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Preparation for The Study of Jesus' Passion Week

Introduction

The eight days that begin with Palm Sunday and conclude on Resurrection Sunday are remarkable days that changed everything negative about our world. The change was not cosmetic, but real, enduring, eternal, and in depth spiritual change. In these eight days God fulfilled all the promises of the Old Testament and guaranteed the final victory at the end of human history. He wrote in the precious blood of His own Son the guarantee of the future destiny of all the human family. For some it will be eternal joy in His presence. Tragically for others it will be eternal judgment and condemnation of their own choosing. It is my prayer that God will use this time to rekindle our own commitment to the reality that Christ alone is the only hope for the salvation of every person on the face of planet earth.

1. Together we will walk through the major events in the life of Jesus.
 - May this be a time of enlightenment and reaffirmation of our faith in the wondrous gift of grace and salvation that was God's gift through His only begotten Son, Jn 3:16.
 - There are a total of sixty-five events from Palm Sunday to Resurrection Sunday that are presented in chronological order. The location of each event is given in the four Gospel records, Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John. Note that some events are found only in one of the four. A few of the events are found in all four Gospels.
 - Take time to read all the Gospel passages on each event listed on the study guide. There are seventy-one days from January 13 to March 23, Easter Sunday. You will have ample time to study at least one event per day with six days left over. Make this a focus of daily Bible reading and personal devotional time. Note the slight differences in each of the eyewitness accounts in the Gospel record.
 - We need to study the Old Testament passages that are in the background of each of these events. See the accompanying notes on "Messianic Hope in the Old Testament" and the accompanying charts from the *Believer's Study Bible*, pp. 1317-1322. For further in depth reading I recommend the following books still in print:

Lockyer, Herbert. *All the Messianic Prophecies of the Bible*, Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1973.

Van Groningen, Gerhard. *Messianic Prophecies in the Old Testament*. Grand Rapids, Baker Books, 1990.

Smith, James. *The Promised Messiah*. Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 1993.

2. We must earnestly seek the guidance of the Holy Spirit.
 - Prayerfully read John 16:5-15 and take note of how we need to depend on the Holy Spirit to be our guide to understanding the passage we will study. You may also prefer looking at each of the Gospel writers' account as follows:
 - Matthew begins his account of the events in 20:17 as Jesus began His last trip to Jerusalem and talked with His disciples about His coming crucifixion. The events continue through Matthew, chapter 28.
 - Mark begins his account of the last days of Jesus' earthly ministry in Mark 10:32 and continues to Mark 16.
 - Luke begins his account in Luke 18:31 and continues through chapter 24.
 - John 12:1 begins the account of the last days of Jesus' earthly ministry and it continues to John, chapter 20 with resurrection Sunday.

3. We must seek deeper commitment of our time and effort in study.
 - Set aside personal and/or family time each day to systematically study the events of the last days of Jesus' earthly ministry. Make sure to either share your time with someone by studying together or get alone to formulate your own study/prayer time.
 - You should develop a personal notebook containing all the handout materials and all of your personal notes. If you put your personal time and effort into this project, preserve it so you can use it again or what a wonderful gift to pass on to a friend or family member.

4. We must combine our reading and study with prayer.
 - As you pray, ask God to open your understanding and discernment as you study His word focusing on the last days of Jesus' earthly ministry.
 - As you pray remember the many people who need to find Jesus as Savior and pray that God will give you opportunity to share your faith with them.
 - As you pray ask that God would receive greater glory for all He has done for us especially as we approach this Easter season.
 - As you pray, give thanks to God for His indescribable love gift in sending His only begotten Son to be our Savior and Lord.