

Jesus Returns to Jerusalem

Grace: Ask for the grace to better know and understand Jesus so that your love for Jesus will grow and your desire to imitate him will increase.

Introduction:

You have experienced that Jesus sometimes gets into trouble. Nevertheless, you have remained with Jesus even if you do not understand why Jesus says or does certain things.

You know that some people are after Jesus. It is no secret that the Pharisees and Sadducees have a bone to pick with Jesus. Perhaps you think it is better to let it rest for a while and not shove it in their faces. Maybe, if Jesus could just be quiet for a while the Pharisees and Sadducees might come around.

Perhaps you feel that Jesus should regroup his forces and be a little more politically suave. There are those who might sympathize with Jesus if given the chance. You may have tried to reason with Jesus but it does not seem to be working. Jesus seems to have his mind set. How are you feeling about Jesus and his mission? There is good reason to be concerned and worried. Going back to Jerusalem seems crazy.

Journey with Jesus as he goes back to the city considered to be the heart of Judaism. Ask the Holy Spirit to guide your decision in picking a Scripture passage. Perhaps the Spirit is guiding you to accompany Jesus as he overlooks Jerusalem and weeps, or to enter with Jesus when the crowds are waving palms and things are looking up, or perhaps you go with Jesus to the temple and Jesus seems to go crazy.

As you prepare to enter the Third Week of the Spiritual Exercises, your commitment to Jesus will be challenged. Trust the Holy Spirit to guide you and listen to Jesus. What is Jesus asking of you, His close and personal friend? Do you need to hear Jesus explain what is going to happen? Do you watch Jesus mourn? Do you watch the crowds welcome him? Do you go with Jesus to the temple?

You have heard Jesus speak, you have seen him get emotional, you have watched the crowds respond to Him, and you have seen Jesus in the temple before. Yet, now something is different about all of these things.

Open your heart to Jesus during this important time in His life. Now, more than ever, Jesus is leading you and you are truly beginning to follow him. Ask Mary for advice on how you can best support Jesus. Speak with God about your concern for Jesus.



Lord Jesus, You tried with all Your might to help people understand the Spirit's teaching. You grieved that they wanted You, or someone, to take away their responsibility for their lives. When they extolled You, You did not rely on that. You went Your way, anointed by the love of faithful friends, anointed for Your death.

Matthew 21:1-17 Messianic entry - As they approached Jerusalem and came to Bethphage on the Mount of Olives, Jesus sent two disciples, saying to them, "Go to the village ahead of you, and at once you will find a donkey tied there, with her colt by her. Untie them and bring them to me. If anyone says anything to you, tell him that the Lord needs them, and he will send them right away." This took place to fulfill what was spoken through the prophet: "Say to the Daughter of Zion, 'See, your king comes to you, gentle and riding on a donkey, on a colt, the foal of a donkey.'" The disciples went and did as Jesus had instructed them. They brought the donkey and the colt, placed their cloaks on them, and Jesus sat on them. A very large crowd spread their cloaks on the road, while others cut branches from the trees and spread them on the road. The crowds that went ahead of him and those that followed shouted, "Hosanna to the Son of David!" "Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord!" "Hosanna in the highest!" When Jesus entered Jerusalem, the whole city was stirred and asked, "Who is this?" The crowds answered, "This is Jesus, the prophet from Nazareth in Galilee."

Matthew 21:12-17 Jesus at the Temple - Jesus entered the temple area and drove out all who were buying and selling there. He overturned the tables of the money changers and the benches of those selling doves. "It is written," he said to them, " 'My house will be called a house of prayer,' but you are making it a 'den of robbers.'" The blind and the lame came to him at the temple, and he healed them. But when the chief priests and the teachers of the law saw the wonderful things he did and the children shouting in the temple area, "Hosanna to the Son of David," they were indignant. "Do you hear what these children are saying?" they asked him. "Yes," replied Jesus, "have you never read, " 'From the lips of children and infants you have ordained praise?'" And he left them and went out of the city to Bethany, where he spent the night.



