

Luke 19:28-44 — The Triumphal Entry

April 10, 2022

Good morning! It is great to gather on Palm Sunday. I love seeing the kids with palm branches. Today is the day we remember the last week of Jesus' life. Next week is Easter where we celebrate Jesus rising from the dead. Between Palm Sunday, which is this week, and Resurrection Sunday, which we celebrate next week, we remember how the final week of Jesus' life unfolded.

At the beginning of the week, Jesus entered Jerusalem with thousands of people cheering for him. That is known as Jesus' Triumphal Entry, which is what we are studying this morning. While people were cheering for Jesus at the beginning of the week, by the end of the week, things went in a different direction. On Thursday night, Jesus was betrayed by Judas. He was condemned to death by Pilate on Friday morning. Jesus was on the cross by 9 a.m. Darkness covered the land from noon until 3 p.m. on Friday. Then Jesus died. Jesus was buried before sundown on Friday. He lay in the grave until Sunday morning when he rose from the dead to new life. Jesus dying on the cross in our places for our sins changed things. But what really changed things was Jesus rising from the dead to new life. How do we know Jesus' resurrection really took place? How does Jesus' resurrection change us today? That is what we will study next week.

Today is Palm Sunday. We are studying Jesus' entry into Jerusalem for the final week of his life.

After almost three years of ministry, Jesus arrived in Jerusalem to celebrate Passover. The crowds cheered for him like he was the quarterback that threw the winning touchdown in the Super Bowl. While Jesus enjoyed an

enthusiastic welcome from the crowds, that welcome masked superficial faith. On the outside, they were enthusiastic about Jesus because of his healings, his teaching, and his popularity. In their hearts on the inside, they planned to use Jesus to get what they wanted. They had no genuine interest in submitting to Jesus and following him.

Why was there such a disconnect in the crowd? Why were people only superficially following Jesus? The crowds misunderstood why Jesus came. They wanted Jesus to be a political hero, a revolutionary. With Jesus' popularity and his ability to heal the sick and raise the dead, they thought Jesus was the kind of politician they needed. Jesus could help them overthrow the Romans that were occupying their country and taxing them. If they had bumper stickers, they would have said, "Jesus for president!"

The truth is Jesus entered Jerusalem that Passover to solve a problem much bigger than the Romans and politics. Jesus came to Jerusalem to die in our places for our sin. He came to solve the problem of sin and death. You see, sin is the problem behind all other problems. Why do we have war in Ukraine, sickness, murder, stealing, deception? It all comes from our sin. Sin is the problem Jesus went into Jerusalem to solve. That is a much bigger problem than the Romans and politics.

Sin isn't just the problem behind all problems in our world. Our sin also separates us from God and leaves us deserving just eternal punishment. Jesus' mission was much bigger than solving the latest problem in the headline of the newspaper. His mission was to solve the problem of sin for all people for all time.

Today, we are no different. Every night we look at the news and see Russia at war with Ukraine. We see superinflation. We are desperately looking for good and wise politicians to solve the problems. We do need those men and women.

What we desperately need far more than a good politician is someone who can solve the problem of sin in the human heart. We need someone who can forgive the guilt of our sin and give us a new heart. Jesus went into Jerusalem, and that is what he planned to accomplish.

Jesus' Triumphal Entry is recorded in all four Gospels. We are going to study it from the Gospel of Luke. Turn to Luke 19. We are studying verses 28-44.

Let's read these verses.

And when he had said these things, he went on ahead, going up to Jerusalem. When he drew near to Bethphage and Bethany, at the mount that is called Olivet, he sent two of the disciples, saying, "Go into the village in front of you, where on entering you will find a colt tied, on which no one has ever yet sat. Untie it and bring it here. If anyone asks you, 'Why are you untying it?' you shall say this: 'The Lord has need of it.'" So those who were sent went away and found it just as he had told them. And as they were untying the colt, its owners said to them, "Why are you untying the colt?" And they said, "The Lord has need of it." And they brought it to Jesus, and throwing their cloaks on the colt, they set Jesus on it. And as he rode along, they spread their cloaks on the road. As he was drawing near—already on the way down the Mount of Olives—the whole multitude of his disciples began to rejoice and praise God with a loud voice for all the mighty works that they had seen, saying, "Blessed is the King who comes in the name of the Lord! Peace in heaven and glory in the highest!" And some of the Pharisees in the crowd said to him, "Teacher, rebuke your disciples." He answered, "I tell you, if these were silent, the very stones would cry out." And when he drew near and saw the city, he wept over it, saying, "Would that you, even you, had known on this day the things that make for peace! But now they are hidden from your eyes. For the days will come upon you, when your enemies will set up a barricade around you and surround you and hem you in on every side and tear you down to the ground, you and your children within you. And they will not leave one stone upon another in you, because you did not know the time of your visitation." Luke 19:28-44 (ESV)

