

Today is Palm Sunday; the first day of what we call the Passion Week and a day when one of the world’s most extraordinary prophecies was fulfilled.

1. Palm Sunday was designed to be the greatest of all Jewish celebrations. It was the day Christ offered Israel their promised Kingdom. By the end of the first century it had become a special Holy Day for Christians around the world.

2. The day on which Israel was to have crowned Christ as their King had become the first day of a seven day "Passion Week." It is the day our Savior entered Jerusalem to begin his “week of horrors” and our “week of victory.” Israel's rejection of Christ’s offering would result in a sea change for his promised people.

3. Early in our Lord's earthly ministry Christ provided numerous evidences that the Kingdom of God had come. The Kingdom offered by Christ during the Passion Week was an offering to Israel of an earthly kingdom.

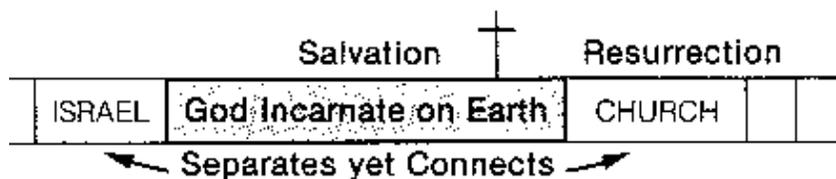
Joh 1:11 He came unto his own, and his own received him not.

Joh 1:12 But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name:

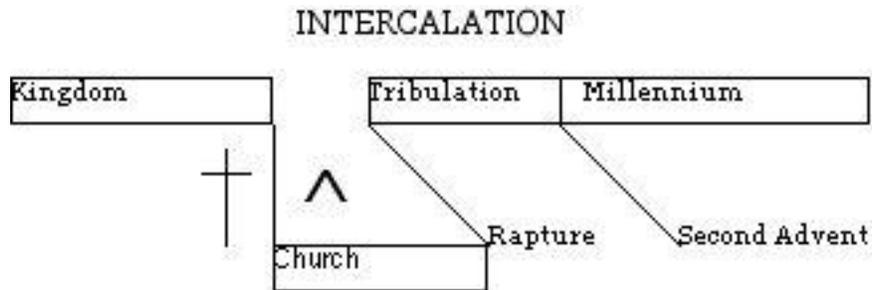
4. For example, Jesus said in Mat 12:28 that His ability to cast out demons was prima facie evidence that the Kingdom of God had come.

Mat 12:28 But if I cast out demons by the Spirit of God, then the kingdom of God is come unto you.

5. Sadly, Israel's rejection of Christ's offering changed the Age of the Kingdom from one of an immediate promise to one of separation and connection. The Kingdom of Christ became that which separated Israel and the Church while at the same time connecting Israel with the Church.



6. Rather than becoming the long-awaited promised Kingdom for Israel, their rejection resulted in the insertion of the Church Age between two Jewish ages; the two being the Age of the Kingdom and the Tribulation.



7. There is a special irony here for Israel. It was in 539 B.C. that Daniel was given one of the world's most spectacular prophecies concerning the timing of the first Palm Sunday.

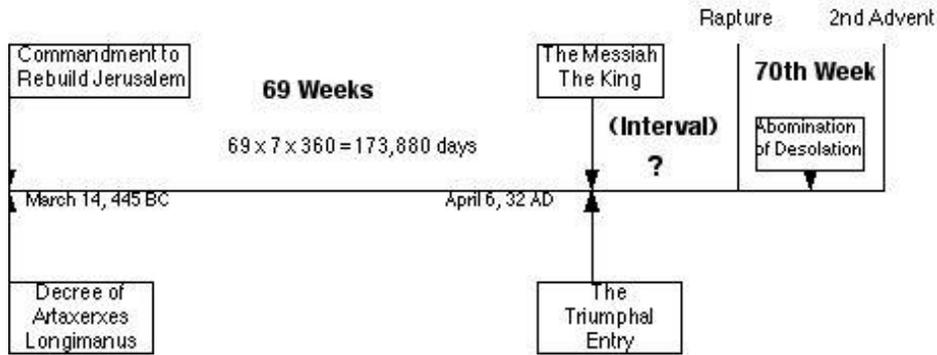
8. Judah by c. 600 had become an idolatrous nation; a nation which had been warned time and again to repent and return to Jehovah God. Judah was ripe for God's discipline; the fifth cycle was about to fall upon the apostate southern kingdom. The Northern Kingdom had earlier fallen under the domination of Assyria in c. 721 AD.

