

New Testament Lesson # 15  
April 15-21  
Easter  
“O Grave Where Is Thy Victory”  
By Lenet Hadley Read

(Here are additional insights into many purposeful acts the Savior did during His Final Week)

**Sunday, The Triumphal Entry (Mat. 21:6-11):** Both David and Solomon had foreshadowed Christ as the King of Jerusalem. Both of them had entered Jerusalem on an ass (1 Kings 1:38). Jesus now fulfilled their witness and that of Zechariah: “Behold thy King cometh unto thee; he is just, and having salvation; lowly, and riding upon an ass (9:9). Not only did the beast signify His coming in Peace and Meekness, but it symbolized Christ’s coming as the “lowliest of creatures, and He, like it, was destined to be a **Bearer of Men’s Burdens, and, as it, to become a Byword.**

David had been denied his kingship until he “removed the blind and the lame” (2 Samuel 5:6). It was Jesus’ great miracles of healing the blind and lame which now caused such a great crowd to accept Him as King and Messiah and to call out “Hosanna to the Son of David (Mat. 21:9).”

David entered “dancing” and “girded [only] with a linen ephod.” His wife, Saul’s daughter, rebuked him for uncovering himself (2 Sam 6:21-3).

Jesus did not deny the honors He was receiving as He entered. Thus He was “uncovering Himself,” or **clearly acknowledging that He was indeed the Messiah and King of the Jews.**

As a result His supposed “bride” (the apostate Jewish leaders) cried “Rebuke thy disciples” (Luke 19:39). They, like Saul’s daughter, in rejecting, would become barren (2 Sam.6:21-3).

**Monday, Cleansing the Temple (Mat 21:12-6):** Solomon’s Temple had a Throne of Judgment symbolizing the need to be found worthy to enter. **The High Priesthood who officiated in Herod’s Temple were not those in line for its authority. They had obtained their position from Herod through bribery.** [Since the time of the Maccabees, the High Priest had been appointed by kings, not according to the Lord’s requirements]. So Jesus judged them! He “cast out all them that sold and bought in the temple, and overthrew the tables of the money changers...And said unto them...My house shall be called the house of prayer; but ye have made it a den of thieves (Mt. 21:12-3).” As Eli’s corrupt priesthood was replaced, so this corrupt priesthood would be replaced. Christ’s “cleansing” was meant to go far beyond the money-changers. They were just a **symbol for the whole corrupt priesthood who would be cast off.**

**Tuesday, Cursing the Fig Tree and Teachings (Mat.21-3):** The casting off of the old Priesthood leadership is verified when the Savior encounters a fruitless fig tree the next morning. “Let no fruit grow on thee henceforward forever (Mat 21:19).” He curses it, making it forever barren.

The Old Israel had generally proven to be barren and without fruit. **It would be replaced with a New Israel led by a New Priesthood, who would bring forth great fruit.**

A great many of Christ’s teachings continue to build upon this stark truth. While many of His parables had not been clear to the leaders, **suddenly His teachings became Very Clear,** as He showed ancient prophetic warnings applied to them. They were the wicked husbandmen who would cause Israel’s destruction (Isaiah 5:1-7). He was the chief corner stone who would be rejected but eventually become the Head of All (Ps. 118:22); But He would establish a new

kingdom and they would be rejected (Mt. 21:42-4). They had been invited to the Wedding Feast Israel so long anticipated. But they had refused, and lepers [sinners who had been cleansed] and strangers [Gentiles] would eat in their place and receive their inheritance.

In answering the conundrum posed of whose would be the wife of the seven brothers who married the widow of the first dead brother, they proved their ignorance of its foundational law: **Whose purpose it was to testify of Him!** The Mosaic Law commanded that kinsmen marry the wives of deceased Israelite men in order to raise up seed to the deceased. But this law taught of Christ--- Israel's Kinsman/Redeemer. **Adam had become subject to death and brought death on all. Christ would be the Kinsman/Redeemer who would now raise up Adam's seed!**

Furthermore, those who rejected him **of that generation** would be denied the sealing powers given to Peter and would in the resurrection neither marry nor be given in marriage.

**Wednesday, Continued Teaching (Mat 24-5).** The Lord now unveils the events of the future --- clear until the Last Days. As was the traditional prophetic method, He blended events of the soon-to-be future with those of the Last Days. Thus Matthew 24 is a blend of events of Jerusalem's rapidly approaching destruction in 70 A.D., and prophecy of the destruction of the Last Days. **For they would follow similar patterns!**

**As witness of the prophetic role of Joseph Smith, when he translated this scripture in his NT Translation, he divides the two so that each can be more clearly understood (See JST-Matthew).**

Jesus' final parables taught that to be prepared for His Return, we must be continually guided by His Holy Spirit (Mat, 1-13); That we must not bury the Gift of His Gospel, but share it so that it might bring forth multiple fruits (Mat 25 14-30)!; And that we must continually seek to feed the spiritually hungry, clothe the spiritually naked; unloose those in spiritually bondage, on this and on the other side of the veil. Then He will say, "Inherit the kingdom prepared for you." (Mt. 25: 31-46).

