

March 13, 2013

I am the Way, the Truth, and the Life**John 13:36-14:7****LESSON FOCUS**

Jesus told him, "I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one can come to the Father except through me." John 14:6

Behold, Your King is coming to you, lowly, and sitting on a donkey. (Matthew 21:5)

Hosanna to the Son of David! 'Blessed is He who comes in the name of the LORD!' Hosanna in the highest! (Matthew 21:9)

"For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord." Romans 6:23

Today's Bible Lesson:**Palm Sunday****Background Information on Palm Sunday from Matthew 21:1-11, similar to John 12:12-19**

This account is used both in Advent and in Lent. In Advent it is used to point ahead to Jesus' Second Coming, and in Lent as the beginning of Holy Week. All four Gospels record the account, which tells us something of its importance. We find here a fulfillment of two Old Testament prophecies: Psalm 24:7-10 and Zechariah 9:9. (Consider reading these prophecies at the beginning of the lesson, asking the students to see if they can tell how they were fulfilled as the events of Palm Sunday progressed.)

v. 1-3

- Jesus traveled to Jerusalem knowing full well that He would die there. (Matthew 16:21) This is further evidence that neither Satan nor humans could take Jesus' life from Him, but He could lay it down willingly. (John 10:18)
- Jesus here demonstrated that, although He set aside the full use of his divine powers, He was still true God, able by His divine power to know of the donkey and know that the owners would allow his disciples to take it.

v. 4-6

- No matter how seemingly insignificant, Jesus did not leave even one prophecy unfulfilled. Here He fulfilled what was earlier spoken by the Prophet Zechariah.
- The choice of a donkey rather than a nobler mode of transportation is significant.
- When Jesus came the first time He came as our humble Savior.
- He came not to be served but to serve and to give His life as a ransom for many. (Mat. 20:28)
- The next time He comes will not be in humility but in power and great glory.
- With the shouts of praise from the people we are given a brief glimpse of that future glory.

v. 7-8

- These cut palm branches give the day its name.
- The spreading of palm branches and garments on the road was a greeting reserved for the arrival of conquering heroes, especially kings.

- What a strange procession we see here, as many of those who worshiped Jesus as king on Palm Sunday were probably among those later calling for his crucifixion.
- The scribes and Pharisees had hoped that Jesus would come to Jerusalem to celebrate the Passover, but they hadn't counted on this kind of reception by the people.
- They were powerless to stop it. Had the people not cried out, the very stones would have. (Luke 19:40)

v. 9

- Imagine the scene as "a very great multitude" sang out the praises of their King!
- Yet this is as nothing compared to the celebration of all the faithful on the Last Day, when Jesus returns in pure, unrestrained power and glory.
- Like the word *hallelujah*, *hosanna* came to represent more than just its literal meaning in the minds of the people.
- It came to be used as an expression of joy; "praise the Lord!" It had clear implications to the Promised Messiah, who alone could save.
- "*Hosanna in the highest*" was roughly equivalent to "May our shout of praise resound also in heaven."

v. 10-11

- The commotion stirred the entire city to ask what was happening and what it meant.
- Since Jesus entered during the Passover, there were many more Jews in Jerusalem than usual.
- One census during the reign of Emperor Nero reckoned the number of Jews in Jerusalem during the Passover at 2,700,000.

Good Friday & Holy Saturday

The Death and Burial of Jesus - (Matthew 13, Mark 14, Luke 23, John 19)

At the scene of Jesus on the cross, from about noon until 3:00 pm, Jewish Standard time:

Luke 23:44-45 tells us that there was darkness at midday over all the earth, for the sun was darkened (obscured) as in a total solar eclipse, yet this was not the moon obscuring the sun, because Passover was always at full moon, when the moon and sun are on opposite sides of our planet. This miracle was recorded even by heathen writers, for it darkened the whole hemi-sphere of the planet facing the sun for three hours. Comment: Perhaps this miraculous darkness was a byproduct of the struggle of Jesus against the "Prince of darkness," who was doing his infernal worst to penetrate Jesus' self-sacrificing attitude of love for us. The light of heaven was denied Jesus, as it would be denied to us if He had not endured this brush with hell.

