

SABBATH THOUGHT 2023-04-08—PRE-PASSOVER EVENTS

May God bless you on His Sabbath day!

The 2023 Passover falls on the fourth day of the week (Wednesday), which is the same day of the week that Jesus died. While our focus usually begins with the Passover ceremony—the remembrance of the sacrifice of Jesus Christ and His sacrifice—our Lord spent several days beforehand preparing for His death and fulfilling several prophecies.

In preparation for His death, He was anointed the first time six days prior to Passover day by Mary, the sister of Lazarus and Martha:

JOHN 12:1-3, 7 Now **six days before the Passover**, Jesus came to Bethany, where Lazarus was who had died, *and* whom He had raised from *the* dead. 2 There they made a supper *for* Him, and Martha served; and Lazarus was one of those who sat with Him. 3 **Mary then took a pound of pure spikenard ointment worth a great price and anointed Jesus' feet**, wiping His feet with her hair. And the house was filled with the aroma of the ointment. ... 7 Then Jesus said, "Let her alone; she has been keeping it toward the **day of My burial**."

This first anointing was of His feet. Four days later, on Abib/Nissan 12, Jesus was again anointed—this time on His head at Simon the leper's house¹:

MATTHEW 26:2, 6-7, 12-13 "You know that **after two days the Passover takes place**, and the Son of man is delivered up to be crucified." ... 6 Now when Jesus was in Bethany, **in Simon the leper's house**, 7 **A woman came to Him with an alabaster flask of ointment, very precious, and poured it on His head** as He sat down *to eat*. ... 12 What this *woman did* in pouring this ointment on My body, **she did for My burial**. 13 Truly I say to you, wherever this gospel shall be preached in the whole world, what this *woman* has done shall also be spoken of for a memorial of her."

These anointings were for the BURIAL of Jesus Christ. You may remember another anointing mentioned in Luke 7:36-38, 44-50. That one occurred early in Jesus' ministry and it appears to be a fulfillment of Isaiah 61:1-3:

ISAIAH 61:1-3 The Spirit of the Lord GOD *is* upon me; because the LORD [*God the Father*] hath **anointed me [Jesus Christ] to preach good tidings** unto the meek; he hath sent me to **bind up the brokenhearted**, to **proclaim liberty** to the captives, and the **opening of the prison** to *them that are* bound; 2 To **proclaim the acceptable year of the LORD**, and the **day of vengeance** of our God; to **comfort** all that mourn; 3 To appoint unto them that mourn in Zion, to give unto them **beauty** for ashes, the **oil of joy** for mourning, the garment of **praise** for the spirit of heaviness; that they might be called trees of

¹ Also Mark 14:1, 3, 8.

righteousness, the planting of the LORD, that He [*God the Father*] might be glorified.

Jesus Christ was anointed by God the Father to be the Messenger of God—to bring a message of the Gospel, healing, and liberty to the world. In contrast, the two anointings prior to His sacrifice were for His burial. There is much meaning behind anointings because they symbolize cleansing or separation unto holiness. You can find messages on cleansing on the website, but I think it is possible that these anointings symbolized that God “examined” Jesus Christ and found Him to be the perfect (“without blemish”²) sacrificial Passover Lamb with whom God the Father was well pleased:

ISAIAH 53:10 Yet it **pleased the LORD** [*God the Father*] to bruise Him [*Jesus Christ*]; He [*God the Father*] hath put Him [*Jesus Christ*] to grief: when **Thou [God the Father] shalt make His [Jesus Christ] soul an offering for sin**, He [*God the Father*] shall see His [*Jesus Christ*] seed, He [*God the Father*] shall prolong His [*Jesus Christ*] days, and the pleasure of the LORD [*God the Father*] shall prosper in His [*Jesus Christ*] hand.

Just a few days prior, the priests decided that Jesus must die on Passover (John 11:53). Essentially, they unwittingly “accepted” God’s true Lamb. They planned His death, so the anointings were for His burial. Following the anointings is the wondrous event when Jesus is proclaimed King:

JOHN 12:12-17 **On the next day**, a great crowd of people who had come for the feast, when they heard that Jesus was coming into Jerusalem, **13 Took branches from palm trees** and went out to meet Him, and **were shouting, “Hosanna! Blessed is He Who comes in the name of the Lord, the King of Israel.”** 14 Now **after finding a young donkey, Jesus sat upon it**, exactly as it is written: 15 **“Fear not, daughter of Sion. Behold, your King comes, sitting on a colt of a donkey.”** 16 And His disciples did not understand these things at the beginning; but when **Jesus was glorified**, then they remembered that these things were written about Him, and that they had done these things to Him.

Depending upon the meaning of “on the next day,” Jesus might have ridden into Jerusalem on Abib/Nissan 10 when the Passover lambs were chosen³—it was certainly no earlier than the 9th. This fulfilled the prophecies in Isaiah 62:11 and Zechariah 9:9. However, it also fulfilled a prophecy in Psalms:

PSALMS 118:25-26 **Save now [yasha`]**, I beseech You, O LORD; O LORD, I beseech You, cause us to prosper now. 26 Blessed is **He who comes** in the name of the LORD [*God the Father*]; we have blessed You **out of the house of the LORD [God the Father]**.