9. In 606 Babylon advanced upon Judah with a great and powerful army; Judah was devastated and many hostages were taken captive to Babylon as slaves. As a result of Judah's continued rebellion further defeat and hostage taking occurred in 597 and 586. The attack in 586 resulted in the destruction of the city of Jerusalem and Solomon's Temple. By 586 the diaspora was complete. Men like Daniel, Shadrach and Abednego had been taken hostage to serve in the court of Nebuchadnezzar.

10. In c. 539 Daniel read from the 25th chapter of Jeremiah. It was from Jeremiah he learned the diaspora would last 70 years. The old prophet put a pencil to 606 minus 539 arriving at 67 years; by his calculations the dispersion to Babylon should end in three years. So, excitedly he began to pray.

10.1 The prayer can be found in Dan 9:1-19. The prophet only wanted to know if his calculations were correct. Gabriel was sent to answer his prayer and much more. Daniel was astonished at his answer:

The Seventy Weeks of Daniel



Expanded Translation:

Dan 9:24 Daniel I have heard your prayer; four hundred and ninety years have been cut out for your people. I have not forgotten my beloved Israel. It is within this 490-year period that I will: establish the Temple, make an end of sins, bring in everlasting righteousness, and fulfill the Messianic promise by establishing the Messiah as Israel's King.

Dan 9:25 I want you to understand, that from the commandment to rebuild the city of Jerusalem which will occur only once and that on the first of Nisan B.C. 445; from that day until the Messiah arrives in Jerusalem on the first Palm Sunday shall be 483 years to the day. The streets of Jerusalem and its inner and outer walls shall be restored, even in dangerous times, Nehemiah and his people will work on the city walls with a trowel in one hand and a sword and spear in the other.

Dan 9:26 Now after 434 years (actually we now know quite specifically that it was on the first Wednesday following the first Palm Sunday) the Messiah will be crucified, but not on behalf of Himself but rather as a substitute for the sins of the world. Later the Romans as a precursor of the antichrist will come and destroy the city and the Temple. The traumatic destruction in A.D. 70 is but a representation of what the future would hold for Israel. The destruction of the Temple and the city by Titus in A.D. 70 will begin an uncertain time gap in the 490 years. Many will later style it "the church age."

Dan 9:27 After the removal of the church from the planet the antichrist will make a treaty with Israel and both peace and freedom to worship Jehovah God in a "restored temple" will be guaranteed. Be aware however that in the middle of that 7-year period the antichrist will break that treaty and all worship will cease. A statue of the antichrist will be set up in the false temple and people will be required to worship the antichrist as their Messiah.

This sad state will continue until God Himself casts both the first beast and the second beast into the lake of fire. "Be aware however that in the middle of that seven-year period the antichrist will break that treaty and all worship will cease. A statue of the antichrist will be set up in the false temple and people will be required to worship the antichrist as their Messiah. This sad state will continue until God Himself casts both the first beast and the second beast into the lake of fire."

11. These Scriptures represent a remarkable prophecy for both Israel and the Church. With reference to Psalm Sunday, we have seen this prophecy fulfilled to the letter.

12. For more information I recommend you go to www.westbankbiblechurch.com and click on Pastor Merritt's study book entitled *Doctrine of Palm Sunday*. Now if you are still thirsty, click on Pastor Merritt's study book entitled *Doctrine of the Seventieth Week*.

13. Let us pray.

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Paul the Apostle

Part VIII

3-28-21

1. Earlier we completed the study of the Third Missionary Journey and when the clock tolled 11:30 we were studying the Trials of Paul.
2. I want to review some of that learned and then begin new material on page thirteen.