Mt.27:46

- "And about the ninth hour (with no sun shining, it would have been difficult to be very precise about "clock? time), Jesus cried out with a loud voice..."
- Even after three hours of losing blood and his cardio-vascular system going into shock, He summoned enough energy to call out with a LOUD voice "My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me?? In Hebrew/Aramaic *EI* is the form of direct address for *God*, and the *i* suffix means *my*, as Jesus spoke the words of Ps. 22:1 when He felt the pain of being abandoned by His own Father in heaven.
- We will never plumb the depth of what Jesus felt, but we may ponder: "Why..." -- (What have I done to deserve this treatment?) have You -- (You, the eternal Creator and Architect of the plan

of salvation, the merciful God who does not desire the death of even the wicked) forsaken-- (abandoned, cut off from all rescue or desire to salvage) Me??-- (the one Person who has done nothing to deserve being cast overboard like this, the only totally flawless, blameless human who has ever lived.)

Matt 27:47

- "Some of those who stood there, when they heard that, said: 'This man is calling for Elijah.' These Scripturally illiterate bystanders did not recognize Ps.22:1 and perhaps mistook *Eli* as a shortened form of *Elijah*.

John 19:28

- "After this, Jesus knowing that all things were now accomplished, that the Scripture might be fulfilled, said: 'I thirst.'? Again Psalm 22 came to Jesus' mind as it befit His agony of thirst (due to the parching effect of raging fever and heavy panting in pain).
- We must note that "knowing that all things were now accomplished" carries a depth of meaning: by the Spirit John reports that Jesus had arrived at the conviction that His sufferings had accomplished their purpose, for He had gone through the torments of hell, and nothing was left undone that He had been commissioned to do as the Lamb of God for sinners slain. The life He had lived in perfect loving obedience and self-sacrifice could now come to a successful close.
- John 19:30 and Luke 23:46 tell us that when He had received the sour wine, He cried with a loud voice, "It is finished!?" and "Father, into Thy hands I commend My spirit?" (cf. Ps.31:5); He then breathed His last and gave up His spirit. These are the sixth and seventh "words?" from the cross, and both of them came during His last conscious moments.
- "It is finished" means more than "I am a goner," for it is a loud echo of "all things are now accomplished.." In spiritual content, everything that had ever gone wrong and needed righting in the court of divine justice had been taken care of and properly completed; the obstacle of sin, sins, and sinfulness was successfully removed to the last iota in that moment of His death. The head of Satan had been crushed, and Paradise opened for all mortals. The loudness of His vigorous announcement should ring from every Christian pulpit and echo in every sinner's heart, as Paul expresses: "But thanks be to God, Who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ!" (I Cor.15:57).
- When His spirit (soul, "ghost") left His earthly body, the God-man really died. He entrusted His eternal future into the loving care of His Father, and OUR Father. Hallelujah!

Mt. 27:51

- "And behold, (the Spirit expressly points these out as deserving our attention, due to their import) "the veil of the temple was torn in two from top to bottom.?"
- This three-inch thick, 60' tall by 30' wide room divider between the Sanctuary and the Most Private Sanctuary normally protected the privacy of God's Ark of the Covenant from any intrusion, symbolizing God's unapproachable presence. The only exception was that once a year on the Day of Atonement (*Yom Kippur*) the High Priest was authorized to come in with sacrificial blood to sprinkle on the "Mercy Seat?" (place of mercy) for atonement of sins.
- Since Jesus "by His own blood entered in once [and that was enough!] into the Holy Place, having obtained eternal redemption for us?" (Heb. 9:12), the obstructive curtain had no further function; the Old had been superseded by the New!
- "and the earth quaked and the rocks were split" in testimony that a corner of history had been turned; a new Era had been opened by God's almighty hand.

