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05 April 2015

John 12 - Part I

Entering into Jerusalem

John 12:1-8: *1. Then Jesus six days before the Passover came to Bethany, where Lazarus was which had been dead, whom he raised from the dead. 2. There they made him a supper; and Martha served: but Lazarus was one of them that sat at the table with him. 3. Then took Mary a pound of ointment of spikenard, very costly, and anointed the feet of Jesus, and wiped his feet with her hair: and the house was filled with the odor of the ointment. 4. Then saith one of his disciples, Judas Iscariot, Simon's son, which should betray him, 5. Why was not this ointment sold for three hundred pence, and given to the poor? 6. This he said, not that he cared for the poor; but because he was a thief, and had the bag, and bare what was put therein. 7. Then said Jesus, Let her alone: against the day of my burying hath she kept this. 8. For the poor always ye have with you; but me ye have not always.*

The Passover mentioned in John 11:55 is the third which Jesus attended with his disciples, and the one on which he died. John, however, drops back to six days before Passover, perhaps because Jerusalem was already being filled with many Jews who came early to purify themselves so that they could attend the rites. John reveals some significant things leading up to the event.

In John's account, Mary anoints the feet of Jesus, whereas in the accounts of Mark (ch 14) and Matthew (ch 26), the unnamed woman pours the spice on his head. Scholars are split as to whether the events are the same because of the times mentioned - two versus six days before Passover. Because John sometimes focuses on details not covered by other writers, I am inclined to think the stories are about the same event. John names Bethany, but not the home in which they meet, as do the others, nor how long they were in Bethany before the supper. However, John mentions that Judas Iscariot is Simon's son, an indication that Judas may have arranged the meeting place and Mary, Martha and Lazarus were invited guests. In **Mark 14:8**, Jesus said, *She hath done what she could: she is come afore hand to anoint my body to the burying.* At the cross, Jesus died just before sundown which began the Sabbath, so they were not able to prepare his body for burial according to Jewish tradition. When the women came with spices to the tomb early the first day of week, Jesus was already risen. Also, instead of saying "head or feet," Jesus said "my body," covering both head and feet. He also indicated that Mary had been inspired by God to do this as a figure of his prophesied death (verse 7).

Jesus was sacrificed on Passover day. Notice how Paul describes the event: **Ephesians 5:2:** *And walk in love, as Christ also hath loved us, and hath given himself for us an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweet smelling savor.*

Additionally, while Matthew and Mark indicate there were several who complained, John specifically names Judas, betrayer of Jesus, as the one who complained that the expensive spice should have been sold and given to the poor. The poor are an indication of those who know about Jesus, but have not yet attained his spiritual riches. Judas is a type for those in the ministry who care not for the sheep (Jn 10:1, 8, 10), but preach the gospel for material wealth.

John 12:9-11, 17-19: *9. Much people of the Jews therefore knew that he was there: and they came not for Jesus' sake only, but that they might see Lazarus also, whom he had raised from the dead. 10. But the chief priests consulted that they might put Lazarus also to death; 11. Because that by reason of him many of the Jews went*

away, and believed on Jesus. ... 17. *The people therefore, that was with him when he called Lazarus out of his grave and raised him from the dead, bare record.* 18. *For this cause the people also met him, for that they heard that he had done this miracle.* 19. *The Pharisees therefore said among themselves, Perceive ye how ye prevail nothing? behold, the world is gone after him.*

Nicodemus indicated that many of the Pharisees had heard the teachings of Jesus, and had seen the miracles (Jn 3:1-2). Yet, because many Jews were believing in Jesus, most of these same leaders, who were envious, wanted to eliminate both Jesus and Lazarus. Think about the principle here: Outwardly, how will church leaders react if they see their congregations following a teacher of the gospel whom they consider a nobody who is teaching error? When multitudes begin to respond to the message and witness, the modern Pharisees will become concerned about losing their flocks. These are depicted in the 5th 6th trumpets. Inwardly, they will attempt to kill the truth a person is carrying by supplanting it with their perverted ideas about God.

John 12:12-13: *12. On the next day much people that were come to the feast, when they heard that Jesus was coming to Jerusalem, 13. Took branches of palm trees, and went forth to meet him, and cried, Hosanna: Blessed is the King of Israel that cometh in the name of the Lord.*

The Palm tree received its name because the shape of the leave resembles the fingers of a hand. In ancient times, Palm branches were worn or waved as a symbol of victory or triumph, and thus Jesus' entry into Jerusalem that last time is referred to as his "triumphal entry." However, there is more to be learned from this event.

Zechariah 9:9: *Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion; shout, O daughter of Jerusalem: behold, thy King cometh unto thee: he is just, and having salvation; lowly, and riding upon an ass ^(h2543), and upon a colt the foal of an ass.* The Hebrew for ass is *hamor* ^(h2543) and the root is *hamar* ^(h2560), which meaning is *to glow with redness*, figuratively, *to glow with a man's understanding*. Also a donkey is an animal used to bear heavy burdens - think spiritual. Jesus said in **Matthew 11:30:** *For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light.* Anyone being governed by the law carries a heavy burden and can never receive the righteousness of Jesus Christ via their own understanding of the law (Gal 2:21; 3:21)

In Moses' time, the name Jericho meant "city of the moon" and was called "city of Palm trees" (Dt 34:3). From past studies we learned that the moon is a symbol for the law (Jer 31:35), which has no light of its own. So the association of Palm trees with the moon is indicative of the Jewish people's faith and works (took palm branches in their hands) as governed by their understanding of law. In Jesus' day, the Messiah and King expected by the Jews was One who would deliver them from physical bondage and the yoke of Rome. However, the yoke from which they needed deliverance was the law (Acts 15:5, 10).

1Corinthians 5:6-8: *6. ...Know ye not that a little leaven leavens the whole lump? 7. Purge out therefore the old leaven (old teaching), that ye may be a new lump, as ye are unleavened. For even Christ our Passover is sacrificed for us: 8. Therefore let us keep the feast, not with old leaven, neither with the leaven of malice and wickedness; but with the unleavened bread (Jesus) of sincerity and truth. By keeping the spiritual feast, we are able to enter into spiritual Jerusalem, the city of God, and city of peace and the mother of us all (Gal 4:26; Rev 3:12). Amen.*