



Madman or Savior?

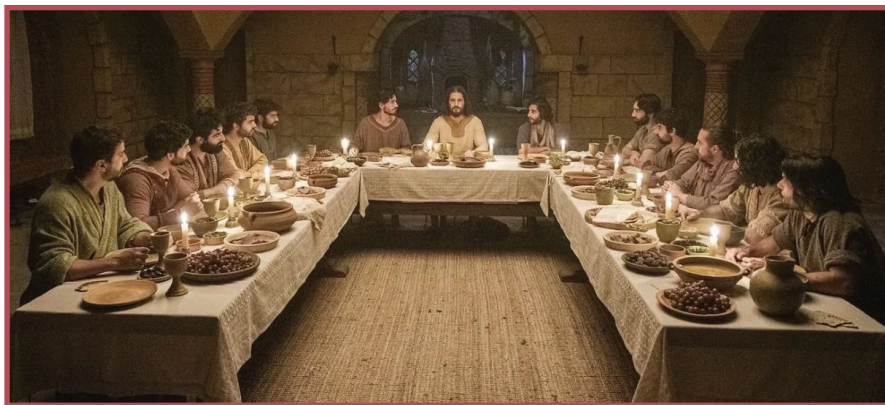
A couple of Sundays ago a group of us went to the Cinemark theater in Jess Ranch to see Episodes 1&2 of "The Chosen", Season 5. This is the TV series that follows the gospel accounts of Jesus' ministry from the viewpoint of His followers. Each season has 8 episodes, so these are actually episodes 33 & 34. (I was going to try to show the release dates of the Season 5 episodes here, but it's pretty complicated the way they did it. If you want to see it, go to their app to see the schedule. And I recommend that you do!)

At this stage of the gospel narrative, Jesus has alienated pretty much all of the religious leadership of Israel, who in turn are trying to rile up the Romans to recognize Jesus as a threat and to do something about Him, like execute Him. The Jews aren't allowed to execute anyone outside the Temple, so they need the Romans for that.

Episode 1 opens with Jesus' Triumphant Entry into Jerusalem on the back of a donkey. It's the beginning of the final week of His time on earth, so He has just those few days left to make His (and God's) point that the traditional religion of thousands of years centering on ritual and human interpretation is no longer acceptable. What God requires is belief, surrender, and FAITH, not man-centered performance. God wants human hearts committed to Him.

Of course, this threatens the Pharisees and Sadducees (I can't resist - kinda like Trump and DOGE threaten the deep state and government elite right now! See how angry, even violent, they get.) Jesus knows He is headed for painful and nasty confrontation with them. They sense correctly that Jesus' message signifies the end of their riches, power, and comfortable lives.

As the tension builds, the disciples and other followers have stayed loyal to Jesus, but they misunderstand what's going on.



In their minds, and as they were taught from childhood, the long-awaited Messiah is to be a king of the political kind, so they are perplexed but at the same time excitedly believe that now is the time Jesus is going to take over and oust the Pharisees and Sadducees.

Jesus knows that the disciples don't really understand what He is doing and say-

ing, and they won't fully understand until later, when they receive the Holy Spirit. So Jesus is alone as He fashions a whip and enters the Temple courtyard. It is Passover week, for the Jews one of the most holy and significant feasts of the year.

In the courtyard, the crowds are noisily engaging in changing money since many came from foreign countries; they are dickering for animals to sacrifice; and they are buying things to prepare for their private Passover meal and family celebration.

Jesus goes ballistic, and uses His whip to overturn the moneychangers' tables and tear up the display stalls, opening the gates and letting go the animals that are for sale. Needless to say, the disciples and followers are aghast, one of them shouting to the others, "He's gone mad, He's gone mad!" They know how much Jesus is detested and they fear for His life, with great justification.

There is no Spoiler Alert coming, since up to this point, I haven't told you anything that isn't already in the Gospel accounts. And I won't tell you anything more, so you can quit yelling at me.

The serious question is, "Was Jesus a madman?" Some like to think so, or probably more likely, many prefer to think of Him as a great moral teacher or a prophet, but not the Son of God, as He Himself claimed.

There is a problem with that second option. How can you think of a person as a "great moral teacher" or a prophet, Who

claims to be the Son of God? C.S. Lewis, in his wonderful book "Mere Christianity" said this:

"A man who was merely a man and said the sort of things Jesus said would not be a great moral teacher. He would either be a lunatic - on the level with the man who says he is a poached egg - or else he would be the Devil of Hell. You must make

your choice. Either this man was, and is, the Son of God, or else a madman or something worse." - (C.S. LEWIS, "Mere Christianity")

Even the disciples struggled with this to some degree. They knew in their heads that Jesus claimed to be the Messiah, the Son of God, but they were still too steeped in their religious training to fully grasp what that meant. They thought the Messiah would be a great political or military leader, and then came to see that

Jesus represented something quite different. He was here to do away with the old manmade religious traditions. He came to bring to us the Holy Spirit, Who would dwell IN us. They simply did not understand the message, or Who Jesus was and what He was going to have to face - death and torture - in order to make God's point. Until later.

"Until later" was after Jesus had been executed on the cross and they all were in despair, feeling crushed and rudderless. How could this happen?? What did it mean? And they themselves had to hide or get out of town, because they also were targets of the religious establishment, to be eliminated before they could lend credibility to Jesus' teachings.

And then it happened! Resurrection Day! To their great amazement and awe, Jesus body was missing from the tomb where He'd been laid, and He Himself appeared to them to assure them that He truly had come back to life in His human form. In the words of Paul the Apostle, He stayed around long enough to appear "to Cephas, then to the twelve. Then he appeared to more than five hundred

brothers at one time, most of whom are still alive, though some have fallen asleep. Then he appeared to James, then to all the apostles. Last of all, as to one untimely born, he appeared also to me. (1 Corinthians 15: 5b-8a)

Now it's up to each one of us to decide whether Jesus was a madman or the savior that God sent into the world to rescue those who want rescue. Will you decide that He's a madman, as the disciples feared when He upset the tables and booths in the Temple? Or will you take Him at His word that He is God's Son, sent to deliver us from the evil of this world?

Sure, you can try to ignore Him, but you cannot justify that by saying that He's just another wise teacher or prophet. He claimed to be the Savior, so if you don't believe Him, you're calling Him a liar, not a prophet or great teacher.

The fact of Jesus' resurrection proves His case. We celebrate it as Easter Resurrection Day! Far more significant than bunnies and candy! That's our ticket to life with God eternally! What could be better than that?

Happy Resurrection Day! *Linda Gammel*

On The Lighter Side of Serious Stuff . . . from the Web

Sorry, I hid all your chocolate in my tummy



RD

What kind of movie do you want to watch on Easter? A chick flick?



RD

The more colorful your diet is, the healthier you'll be



Nailed it

RD

Chillin' with my Peeps



RD

LVEDA Meeting

(Lucerne Valley Economic Development Association)

Monday, April 28th

5:00 pm at the Moose Lodge

on Foothill Road, just west of Tradepost Road.

LVEDA provides an important community forum recognized by County, State, and Local Representatives. Supports real economic development consistent with our rural goals. Opposes projects that harm our land-use integrity and quality of life.

**Is something bugging you?
COME TO THE NEXT MEETING
TO EXPRESS YOUR OPINION!**



Mark your Calendar for

MEGA SWAP MEET

Sat. June 7

8am to 3pm