- "...and the graves were opened and many bodies of the saints who had fallen asleep were raised, and coming out of the graves after His resurrection, they went into the holy city and appeared to many."
- First of all, we remember that these were not underground graves, but grottos in hillsides; in these little caverns our brothers and sisters came alive, and on Easter morning they got out to return to their old neighborhoods and their families to prove that the Resurrection was no theory!
- Thus God added a few more instruments of orchestral accompaniment to the grand symphony of victory over death and the grave--in resurrecting some Christian folks who knew from personal experience that Jesus was indeed Savior and LORD.

Mt. 27:54

- The earthquake and its impact on the cemetery scared these tough soldiers, for they made the correct connection between Jesus and God, recognizing that His death had disturbed the universe. Luke comments that the centurion "glorified God? by his recognition that Jesus was a righteous man.
- Perhaps we shall see this man in heaven, a firstfruit of Jesus' promise: "If I be lifted up from the earth [upon the cross], I will draw all persons unto Me? (Jn.12:32).

The *coup de grace*: John 19: 31-37

Saturday, the Sabbath, was only a couple of hours away, since it started at sundown. Mosaic Law required that a corpse not be left exposed overnight (Deut. 21:22-23), so the Jewish officials wanted to move quickly. First, they would brutalize the three men crucified so as to snuff out any flicker of aliveness from their bodies. Breaking their thigh bones with a sledge-hammer would do it, and so this was done with the two criminals. "But when they came to Jesus and saw that He was already dead, they did not break His legs." They could see that Jesus had stopped breathing, and other clinical clues [not to be discussed with children] told them that He was past further torture. "But one of the soldiers pierced His side with a spear, and immediately blood and water came out." This was a fail-safe and less strenuous way to be sure He was dead; one sharp jab up under the ribcage would puncture liver or heart or aorta; the blood did not spurt as from a beating heart, but as from a pool in one of the ventricles. It is more difficult to figure whether this and the water (clear fluid) was a miracle or not; the prophecies that were fulfilled as to His bones not being broken (Ex.12:46 as the Antitype of the Passover Lamb) and His side being pierced (Zech. 12:10) are called to our attention, but we have no prophetic notation about the blood or water. Jesus still retains the five deep wound-marks on His glorified body and will retain them through Judgment Day as testimony to both believer and unbeliever (Rev.1:7) of His self sacrifice for sinners.

Matt. 27:56-61 Jesus' corpse awaited claiming by family or friends. The three hours between His death and sundown was a busy time. Joseph went to Pilate with his request to be allowed to claim the body; Pilate sent for the centurion in charge to see if Jesus had already died; he reported the fact that Jesus was dead; Pilate authorized Joseph's claim to the body, and Joseph (with help from others--though none of the eleven, probably) proceeded with such meager funeral preparations as he could for a hasty entombment so that he and the others could get home yet before sundown.

We are told that Nicodemus (John 19:39-40) was another attendant in this last-hour rush to place Jesus' body to rest. This is the same Nicodemus who had gotten acquainted with Jesus early on (John 3) and was also a member of the Council, who nevertheless had defended Jesus at a Council meeting some six months earlier (Jn.7:50-53) who now came to His side with a large amount (70 to 100 pounds) of pickling

spices to pack around the corpse to delay decay; this was the normal Jewish practice for embalming a corpse. Close by was the "garden" with Joseph's cemetery plot, so they could manage to do all this and still get home by sunset if they hurried; whatever else needed doing to complete the burial would have to wait for later, because the Law forbade physical activities on Saturday, the Sabbath. [Of course, by time they got back to the grave site very early on Sunday morning, it was absolutely too late for a funeral, because Jesus was up before anybody else, wide awake in His glorified body which had been miraculously kept from cellular decay (Ps.16:10)!!]

