

Jesus Wept

In exactly 2 months from today Jewish people around the world will celebrate Passover by going to synagogue services and then participating in a Passover Seder.

The Passover Seder is designed to be a rather lengthy ceremonial meal. It's a remembrance of God's deliverance of the Jewish people from slavery in Egypt thousands of years ago. The instruction book for the Seder is called the Haggadah. It explains, "Each Jew is required to see himself as if he personally escaped from Egypt."

It's to be a personal journey to freedom, dignity, and the rule of God.

The Haggadah is divided into 15 steps. Step number 15 reads: "The Passover Seder is now completed in accordance with its particular laws, all its ordinances and statutes. Just as we merited to perform it, so may we merit to offer it. O Pure One, Who dwells on high, uplift the congregation (Israel) who cannot be counted. Soon, and with rejoicing, lead the offshoots of the stock that You have planted, redeemed, to Zion. Next year in Jerusalem!"

Every Seder concludes with the prayer, "Next Year in Jerusalem." Every synagogue in the world faces Jerusalem.

Jerusalem is the "Holy City." It's the heart and center of Judaism. The thought of celebrating Passover in Jerusalem is the heart passion of every Jew. It's the most joyous thing that could happen to Jews who are serious about their faith.

But there was one Jewish man who celebrated Passover in Jerusalem who wasn't joyful at all. Not because of Passover, but because of the hardness of the hearts of the people He loved so intensely.

Turn to Luke 19 Pg 1017

Luke 19 marks the beginning of what is often called "Passion Week" in the life of Jesus. We define "passion" as a powerful emotion but the word passion actually comes from a Latin root that means "to suffer." It's called "Passion Week" because this is cross week. This is the final week of Jesus' life. In 7 days He'd be suffering on the cross.

Last week we looked at verses 28-40 and the triumphal entry. All of this is happening on what's traditionally called "Palm Sunday" because the people welcomed Jesus into

Jerusalem by waving palm branches and crying out:

“Blessed is the King who comes in the name of the LORD!’ Peace in heaven and glory in the highest! Hosanna to the Son of David! ‘Blessed is He who comes in the name of the LORD!’ Hosanna in the highest!”

For the 12 disciples this must have been heaven on earth. They’d followed Jesus for three years just waiting for this moment. They knew Jesus was the long awaited Messiah of Israel. They just knew that He was the King, but He’d always kept it a secret.

Finally their Rabbi was getting the recognition they were waiting for.

Finally He’d take His rightful place on David’s throne and lead the nation in victory over their Roman oppressors. Finally, they’d get the places in His Kingdom they were looking forward to. They deserved.

The people saw what they wanted to see. The disciples saw what they hoped would be. But God sees things as they really are.

As Jesus drew near the holy city of Jerusalem He did something totally unexpected.

Read vs 41

I. God Sees Things As They Really Are

Jesus wasn’t weeping because He was happy. The word translated *wept* means “to wail out loud.” its the word Luke used in chapter 7 to describe the actions of the sinful woman who fell at the feet of Jesus weeping and wash his feet with tears.

This is the word that Luke uses to describe Peter in chapter 22 after he betrayed Jesus and went out and wept bitterly.

There’s a lot that’s superficial in our world, and in our lives. One of the things that happens when we’re threatened with terrorist attacks is we become a whole lot more serious. We start looking at life in a different way. We begin to focus our priorities and values.

God doesn’t need to have His priorities focused. He already sees clearly. The crowds were celebrating Jesus entry into Jerusalem but Jesus knew their hearts. He knew

when they didn't get what they wanted they'd turn on Him in a heartbeat. And to turn on Him, was to turn on God's plan for the nation.

God sees things as they really are, not as they appear. I wonder, what makes Jesus weep today? How about: a lack of commitment by His people, the loss of spiritual passion in our lives, the loss of your first love

Here's the question: is Jesus broken hearted when He looks into your life? Jesus Christ sees into the fabric of our lives. He knows every one of our failures. He sees each of our sins, and yet:

- a.) He still loves us in spite of our sins
- b.) He wants to give the forgiveness that we need
- c.) He longs to have a relationship with us that's a two way street

Jesus Christ knows each person inside out. He isn't fooled by the mere appearances. He looks right to the heart.

When God looks at your heart, what does He see? Selfishness? Anxiety? Bitterness? Anger?

When Jesus looked over the city of Jerusalem with all of it's splendor, He saw right to the heart of people, and what He saw made Him cry out loud. He was a thirty year old man at this point, and He cried openly.

