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The Final Week of Jesus Christ's Ministry - Tuesday

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THE FINAL WEEK OF JESUS CHRIST'S MINISTRY—TUESDAY

TUESDAY

- **THE OUTLINE**

- A. The withering of the fig tree Jesus had previously cursed (Mt. 21:19b-22)
- B. His comments on the faith that removes mountains (Mk. 11:22-24)
- C. His confrontations with the Jewish leaders
 - 1. The Herodians (Mt. 22:15-22; Mk. 12:13-17; Lk. 20:20-26)
 - 2. The Sadducees (Mt. 22:23-33; Mk. 12:18-27; Lk. 20:27-38)
 - 3. The Pharisees (Mt. 22:34-46; Mk. 12:28-34).
- D. His condemnation of the Jewish leaders (Mt. 23:1-36; Mk. 12:38-40; Lk. 20:45-47)
 - 1. They gave the word *hypocrisy* a bad name!
 - 2. Their lives were roadblocks to God's Kingdom.
 - 3. They taught their converts to be the same.
 - 4. They made oaths but had no intention of honoring them.
 - 5. They were like whitewashed tombs, beautiful on the outside but full of rotting bones on the inside.
 - 6. Their descendants had murdered the prophets in the past.
 - 7. They themselves would soon do the same in regard to both present and future prophets.
- E. He commends a poor widow for her sacrificial gift (Mk. 12:41-44; Lk. 21:1-4).
- F. He weeps over the sins of Jerusalem (Mt. 23:37).
- G. He delivers the Mount Olivet Discourse (Mt. 24:1-25, 46; Mk. 13:1-37; Lk. 19:43, 44; 21:5-11, 20-24, 29-36).

- **THE ANALYSIS**

Jesus' confrontations with the Pharisees: All throughout His ministry, Jesus had tangled with the Pharisees who had constantly attempted to either accuse or ensnare Him.

- A. Prior Confrontations

They said:

- 1. He violated the Sabbath

"Therefore said some of the Pharisees, This man is not of God, because he keepeth not the Sabbath day. Others said, How can a man that is a sinner do such miracles? And there was a division among them." (Jn. 9:16)

2. He had transgressed the traditions of the Father (Mk. 7:5-9, 13).
3. He did not insist upon His disciples observing the many feasts (Mk. 2:18-20).
4. He ate and associated with sinners (Mk. 2:15-17).
5. He was a blasphemer:
 - (a) Because He claimed to forgive sin (Mt. 9:1-3)
 - (b) Because He claimed to be God (Jn. 10:31-33)
6. He was actually energized by Satan himself (Mt. 12:22, 24).

B. Passion Tuesday Confrontations

1. Concerning the source of His authority

"And they come again to Jerusalem: and as he was walking in the temple, there come to him the chief priests, and the scribes, and the elders, And say unto him, By what authority doest thou these things? and who gave thee this authority to do these things? And Jesus answered and said unto them, I will also ask of you one question, and answer me, and I will tell you by what authority I do these things. The baptism of John, was it from heaven, or of men? answer me. And they reasoned with themselves, saying, If we shall say, From heaven; he will say, Why then did ye not believe him? But if we shall say, Of men; they feared the people: for all men counted John, that he was a prophet indeed. And they answered and said unto Jesus, We cannot tell. And Jesus answering saith unto them, Neither do I tell you by what authority I do these things." (Mk. 11:27-33)

2. Concerning paying tribute to Caesar

"And they asked him, saying, Master, we know that thou sayest and teachest rightly, neither acceptest thou the person of any, but teachest the way of God truly: Is it lawful for us to give tribute unto Caesar, or no? But he perceived their craftiness, and said unto them, Why tempt ye me? Shew me a penny. Whose image and superscription hath it? They answered and said, Caesar's. And he said unto them, Render therefore unto Caesar the things which be Caesar's, and unto God the things which be God's. And they could not take hold of his words before the people: and they marvelled at his answer, and held their peace." (Lk. 20:21-26)

