because of the Resurrection we have the assurance that there is a purpose and a provision for ultimate good behind even the most heartbreaking tragedy.*
- *Because of the Resurrection we have hope. Not only has death been conquered, but Satan and all his evil power will one day be eternally vanquished. We know that ultimate victory will be the Lord's and that His Kingdom will be triumphant and eternal.*

Jesus paid a high price for our redemption, and was victorious over sin, death, and Hell. As Christians, we have every reason to glorify the King of kings and the Lord of Lords for He is worthy!

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