² Exod. 12:5.

³ Exod. 12:3.

The word *hosanna* in John 12:13 is not Greek, but Hebrew. It is the transliteration of two Hebrew words *yasha`na'*. It means *O save* and is the same word used in Ps. 118:25. That is exactly what Isaiah 61:1-3 described—that salvation of God through Jesus Christ. But now notice the next verse:

PSALMS 118:27 The LORD is God and He has made His light to shine upon us.
Bind the festival sacrifice with cords even unto the horns of the altar.

Jesus had already been chosen as God's sacrificial Lamb when He finally came to Jerusalem. As the Passover sacrifice, He was bound with cords on the night of his arrest. John records this fulfillment:

JOHN 18:12 Then the band and the chief captain and the officers of the Jews took hold of Jesus, and **bound** Him;

Now we come to one of the most important fulfillments written in the Bible: Jesus glorified God the Father:

JOHN 12:23, 28-30 But Jesus answered them, saying, "The time has come for **the Son of man to be glorified.** ... 28 **Father, glorify Your name.**" Then a **voice came from heaven, saying, "I have both glorified it and will glorify it again."** 29 Then the people standing *there*, who heard *it*, said, "It thundered." Others said, "An angel spoke to Him." 30 Jesus answered and said, "This voice did not come because of Me, but because of you.

That God the Father was glorified was mentioned at the end of Isaiah 61:3, "... the planting [*Jesus Christ*] of **the LORD, that He [God the Father] might be glorified.**" It also fulfills the prophecy in Ps. 118:27: "**God [the Father] made His light [of glory] to shine upon us.**" All that Jesus Christ did GLORIFIED God the Father and, because of His obedience and sacrifice, God the Father also glorified Jesus.

While John omits it, Luke mentions that the glorification of God the Father and Jesus Christ was such a majestic part of the events prior to the crucifixion that if people did not proclaim Their praise, then the stones themselves would cry out:

LUKE 19:38-40 38 Saying, "Blessed be the King [*Jesus Christ*], Who comes in the name of the Lord [*God the Father*]. Peace in heaven and **glory in the highest!**" 39 And some of the Pharisees in the multitude said to Him, "Master, rebuke Your disciples." 40 But He answered *and* said to them, "I tell you that **if these were silent, the stones would cry out.**"

The next verses not only continue to describe the "light" of God's glory, but also bring out another prophetic fulfillment:

JOHN 12:31-36a Now is *the* judgment of this world. Now shall the prince of this world be cast out. 32 And if **I be lifted up** from the earth, **I will draw all to Myself.**" 33 But He said this to signify by what death He was about to die. 34 The people answered Him, "**We have heard out of the law that the Christ lives**

forever, and why do You say that the Son of man must be lifted up? Who is this Son of man?" 35 Then Jesus said to them, "**Yet a little while the light is with you.** Walk while you have the light, so that *the* darkness will not overtake you. For the one who walks in darkness does not know where he is going. 36 **While you have the light, believe in the light, so that you may become the children of light.**" ...

The Jews knew from the Law, Prophets, and Writings that the prophesied Savior was an eternal being. The fact that Jesus came in the flesh and died was a major stumbling block for them. This was another fulfillment of prophecy⁴:

JOHN 12:37-46 Although **He had done so many miracles in their presence, they did not believe in Him,** 38 So that **the word of Isaiah the prophet might be fulfilled** who said, "**Lord, who has believed our report?** And to whom has the arm of *the* Lord been revealed?" 39 For this *very* reason **they could not believe** because again Isaiah said, 40 "He has blinded their eyes and hardened their hearts so that they would not see with *their* eyes and understand with *their* hearts, and be converted, and I would heal them." 41 Isaiah said these things when he saw His glory and spoke concerning Him⁵. 42 But even so, many among the rulers believed in Him; but because of the Pharisees they did not confess *Him*, so that they would not be put out of the synagogue; 43 For they loved the glory of men more than **the glory of God.** 44 Then Jesus called out and said, "The one who believes in Me does not believe in Me, but in Him Who sent Me. 45 And the one who sees Me sees Him Who sent Me. 46 **I have come as a light into the world** so that everyone who believes in Me may not remain in darkness.

The Passover is a solemn remembrance of Jesus Christ and His sacrifice. It is a time to remember that He was betrayed, falsely accused and tried, shamed, tormented, scourged, beaten, tortured, nailed to a cross, killed with a spear, and buried in the earth—all so that **our** sins may be forgiven and **we** might receive the gift of eternal life. It was the day that God our Christ **died** for us. The remembrance of Passover is a time of humble and solemn remembrance, worship, praise, respect, honor, and glory to the Most High Father and His beloved Son who is the Passover Lamb. But then Jesus was resurrected and the time is at hand when the fullness of heavenly joy will be upon all those who believe and trust in God the Father and Jesus Christ!

May God's grace and peace be upon you!

Steven Greene

<https://sabbathreflections.org>
sabbathreflections@gmail.com

⁴ Isa. 53:1

⁵ Isa. 6:1-4.