

PALM MONDAY ? LESSONS FROM THE PASSION WEEK

I. PROPHECY: Dan. 9:24-27

- A. A “week” = 7 years
- B. A “year” = 360 days (a “Jewish year”)
- C. 69 x 7 weeks = 483 “Jewish years” (360 days each) (i.e. 173,880 days)
- D. Gregorian Calendar (365 days per year) = 476 yrs. + 25 days
- E. Start date of 69 weeks: Mar. 5, 444 B.C. (command to rebuild Jerusalem given to Nehemiah)
- F. End date of 69 weeks: Mar. 30, 33 A.D.
- G. Mar. 30, 33 A.D. = Monday (Nisan 10): day of the Triumphal Entry -- not a Sunday ¹

II. HISTORY: The Gospel Accounts ²

- A. Sat. evening / Sun. morning: Jesus arrives in Bethany (“6 days before Passover” on Friday) (John 12:1)
 - 1. Traditionally, it is believed that Jesus arrives in Bethany on Saturday (probably in the evening after the Sabbath ends)
 - 2. However, if counting inclusively as the Jews commonly did (including both Sun. & Fri. in the count of 6 days), then He arrived on Sunday. (cp. His three days in the tomb: the “three days” are inclusive of both Friday as the day of His death & Sunday as the day of His resurrection)
- B. Sunday: Large crowds gather in Bethany to see Jesus & Lazarus (John 12:9-11)
- C. Monday (“the next day” – John 12:12)
 - 1. Triumphal Entry (Matt. 21:1-11, Mark 11:1-10, Luke 19:29-44, John 12:12-19)
 - 2. God the Father speaks from Heaven (John 12:20-50)
- D. Tuesday (“in the morning” – Mark 11:12, Matt. 21:18)
 - 1. Fig tree cursed (Mark 11:12-14)
 - 2. Temple cleansed (Matt. 21:12-17, Mark 11:15-18, Luke 19:45-48)
- E. Wednesday (“in the morning” – Mark 11:20; “after two day is the Passover” – Matt. 26:2, Mark 14:1)
 - 1. Comments on the cursed fig tree the next day (Matt. 21:18-22, Mark 11:20-26)
 - 2. Lengthy debates w/ Pharisees & Sadducees (Matt. 21:23-23:39, Mark 11:27-12:40, Luke 20:1-47)
 - 3. The widow’s 2 mites (Mark 12:41-44, Luke 21:1-4)
 - 4. Olivet Discourse with the disciples (Matt. 24-25, Mark 13, Luke 21:5-38)
 - 5. Sanhedrin plot to kill Jesus (Matt. 26:1-5, Mark 14:1-2, Luke 22:1-2)
 - 6. Dinner at Simon’s home; Mary anoints His feet (Matt. 26:6-13, Mark 14:3-9, John 12:2-11)
 - 7. Judas agrees with Jewish leaders to betray Jesus (Matt. 26:14-16, Mark 14:10-11, Luke 22:3-6)

- F. Thursday (“then came the Day of Unleavened Bread” – Luke 22:7)
- a. The disciples prepare the Passover/Last Supper (Matt. 26:17-19, Mark 14:12-16, Luke 22:7-13)
 - b. Evening: Last Supper (Matt. 26:20-30, Mark 14:17-31, Luke 22:14-38, John 13-17)
 - c. Prayer in the Garden of Gethsemane (Matt. 26:30-46, Mark 14:32-42, Luke 22:39-46, John 18:1)
 - d. Arrest (Matt. 26:47-56, Mark 14:43-52, Luke 22:47-53, John 18:2-12)
 - e. Trials before Annas & Caiphas (Matt. 26:57-75, Mark 14:53-72, Luke 22:54-65, John 18:13-27)
- G. Friday
- a. Trial before the Sanhedrin (Matt. 27:1, Mark 15:1, Luke 22:66-71)
 - b. Trials before Pilate & Herod (Matt. 27:2, 11-26, Mark 15:1-15, Luke 23:1-25, John 18:28-19:16)
 - c. 9:00 a.m. -- Christ crucified (Mark 15:25)
 - d. 12:00 p.m. to 3:00 pm -- Darkness over the land (Matt. 27:45, Mark 15:33, Luke 23:44,)
 - e. 3:00 pm -- Christ dies (Matt. 27:46-50, Mark 15:34-38, Luke 23:44-46)

II. BIBLICAL CEREMONY: Law of the Passover

- A. Ex. 12:3-6
1. Lamb selected on Nisan 10th (12:3)
 2. Lamb slaughtered on Nisan 14th (12:6)
- B. Passover dates during the year A.D. 33
1. Nisan 10 (Mar. 30) = Monday (the Triumphal Entry: day of the Lamb of God’s presentation)
 2. Nisan 14 (Apr. 3) = Friday (Passover lambs slaughtered about 3:00 p.m. – time of Christ’s death)

Notes:

¹ Chronology for Daniel’s 69 weeks based on the calculations of H. W. Hoehner, utilizing the date of Mar. 5, 444 B.C. for Artaxerxes’ decree to rebuild Jerusalem. Previously the traditional date for Artaxerxes’ decree to rebuild Jerusalem was believed to be Mar. 14, 445 B.C. as calculated by Sir Robert Anderson. His calculations culminated the 69 weeks on April 6, A.D. 32 on a Sunday (Palm Sunday).

² Those who hold that the Triumphal Entry was on a Sunday must account for an extra day in the Passion Week. A. T. Robertson suggests that this one day is un-accounted for in the Gospel accounts because apparently Christ took off Wed. as a “day of rest,” staying in Bethany (but hadn’t He just observed the Sabbath as a day of rest a few days prior?). Others spread the events of Wednesday over two days (Tues. – Wed.), but Mark provides a straightforward chronology of the final week, and he does not spread the events associated with Wed. over a two-day period. However, if the Triumphal Entry was on Monday, then there is no extra day for which to account, and the Triumphal Entry was exactly four days prior to Christ’s crucifixion as the symbolism of the Passover would require in order to find its fulfillment in Christ. Of course, calculating a Sunday for the Triumphal Entry (per Sir Robert Anderson) preserves the symbolism of the Passover lamb if one chooses Thursday as the day of Passover & Christ’s crucifixion, but John 19:31 suggests that the Passover was indeed on a Friday, with the first day of Unleavened Bread (a special Sabbath) falling on and coordinating with the usual Saturday Sabbath. All things considered then, Hoehner’s views best fit the evidence.