

Luke 19:29–48 JESUS' TRIUMPHAL ENTRY INTO JERUSALEM

Did you hear about the mostly peaceful demonstration that happened just outside a large eastern city? A controversial teacher came into town, and a spontaneous demonstration occurred. People were shouting various political slogans, tearing down branches, and throwing their clothing onto the street. Enthusiastic masses of people were ready to install their leader as the new king. It looked like insurrection against the government was inevitable.

I'm not talking about the riots in Portland or Kenosha. I'm talking about the Triumphal Entry of Jesus into Jerusalem some 2000 years ago. It was *not* a “fiery but most peaceful protest,” but it did cause quite a stir in the city.

Today we get back into our study of the book of Luke. And we now begin the third main section of this book, in which the author records the final days of Jesus' life—the passion week—from Palm Sunday through Resurrection Day. Over 1/3 of the contents of the Gospels deals with the events of this final week in Jesus' life.

And it all starts with the Triumphal Entry. On this occasion, Jesus formally and officially offered Himself to the nation as their promised King.¹ Because he's presenting himself as the Messiah, all the details of this day's events have Messianic implications.

Background: The TE occurred at the time of the Passover celebration in Jerusalem, which means many thousands of people would have been in the city to observe the feast. John 12:12 “much people” were in the city for this occasion.

According to the Jewish calendar, the day of the TE would have been the same day the Jews selected the lamb they would sacrifice for the Passover. Thus, the TE was the day when Christ presented Himself as “the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world.”²

¹Dallas Theological Seminary, *Bibliotheca Sacra Volume 124* (Dallas Theological Seminary, 1967; 2002), 124:226.

²Dallas Theological Seminary, *Bibliotheca Sacra Volume 131* (Dallas Theological Seminary, 1974; 2002), 131:262-263.

Everything in this story shows evidence of planning and coordination. God is working out his plan in splendid detail, and every part of the story demonstrates God's control.

All these details point to the fact that Jesus is the Messiah. This whole event is designed to make that statement very loudly and clearly. That was important for the people of that place and time to understand, and it's still important for us to understand today. Salvation depends on believing Jesus' claims about himself. We must believe that he is indeed the Messiah, the Son of God, the savior of the world. If you don't accept Jesus' claims about himself, you cannot be saved.

Notice the details we find in Luke 19 and the other Gospel accounts and how they show that Jesus is the Messiah.

I. 19:29 Jesus' approach to Jerusalem from the Mount of Olives had Messianic implications.

.29 Jesus arrived and stayed in Bethphage and Bethany, about two miles from Jerusalem. He and his followers likely arrived there on Friday evening before sunset. The Sabbath began on Friday at sunset, so Jesus probably stayed with friends enjoyed the Sabbath in that area. Mark tells us that on Saturday evening, Simon the Leper hosted a supper for Jesus at his home. The Triumphal Entry happened the next day—Palm Sunday.

The Mount of Olives, sometimes called Olivet, is a range of hills that overlooks Jerusalem and the Temple area. Between the city and the Mount of Olives is the Kidron Valley. So you'd go down the Mount of Olives, through the Kidron Valley, then back up into the city of Jerusalem.

Why are these hills so important? The OT books of Ezekiel and Zechariah both foretell the Messiah's activities on the Mount of Olives (cf. Ezek 11:23; Zech 14:4–11). If the King of the Jews were to come to the city, he would have come from the Mt of Olives. So this is not just a coincidence that he enters the city from that location; even the way he approaches the city is intentional.

- II. .30-34 Jesus' riding a donkey into the city was a clear Messianic statement.
- A. Jesus' instructions about the donkey were very detailed.
1. The donkey had never been ridden. (Mark 11:2)
The choice of this animal was appropriate for the unique situation—the colt was dedicated to this one job. God had prepared this colt for one person and one purpose.
 2. The other Gospel accounts refer to two animals: a donkey and its colt (Mt 21:7). Why?
 - a) This is a fulfillment of OT prophecy. If we look closely at the prophecy (Zech 9:9) we find both the donkey and its foal/colt mentioned. So it's a remarkably accurate prediction; Jesus fulfills it to the letter.
 - b) Practically speaking, the colt likely would not have cooperated had its mother not come along.
- B. .32-34 The disciples followed Jesus' instructions.
1. It seems likely that the owners of the donkeys were follower of Jesus. As soon as they heard that the Lord needed the animals, they let them go.
 2. This is another example of the fact that many people supported or provided for things Jesus needed during his ministry (e.g., Luke 6:13; 10:1; cf. Mark 15:40–16:1; John 12:19; 19:38–20:1).
- App:** For the owners of this animal, a donkey represented a significant investment. Donkeys were important vehicles for transportation and for work. Giving up the donkey was a sacrifice for the owners, but they were willing to do that for the Lord.
- That one phrase, “The Lord hath need of him” (vs. 34) is very powerful. What genuine disciple of Christ would hold anything back if we knew “the Lord needs it”? Yet sometimes we are reluctant to give what the Lord needs—our time, talent, treasures, ourselves. Parents may have to give up their children for the Lord's service. There may be any number of things we may be called upon to sacrifice for the Lord's work.