I. God Sees Things As They Really Are and one of those things is this...

II. God Sees What Our Lives Can Be If We Obey Him **Read vs 42**

Jesus wept as He approached the city of Jerusalem and the reason for His tears was first and foremost, Jerusalem failed to grasp "the things which make for peace."

What are "the things which make for peace"? That's a timely question, isn't it?

Some people would say peace is secured by might, by having sufficient military power to serve as a threat to any who would think of attacking us.

Others think the absence of weapons is the answer. If we would just back off and unilaterally disarm other nations would do the same.

In 1st century Israel, they believe was that Messiah would bring peace to the nation when He appeared.

The question was, how was this peace to be accomplished? Most people figured that peace would be accomplished by a sword, and by force. They assumed that when Messiah came, He would use military power, and that He'd throw off the shackles of Rome.

Jesus wept because Jerusalem didn't know what would bring peace. He wept because He knew what was ahead for His people. Instead of Messiah's coming bringing about the annihilation of Rome, the rejection of Jesus as Messiah meant the destruction of Jerusalem, at the hand of Roman soldiers.

It wasn't by Messiah's use of force and power. It wasn't by the death of Messiah's enemies that the kingdom was to be brought about. It was going to happen by Messiah's death, at the hand of His enemies.

It wasn't triumph that would bring in the kingdom, it was the tragedy of the cross. God's ways are never man's ways. Man would have brought about the kingdom in many ways, but man would never have thought of bringing it in by a cross, by an apparent defeat, by the suffering of Messiah Himself for the sins of His people.

Political correctness can be a good thing if it makes us more sensitive to discrimination. But political correctness can be a bad thing if it keeps us from speaking the truth.

These days it wouldn't be politically correct to say that Israel's rejection of Jesus brought about God's judgment. In fact, to speak of God's judgment on any nation is considered the height of arrogance.

The fact is though, that's exactly what the Bible says. Jesus wept because He saw what Israel's potential was and how they blew it big time.

Remember the context. This comes on the heels of His triumphal entry into Jerusalem. It is spoken in the context of people singing and praising Him and waving palm branches and quoting Messianic Scripture.

But in spite of all these things, they didn't get it. They didn't understand. Even the 12 disciples and those who followed Him didn't understand who He really was and what He was doing.

It wasn't that they hadn't been told. Abraham had told them. Moses had told them. All of the prophets had told them. Jesus had told them very plainly. But they continued to be ignorant.

Some were ignorant because of their preconceived notions. Some were willingly ignorant. These were the ones who willingly rejected the Son of God. And because of this, any further understanding was now hidden from their eyes.

Warren Wiersbe writes: "No matter where Jesus looked, He found cause for weeping. If he looked *back* He saw how the nation had wasted its opportunities and been ignorant of their "time of visitation." If He looked *within*, He saw spiritual ignorance and blindness in the hearts of the people. They should have known who He was, for God has given them His word and sent His messengers to prepare the way."

"As He looked *around*, Jesus saw religious activity that accomplished very little. The temple had become a den of thieves, and the religious leaders were out to kill Him. The city was filled with pilgrims celebrating a festival, but the hearts of the people were heavy with sin and life's burdens."

Sin isn't a word you hear much these days. We hear about phobias, syndromes, healing, recovery but "sin" almost sounds archaic. The only time the culture uses it is to describe chocolate fudge brownies or cheesecake.

God uses the word "sin" on purpose. In fact He uses it 508 times in the Bible. God doesn't use the word "sin" because He's trying to beat us up. He's using the word "sin" because He wants to set us free.

We have some people in this congregation who have had chronic pain that seems to defy diagnosis. They've had test after test, but nothing shows up. You know what that's called? That's called total frustration. If we're hurting, we want a diagnosis. We want a diagnosis even if it shows something is seriously wrong, because at least then we know what we're dealing with.

If you can diagnose the problem then you can solve the problem.

One of the reasons Israel missed Jesus Christ is because they were so self righteous they couldn't see their own sin. Why would they need a Savior?

Human nature hasn't changed over the past 2000 years. We're just like they were. We need the same diagnosis. We don't need a little religion to make us feel better. We don't need excuses for our behavior. We need our creator's evaluation. We need God's diagnosis.

God's diagnosis is: *All have sinned and come short of the glory of God.* In fact He says this: *If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. If we say that we have not sinned, we make Him a liar, and His word is not in us.*

God sees what our lives can be if we obey Him. Jesus saw what could be in Israel and He wept.