The Background

And when he had said these things, he went on ahead, going up to Jerusalem.
Luke 19:28 (ESV)

Jesus came to Jerusalem for the Passover, coming from Galilee in the north. He would have crossed the Jordan River and passed through the area of Perea east of Jerusalem. He would have then crossed back over the Jordan River and headed to Jericho.



This was the roadway typically used by those traveling from the northern portion of Israel to Jerusalem in the south of the country. It was Passover season so Jesus wasn't alone. He was part of a mob of thousands that traveled the same road to Jerusalem that year. While Jesus was part of the crowd, he had an especially large number of people clumped around him.

At this time, Jesus' popularity was at its peak. After three years of traveling through Israel, Jesus' healings were so extensive and frequent that he essentially banished sickness from the nation. Jesus cured thousands. No medical problem was too hard. With just a touch or a word, people's bodies were completely and instantly healed. Imagine doctors being out of work because of a patient shortage. That is what happened with Jesus. Jesus cured everybody. This helps us better understand the incredible popularity of Jesus. We can understand why everyone wanted to be around Jesus. Everyone wanted to touch Jesus. There was a mob of people around Jesus, the one who healed everyone, as he headed to Jerusalem.

It wasn't just Jesus' healings that made him popular. It was also his teaching. As we learned in the Gospel of Mark, Jesus was an amazing teacher. Thousands would follow Jesus into the wilderness when he was getting away from crowds. They were desperate to hear Jesus teach. People would go for days without food just to hear Jesus teach. That is impressive. Imagine people going without food to hear someone teach the Bible. That is amazing. With Jesus' teaching abilities, no wonder everyone wanted to be around him and to hear from him.

After crossing the Jordan River, Jesus went to the city of Jericho. He stayed there for two days. While in the town, he healed two blind men. The Gospel of Mark tells us the name of one of them was Bartimaeus. When we studied him in the Gospel of Mark, we named him blind Bart. Blind Bart was one of two blind beggars to whom Jesus gave instant and perfect physical sight while in the city. They didn't just receive their sight from Jesus but now they were following Jesus and telling everyone they knew how Jesus gave them the ability to see. This made the huge crowd around Jesus even bigger!

Jesus performed another miracle in Jericho. He didn't just open the physical eyes of blind men. He opened a man's blind spiritual eyes. That man's name was Zacchaeus. He was a chief tax collector in the city of Jericho. That was a prestigious position, but it was also a hated position. The Jews hated tax collectors who worked for the Romans, and Zacchaeus was the chief tax collector! He was the most hated man in Jericho. While everyone hated Zacchaeus, Jesus didn't hate Zacchaeus. Instead, Jesus decided to have lunch

with him. During that meal, Jesus changed Zacchaeus' life. We would say that Zacchaeus was born again. How do we know he was born again? He had a radical change in his heart and life. Tax collectors were directed by the Romans on how much tax they were to raise. It was common to inflate the tax to line their own pockets. They did that because they could. When Zacchaeus finished eating with Jesus, his heart was so radically changed that he decided to give back all the extra money he wrongfully extorted from people. He did more than just give back the money. He gave back four times more money than he stole!

My friends, when an encounter with Jesus leaves you giving back four times more money than you stole from people, that is a heart that is radically changed by God. Jesus wasn't just healing sick bodies, like blind Bart. Jesus was healing sin-sick hearts like Zacchaeus'. When people saw the change in Zacchaeus' life even more people wanted to be around Jesus. The crowd around Jesus was getting bigger and bigger.

Let us not forget one of the greatest miracles of Jesus. Just a few weeks prior to this, in the small town of Bethany, which was only 2 miles outside of Jerusalem, Jesus raised Lazarus from the dead.

