

Luke's Ancient Biography of Jesus 2

Notes on Lesson Four: City of Peace

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Luke 19:28-44

Central Message

When Jesus rode into Jerusalem, the City of Peace, he came on a mission of peace and salvation. His peace was not a political peace, but peace with God. It is not a feeling of agreement with God, but a completely new relationship. The irony¹ is that his mission was not complete until he was killed.

Life Application

The closing remarks do not include a direct application. For many, it is enough at this point to take in the power and truth of the passage. But what if they hear it, and it does not bring them closer to Jesus? Will they look back at this time and say, "If only ..."? "If only I had listened to the teachings of Jesus...." "If only I had become a Christian at that time...." Pray that they will respond now while there is still time.

Community-Building Activity and Introduction²

Palm Sunday

Preparation: Write the instructions on a board, or print the worksheet or cover page from the supplementary materials. If you use the instruction strips, copy and cut enough strips for each person. You may want to collect some pictures that depict the events of Easter Week and Easter traditions. (See below.)

Instructions: Palm Sunday is the Sunday before Easter. It is the beginning of Jesus' last week, often called "Holy Week" or just "Easter Week." How much do you already know about how Christians celebrate Holy Week and Easter? Share what you know.

What other Easter traditions do you know about?

Teaching Notes: It is very helpful for you to know whether the group participants have any knowledge of Easter. If you have some Christians in the group, they may mention the events in Jerusalem or the celebrations of those events in the churches. Others may know about the Easter Bunny and Easter Eggs. They may want to know

¹ One meaning of irony is something completely unexpected.

² The community-building activities and the introductions are often combined in the lesson notes because sometimes the introduction is first, and sometimes the activity is first.

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if Christians also celebrate with bunnies and eggs. (I would answer that by saying that most Christians do enjoy the other traditions, just like we enjoy Christmas traditions. Spring flowers and little animals are symbols of new life, so we remember the new life that we have because of the resurrection.)

This is not the time to explain all the events of Easter Week and Easter traditions. For a quick introduction, you might look for a set of pictures about Easter week. You can get large pictures or posters at a Christian store, or use a picture book for children such as "The Bible in Pictures for Little Eyes" by Kenneth N. Taylor, Moody Bible Institute of Chicago, 1956. You could also look for pictures on the internet.

This lesson could also be taught without the worksheet. The question about Easter is included in the introduction to the lesson. Read the introduction together.

Lesson Notes

Part One: Palm Sunday Luke 19: 28-40

Preparation:

Note that the numbers below refer to the numbers in the workbook. Find a map of ancient Israel or use the one on page 35.

Read the introduction and the introduction to the LOOK OVER section. You might want to skip some parts of this if you use the community-building activities.

1. The scanning activity for this lesson is more difficult than previous exercises. They are searching for everything that tells them **WHERE**. Note that they are not searching the entire text, but just Luke 19:28-30 and 36-37. The instructions tell them to look for place names, places, and phrases, such as "the place where." Walk around to see if anyone needs help.
2. As you read the text together, you might want to mark the cities and the Mount of Olives on a map. (There is a temporary map in this lesson on page 35, but it is not the detailed map I hope to include.) Note that WHERE includes the "village," the "road," and "the place where the road goes down the Mount of Olives."
3. They brought [the colt] to Jesus, threw their cloaks on the colt and put Jesus on it. ... people spread their cloaks on the road... the whole crowd of disciples began joyfully to praise God in loud voices for all the miracles they had seen: "Blessed is the king who comes in the name of the Lord!" "Peace in heaven and glory in the highest!" Note that they are also asked to read the footnotes.

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4. Again, this will be much more meaningful when a better map is included.
5. This is a speculation. Ask them what the religious leaders think about Jesus. Why are they against him? This question will be answered more fully in the LINK section, but it is good to think about what the Bible says before looking at background information.
6. Note that there are two questions here. The first is from the text, 19:40 "I tell you," he replied, "if they keep quiet, the stones will cry out." Talk about what this implies. The second question is another speculation. You could set it up as a roleplay with two religious leaders. What would they say to each other about Jesus?