Joseph of Arimathea deserves some attention because he was also a member of the Supreme Council (Sanhedrin), was a righteous--rather than a hypocritical--Pharisee, had voted against the Council's condemnation of Jesus (Mk.14:64), and had become convinced that the Messiah he had long expected had now arrived in the person of Jesus. In devoted love he quickly wrapped Jesus' body in a clean linen shroud, with helpers carried it to the tomb recently carved out of the rocky hillside for his own use, hurriedly laid the body there, intending to return on Sunday morning to continue the burial (Luke 23:55-56); he (and helpers ?) closed the opening with a large slab of rock that could be rolled into its groove to keep varmints out of the gravesite, and they went home, feeling pretty sad about everything.

Dear Lord Jesus, may the love that You demonstrated for me on the cross fill my heart with love and appreciation. Truly You have rescued my soul from hell through Your innocent sufferings and death. I desire now to show my love to You by teaching the truths of Your crucifixion to my students. As Your Holy Spirit has already worked faith in my heart, so also I pray that He might now work through me to strengthen the faith of these students. Give success to my humble effort for Your name's sake. Amen.

WELCOME ACTIVITY

Bring or find objects and distinguish whether they are alive or not alive.

(Examples may include plants, pictures of people, chair, toys, rocks) Talk about what it means to be alive. Then, share how Jesus came back to life. Explain that we celebrate Easter because Jesus is alive!

OPENING

Make a Cross

Make craft stick crosses.

BIBLE STORY

Palm Sunday

Jesus and the disciples were coming to Jerusalem because it was almost time for Jesus to die on the cross. Before they reached Jerusalem, they came to a village. Jesus told two of His disciples to go to the village and get a young donkey. Jesus told them that if anyone asked them what they were doing, they should say, "The Lord needs to use this donkey."

The disciples left. They found the young donkey. The people who owned the donkey asked them what they were doing. The disciples said, "The Lord needs to use this donkey." The owners were happy to let Jesus use the donkey!

The disciples brought the donkey to Jesus. They put their coats on the donkey's back, and then Jesus sat on it. Jesus rode into Jerusalem. Many, many people came out to greet Him. Some people put their coats on the road for Jesus to ride on. Others put soft, leafy palm branches on the road. They were treating Jesus like a king!

The people also sang praises to Jesus. They sang, "Hosanna to the Son of David! Blessed is He who comes in the name of the LORD! Hosanna in the highest!"

There were some people in the crowd, however, who hated Jesus. They said, "Teacher, tell your disciples to be quiet!" Jesus said, "If they would be quiet, the stones would call out to say that I am the Savior!"

The people praised Jesus as He rode into Jerusalem.

Jesus is our Savior, and we will praise and worship Him.

Dear Jesus, Thank You for being our King. Thank You for taking away our sins. Amen.

Song - Praise Him, Praise Him

Praise Him, praise Him, All you little children;

God is love, God is love.
Praise Him, praise Him, All you little children;
God is love, God is love.

Love Him, love Him, All you little children;
God is love, God is love.
Love Him, love Him, All you little children;
God is love, God is love.

Thank Him, thank Him, All you little children.
God is love, God is love.
Thank Him, thank Him, All you little children.
God is love, God is love.

Jesus Dies and is Buried

Read from your Bible. The Beginner's Bible, page 446ff. (The story is the same from the Beginner's Bible, please tell tonight's story.)

"For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord." Romans 6:23

We have all messed up and done things that are wrong. Jesus wants us to know that He still loves us. He died for our sins.

Sing, "Jesus Loves Me."

Jesus loves me this I know
For the Bible tells me so.
Little ones to Him belong
They are weak but He is strong.
Yes, Jesus loves me ... The Bible tells me so.

Jesus is Crucified and Dies

Pontius Pilate, ordered Jesus to be crucified. Pilate was doing just what Jesus' enemies wanted him to do. The soldiers took Jesus away. The soldiers made Jesus carry His own cross. The cross was made out of heavy wood. When Jesus could no longer carry the cross, the soldiers took a man out of the crowd to carry it for Him.