Mary and Martha had the funeral. They buried Lazarus. When Jesus finally arrived, Lazarus was in the grave for four days. Jesus directed that the stone be rolled away from the grave. I love what Martha, Lazarus' sister said at that point. "Don't roll away the gravestone because he stinketh. He smells like rotting decomposing flesh." Jesus had the stone rolled away and with just the

command of his voice saying "Lazarus come forth," the dead, rotting body of Lazarus was instantly brought back to life.

For the last few weeks, Lazarus walked around Bethany talking to all the people who attended his funeral. He thanked them for coming but he gave Jesus all the credit for bringing him back to life from the grave. This made Jesus even more popular around Jerusalem. When people heard Jesus was coming up from Jericho to Jerusalem he didn't just have a huge entourage with him but the closer he came to Bethany and Jerusalem, even more people who knew about Lazarus came out of the city to greet him.

I say all of this background to help us understand the size of the crowd around Jesus and the enthusiasm of the people for Jesus. If we miss that, we will miss what is happening in these verses.

In all of this enthusiasm, all the crowds wanted out of Jesus was for him to be a political hero who would help them overthrow the Roman occupation and reduce their taxes. They were blind to the greater problem of their sin that Jesus was coming to Jerusalem to solve.

Why did Jesus allow people to worship him?

I want to make one other point by way of introduction. If you have read the Gospels, you know that up to this point in Jesus' life, Jesus didn't allow public displays of worship toward him. Earlier in the Gospels, when the crowds wanted to make Jesus king in John 6:15, he slipped out of their grasp.

This was different. As Jesus made his way into Jerusalem to die, he allowed people to worship him. He accepted it when people called him their king.

Why did Jesus change his tactics? Why, for the first time in his life, did Jesus let people sing his praise and call him their king instead of slipping away from it and avoiding it?

At the very beginning of Jesus' ministry, when Jesus healed the man in the synagogue with the withered hand in Mark 3, the religious leaders decided they hated Jesus and wanted to kill Jesus. For the last three years, while the religious leaders wanted Jesus dead, they didn't do anything about eliminating him. They tolerated Jesus. Most of the time Jesus was up north in Galilee away from Jerusalem. Jesus was slipping away from public attention, not leaning into public attention, so they tolerated him.

In the Triumphal Entry, Jesus changed his strategy. Jesus allowed thousands of people to worship him and call him king *as he arrived in Jerusalem*, right in front of the religious leaders! It almost feels like Jesus was shoving his popularity in the face of the religious leaders just to irritate them. Why would he do such a thing?

I don't know for sure but I have a theory. In Matthew 26 we see the religious leaders planned to arrest Jesus during the Passover but they planned to execute Jesus after the Passover when the crowds died down. They figured after the Passover would be a safer time to kill Jesus. That timetable worked for the religious leaders, but it didn't work with God.

According to the Gospel of John, Jesus is the true Passover lamb. God's plans were that Jesus would die on Friday at the same time as the Passover lambs were slain. Just as the shed blood of the Passover lamb allowed the angel

of death to pass over the Israelite forefathers in Egypt, it would be the shed blood of Jesus of the Son of God that allows death to pass over us. The Passover lambs pointed to Jesus. According to the Gospel of John, Jesus needed to die on Friday when the Passover lambs were slain because Jesus is the lamb of God that all the other Passover lambs point us to. Look what John the Baptist said about Jesus.

...said, "Behold, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world!" John 1:29 (ESV)

How did God plan to move up the timetable of the religious leaders so they decided to jump the gun and kill Jesus during the Passover on Friday and not after the Passover like they originally intended? It was by Jesus irritating them. It was by Jesus accepting the worship of thousands of people as he came into Jerusalem.

When the religious leaders saw thousands of people worshipping Jesus, they decided to get rid of Jesus as soon as possible because he was too popular.

How many people were worshipping Jesus in the Triumphal Entry?

Another important question for us to ask by way of introduction is, "How many people were worshipping Jesus in the Triumphal Entry?" Here we get into some speculation. You may not agree with my analysis. That is OK. Feel free to come up with a better way of estimating the number if you have one.