Do you think God weeps today? Do you think God weeps when He looks at a nation like ours with all of it's potential for good and sees us drowning in sin?

I love this country. But I have to believe God weeps when he sees abortion on demand, no fault divorce, legalized pornography and gambling, radical homosexuals strongarming institutions like our public schools and the boy scouts, sleaze pouring out of Hollywood in the name of entertainment, rappers and rock stars spewing out every kind of blasphemy and getting rich by it.

I believe God weeps at all that stuff. But you know what grieves the heart of God the most? What grieves the heart of God the most is seeing His people asleep at the wheel. Seeing His church being changed by the culture rather than being a change agent. That what really breaks the heart of God.

When God's people are more concerned about their portfolios than the poor. When they'd rather be entertained than get involved in ministry. When they love themselves instead of God and others, God weeps. God weeps.

I. God Sees Things As They Really Are

II. God Sees What Our Lives Can Be If We Obey Him

But

III. God also Sees What Our Lives Will Be if We Disobey Him

Read vs 43-44

Insurrectionists had been a part of the Jewish mindset from the beginning of Roman occupation. When Jesus failed to meet the expectations of the people, they rejected

Him completely. At the trial of Jesus, Pilot gave the people a choice to free Jesus or Barabbas. Mr 15:7 *And there was one named Barabbas, who was chained with his fellow rebels; they had committed murder in the rebellion.*

Barabbas was an insurrectionist who murdered others to promote his cause. The Jews chose the murderer over Jesus. Lu 23:18 *And they all cried out at once, saying, "Away with this Man, and release to us Barabbas"--*

The Jews launched an outright rebellion against Rome in AD 66. Several cities around Jerusalem were destroyed as a show of force. The rebellion continued until Vespasian began his march to destroy Jerusalem. Vespasian unexpectedly turned away from Jerusalem but a short time later, Vespasian's son, Titus returned with the Roman armies to lay siege to Jerusalem.

While Titus was marching to Jerusalem, his father, Vespasian was proclaimed Emperor of Rome.

Josephus was a Jewish historian at this time and an eyewitness to the siege and fall of Jerusalem in 70 AD. In his book *Wars of the Jews* he writes: "[General Titus] also at the same time gave his soldiers leave to set the suburbs on fire, and ordered that they should bring timber together, and raise banks against the city;

and when he had parted his army into three parts, in order to set about those works, he placed those that shot darts and the archers in the midst of the banks that were then raising; before whom he placed those engines that threw javelins, and darts, and stones, that he might prevent the enemy from sallying out upon their works, and might hinder those that were upon the wall from being able to obstruct them. So the trees were now cut down immediately, and the suburbs left naked. But now while the timber was carrying to raise the banks, and the whole army was earnestly engaged in their works."

"So all hope of escaping was now cut off from the Jews, together with their liberty of going out of the city. Then did the famine widen its progress, and devoured the people by whole houses and families; the upper rooms were full of women and children that were dying by famine, and the lanes of the city were full of the dead bodies of the aged.... Now the [Jews] at first gave orders that the dead should be buried out of the public treasury, as not enduring the stench of their dead bodies. But afterwards, when they could not do that, they had them cast down from the walls into the valleys beneath."

"While the holy house (the Temple) was on fire, every thing was plundered that came to

hand, and ten thousand of those that were caught were slain; nor was there a commiseration of any age, or any reverence of gravity, but children, and old men, and profane persons, and priests were all slain in the same manner; so that this war went round all sorts of men, and brought them to destruction, and as well those that made supplication for their lives, as those that defended themselves by fighting."

The siege lasted 143 days. Prisoners of war were crucified in front of the wall. Titus used the crucifixions to try to convince the people in the city to surrender. So many thousands of Jews were crucified the roads leading to Jerusalem were lined with crosses. They couldn't find enough wood so they literally nailed people to the walls. In all 600,000 were slaughtered.

No wonder Jesus weeps as he sees with prophetic vision what will take place.

Why did all this happen? *"Because you did not know the time of your visitation."*

The OT Prophet Malachi made this prediction: 3:1 *"Behold, I send My messenger, And he will prepare the way before Me. And the Lord, whom you seek, Will suddenly come to His temple, Even the Messenger of the covenant, In whom you delight. Behold, He is coming," Says the LORD of hosts.*

Did you catch that? *The Lord whom you seek will suddenly come to his temple...*

The NT puts it this way: *He was in the world, and the world was made through Him, and the world did not know Him. He came to His own, and His own did not receive Him.* (John 1:10, 11)

I hope your grasping what happened here. After centuries of prophetic announcements giving every detail of how, when, and where it would happen, God shows up.

