

Synopsis & Context – Session # 25: Jesus, The Son of God

Who do you say I am? It was the most important question Peter was ever asked. People did not know what to make of this Jesus. He was like no other rabbi. His claims about himself seemed outrageous for any *man*. Some two thousand years had passed since God promised Abraham that through his seed all nations would be blessed. A thousand years had passed since God promised David that his descendant would reign forever. Now, in Jesus, God's mission of salvation was approaching its finale. This makes Jesus' question and Peter's answer to the question all the more foundational.

"You are the Messiah," Peter confessed. Then Jesus began to teach the disciples that this mission of God included suffering, death, and a resurrection from the dead. They objected to this notion that God's anointed one should experience that, but Jesus rebuked them. In fact, Jesus taught His disciples that they too would need to lose their lives to save them, they would need to pick up their own cross.

Jesus took Peter, James, and John up a mountain and gave them a glimpse of his glory. When He was transfigured before their very eyes, they fell face down in fear. They did not know how to respond.

Jesus had often made "I Am" statements connecting Himself to the name YHWH or "I Am." At the Transfiguration a voice from heaven stated that Jesus was the Son of God, thereby confirming His assertions (just as it had at the Baptism of Jesus). *I AM the light of the world. I AM the bread of life.* But Jesus' claims were, to the Pharisees, nothing short of blasphemy; their hatred of Him ripened into an assassination plot.

The march toward Jerusalem continued. His time was fast approaching and He had to prepare the disciples for what lay ahead. He told them that the kingdom of God is accessible to those with childlike trust and humility, not through performance. Along the way, Jesus met a rich young man who had performed well since childhood. Jesus told him that discipleship, for him, would mean giving away his riches. Unable to part with earthly wealth, the young man walked away from Jesus' offer. So strong is the lure of riches that, as far as the gospels record, this is the only time Jesus' offer was refused. For the third time, Jesus told them that His work included suffering, death, and a resurrection after three days.

I AM the resurrection and the life. Despite getting word that His friend Lazarus was on his deathbed, Jesus delayed His journey. By the time He arrived, Lazarus had been entombed for four long days. Sisters Mary and Martha mourned their brother's death, disappointed that Jesus had not arrived in time to heal him, but at Jesus' command, Lazarus walked out of his tomb. The dead now live.

Now it was time for Jesus' grand entrance. Jesus mounts not a chariot or mighty horse, but the donkey colt and triumphantly rode into Jerusalem as people laid down their coats and branches on the road and hailed Him as the long awaited King, son of David!

Jesus was preparing to glorify the Father's name. He continued to offer eternal life to all who would believe. The incensed Pharisees instilled fear in many; some who did believe kept quiet. Still Jesus reveals God's redemptive plan. *Who do you say I am?* It is the single most important question that we each must answer. *Who is Jesus for you?*



Chapter 25: Jesus, The Son of God is 'woven' from selections from all four Gospels as a composite sketch: Matthew (Chs. 17, 21), Mark (Chs. 8-12, 14), Luke (Chs. 9, 22) and John (Chs. 7-8, 11-12).

Plot Points for Chapter 25: Jesus, The Son of God

A massive showdown with the religious leaders seems inevitable. Jesus, once again, is affirmed as God's Son by God himself as he speaks with Moses and Elijah on a mountaintop. The question of Jesus' identity is emerging as the central concern of Jesus' day and of the Gospels. The disciples, despite Jesus' frank proclamations, still do not understand that he will die and be raised again in three days. Jesus raises a man three days dead, demonstrating that he is the resurrection and the life. The conspiracy to kill Jesus is set in motion with the recruitment of Judas Iscariot.

Cf. Barr, Adam Exploring the Story: A Reference Companion (Story, The). Zondervan.

Matthew

- Ch. 17** – The Transfiguration, Jesus cures a boy with a demon, Jesus foretells his death & resurrection, Jesus and the Temple Tax
Ch. 21 – Jesus' triumphal entry into Jerusalem, Jesus cleanses the Temple, Jesus curses the fig tree, his authority questioned, the Parable of the Two Sons, the Parable of the Wicked Tenants

Mark

- Ch. 8** – Feeding the four thousand, the demand for a sign, the yeast of the Pharisees and Herod, Jesus cures a blind man at Bethsaida, Peter's declaration about Jesus, Jesus foretells his death and resurrection
Ch. 9 – The Transfiguration, the coming of Elijah, the healing of a boy with a spirit, Jesus foretells again his death and resurrection, who is the greatest? Another exorcist, temptations to sin
Ch. 10 – Teaching about divorce, Jesus blesses the little children, the rich man, third time foretelling his death and resurrection, the request of James and John, the healing of Bartimaeus
Ch. 11 – Jesus' triumphal entry into Jerusalem, Jesus curses the fig tree, Jesus cleanses the Temple, his authority questioned
Ch. 12 – The Parable of the Wicked Tenants, question of paying taxes, question about the resurrection, the First Commandment, question about David's son, Jesus denounces the scribes, the widow's offering
**Ch. 13 – Destruction of the Temple foretold, persecution foretold, desolating sacrilege, the coming of the Son of Man, the lesson of the fig tree, the necessity for watchfulness → NOT included in The Story.*
Ch. 14 – The plot to kill Jesus, the anointing at Bethany, Judas agrees to betray Jesus, the Passover with the disciples, the institution of the Lord's Supper, Peter's denial foretold, Jesus prays in Gethsemane, the betrayal and arrest of Jesus, Jesus before the Council, Peter denies Jesus

Luke

- Ch. 9** – The mission of the twelve, Herod's perplexity, feeding the five thousand, Peter's confession, the nature of discipleship, the Transfiguration, Jesus heals a boy with a demon, Jesus foretells of his death and resurrection, true greatness, another exorcist, a Samaritan village refuses to receive Jesus, would-be followers of Jesus
Ch. 22 – The plot to kill Jesus, the preparation of the Passover, the institution of the Lord's Supper, the dispute about greatness, Jesus predicts Peter's denial, final words, prayer at the Mount of Olives, the betrayal and arrest of Jesus, denial and rejection

John

- Ch. 7** – The unbelief of Jesus' brothers, Jesus at the Festival of the Booths, Is this the Christ? Officers are sent to arrest Jesus, rivers of living water, division among the people, the unbelief of those in authority
Ch. 8 – [the woman caught in adultery], Jesus the light of the world, Jesus is from above, Jesus and Abraham
**Ch. 9 – A man born blind receives sight, the blind man and the Pharisees and Jesus → NOT included in The Story.*
**Ch. 10 – Jesus the good shepherd, Jesus is rejected → NOT included in The Story.*
Ch. 11 – The death of Lazarus, Jesus, the resurrection and the life, Jesus raises Lazarus, the plot to kill Jesus,
Ch. 12 – Mary anoints Jesus, the plot to kill Lazarus, Jesus' triumphal entry into Jerusalem, some Greeks wish to see Jesus, Jesus speaks of about his own death, summary of Jesus' teachings

God's Story – YOUR story!

- Do the differences of how *The Story* is told make a difference for you?
- As Matthew, Mark and Luke describe, after Jesus enters Jerusalem, he enters and then "cleanses the Temple." Is there a message for modern churches from that today? As Jesus would enter a congregation, what would you think he would most like to see? What might he not want to see?
- Jesus said we must "deny ourselves" and "take up our cross;" and if we seek to save our lives we will lose them. (p. 353-354). What are the implications of these commands for your life, relationships and even sense of 'vocation'?
- So a friend or colleague genuinely wants to know more about *The Story* – God's story and your story. Your friend simply asks, "So who is Jesus to you?" How might you answer?