In the historical record, we have one hard number. In a Passover that took place 10 years after this the Jewish historian Josephus tells us 260,000 lambs were slaughtered. There was typically one lamb for every 10 people. If that is accurate, simple multiplication leads to the conclusion that 2.6 million people

were in and around Jerusalem for Passover that year. Of course, that is an estimate. I think we can safely assume a similar number of people were in and around Jerusalem during the Passover when Jesus was crucified.

We have already seen the crowds around Jesus were huge. Some scholars estimate that as many as 5-10 percent of the population in and around Jerusalem was gathered around Jesus for at least some part of the Triumphal Entry as Jesus traveled from Jericho to Jerusalem. If only 5 percent of the city connected with Jesus in the Triumphal Entry, that sounds small, but remember how many people came to Jerusalem for Passover. Five percent of 2 million is 100,000 people! That is a lot of people around Jesus!

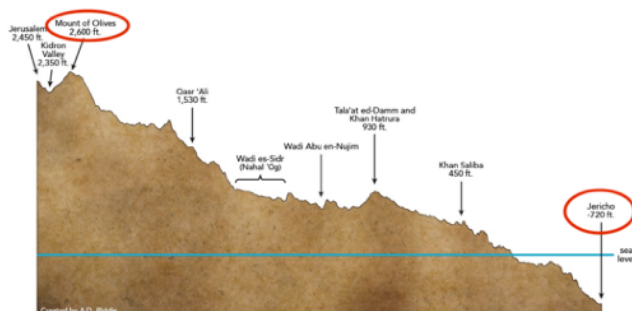
If you were the religious leaders and 100,000 people were cheering for Jesus when he came into town, that would put you in a panic. You would do anything you could to get rid of Jesus as soon as possible.

Let's work through the remaining verses.

Jesus entered Jerusalem in a position of humility.

When he drew near to Bethphage and Bethany, at the mount that is called Olivet, he sent two of the disciples... Luke 19:29 (ESV)

As you can see on the map, It was an uphill walk from Jericho to Bethany. Jericho is 720 feet below sea level. Bethany is 1,516 feet above sea level. The Mount of Olives is 2,600 feet above sea level. It is approximately 13 miles from Jericho to Bethany.



Bethany and Bethpage were small towns located 2 miles outside of Jerusalem before the

top of the Mount of Olives. Bethany was the home of Mary, Martha, and Lazarus.

Today, Bethany is called Al-

‘Ayzariyyah in Arabic. That

Arabic name means Lazarus.

The small town was renamed

after its most famous citizen. In

Hebrew, Bethany means house

of dates. Bethpage was next to

Bethany. Bethpage in Hebrews means house of figs. They were both next to the

Mount of Olives. As you can see, these people were farmers. We have Fig Town,

Date Town, and Olive Mountain.



Bethany and Bethpage are on the east side of the Mount of Olives, so you couldn't see Jerusalem from these towns. Jerusalem was only visible from the opposite side of the Mount of Olives after you crested the top. At this point, Jesus was still climbing and had not crossed the top of the Mount of Olives. He was near Bethany. He sent two of his disciples ahead of him to what was most likely Bethpage to fetch a ride for him to use as he came into town.

...saying, "Go into the village in front of you, where on entering you will find a colt tied, on which no one has ever yet sat. Untie it and bring it here. If anyone asks you, 'Why are you untying it?' you shall say this: 'The Lord has need of it.'" Luke 19:30–31 (ESV)

"Go to Bethpage. There you will find a colt tied up. It is a colt that no one has ridden. Untie it and bring it to me." Today, we call this car-jacking. In that day they called it colt-jacking.

How did Jesus know this colt would be tied up on the side of the road as they went into the next town? He used his cell phone to check the Bethpage webcam. No. Of course, that isn't the way he knew. The answer is simple. Jesus is God. He knows things nobody else knows. He could see things in places where he was not located.

We have already seen Jesus tell his disciples things about the future before they happened. He gave them details about what would happen to him in Jerusalem. In John 13, he told his disciples that one of them would betray him. He told his disciples he would be killed by the chief priests. He told them he would be dead for three days. He told them he would rise from the dead after three days. Jesus knows the future. Jesus also knew things that were happening where he was not located.

Jesus had a staggering amount of supernatural knowledge about what was happening in different parts of the world around him.