R. C. Foster observes:

Two general types of tribute were paid to Rome: taxes and customs. For the collection of taxes, levied with the assistance of the Sanhedrin throughout the eleven districts of Judaea, the Roman procurator was responsible. Herod Antipas and Philip were responsible for the taxes in their respective tetrarchies. Much of these taxes was spent upon the upkeep of roads, harbors,

public buildings, and the governments. The remainder was sent on to Rome. The right to collect customs having been purchased by senatorial corporations in Rome, these taxes were collected by them through the commissioners and the horde of publicans they employed. Customs included export and import duties, bridge and harbor tolls, market taxes, tax on salt and many similar duties. While the system of collection was full of corruption and the publicans notorious for extortion, the Romans in general had a genius for government and maintained their dominions most efficiently. They preserved law and order, permitted remarkable freedom of local rule and worship, and built such highways and buildings as have resisted the march of time in an astonishing way. (*Studies in the Life of Christ*, Baker Books, Grand Rapids, Mich., 1979, p. 1137)

3. Concerning the resurrection

"The same day came to him the Sadducees, which say that there is no resurrection, and asked him, Saying, Master, Moses said, If a man die, having no children, his brother shall marry his wife, and raise up seed unto his brother. Now there were with us seven brethren: and the first, when he had married a wife, deceased, and, having no issue, left his wife unto his brother: Likewise the second also, and the third, unto the seventh. And last of all the woman died also. Therefore in the resurrection whose wife shall she be of the seven? for they all had her. Jesus answered and said unto them, Ye do err, not knowing the scriptures, nor the power of God. For in the resurrection they neither marry, nor are given in marriage, but are as the angels of God in heaven. But as touching the resurrection of the dead, have ye not read that which was spoken unto you by God, saying, I am the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob? God is not the God of the dead, but of the living. And when the multitude heard this, they were astonished at his doctrine." (Mt. 22:23-33)

This ignorance of God's Word had always been Israel's problem. The Old Testament prophets often testified of this:

"The ox knoweth his owner, and the ass his master's crib: but Israel doth not know, my people doth not consider." (Isa. 1:3)

"My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge: because thou hast rejected knowledge, I will also reject thee, that thou shalt be no priest to me: seeing thou hast forgotten the law of thy God, I will also forget thy children" (Hos. 4:6).

"Behold, the days come, saith the Lord GOD, that I will send a famine in the land, not a famine of bread, nor a thirst for water, but of hearing the words of the LORD: And they shall wander from sea to sea, and from the north even to the east, they shall run to and fro to seek the word of the LORD, and shall not find it." (Amos 8:11-12)

4. Concerning the greatest commandment

"And one of the scribes came, and having heard them reasoning together, and perceiving that he had answered them well, asked him, Which is the first commandment of all? And

Jesus answered him, The first of all the commandments is, Hear, O Israel; The Lord our God is one Lord: And thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, and with all thy strength: this is the first commandment. And the second is like, namely this, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. There is none other commandment greater than these. And the scribe said unto him, Well, Master, thou hast said the truth: for there is one God; and there is none other but he: And to love him with all the heart, and with all the understanding, and with all the soul, and with all the strength, and to love his neighbour as himself, is more than all whole burnt offerings and sacrifices. And when Jesus saw that he answered discreetly, he said unto him, Thou art not far from the kingdom of God. And no man after that durst ask him any question" (Mk. 12:28-34)

The "Hear, O Israel" phrase (12:29) is known as the "shema," named after the first word of Deuteronomy 6:4 in Hebrew which means "hear." The Shema became the Jewish confession of faith, which was recited by pious Jews every morning and evening. To this day it begins every synagogue service.

As Jesus stated, the Ten Commandments are aptly summarized by these two statements:

- (a) The first statement is vertical in nature, and covers commands 1-4 (Exod. 20:3-11).
- (b) The second statement is horizontal in nature, and covers commands 5-10 (Exod. 20:12-17).

5. Concerning the deity of the Messiah

"While the Pharisees were gathered together, Jesus asked them, Saying, What think ye of Christ? whose son is he? They say unto him, The son of David. He saith unto them, How then doth David in spirit call him Lord, saying, The LORD said unto my Lord, Sit thou on my right hand, till I make thine enemies thy footstool? if David then call him Lord, how is he his son? And no man was able to answer him a word, neither durst any man from that day forth ask him any more questions. " (Mt. 22:41-46)

Warren Wiersbe observes:

Jesus did not phrase this question as He had when He asked His disciples, 'Whom say you that I am?' (Mt. 16:15). These men who had been arguing with Him were not sympathetic with His cause, nor were they honest in their assessment of His credentials. Jesus had to take an indirect approach with His enemies. He made this sound like another theological question, when in reality it was the most important personal question they would ever face.

