

SEVEN TIMES JESUS WENT TO JERUSALEM.....Luke 19:28-41;
Psalm 118:24-28 Palm Sunday, Tryon, April 5,2009

Today we can follow the story of Jesus' last week before the resurrection. It is a powerful experience, walking with our Savior in the week of His crucifixion. It began with Jesus entering the city of Jerusalem on the first day of the week. We call this the triumphal entry because...

This day's journey to Jerusalem was **the seventh time** that Jesus traveled to Jerusalem, entering those walls that surrounded the Holy City of David, and made his way purposefully to the heart of the life of this nation. If you can think of a trip into Washington D.C., this nation's capital, you can envision the importance....if you add to the picture that you would address the crowd on the steps of the Capital City!

1. Jesus' first visit to the center of Israel's life was electrifying. Every firstborn male was holy unto the Lord and to be consecrated to the Lord, (Lev. 12:2-8). They went just after circumcision and the momentous naming of the child, you remember the Angel had foretold the name to Joseph in a dream, "*Joseph, son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary as your wife. What is conceived in her is of The Holy Spirit. She will conceive a son, and you are to name Him Jesus, because He will save His people from their sins.*" (Matt. 1:20-21)

Jesus was taken up to Jerusalem to be presented to the Lord in keeping with the law of Moses. (Lev. 19:2-8) On this occasion the devout old servant, Simeon, patiently waiting to "*see the salvation of our God,*" as he spoke of it, felt the Spirit of God drawing him into the temple courts, and there! He knew it the moment the little family walked in! (Luke 2:25) He knowingly stepped forward as servants were expected and

needed to be helpers. He tenderly took Jesus into his arms, praising God for answer to the prayers of his people, and said, *"Now call me home, My Lord! You have let me see Him, the Hope of all nations, the Light of the world!"* (Luke 2:29-32)

"This child is destined to cause the falling and rising of many in Israel, and to be a sign that will be spoken against, so that the hearts of many hearts will be revealed. And a sword will pierce your own soul, too." Simeon's prophecy would not be forgotten as every word spoken over Jesus that first day in Jerusalem proved true!

Then came Anna, a woman who was an elderly and respected woman of 84, the daughter of Phanuel. She was a widow since early days. She never left the temple, but prayed and fasted day and night. Anna approached them preaching to all around them about the child! "God is faithful!" she must have preached that day. "This child will fulfill our greatest hopes and carry out God's redemptive purpose in Jerusalem! This is the Messiah!" She was a well respected preacher in her old age. She had seen many would be preachers come and go, but she had a word for all who would listen! Joseph and Mary listened, thank God! Jesus had come **to Jerusalem** to be identified and announced to all the world!

2. His second visit to Jerusalem is well known to us. It was the family pilgrimage when Jesus was 12. Into the temple they ventured; the rigors and routine of raising children tends to dim the great prophecies spoken at births. Jesus stayed behind, clenched in tense debates with the elders and teachers there, and he missed the outbound family train returning to Nazareth! They didn't even notice. Assuming each would have him in tow, they had journeyed several days down the road! And boy did Jesus catch it! (Luke 2:48)

But the summarizing words of Dr. Luke were that Jesus returned as an obedient son and, "*increased in wisdom and stature and in favor with God and man!*" **In Jerusalem** he had been recognized again as appointed by God with wisdom and understanding that amazed all the teachers in the temple.

3. The third visit to the Holy City is recorded in the Gospel of John. The gospel places the cleansing of the temple during this visit. This time Jesus was recognized as an adult, and at nighttime, he had a nervous caller, a respected member of the ruling class who risked his reputation and his position to speak with Jesus, but only under the cover of darkness! The caller was Nicodemus, and they talked of "*being born again*" (John 3: 7), born of the Spirit of God, just as if you could enter your mother's womb again. Nicodemus was baffled, but he wanted so badly to share in this joy, this spirit of confident hope, this calling of the young preacher to a radical faith in God!

Hear our Savior saying with genuine love and some portion of pity, "*Nick! You trust in other things of creation that you cannot see, but you know their evidence! The wind! It blows as it does without you having a clue about its origin or its direction. You trust it! Why can you not trust the simple winds of the truth of God? And you are among Israel's finest for teaching the truths that men build their lives on! Can you not accept our testimony of these unseen things?!*"

"Listen, Nick. I will be lifted up in infamy one day like a snake on a stick. All people will see and finally believe! Don't wait till it takes a tragedy to believe. This is a matter of life and death!"

Then the gospel writer recalls the glorious statement of our faith found in Jesus' words of **John 3:16**, as he says, "*For God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten son, that*

whosoever believeth in him shall not perish, but have everlasting life!" Jesus said it **in Jerusalem** that night!

4. John 5 tells of the fourth visit. On this visit, Jesus healed a man by the Pool of Bethesda and stayed for a challenging discussion with those who saw him as a threat and wanted to kill him. Right there in the Holy City for all to see, Jesus had the power of life in his touch of a man, while the peddlers and protectors of a proper religious form had nothing to offer, because they had no faith, only religion. That day **in Jerusalem**, Jesus demonstrated the power of a living faith.
5. The Feast of Tabernacles was the next entry into the city. Jesus came on a holiday! Call it 'Thanksgiving,' if you like, to help you understand its significance. Find it in John 7:10, as Jesus went up privately, after first indicating to his brothers, who didn't believe in him, and who challenged him to go to prove himself to the whole world, they said! After saying that his time had not come, he went secretly, the Bible says. For the fifth entrance Jesus slipped in unnoticed as the Jews were gunning for him.

About the middle of the festival, Jesus emerged teaching in the temple. At the last day of the feast, that great day for the national holiday, He stood up and told a crowd: *"If anyone thirst, let him come unto me and drink. He who believes on me- out of his heart shall flow rivers of living waters."* There **in Jerusalem** he spoke of the Spirit of God within every believer, but it had not yet been given until Jesus was to be glorified.

6. The sixth entry happened at the feast of dedication, a national observance or holiday in winter. (John 10:22) The leaders caught him walking in the colonnade of the

temple." *Don't keep us hanging any longer! Tell us straight... are you the Messiah?"* He answered them just as straight as any word could be. *"I have told you. My miracles have told you. You just do not believe. It is because you are not part of me. If you were mine you would have easily accepted what is as plain as it can be!"*

"My sheep hear me, and believe. I give eternal life! No one can snatch them out of my hands or my Father's hand." At this they were enraged and gathered stones to stone him for blasphemy! But he was right, it wasn't his time, and he slipped away right through the mob. They caught him a second time right there and engaged him again, "You are claiming to be God!" they exclaimed. "For this we will stone you!" Jesus spoke openly with explanations that they couldn't refute. But as they tried again to mob him, **the Jerusalem crowd** protected him, and he slipped right through their fingers! He stayed after that at John's baptizing pool in the countryside and they couldn't touch him. Many believers came there and realized his truth and the truth of John the Baptist's claims about him.

7. Then came this day we celebrate today, the TRIUMPHAL ENTRY INTO JERUSALEM! The king was riding into die. He knew their sins as a greater burden than all the threats and slanders the leaders could heap on him. He wept for Jerusalem, then gave himself to their false religion, gave himself to their ignorance, gave himself to their useless processes of self security, gave himself to the evils of power, gave himself to sin. He gave himself for you and me to have life and have it fully, freely, abundantly! He gave himself to die for us. This was his last, the TRIUMPHAL ENTRY **into Jerusalem**. He came determined to die.

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