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5 Following the Messiah Episode 8 (00:00 – 8:55) The Last Week: Triumphal Entry

Opening:

1. You have viewed the video “Following the Messiah Episode 8” at www.appianmedia.org and have worked through the study guide Lesson Five available by request at wtg2@hughes.net.
2. In this lesson we will consider Zaccheus’ encounter with Jesus (Lk. 19:1-10), Jesus’ triumphal entry into Jerusalem (Lk. 19:28-40) and His weeping over the city (Lk. 19:41-44).
3. The rest of our studies in Following the Messiah will deal with the historic period known as the final week. The Gospel accounts devote approximately one third of their material to this final week. I would like to recommend for your reading R. C. Foster’s book entitled *Studies In the Life of Christ*. Although it was originally published in 1938 it has gone through several printings and in my judgment remains a classic chronological commentary. Pages 1067-1393 focus on the final week. It is available used on Amazon.com for \$8-12 and will provide you with good supplemental reading to the next several lessons.

Into the Text:

1. Reading of Lk. 19:1-10.

Jesus went up from Jericho and the house of Zaccheus to Jerusalem. Zaccheus was a tax collector and was rich. This marked him out as an unlikely candidate for the kingdom of God. But he wanted to see Jesus and climbed up in a tree to do so because he was small in stature.

Jesus spoke to him. “Zaccheus, hurry and come down, for I must stay at your house today.” In our previous study we observed that Jesus included Samaritans and even Gentiles in His association. He defined “loving one’s neighbor” to include such non-Jews. Zaacheus the rich tax collector is also included. All such inclusions are reflective of Jesus’ great love for all.

Some objected to His association with this sinner, but Zaacheus was responsive to Jesus. He said, “Behold, Lord, the half of my goods I give to the poor. And if I have defrauded anyone of anything, I restore it fourfold.” Note that Zaacheus accepted responsibility for his sins and was willing to pay back what he had taken. Because he was small in stature maybe he boosted his self-image by wealth achieved by defrauding others. Maybe he propped himself up by withholding from the poor. People do this kind of thing, you know. Apparently the rich man in Lk. 16:19ff did this. Zaacheus found his value in Jesus and so repented of what he had been doing.

What kind of effect does Jesus have on you? Does the fact that He loves you bolster the value that you place on yourself? Have you been propping yourself up with wealth and other “things” to no avail? There is no point in taking from others in order to make yourself “bigger.” You are already valuable to the Lord. He is ready to stay at your house.

2. In the next passage Jesus proceeds to the towns near Jerusalem. We pick up the account in Lk. 19:28-40.

The episode with the colt of the donkey is mysterious to us. Had Jesus made arrangements with the colt’s owners beforehand? Perhaps, but the fact of the matter is, we do not know. The owners seem to be completely satisfied with the statement, “The Lord has need of it.” While I had not realized it before Jesus must have ridden on this colt for some distance. He was approaching near the descent of the Mount of Olives and the disciples were praising God with a loud voice shouting, “Blessed is the King who comes in the name of the Lord; peace in heaven and glory in the highest!” This is a quotation from Psa. 118:26. The disciples are identifying Him as the King that God was sending.

Matthew interprets Jesus’ riding on the donkey in light of Zech. 9:9 (21:5). “Behold your King is coming to you gentle, and mounted on a donkey, even on a colt, the foal of a beast of burden.” What? No white horse for the King? Instead the offspring of a beast of burden? This is reflective of the nature of the King and His kingdom. He is gentle and His Kingdom is not characterized by the dominating power and military might typical of Kingdoms of the world. He comes into Jerusalem with the intention of giving His life a ransom for the many (Matt. 20:28).

I had never noticed this before, but Zaccheus had been taking from others in a futile attempt to bolster himself. He was taking power, but Jesus is humbling Himself. He is the mighty King whose approach is to give His life for others. It was in the presence of such greatness that Zaccheus repented. How does Jesus’ humility affect you? Are you taking power or giving it up?

As the disciples called out identifying Jesus as the King, some of the Pharisees said, “Teacher, rebuke your disciples.” Jesus said, “If these become silent, the stones will cry out!”

3. Lk. 19:41-44 continues the account. Jesus is weeping over Jerusalem? The King is weeping over His city? He sees their future. In AD 70 the Romans destroyed Jerusalem. And why? Jesus says, “Because you did not recognize the time of your visitation.” The King had come to them and they did not recognize Him. They did not know the things that make for peace. All the while men are seeking power through wealth, position and military might the King comes in humility offering Himself as a ransom! Are things upside down here? It seems that what Jesus says would produce peace is not the way men attempt to achieve peace. Instead their way results in the city being leveled to the ground.

Eph. 2:14-22 says, "He Himself is our peace, who made both groups (Jews and Gentiles) into one and broke down the barrier of the dividing wall, by abolishing in His flesh the enmity, which is the Law of commandments contained in ordinances, so that in Himself He might make the two into one new man, thus establishing peace, and might reconcile them both in one body to God through the cross, by it having put to death the enmity. And He came and preached peace to you who were far away, and peace to those who were near; for through Him we both have our access in one Spirit to the Father. So then we are no longer strangers and aliens, but you are fellow citizens with the saints, and are of God's household, having been built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus Himself being the corner stone, in whom the whole building, being fitted together, is growing into a holy temple in the Lord, in whom you also are being built together into a dwelling of God in the Spirit."

In our world of racial and religious division the answer is not that one race dominate over another. Or that one religion exercise power over others. But that all come together under the leadership of Christ, the one who died for all, the one whose leadership involved serving rather than dominating over. Not until we learn humility, self-sacrifice and service will there be peace. Not until men learn Christ will there be reconciliation. He died to pay the penalty for our sins and every one of us needs to come under His control. When we do we will be fellow citizens in His kingdom and members of His household.

Applications:

1. Do you think Jesus weeps over us today for not recognizing His Way? Why or why not? What can you do to diminish the weeping?
2. How does Jesus approach to leadership compare with your leadership in your family? In the church? In your community? What would you need to do to make your leadership more like His?
3. How do you find yourself feeling diminished and trying to bolster your value? It is interesting how our perceptions of our "size" affect us. But not just in regard to physical stature, but monetary stature, position and other ways. Do you find yourself comparing yourself with others and feeling "smaller?" What are some ways that you have tried to compensate? What would repentance from this way look like?
4. What can you do to establish peace?