Jesus Christ, the Second person of the trinity, the Lord of Glory visits His people and they nail Him to a cross! They were totally oblivious to who He was because they closed their eyes to the clear, specific teachings of Scripture. God had given His people chance after chance to respond. They killed the prophets, put on an empty show of religion, and then crucified the Son of God.

That was it. One stone wasn't left on another. Jerusalem was burned, the gold in the temple melted, and Titus ordered his soldiers to pull the remaining stones down to get the gold that had run down into the cracks.

Wow.

And you know what the Jewish people thought all along? It can't happen here. God loves us and has a wonderful plan for our lives. God has made some great promises to us. We may not always be obedient, but hey, God's a merciful God. We show up for religious celebrations. We follow a lot of rules. We worship in the synagogues.

You know, I honestly think there's a lot of Americans who think "It can't happen here." Maybe not quite as many as before September 11, but were still pretty smug.

We have the weaponry. We have the finances. Who can touch us? We're on the side of right. We claim the moral high ground. look how many churches we have in our country.

I don't know what God has in store for this nation. I don't know what its going to take to get us to do some serious soul searching. I thought September 11 would do it. A few weeks later we were back to business as usual.

I don't know, but I do know this... when God says "enough is enough," all the wealth and power in the world won't make any difference.

We are so short sighted, but God sees what our lives will be if we disobey Him. God sees and He weeps when what He sees is apathy, sin, and ignorance.

We might not be able to change our whole nation. The US Census Bureau web site says as of 10 AM today the US has a population of 290,260,411. That's a lot of people.

We can't change everyone else, but we can change ourselves. We can't be accountable for what other people say and do, but we can be responsible for ourselves.

The biggest struggle that the Jews had was with the concept of faith. God established the principle right from the beginning. Genesis 15:6 says the father of the Jewish people, *Abraham believed in the LORD, and God accounted it to him for righteousness.*

The Hebrew word translated "accounted," *chashab*, means "to think" or "to regard." Abraham had faith in God and God regarded him as righteous because of it.

That same principle, which really started in the garden of Eden when God clothed Adam & Eve with animal skins after they sinned, is carried through the entire Bible.

Jonah chapter 2: *Salvation is of the LORD.*

Our problem is sin. That's God's diagnosis. The end result is separation from God in hell. That's clear from Scripture. The cure is forgiveness, and that can only come from God.

Listen to the Scripture: *...not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to His mercy He saved us...*

In fact the Bible says salvation is *the gift of God, not of works, lest anyone should boast...*

What happened to Israel? **Turn to Romans 9 pg 1092 Read vs 30-33**

Israel said, "God gave us the Law of Moses so we'll trust in our keeping of His law rather than Him." The non-Jews believed and were saved. Israel stumbled over Jesus.

Let me challenge you with this thought. Don't make the same mistake. Don't say, "Trust Jesus Christ as my Savior and I'm forgiven? No way. That's too easy. I'm going to trust in what I do for God. Hey, I go to church once in a while. I even throw a few bucks in the plate. I pay my taxes. I'm as good citizen. I don't need a Savior."

That's what Israel said. But here's the \$64,000 question. If you don't need a Savior then why did Jesus die on a cross? If you can earn your forgiveness from God why did the Son of God suffer the torture and agony of the crucifixion?

Don't make the same mistake Israel did. Don't miss the fact that God visited the planet. Refuse God and what happened to Jerusalem is just a foretaste of your eternal future.

I. God Sees Things As They Really Are. Do you? Do we really have our eyes open to spiritual realities? God isn't sidetracked by life. let's make sure we're not either.

II. God Sees What Our Lives Can Be If We Obey Him. Jer 29:11 *For I know the thoughts that I think toward you, says the LORD, thoughts of peace and not of evil, to give you a future and a hope.*

III. God Sees What Our Lives Will Be if We Disobey Him How we respond to God, believing or disbelieving, has eternal consequences for our lives.

Jesus wept over Jerusalem. The question is, is Jesus still weeping?

Is He weeping over the sin and rebellion of our nation? Is He weeping over the insensitivity and apathy of our churches? Is He weeping over the state of your life?