When we look at the parallel account of the Triumphal Entry in Matthew 21, we learn Jesus knew they wouldn't just find a colt tied-up in the next town but they would also find a donkey tied up with the colt. They were to bring both of the animals to him. Jesus knew there were two animals in the next town, and he knew the life history of the young colt. He knew it had never been ridden.

Here is a great application for us. If Jesus knew the location of a colt in another town, and he knew the complete life history of that colt, that means Jesus knows all about our lives. It means Jesus knows our complete history. There is nothing we can hide from him. There is nothing he does not know about

us. He knows not just about our sin, but he knows about our pain. He knows about our worries. He knows about our fears.

What I find amazing is that while Jesus knows us completely, he still loves us fully. Isn't that what each of us desperately want? Don't all of us want spousea that know everything about us but still love us? That is Jesus. Jesus knows all there is to know about us --- all of our sin, all of our weaknesses, and all of our failures --- and yet he still loves us. He loves us so much that he rode into Jerusalem to die for us and die for our sin. That is amazing!

Jesus has so much knowledge about the future that he even told his disciples what would happen when they took the colt. Jesus knew some people would ask why his disciples were taking the animal. Jesus also knew all they needed to say was, "The Lord has need of it." That answer would be enough of an answer to satisfy the colt's owners.

So those who were sent went away and found it just as he had told them. And as they were untying the colt, its owners said to them, "Why are you untying the colt?" And they said, "The Lord has need of it." Luke 19:32-34 (ESV)

Everything transpired just the way Jesus said it would. Nothing was out of control.

I know some of you may not see this passage about Jesus sending his disciples to grab a colt in the next town as a demonstration of Jesus' supernatural knowledge. Some of you may think Jesus simply arranged the colt ahead of time. This was all a matter of good planning, not divine knowledge of places and events before they happen. This is Jesus picking up the rental car he reserved.

If your heart is wrestling with Jesus' foreknowledge of these events, let me turn you to the Gospel of John. There, Jesus met a man named Nathanael. The

first time Nathanael walked up to Jesus, even though they had never met, Jesus already had intimate and detailed knowledge of his life.

Jesus saw Nathanael coming toward him and said of him, “Behold, an Israelite indeed, in whom there is no deceit!” Nathanael said to him, “How do you know me?” Jesus answered him, “Before Philip called you, when you were under the fig tree, I saw you.” Nathanael answered him, “Rabbi, you are the Son of God! You are the King of Israel!” John 1:47–49 (ESV)

What happened under the fig tree with Nathanael? I have no idea! Only Nathanael knew. Jesus also knew, and he wasn't even there! Jesus' knowledge of Nathanael's life and what happened under the fig tree was enough to instantly convince him that Jesus was God because Jesus knew things only God could know.

John said it this way:

But Jesus on his part did not entrust himself to them, because he knew all people and needed no one to bear witness about man, for he himself knew what was in man. John 2:24–25 (ESV)

Jesus knows the future and the way it will unfold. Jesus knew what was happening at places where he was not located. Jesus also knows people's hearts and what they are thinking.

In Mark 2, Jesus forgave the sin of a paralytic. It says the scribes were questioning Jesus in their hearts about how Jesus could forgive sins. Then it says this:

And immediately Jesus, perceiving in his spirit that they thus questioned within themselves, said to them, “Why do you question these things in your hearts?” Mark 2:8 (ESV)

Here is another instance of Jesus knowing people's thoughts. I remind us again that Jesus knows our history and our hearts completely but he still loves us fully. He loves us so much he rode into Jerusalem that day to die for us.

Let's continue the story.

And they brought it to Jesus, and throwing their cloaks on the colt, they set Jesus on it. Luke 19:35 (ESV)

They brought the colt to Jesus and threw their jackets on it creating a make-shift saddle. While Luke doesn't point out this important detail, the parallel account of the Triumphal Entry in Matthew 21 does. Matthew says that when Jesus rode this little colt into Jerusalem to the cheers of the people, it was the fulfillment of prophecy given by the Old Testament prophet Zechariah in Zechariah 9:9. Five hundred years before this Zechariah prophetically wrote that Jesus, the true king of God's people, would humbly ride into Jerusalem on a colt to bring salvation to God's people, not salvation from Roman occupation but salvation from the problem behind all problems, salvation from sin.

Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion! Shout aloud, O daughter of Jerusalem! Behold, your king is coming to you; righteous and having salvation is he, humble and mounted on a donkey, on a colt, the foal of a donkey. Zechariah 9:9 (ESV)

The people expressed hollow adoration of Jesus.

And as he rode along, they spread their cloaks on the road. Luke 19:36 (ESV)

The idea of throwing cloaks on the road in front of a coming king was an old custom. 2 Kings 9:13 describes it as the way people symbolically showed they were submitting to someone and recognizing that person as their king, the person in authority over them. Today, people bow before a king. In that day, you spread your cloak in front of someone when you recognized him as king.

Even though Jesus told his disciples he was going to Jerusalem to die, the people thought that by recognizing Jesus as their king they could force Jesus to

rise up against the Romans. They wanted Jesus to be the political hero they thought they needed.

In all honesty, I am sure it was heady stuff to have thousands of people cheering for you. I am sure the disciples felt important. Thankfully, Jesus kept a level head and knew this was all hollow, surface worship and they just wanted to use Jesus for their own purposes.

As he was drawing near—already on the way down the Mount of Olives—the whole multitude of his disciples began to rejoice and praise God with a loud voice for all the mighty works that they had seen, Luke 19:37 (ESV)

At this point, as Jesus crested the top of the Mount of Olives, the enthusiasm and the cheering came to a crescendo. They were coming down the other side of the mountain into the Kidron Valley. It was



a beautiful view of the city. Jerusalem was in front of the crowd. This picture does not do the scene justice but it is similar to what it would have looked like.

At that time, Herod's temple dominated the landscape of the city. It was located where the Muslim dome of the rock is located in this picture. The Muslims put the dome of the rock on the temple mount around 690 A.D. At this time, Herod's great temple was still in place. It was made of white marble. The whiteness of the walls made the building hard to look at in the sun. What wasn't white marble was covered with gold. The historical record tells us the gold on the building reflected the sun so brilliantly that people had to look away from the city

because the brilliance of the sun shining off the gold was blinding. It was an amazing scene, stunningly beautiful.

Beautiful Jerusalem was in front of Jesus. Possibly 100,000 people were around Jesus, all cheering for him. People couldn't stop talking about Jesus' miracles. Dead Lazarus was alive, and blind beggars could see. Jesus fed thousands with a little boys' lunch. Jesus stopped storms with just a word. Jesus drove out demons. Everywhere Jesus went there was a story about what he had done.

Everyone loved Jesus. Everyone wanted Jesus for president. They wanted Jesus to throw out the Romans and take leadership of the nation. Look what they were saying to Jesus.

...saying, "Blessed is the King who comes in the name of the Lord! Peace in heaven and glory in the highest!" Luke 19:38 (ESV)

"Blessed is the king who comes in the name of the Lord" is a quote from Psalm 118:26. A hundred years before this the Jews shouted the same words from this Psalm when Judas Maccabeus rose up and called the Jews to war to overthrow the Syrians who were occupying their nation. Judas Maccabeus successfully overthrew the Syrians and gained Jewish independence. The people now wanted Jesus to be the next Judas Maccabeus. Just as Judas Maccabeus rose up and led the Jews to freedom from Syrian oppression, they wanted Jesus to rise up and lead them to freedom from Roman oppression. That is why they were saying these words to Jesus. It was all politics.

Nobody wanted freedom from sin. They want a lesser victory. They wanted a political leader.

Matthew 21:8, which is a parallel passage to the one we are reading in Luke, tells us people also cut branches from trees and spread them on the road along with their cloaks. The Gospel of John is the only place it tells us they cut palm branches. This is where we get the term Palm Sunday. It only comes from the Gospel of John.

So they took branches of palm trees and went out to meet him, crying out, "Hosanna! Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord, even the King of Israel!" John 12:13 (ESV)

Notice what else they were saying to Jesus. They were saying "Hosanna" to Jesus. Hosanna sounds churchy and religious. What does it mean? Hosanna means, "Save us now." "Jesus, rise up and save us now from the Romans. We want you to be king. Jesus, we will back you." Hosanna means "Save us now!" Do it now! Do it now! Are you getting the picture?

We have a huge crowd cheering for Jesus, wanting him to rise up and be a self-proclaimed political king. They are giving him a red carpet welcome but for the wrong reasons. They wanted Jesus to be king to save them from the Romans.