'Whose Son is the Messiah?' He asked them. As trained experts in the Law, they knew the answer: 'He is the Son of David.' Had they been asked, they could have referred to numbers of Old Testament Scriptures, including 2 Sam. 7:12-13; Psa. 78:68-72, and Micah 5:2. Once they had given this answer, Jesus asked a second question, this time quoting from Psa. 110:1 – 'The LORD [Jehovah] said

unto my Lord [Hebrew 'Adonai] ', 'Sit Thou at My right hand, until I make Thine enemies Thy footstool.'

Every orthodox Jewish scholar interpreted this to refer to the Messiah. Only the Messiah could sit at the right hand of Jehovah God. Jesus believed in the inspiration and accuracy of the Old Testament Scriptures, for He said that David spoke these words *'in the Spirit'* (v. 43, NASB). Nobody dared to question the accuracy or the authority of the text.

'If Messiah is David's Son,' Jesus asked, *'then how could Messiah also be David's Lord?'* There is only one answer to this question. As God, Messiah is David's Lord; as man, He is David's Son. He is both *'the root and the offspring of David'* (Rev. 22:16). Psalm 110:1 teaches the deity and the humanity of Messiah. He is David's Lord and He is David's Son.

When He was ministering on earth, Jesus often accepted the messianic title *'Son of David'* (see Mt. 9:27; 12:23; 15:22; 20:30-31; 21:9, 15). The rulers had heard the multitudes proclaim Him as *'Son of David'* when He rode into Jerusalem. The fact that He accepted this title is evidence that Jesus knew Himself to be the Messiah, the Son of God. As God, He was David's Lord; but as man, He was David's Son, for He was born into the family of David (Mt. 1:1, 20).

The scholars in that day were confused about the Messiah. They saw two pictures of Messiah in the Old Testament and could not reconcile them. One picture showed a suffering servant, the other a conquering and reigning monarch. Were there two Messiahs? How could God's servant suffer and die? (See 1 Peter 1:10-12.)

Had they listened to what Jesus said, they would have learned that there was only one Messiah, but that He would be both human and divine. He would suffer and die as a sacrifice for sins. He would then rise from the dead in triumph, and one day return to defeat His enemies. However, these religious leaders had their own ideas, and they did not want to change. If they had accepted His teaching, then they would also have to accept Him as the Messiah, and this they were unwilling to do.

The result of this day of dialogue was silence on the part of His enemies. They dared not ask Jesus any more questions, not because they had believed the truth, but because they were afraid to face the truth. *'For they did not have courage to question Him any longer about anything'* (Lk. 20:40, NASB). But neither did they have courage to face the truth and act upon it. (*Meet Your King*, Victor Books, pp. 162-163, 1980)

- Jesus' condemnation of the Pharisees

- A. Their words and their works were totally unrelated:

"Then spake Jesus to the multitude, and to his disciples, Saying The scribes and the Pharisees sit in Moses' seat: All therefore whatsoever they bid you observe, that observe and do; but do not ye after their works: for they say, and do not." (Mt. 23:1-3)

B. They placed grievous weights of their own vain traditions upon the shoulders of men (23:4).

C. They dressed and performed only for the praise of men:

1. Wearing fancy prayer boxes (23:5)
2. Displaying lavish garments (23:5)
3. Occupying prominent places at feasts and in synagogues (23:6)
4. Demanding to be addressed by their full titles (23:7)

D. They not only refused to enter into the kingdom of heaven, but stood in the doorway to prevent others from entering (23:13).

E. They cheated poor widows out of their homes (23:14).

F. They repeated long and insincere prayers (23:14).

G. They made converts and taught them their evil ways:

"Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye compass sea and land to make one proselyte, and when he is made, ye make him twofold more the child of hell than yourselves." (Mt. 23:15)

H. They uttered their oaths of promise with forked tongues (23:16-22).

I. They had, in their legalistic bondage, perverted the very Law of Moses.

1. In their tithing

"Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye pay tithe of mint and anise and cummin, and have omitted the weightier matters of the law, judgment, mercy, and faith: these ought ye to have done, and not to leave the other undone. Ye blind guides, which strain at a gnat, and swallow a camel." (Mt. 23:23-24)

In their deceitful tithing practices, they had actually done violence to their own parents. Mark records Jesus' word on this:

"For Moses said, Honour thy father and thy mother; and, Whoso curseth father or mother, let him die the death: But ye say, If a man shall say to his father or mother, it is Corban, that is to say, a gift, by whatsoever thou mightest be profited by me; he shall be free." (Mk. 7:10-11)

John Grassmick writes:

Corban is the Greek (and English) transliteration of a Hebrew term used to refer to a gift devoted to God. It was a dedicatory formula pronounced over money and property donated to the temple and its service by an inviolable

vow. Such gifts could only be used for religious purposes. If a son declared that the resources needed to support his aging parents were Corban, then, according to scribal tradition, he was exempt from this command of God, and his parents were legally excluded from any claim on him. The scribes emphasized that his vow was unalterable (cf. Num. 30) and held priority over his family responsibilities. So they no longer let him do anything for his parents. (*The Bible Commentary*, Victor Books, Wheaton, III, 1983, p. 133)

Thus, by this despicable method, the wicked Jewish leaders were deliberately violating the Fifth Commandment. Centuries before, Isaiah had written concerning this sad and sordid thing:

"Wherefore the Lord said, Forasmuch as this people draw near me with their mouth, and with their lips do honour me, but have removed their heart far from me, and their fear toward me is taught by the precept of men" (Isa. 29:13).

Note the phrase, "swallow a camel." The strict Pharisee would carefully strain his drinking water through a cloth to make sure he did not unknowingly swallow a gnat, the smallest of unclean creatures. But, in a figurative sense, by his double standard of life, he would knowingly swallow a camel, one of the largest of unclean creatures.

2. In their ritual washings

"Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye make clean the outside of the cup and of the platter, but within they are full of extortion and excess. Thou blind Pharisee, cleanse first that which is within the cup and platter, that the outside of them may be clean also" (Mt. 23:25-26).

J. They had polished exteriors, but polluted interiors (23:27-28) – *"Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye are like unto whited sepulchres, which indeed appear beautiful outward, but are within full of dead men's bones, and of all uncleanness."* (Mt. 23:27)

K. They revered the memories of their murderous fathers (23:29-32).

L. They were, in fact, descendants from a race of religious snakes (23:33)

M. They would later kill God's prophets

"Wherefore, behold, I send unto you prophets, and wise men, and scribes: and some of them ye shall kill and crucify; and some of them shall ye scourge in your synagogues, and persecute them from city to city." (Mt. 23:34)

N. They had already killed God's prophets

"That upon you may come all the righteous blood shed upon the earth, from the blood of righteous Abel unto the blood of Zacharias son of Barachias, whom ye slew between the temple and the altar." (Mt. 23:35)

Here Jesus summarized the past cruel action of the unsaved Jewish leaders by referring to the first and last Old Testament martyrs. The killing of Abel is recorded in Genesis 4:8, in Scripture's first book; and the killing of Zechariah in 2 Chronicles 24:20-22, the final book of the Hebrew Bible.

O. Jesus commends a poor widow.

"And he looked up, and saw the rich men casting their gifts into the treasury. And he saw also a certain poor widow casting in thither two mites. And he said, Of a truth I say unto you, that this poor widow hath cast in more than they all: For all these have of their abundance cast in unto the offerings of God: but she of her penury hath cast in all the living that she had." (Lk. 21:1-4)

Her sacrificial gift here was in stark contrast to the hypocritical giving of many rich people. Our Lord warned of this during His Sermon on the Mount.

"Take heed that ye do not your alms before men, to be seen of them: otherwise ye have no reward of your Father which is in heaven. Therefore when thou doest thine alms, do not sound a trumpet before thee, as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and in the streets, that they may have glory of men. Verily I say unto you, They have their reward. But when thou doest alms, let not thy left hand know what thy right hand doeth: That thine alms may be in secret: and thy Father which seeth in secret himself shall reward thee openly." (Mt. 6:1-4)

P. Jesus weeps over the City of Jerusalem.

1. First occasion

"And when he was come near, he beheld the city, and wept over it, Saying, If thou hadst known, even thou, at least in this thy day, the things which belong unto thy peace! but now they are hid from thine eyes. For the days shall come upon thee, that thine enemies shall cast a trench about thee, and compass thee round, and keep thee in on every side, And shall lay thee even with the ground, and thy children within thee, and they shall not leave in thee one stone upon another; because thou knewest not the time of thy visitation." (Lk. 19:41-44)

The famous Bible student, Sir Robert Anderson, has attached great meaning to the three words, "this thy day." According to the prophecy in Dan. 9:24-27 (often called the 70-week prophecy) God told Daniel he would deal with Israel for yet another 70 "weeks," which is usually interpreted as 490 years. The prophecy continued that after 69 of these "weeks," or 483 years, the Messiah would be "cut off" (rejected and crucified). The prophecy was to start on March 14, 445 B.C. Mr. Anderson suggests that if one begins counting forward from that day, he discovers that the 483 years (173,880 days) runs out on April 6, A.D. 32. It was on this exact day that Jesus rode into Jerusalem on the foal of an ass and, although welcomed by the masses, was officially rejected by Israel's leaders. According to Sir Robert, all this was in mind when our Lord uttered the words of this statement.