Next time you have an opportunity to serve the Lord, what will be your response?

C. The event fulfilled OT prophecy (not in Luke). Mt 21:4-5; John 12:14-15

1. Why did Jesus ride a donkey into town? Why didn't he ride a horse? He was making a very intentional statement—he was claiming to be the Messiah.
2. The OT reference for this is Zech 9:9. Jesus is intentionally fulfilling this prophecy.

Zechariah 9:9 Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion! Shout, O daughter of Jerusalem! Behold, your King is coming to you; He is just and having salvation, Lowly and riding on a donkey, A colt, the foal of a donkey.

3. Any Jewish person in Jerusalem, seeing Jesus riding into town on a donkey, from the Mount of Olives, with multitudes of followers crying out “Hosanna, blessed be the king of Israel,” should have immediately realized what this was—a claim to be the Messiah. It's unmistakable.

Quote: Jesus now deliberately acted out [Zech's prophecy]. By His action He proclaimed in the very home and heart of Israel that He was the Messiah.”⁵

III. .36-40 Jesus' entry into Jerusalem aroused Messianic expectations.

- A. The multitude cut down palm branches. I.e., this is Palm Sunday.

Luke doesn't mention this detail; he reports that people spread their clothes on the road (vs. 36). Like rolling out the red carpet for a dignitary or VIP.

John 12:12-13 a great multitude ... took the branches of the palm trees, and went forth to meet him

⁵5. A. M. Hunter, *The Work and Words of Jesus*, p. 113.

The palm branches symbolized rejoicing, triumph, and welcome. When a conquering hero or high official came to a town, this is how the people showed their respect and welcome.

- B. .38 The multitude cry “Hosanna, blessed be the king...”
1. Part of this is a quotation from Ps 118:26: “Blessed be he that cometh in the name of the LORD.” This psalm was often sung during Passover. It is a distinctly Messianic Psalm, which speaks about the stone which the builders rejected and which became the cornerstone.
 2. The word “Hosanna” means “Save now,” e.g., Ps 118:25-26 -- *Save now, I beseech thee, O LORD: O LORD, I beseech thee, send now prosperity. Blessed [be] he that cometh in the name of the LORD.*
 3. This was an expression of Messianic expectation. They are asking God to save them thru their Messiah, their king. They were expecting the Messiah to take over as the new political ruler. He would cast out the corrupt Jewish leaders and throw off the yoke of Roman dominance.
 4. “he that cometh in the name of the Lord” (Luke 19:38) was a well-known Messianic title.
Mk 11:10 Blessed [be] the kingdom of our father David, that cometh in the name of the Lord: Hosanna in the highest.
 5. The crowd also calls Jesus “the Son of David” and “the King,” both of which are Messianic titles.
 6. So, when we consider this language, the use of Psalm 118, the palm branches and clothing thrown down on Jesus path, it is abundantly evident that Jesus was presenting himself as the Messiah and that the crowds recognized him as such.
- C. .39-40 The Pharisees’ react with scorn.
1. The Pharisees clearly understood the significance of this event. They knew exactly what Jesus was claiming, and they wanted Jesus to rebuke the crowds for accepting this claim.

2. The Pharisees had a point—if Jesus were not the Messiah, these expressions would be inappropriate. These things ought to be said only of the King of Israel. They were right about that.
3. Instead of rebuking the crowds, Jesus affirms what they are saying. Using metaphorical language, he asserts that the very ground itself would affirm what the crowds were crying out—that Jesus is the Messiah.

App: We see here two opposite responses to Jesus: the crowd accompanying Jesus accepted his messianic claims, while the official leaders of Israel rejected him. Cf. vs. 47b-48b: chief priest vs. people.

Those are really the only options. You accept his claims, or you reject them.

CS Lewis—Jesus is a liar, a lunatic, or the Lord. No middle ground. He claims to be the king of the Jews, the Messiah, the Son of God. You either have to accept that claim or reject it. Jesus is a total package—person and work.

Have you ever personally acknowledged who Jesus is? Have you affirmed these claims for yourself? Rom 10:9

IV. .41-44 Jesus displays Messianic knowledge.

A. .41-42 He knows the people will reject him.

1. This happens before Jesus entered the city gates. The Mount of Olives overlooks the Old City of Jerusalem. Jesus can clearly see the majority of the city, including the temple. It would have been quite a majestic sight, yet Jesus begins to weep over the city.
2. Jesus' weeping might seem a little out of place. From all appearances, the crowds are accepting Jesus as their king. They cried out "Hosanna" and "blessed be he who comes in the name of the Lord," and they called Jesus the King of Israel. They are ready to rebel against their leaders and install him as their king.