Mark 11:15-19, Cleansing of the temple - On reaching Jerusalem, Jesus entered the temple area and began driving out those who were buying and selling there. He overturned the tables of the money changers and the benches of those selling doves, and would not allow anyone to carry merchandise through the temple courts. And as he taught them, he said, "Is it not written: " 'My house will be called a house of prayer for all nations'? But you have made it 'a den of robbers.'" The chief priests and the teachers of the law heard this and began looking for a way to kill him, for they feared him, because the whole crowd was amazed at his teaching. When evening came, they went out of the city.



Luke 19:41-44 Lament over Jerusalem - As he approached Jerusalem and saw the city, he wept over it and said, "If you, even you, had only known on this day what would bring you peace—but now it is hidden from your eyes. The days will come upon you when your enemies will build an embankment against you and encircle you and hem you in on every side. They will dash you to the ground, you and the children within your walls. They will not leave one stone on another, because you did not recognize the time of God's coming to you."

Matthew 16:21-28 Jesus Predicts His Death -

From that time on Jesus began to explain to his disciples that he must go to Jerusalem and suffer many things at the hands of the elders, chief priests and teachers of the law, and that he must be killed and on the third day be raised to life. Peter took him aside and began to rebuke him. "Never, Lord!" he said. "This shall never happen to you!" Jesus turned and said to Peter, "Get behind me, Satan! You are a stumbling block to me; you do not have in mind the things of God, but the things of men." Then Jesus said to his disciples, "If anyone would come after me, he must deny himself and take up his cross and follow me. For whoever wants to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for me will find it. What good will it be for a man if he gains the whole world, yet forfeits his soul? Or what can a man give in exchange for his soul? For the Son of Man is going to come in his Father's glory with his angels, and then he will reward each person according to what he has done. I tell you the truth, some who are standing here will not taste death before they see the Son of Man coming in his kingdom."

In these or similar words ... In the passage, the quote that stood out to me was when Jesus said, “The days will come upon when your enemies will build an embankment against you and encircle you and him and you in on every side.” Jesus was scared but his faith in God and his trust got him through the punishment that lied in front of him. An enemy that is constantly encircling me in my life is cancer. Everywhere I look people are getting diagnosed with cancer, for instance my dad and one of my good friend’s mom. When I found out my dad had cancer and is still battling it today, I was quite angry. I felt as if this enemy in disguise is corrupting my family and I was angry with God. I couldn’t understand why this would happen to my dad. There were plenty of times during those stages when I lost sight of God and lost my faith because of the single question. Why do bad things happen to good people? At times I needed someone to talk to and I gradually started talking to God again. I don’t have the faith Jesus had but it is improving everyday with every word I say to him and I’m starting to trust him that everything will be OK and this is all part of his plan. As I walk over to Jesus laying down crying over Jerusalem, I gently put my arm around his shoulder and helped him to his feet. Very concerned I say to him why are you doing this Lord? This is suicide and I can’t sit aside and watch my God and my best friend die. He looked at me with watery eyes he said, “You must. This is far more important and beyond our control. My life is in my Father’s hands and you must truly believe that his plan in the long run is better for us and filled with joy.” I stop and begin to feel warm drops of water down my cheek and I turn to Jesus and say. “I need your help to learn to trust and have absolute faith in the Lord.” Jesus just smiled and said, “It will come in time. Just be open with your experiences.”

Practicing What You Preach ... To better understand the Jesus’ desire to return to Jerusalem, the heart of Judaism, consider becoming more involved and aware of the universal Church. Often, you may think of the Church as the building you go to on Sunday for Mass; however, Jesus was not returning to just visit a building. He was returning to the heart of Judaism. Similarly, you may want to visit the Vatican in Rome or go to Mass at your local Cathedral. If traveling is not an option, consider some of the Papal Encyclicals by visiting <http://www.papalencyclicals.net/>. The goal is to better understand what is happening with the larger Church and to get in touch with your spiritual roots.