The Trials of Paul

1. After the Third Missionary Journey Paul returns to Jerusalem in hopes of gaining access to the hearts and minds of the many Jewish converts living in the city.

1.1 Paul spends several days in the Temple participating in a purification rite, the purpose of which being to assure his Jewish brethren that he is not a heretic.

2. The Jews at Jerusalem are however implacable and outraged thinking that Paul had taught the Jews of Asia Minor to turn away from Moses.
3. An angry mob gathers outside the Temple to confront Paul. On the steps of the Temple Paul is physically accosted. Paul is rescued by a platoon of Roman soldiers. Acts 21:31-36
4. Paul's first defense therefore is before an unruly mob; first on the steps of the Temple and later from the steps of Fort Antonia. Paul is mistaken for an earlier Egyptian heretic. Acts 21:38-40
5. Paul witnesses to the angry gathering by telling of his conversion experience. Acts 22:2-21
6. All seems well until he mentions he took the Gospel to the gentiles, then the Jews go berserk. Acts 22:22
7. Paul is saved from the crowd by the Roman soldiers who take him into custody. Paul declares himself a Roman citizen and the Centurion becomes concerned that he has bound a Roman without just cause. Acts 22:25-29
8. Paul is brought before the Sanhedrin. Acts 22:30-23:5
9. Paul decides to divide the Sanhedrin by letting it be known he was a Pharisee who was on trial because he believed in the resurrection of the dead. Acts 23:6-7
10. The Jews were so divided they became violent; soon Paul's life was in jeopardy so the Roman officer in charge ordered his men to take Paul into Fort Antonia. Acts 23:10
11. The Lord visits and comforts Paul in a night vision.
12. Paul is removed from Jerusalem under armed guard because a plot to kill Paul is discovered. As a result Paul is taken to Caesarea. Acts 23:12-35
13. At Caesarea Paul first appears before Felix. Acts 23:25-35
14. Felix was the Procurator of Judea under Claudius and Nero. This description by Tacitus is classic. "He thought he could do any evil act with impunity," and "(He) exercised the power of a king in the spirit of a slave."

14.1 Felix listened to Paul's defense and postponed any decision pending more information from Lysias, the Roman commander in Jerusalem. Felix then remands Paul to Herod's judgment hall to await his accusers. Felix then sends for Ananias the Chief Priest.

15. Ananias arrives from Jerusalem with his chief prosecutor. Paul is accused by Ananias' chief prosecutor Tertullus who accuses Paul of disturbing the quietude, profaning the Temple and inciting sedition among the Jews throughout the world. Acts 24:1-9

15.1 Paul defends himself before Felix. He first denies the charges ... he further makes the point there was not sufficient time to have done all concerning with which he was charged. He admits raising the question of the resurrection. Acts 24:17-23

16. Paul witnesses to Felix and Drusilla, the wife of Felix. Acts 24:24-26

17. Paul is placed in a Caesarean prison.

17.1 Felix was recalled to Rome by the emperor Nero under accusation by the Jews of bad administration. Porcius Festus succeeded him as procurator of Judea in c. A.D 60. Though Felix knew that justice required Paul's dismissal, he left him in prison because he saw that he could thereby ingratiate himself with the Jews. Acts 24:27

Acts 24:27 But after two years Porcius Festus came into Felix' room: and Felix, willing to show the Jews a pleasure, left Paul bound.

17.2 While this two-year incarceration must have been very trying on Paul, one redeeming feature was that throughout this entire time Luke was with the apostle.

17.2.1 Quite certainly Luke used this time to gather information about the life and ministry of Jesus and to compile notes about the life of the early church. This material later appeared in the Gospel of Luke and in the Book of Acts.

18. Festus soon after taking over from Felix goes to Jerusalem where he parties for several days with the Jewish leadership and agrees to a second trial. Acts 25:1-5

Acts 25:1 Three days after arriving in the province, Festus went up from Caesarea to Jerusalem,

Acts 25:2 where the chief priests and Jewish leaders appeared before him and presented the charges against Paul.

Acts 25:3 They urgently requested Festus, as a favor to them, to have Paul transferred to Jerusalem, for they were preparing an ambush to kill him along the way.