LINK Ask questions to make sure they understand this section. Show them where the Old Testament passages are in the Bible.

Lesson Notes

Part Two: Jesus Weeps, Luke 19: 41-44

Preparation:

Note that the numbers below refer to the numbers in the workbook.

- 1.2. This scanning activity asks readers to look for one particular sentence in Luke 19:41. The purpose is to call attention to the meaning of this sentence. Make sure they understand before proceeding. As you read together, search for what opportunity the people of Jerusalem have missed. The question appears again in question #5.
3. We are not given the exact words to know how Jesus felt, but he wept when he saw the city. He was sad about what was going to happen to them.
4. Note that they are only looking for verb phrases in two verses. The verb phrases: build an embankment, circle you, hem you in, dash you, and not leave one stone on another. They will write the words, "Who will do this?" above the words, "your enemies," and the words, "Who will get hurt?" above the words, "you and your children."
5. Look for the words, "If they had only known..." This tells of a missed opportunity. It is found in verse 42. The rest of the sentence tells us what they should have known: "what would bring them peace." The form of the next phrase is a little different. Look for the word, "recognized." If only they had

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recognized “the time of God’s coming.” The wording of this phrase is not as strong as the Greek wording. They did not recognize the “day of God’s visitation.” The same Greek word in the Greek translation of the Old Testament refers to a day of God’s coming in power and judgment. See Jeremiah 10:15 and Hosea 9:7 in the King James Version.³ However, the primary meaning here is that God has visited his people, in Jesus, and they have failed to recognize him.

LINK Would God punish an entire city because they did not recognize God’s coming to them?...men, women, and children? It is a punishment, but they brought it on themselves. The destruction of Jerusalem was the natural outcome of their unbelief. Jesus was weeping because they missed their opportunity for peace, their chance to be saved. As I say in this section, “The people of Jerusalem failed to see that peace is only found in Jesus. They thought if they could overthrow the Romans, they would find peace.”

LIVE Both of these questions are serious and personal. It might be a good time to have them work in pairs, and maybe even in their own language. Bring them together after a while for the conclusion.

1. Everyone has “if only” stories. If only I had stayed in school.... If only I had talked to my father one more time before he died... This may not bring out a spiritual truth, but it helps them to think about the opportunity they might miss if they reject Jesus.
2. They might think of a nation, a group, or an individual.

Be sure to read the “Consider This” section, including the footnote about “irony.”

When Jesus rode into the city on a donkey, he came on a mission of peace and salvation. His peace was not a political peace, but peace with God. It is not a feeling of agreement with God, but a completely new relationship. The irony⁴ is that his mission was not complete until he was killed.

The final verse is from Isaiah. Note the similarity with this passage.

Suggestion: The background paper on the Passover is part of the next lesson. It is best read as part of the introduction to that lesson, but in order to do that in class, the students should be familiar with it. Point out that the background paper is part of the next lesson, and ask them to read it before class. The footnotes will help them with unfamiliar words.

³ I am recommending the KJV because it uses the English word “visitation” in each of these texts.

⁴ One meaning of irony is something completely unexpected.

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The City of Peace

In the last lesson, the blind man responded to Jesus by following him. Zacchaeus the tax collector responded by welcoming him gladly and correcting something that he knew was wrong. These men were lost, and Jesus welcomed them. This was Jesus' mission.

Jesus was going to Jerusalem to die for our sins. This is a part of the same mission. "For the Son of Man came to seek and to save what was lost." Luke 19:10

In this lesson, Jesus enters Jerusalem, the City of Peace, like a king on a mission of peace. But when he sees the city, he weeps.¹

Community Time



Palm Sunday

Palm Sunday is the Sunday before Easter. It is the beginning of Jesus' last week, often called "Holy Week." How much do you already know about how Christians celebrate Holy Week and Easter? Share what you know.

What other Easter traditions do you know about?

¹ To weep is to cry very hard.

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