Here is something I find funny. We read about this in the Gospel of John right before the Triumphal Entry.

Now the chief priests and the Pharisees had given orders that if anyone knew where he was, he should let them know, so that they might arrest him. John 11:57 (ESV)

Did anyone know where Jesus was? Everybody knew where to find Jesus. Nobody needed to report Jesus. The religious leaders were afraid to arrest Jesus. He was too popular.

Look what some of the Pharisees said to Jesus at this point.

And some of the Pharisees in the crowd said to him, "Teacher, rebuke your disciples." Luke 19:39 (ESV)

"Jesus, this is blasphemy. They are calling you king. They are singing your praises. Put a stop to this. You can't allow them to give you this honor." However, Jesus refused to stop people's worship. That really made the religious leaders mad. It made them even more determined to kill Jesus as soon as possible.

Jesus condemned the city.

He answered, "I tell you, if these were silent, the very stones would cry out." Luke 19:40 (ESV)

Jesus told the Pharisees that if the people did not worship him, the very stones would cry out. If the people ended up rejecting him as their king, the stones would cry out. What does that mean? This is easy to misunderstand. The natural assumption when we read this is to picture stones with a mouth singing praises to Jesus because after this day the people stopped singing praises to Jesus. I don't think that is what Jesus had in mind.

Jesus said that if these people stop all their praise and worship, the stones would cry out. After the Triumphal Entry, the people did stop their praise and worship of Jesus. We don't hear about any praise and worship of Jesus on Tuesday. We don't hear any praise and worship of Jesus on Wednesday. The next time we hear the crowds addressing Jesus was on Friday when they called for his death. When Jesus refused to rise up and declare himself to be king, the people were done with him.

Jesus told us that if these people stopped worshipping him, which they did after this day, the stones would cry out. What does that mean? Habakkuk 2 gives us a window of insight. In Habakkuk 2, the prophet was talking about the

Chaldeans, that is the Babylonians. As a society, they prospered not through productivity and ingenuity but through the conquering of other nations. They built their homes from the valuable materials they took from the cities they conquered. The stones and beams in their homes were taken after they killed the people in the cities they conquered. Habakkuk said the stones and beams of their houses would serve as a lasting testimony to the depravity of their lives. Look how the prophet Habakkuk spoke about this.

For the stone will cry out from the wall, and the beam from the woodwork respond. "Woe to him who builds a town with blood and founds a city on iniquity!" Habakkuk 2:11–12 (ESV)

The very stones and beams of their houses served as a lasting testimony of their wickedness. Jesus was saying the same thing would happen to the city of Jerusalem. The very stones of Jerusalem would one day cry out and serve as a lasting reminder that instead of accepting Jesus as their true king, the people of Jerusalem only wanted Jesus as a superficial political king. They rejected Jesus for the true reason he came.

Let's see what happens as we go a little further into the text.

And when he drew near and saw the city, he wept over it... Luke 19:41 (ESV)

There are different words in Greek for weeping. In John 11:35, Jesus wept over Lazarus. That is the simple word for weeping. It means he shed a tear. In this verse, the word used to describe how Jesus wept over the city of Jerusalem is different. It is the strongest word for crying in the Greek language. It is uncontrollable weeping. It is heaving in sorrowful pain and anguish. Jesus saw the beautiful city of Jerusalem as he came over the hill. Jesus saw the thousands of people worshipping him superficially and was overcome with sadness because

he knew they were rejecting him for the reason he came. By the end of the week, they would cry for his death when he refused to rise up against the Romans.

Jesus didn't weep for himself and the agony of the cross. He wept because they were rejecting him as the one who could save them from their sin. He wept because they just wanted him to be a lesser political savior.

...saying, "Would that you, even you, had known on this day the things that make for peace! But now they are hidden from your eyes." Luke 19:42 (ESV)

What would make for peace in their lives? They thought it was a political hero. For the entire Gospel of Luke Jesus was telling people peace with God comes with repentance of our sin and trust in Jesus. That is the message Jesus preached for the last three years.

As we have seen, Jesus knows the future and can see the future. As Jesus sobbed for them he knew what would happen to the Jerusalem that rejected him. He prophetically described God's judgment that would fall on them because they rejected him as king of their lives.