Acts 25:4 Festus answered, "Paul is being held at Caesarea, and I myself am going there soon.

Acts 25:5 Let some of your leaders come with me and press charges against the man there, if he has done anything wrong."

19. Paul is again tried but this time before Festus; he will at this time appeal to Caesar. Acts 25:6-9

Acts 25:6 After spending eight or ten days with the Jews at Jerusalem, he went back to Caesarea, and the next day he convened the court and ordered that Paul be brought before him.

Acts 25:7 When Paul appeared, the Jews who had come down from Jerusalem stood around him, bringing many serious charges against him, which they could not prove.

Acts 25:8 Then Paul made his defense: "I have done nothing wrong against the law of the Jews or against the temple or against Caesar."

Acts 25:9 Festus, wishing to do the Jews a favor, said to Paul, "Are you willing to go up to Jerusalem and stand trial before me there on these charges?"

19.1 Festus could find no offense against Paul but wanted to please the Jews therefore, he orders that Paul be returned to Jerusalem to be judged before the Sanhedrin. Paul refuses and demands he be sent to Caesar.

Acts 25:10-12.

Acts 25:10 Paul answered: "I am now standing before Caesar's court, where I ought to be tried. I have not done any wrong to the Jews, as you yourself know very well.

Acts 25:11 If, however, I am guilty of doing anything deserving death, I do not refuse to die. But if the charges brought against me by these Jews are not true, no one has the right to hand me over to them. I appeal to Caesar!"

Acts 25:12 After Festus had conferred with his council, he declared: "You have appealed to Caesar. To Caesar you will go!"

20. About this time, King Agrippa and his sister (and wife) Bernice arrive at Caesarea. Act 25:13

Acts 25:13 A few days later King Agrippa II and Bernice arrived at Caesarea to pay their respects to Festus.

20.1 Before Paul could be sent to Rome, a native king, Agrippa, came to Caesarea to greet Festus as the new Roman governor. Herod Agrippa II was the son of the first persecutor of the church (his father Agrippa I) being infamous for the execution of James and the imprisonment of Peter.

20.2 When Agrippa I died, his kingdom was not bestowed upon his son but was placed under Roman governors. In A.D. 53 Agrippa II was given the rulership of a small area north of Palestine called Abilene. Later, certain towns in Galilee and Perea were added to his domain.

20.3 In addition, he was entrusted with the important function of supervising the temple treasury in Jerusalem. He was also given the responsibility of appointing the High Priest. This gave him significant influence in Jewish affairs, and his interests thus overlapped with those of Festus.

20.4 Bernice, sister of Herod, had been wife of an uncle, Herod of Chalcis. Her husband had died, and she was now living with her brother in Caesarea Philippi. Many historians believed she was living in an incestuous relationship with her brother Agrippa II.

21. Festus and King Agrippa review Paul's case. Agrippa agrees to hear Paul. Acts 25:14-22

Acts 25:14 Since they were spending many days there, Festus discussed Paul's case with the king. He said: "There is a man here whom Felix left as a prisoner.

Acts 25:15 When I went to Jerusalem, the chief priests and elders of the Jews brought charges against him and asked that he be condemned.

Acts 25:16 "I told them that it is not the Roman custom to hand over any man before he has faced his accusers and has had an opportunity to defend himself against their charges.

Acts 25:17 When they came here with me, I did not delay the case, but convened the court the next day and ordered the man to be brought in.

Acts 25:18 When his accusers got up to speak, they did not charge him with any of the crimes the two men had expected.

Acts 25:19 Instead, they had some points of dispute with him about their own religion and about a dead man named Jesus who Paul claimed was alive.

Acts 25:20 Festus was at a loss how to investigate such matters; so I asked if he would be willing to go to Jerusalem and stand trial there on these charges.

Acts 25:21 When Paul made his appeal to be held over for the Emperor's decision, I ordered him held until I could send him to Caesar."

Acts 25:22 Then Agrippa said to Festus, "I would like to hear this man myself." He replied, "Tomorrow you will hear him."

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