**Thursday, the Passover and Gethsemane (Mat 26).** The Last Supper was a Passover Meal. Many of the foods and their preparation had been specifically commanded so that they bore witness of Christ's coming Crucifixion; the lamb was to be roast with fire and no bones broken; the herbs were to be most bitter; the wine was to bear witness of His soon to be shed blood.

The Savior changed the traditional feast pattern on this night. It is believed that he broke the bread a second time. And this time he gave to His disciples saying, "Take eat. This is my body." (Mat 26:26). And He blessed the third cup, **The Cup of Redemption**. And He said, "This is my blood of the New Testament, which is shed for many for the remission of sins (Mat. 26:28).

**The High Priest's Prayer:** On the Day of Atonement, the High Priest always offered prayer with his sacred offering, pleading God accept it for atonement. On this most sacred night, Jesus the Christ, the True High Priest, and the True Offering to be made, offered that Prayer! "Father, the hour is come... I have glorified thee on the earth: I have finished the work which thou gavest me to do (John 17:1, 4)."

He pleaded that the disciples might be One, with Him and His Father. And then He went out into Gethsemane to make us all One: Through the Works and Power of His At-one-ment.

**Gethsemane:** It was no accident the Lord chose a garden with both an Olive Press and a Wine Press where He would work out the Atonement. To produce olive oil is a very significant process. The oil does not come except through enormous pressure. Pressed upon by a heavy stone with additional pressure exerted on that stone, the oil is slowly pressed from the olive. The first oil that oozes from the olive has a reddish tint, like blood.

The wine press there was also a witness of Christ's unimaginable suffering, as He took upon Himself the sins of mankind. When He Himself describes His suffering as "[bleeding] at every pore" (D&C 19:18), I can only think that He in fact **bodily wept His blood.**

### **Friday, Trial, Crucifixion and Burial (Matthew 27:1-61).**

**The Trial:** The Day of Atonement required the High Priest to act upon two goats. The first was to be sacrificed. Upon the second, the High Priest lay his hands and symbolically transferred all the sins of Israel. This "scapegoat" then bore Israel's sins.

After His arrest, Jesus was taken to the High Priest. The High Priest demanded Christ answer if He thought himself Messiah/Son of God. Christ indicated He did. Upon these words, the High Priest exploded "Blasphemy?" But in that accusation, **he laid his sin upon Christ.** Blasphemy is showing contempt for God. But Christ was God. It was Caiaphas who was contemptuous.

**The Crucifixion: Jesus Christ was literally the Passover Lamb. And He was sacrificed during the very time Passover Lambs were being offered. [It had become a two-day event].**

This reconciles the Synoptic Gospels which make the Last Supper a Passover Meal and John's Gospel which says Jesus was crucified when Passover Lambs were still being crucified.

"It was the preparation of the Passover" (John 19:14). Thus at the very time the High Priest offered lambs' blood at the temple altar, the True Passover Lamb hung as offering on the cross.

Christ's death on the cross was the promised Tree of Life. The cross, made of wood of a tree, reached into the heavens like a tree. **Christ's flesh and blood which hung there were the fruits of that tree --- which would bring men New Life, and particularly Eternal Life.**

**Christ's Death Rent the Veil (Matthew 27:51):** One of the very significant things that happened when Jesus died was that the veil of the temple was rent. "And, behold, the veil of the temple was rent in twain from the top to the bottom."

This was very significant because the veil was the separation from man into the Holy and Holiest of places, symbolizing Heaven. Its being rent meant the Savior had now opened the way by which men **could now return to their God.**

**It also meant the Veil which had been put over the scriptures could be rent, as Men could now begin to understand that all of their witnesses had been of Jesus the Christ.**

**Saturday, Christ's lies in the tomb while His Spirit ministers to those in Spirit Prison (Matthew 27:62-66; D&C 138).** How blessed we are to have Latter-day Revelation which shows that Jesus' Spirit ministered to those awaiting Resurrection in the Spirit Prison!

**Sunday, Christ is Resurrected (Matthew 28:1-10).** Christ's lifeless body was sealed in a tomb behind a stone. Moses had shown that water would pour forth from rock. Jacob had removed the stone from a well that his hoped-for-bride could water the sheep. In fulfillment, **Jesus now arose out of Stone! The Fountain Everlasting burst forth, bringing new life to all. No more could stones seal up the dead!**

Furthermore, in obedience to God's command, the first cut-down sheaf of the harvest, which had been cut down at the same time Jesus was taken down from the cross (Alfred Edersheim, *The Temple and Its Ministry*, pp. 203-4), was that same morning lifted up in the temple as an offering to the Lord. On this very same morning, Jesus Christ arose in the resurrection.

The Sheaf was witness of Him. For He was now "the Firstfruits of them that slept." (1 Corinthians 15:20). Jesus Christ had truly fulfilled the great work of His First Coming.