2. Second occasion

"O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, thou that killest the prophets, and stonest them which are sent unto thee, how often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not! Behold, your house is left unto you desolate. For I say unto you, Ye shall not see me henceforth, till ye shall say, Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord." (Mt. 23:37-39)

Note especially Jesus' reference to *"your house"* (the temple) here as contrasted to the *"my house"* statements of John 2:16 and Matthew 21:13. At this point Israel is set aside for the duration of the Church age (see Mt. 21:33-46). Jesus' statement in 23:39 will someday be gloriously fulfilled. *"Blessed be he that cometh in the name of the Lord: we have blessed you out of the house of the Lord."* (Psa. 118:26)

Q. Jesus delivers the Mt. Olivet Discourse (Mt. 24)

- **The Content of Christ's Sermon (Mt. 24:1-26, 30)**

1. His remarks concerning the Temple destruction (24:1-3)
 - a. The pride (24:1): Israel takes great pride in the Temple.
 - b. The prophecy (24:2-3)
 - (1) Jesus' revelation (24:2): The Temple will someday be completely demolished!
 - (2) The disciples' request (24:3): The disciples want to know when!
2. His remarks concerning the first part of the Tribulation destruction (24:1-4):
 - a. A time of apostasy (24:4-5, 11)

The rise of false prophets (24:11): False prophets will lead the people astray.

The rise of false christs (24:4-5): False messiahs will lead the people astray.
 - b. A time of anarchy (24:6-8): Wars will break out!
 - c. A time of apathy (24:12-13): The love of many will grow cold.
 - d. A time of affliction (24:9-10): Believers will be hated, betrayed, and martyred.
 - e. A time of accomplishment (24:14): The gospel will be preached to all nations.

R. His remarks concerning the final part of the Tribulation destruction (24:15-26, 29):

- Events of the final three and a half years—the most severe part of the Great Tribulation.
 1. The wickedness against God (24:15-26)
 - a. What the enemy will do (24:15, 23-26):

Construct the sacrilegious object that causes desecration

 - (1) The statue (24:15): Assumed from Rev. 13:14-18
 - (2) The subtlety (24:23-26): Many claim to be Christ.

- b. What the elect are to do (24:16-22): Run for the mountains!
 - 2. The wrath from God (24:29)
 - a. The sun will be darkened (24:29a).
 - b. The moon will not give light 24:29b).
 - c. The stars will fall from the sky (24:29c).
 - d. The powers of heaven will be shaken (24:29d).
- **The Climax of Christ's Sermon (24:27-28, 30-31, 40-41): The Second Coming**
 - A. The signal (24:30): The Son of Man will appear in the heavens.
 - B. The swiftness (24:27): As the lightning flashes across the sky.
 - C. The summons (24:31): Angels will be sent forth with a mighty trumpet blast to gather the people of Israel from the farthest ends of the earth and heaven.
 - D. The slaughter (24:28, 40-41): Armageddon!
 - 1. The assembling of the victims (24:40-41): One will be taken, another left.
 - 2. The appearing of the vultures (24:28): To eat the bodies of the slain warriors!
- **The Clue to Christ's Sermon (Mt. 24:32-35): The rebirth of Israel**
 - A. The parable (Mt. 24:32): a sprouting fig tree
 - B. The prophecy (Mt. 24:33, 34)
 - 1. The when (Mt. 24:33)
 - 2. The who (Mt. 24:34)
 - C. The permanence (Mt. 24:35): Heaven and earth will pass away, but His word is eternal.
- **The Challenge from Christ's Sermon (Mt. 24:36, 42): Be watchful.**
 - A. The reason for this watchfulness (Mt. 24:36, 42): No one knows when Christ will come!
 - B. The reminder of this watchfulness (Mt. 24:37-39)
 - C. The reaction to this watchfulness (Mt. 24:43-51)
 - a. The wise servant (Mt. 24:43-47): He watches and is rewarded.
 - b. The wicked servant (Mt. 24:48-51): He ignores the warning and is condemned.