That morning, Jesus was crucified. The soldiers nailed His hands and feet to the cross. They put the cross on a high hill. There Jesus was to die.

They also crucified two other men, one on each side of Jesus. These men had stolen things. Jesus prayed for His enemies. "Father, forgive them." A sign was put on the cross. It said, "Jesus, King of the Jews."

As Jesus hung on the cross people made fun of Him. They said, "If You are really the Son of God, come down." Even one of the men on the cross made fun of Him. The other man said, "We have sinned, but this Man has done nothing wrong. Remember me when You go to heaven, Jesus."

Jesus said to that man, "Today you will be with Me in heaven."

Jesus saw His mother, Mary. He said to John, His disciple, "Take care of My mother. You will be her son and she will be your mother."

It became very dark then for three hours even though it was during the day. Jesus said, "I am thirsty." Someone standing nearby gave Him something to drink. Then Jesus said, "It is finished. I am going to die." He died. The rocks broke and the earth shook.

The soldiers went to the cross and found Jesus dead. They did not break His bones, but they took a spear and cut His side to make sure He was dead.

A rich man named Joseph asked to have the body of Jesus to bury it. He and his friends wrapped it in clean white cloths. The grave was a big cave dug out of the hillside.

Some women friends of Jesus watched Him get buried. They decided to come back after the worship day to prepare Jesus' body for burial. The women could not do it this day because it was the Sabbath and not allowed.

The enemies of Jesus came to Pilate. They said they wanted a guard at the grave so Jesus' disciples could not steal His body and say that He rose from the dead. Pilate said they could have guards and that the door to the grave would also be sealed. Soldiers were there to watch over Jesus' grave.

Dear Jesus, Thank you for coming to earth to suffer and die for my sins. Please make me always sure that when I die I will go to heaven to be with You. Amen.

GOD'S WORD IN MY HEART

Behold, Your King is coming to you, lowly, and sitting on a donkey. (Matthew 21:5)

Jesus told him, "I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one can come to the Father except through me." John 14:6

Read this passage from your Bible. Help children learn this verse.

VIDEO SEGMENT

Watch the video tonight. The events should focus on Palm Sunday to Good Friday.

Preschool – The Jesus Movie

Watch video chapters 16-21 as time allows.

ACTIVITIES

- **Place words or phrases of the verse on slips of paper inside plastic eggs.**
Hide the eggs and let the kids find them and put the verse in order.
 - ***“For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.”*** Romans 6:23
 - ***“Jesus said: “Because I live, you will live also!”*** John 14:19
- **Bring seeds to pass out to the students.**
Talk about how a seed has to be put in the ground before it can bring life. Compare this to Jesus—He had to die and be buried to have the victory of the resurrection! You could also bring flowers to show what the seeds become. Flowers are a great way to celebrate life!
- **Crown of Glory**
Jesus wore a crown of thorns for us! Make crowns like Jesus should have been wearing. Decorate them with jewels, sequins, glitter, etc.

CLOSING ACTIVITY

Blessing:

**May God, who is all around you,
pour his love upon you.**

**And Jesus, his life a sacrifice,
walk right there beside you.**

**And may God's Holy Spirit,
the one who lives inside you,
keep you strong,
comfort, lead and guide you!**

Beginning at the bottom of the circle, slowly

make a large circle with your hands. Finish by bringing your hands down and wiggling the fingers to resemble rain.)

Slowly make a large sign of the cross. Then move your hands out to the sides.

Cross your hands over the heart.

Move to a "strong man" position. Then

cross your arms with the hands on corresponding upper arms to communicate comfort. Bring one hand forward with "lead" and the other with "guide" to complete the blessing.)

Let's sing Jesus Loves Me.

Sing: Jesus Loves Me

***Jesus loves me, this I know
For the Bible tells me so.
Little ones to Him belong,
They are weak, but He is strong.***

***Yes, Jesus loves me!
Yes, Jesus loves me!
Yes, Jesus loves me!
The Bible tells me so.***