"For the days will come upon you, when your enemies will set up a barricade around you and surround you and hem you in on every side and tear you down to the ground, you and your children within you. And they will not leave one stone upon another in you..." Luke 19:43-44 (ESV)

Let me break this verse down for you.

Jesus said that Jerusalem's enemies would surround it and set a barricade up around it. In ancient times if you wanted to conquer a city, you surrounded the city and built a barricade around it to keep everyone in the city. That way you cut off the food and water for the people. That is what the Russians tried to do with Kyiv.

Jesus spoke these words in 30 A.D. They were fulfilled as God's judgment fell upon the city a little more than 30 years later. Josephus, the ancient historian, tells us that in 66 A.D. the Jews rebelled against Rome and stopped paying their taxes. The Romans tried to negotiate with the rulers of Jerusalem, urging them to return to paying their taxes, but the Jews refused. The Romans then sent Titus Vespasian and Roman legions who surrounded the city in 70 A.D. They cut off food in the city. The Romans then waited for five months letting the people of the city starve to death. Anyone who tried to escape was crucified.

Jesus said that as a city they would be hemmed in on every side. That means they would be choked to death as a city. That is literally what happened when all food was cut off from the 1.1 million people who lived in Jerusalem.

Jesus also prophetically said the city would be torn to the ground.

That is exactly what happened. After five months of starving the city, the Romans breached the city walls. The Roman soldiers rampaged the city, killing everyone. They were not respectful of age or status. Everyone was put to the sword. Ancient historians tell us the blood flowed in the streets like a red river through the city. The only Jews the Romans saved were the strongest young men. They were saved to die in the gladiatorial arena in the Roman.

Jesus also prophetically said they would not leave one stone upon another. That is exactly what happened. Ancient Jerusalem was built of rock. To give you an idea of the amount of rock used in the construction of the city, take Herod's temple. It was more than five football fields in size. The foundation was all rock. Just the rock foundation took 10 years to build with a total of 10,000

workers being used in the construction project. The rest of the temple took an additional 60 years. It was also built of stone. Some of the stone blocks in the temple were 30-feet long by 6-feet wide. They were more than 40 tons each. The intent was for the temple to last a thousand years.

Yet, shortly after the temple was complete, when Titus Vespasian attacked the city, he didn't just destroy the people. The Romans made the decision to decimate the stone buildings of the city, tearing them down, not leaving one rock upon another, just like Jesus said. The only portion they left was a section of the west wall of the temple and a few of the tallest towers to serve as a reminder of the greatness of the city that the Romans destroyed. The destruction of the stones of the city was to serve as a continual reminder to other nations not to rebel against Rome. Jesus said the destruction of the city would serve as a continual reminder of what happens when people reject Jesus and the real reason he came. They were only interested in Jesus as a superficial political savior.

What did Jesus say was the reason God's judgment on the city came?
"...because you did not know the time of your visitation." Luke 19:44 (ESV)

Not much is different this morning. Today, all around the globe there are people in churches gathering to worship Jesus for Palm Sunday. Even more will gather to worship Jesus next week for Easter. Unfortunately, many people are worshipping Jesus for the wrong reasons. They think that if they go to church and worship Jesus then Jesus owes them health, success, and freedom from problems. They want him as a political hero who will make life easy. When Jesus

doesn't provide that, they will turn on him, just like the crowds did on Friday morning.

The practical problems in life are real. They are important. The truth is that is not why Jesus came. He didn't come to overthrow the Romans and reduce taxes. He came to solve the problem behind all problems, the problem of our sin that separates us from God. Jesus came to die on the cross in our places for our sin. Next week we celebrate him rising from the grave to new life. Jesus didn't just come to solve that problem but he achieved that solution. He is the rightful king of our lives.

My friends, today is the day of our visitation. Today is the day when we know the truth of who Jesus is and why he came. This morning, have you repented of your sin and trusted in Jesus to forgive your sin? If not, please do that today. Ask Jesus to be your king. Remember he came to solve the problem behind all problems in our lives, the problem of sin.

Remember Jesus knows each of us completely. There is nothing we can hide from him. While he knows us completely, he still loves us fully. He went into Jerusalem to die in our places for our sin. Even though he knows us, he still loves us.



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