3. What's he weeping about? Probably several things:
- a) Jesus knows what's about to happen. He knows that the nation as a whole has rejected him. He's weeping over their blindness and hardness of heart.
Quote: Expecting a king who would come "armed to the teeth or bestriding a war-horse," [the Jews] failed to recognize the One who came upon the lowly donkey, the symbol of peace. They did not know Him, nor did they know their own great need. The King is a king who conquers by meekness and lowliness, not by force of brazen power.³
 - b) He recognizes that many of his supporters don't understand that he's *not* a conquering king but a humble servant. He came to suffer and die at this point, not reign as a political ruler. Most of his followers, including most of his disciples, will soon abandon him. The excitement of the crowd will be short-lived. Soon, the crowd would be calling for his crucifixion.
 - c) He knows what's going to happen to the city—it will be destroyed, many people killed, and thousands enslaved. This beautiful, majestic city would be reduced to a smoldering ruin in just a few decades.
 - d) Note 42end "now they are hidden from thine eyes." When God hides truth from people, it's an evidence of judgment. God's judgment is about to fall, and God's people don't even recognize it.

³Dallas Theological Seminary, *Bibliotheca Sacra Volume 124* (Dallas Theological Seminary, 1967; 2002), 124:227-228.

App: Like Jesus, we should have a sense of compassion or pity on the lost. They are spiritual blind and ignorant. They face impending judgment. Like the Israelites of old, many people today are stubborn, ignorant, and hard-hearted when it comes to the Gospel. We can say “If you only knew the blessings of salvation...” That fact should cause sorrow in our hearts, especially when we consider the judgment that will fall on unbelievers.

B. .43-44 He knows about the city’s doom.

Exactly what Jesus foretold happened about 40 years later.

The Jewish historian Josephus, *History of the Jewish War*, gives two descriptions of the suffering that occurred when the Romans destroyed the city in AD 70:

“While the [temple] was burning ... neither pity for age nor respect for rank was shown. On the contrary, children and old people, laity and priests alike were massacred” (VI.271).

“The emperor ordered the entire city and the temple to be [levelled] to the ground.... All the rest of the wall that surrounded the city was so completely [levelled] as to leave future visitors to the spot no reason to believe that the city had ever been inhabited” (VII.1–3).⁴

C. .45-46 He knows his Messianic rights.

1. Jesus cleanses the temple.

- a) This is the second time he did this. The first time, as recorded in John, happened at the beginning of his ministry, about 3 years earlier (John 2:13-17). Luke records this event as happening during the last week of Jesus’ life.

⁴William Hendriksen and Simon J. Kistemaker

This would have happened in the Court of the Gentiles, a space at the temple reserved for non-Jews to come and pray. But it had been transformed into a market to buy, sell, or exchange money. It would have been busy, loud, smelly, and filthy. It had become a den of thieves, not a place of prayer.

- b) This act shows Jesus' authority over the temple; he's asserting his rights to clean the place out. He calls the temple "my house" and he casts the merchants out of the area. So this is a Messianic statement also.

2. Jesus heals the blind and lame (not in Luke).

Matt 21:14 And the blind and the lame came to him in the temple; and he healed them.

3. .47 The religious leaders criticize Jesus.

Mt 21:15 But when the chief priests and scribes saw the wonderful things that he did, and the children that were crying in the temple and saying, Hosanna to the Son of David; they were sore displeased

The people/crowds were singing Jesus' praises and calling him their king, but the religious establishment was unmoved in their opposition against him. They were "sore displeased" at the "wonderful things that he did" – shows the hardness of their hearts.

John tells us that the religious leaders had long ago determined to put him to death (Jn 11:53). So they've already made up their minds about him.

App: Rejection of Christ is always a result of hard heartedness. It's a spiritual problem, not intellectual, social, moral, etc. "People love darkness rather than light."

What a tragedy when people respond to Jesus by being "sore displeased" by him.

What does all of this show/demonstrate?

- 1) Jesus is the promised Messiah, the King of the Jews. This is the point of the whole passage. Virtually every detail of this text points to this conclusion. Jesus is the King of the Jews who comes in the name of the Lord.

All of us have to decide what we believe about Jesus. Is he whom he claimed to be, or was he a fraud? In order to be saved, we must affirm that Jesus is the Son of God; he is whom he claimed to be, and we must accept him as such.

- 2) It's a great tragedy when people refuse the offer of salvation. Jesus knew that the vast majority of his people, the Jews, would reject him. The official leaders of the nation had already rejected him long before this. He weeps over this fact and that they would suffer such great judgment.

Each person is totally accountable for his response to Jesus. And if you reject him, you will face severe punishment for your sins.

Don't neglect the day of visitation (vs. 44). Act on the truth while you still can.

- 3) God keeps his promises. This event was the fulfillment of an ancient prophecy. We can trust God to do what he said. We can trust that Scripture is true and reliable. Prophecy will be fulfilled.
- 4) We should be willing to give whatever the Lord needs of us—time, talents, treasures, etc. We ought to make use of every opportunity to serve God and God's people. If the Lord has need of something, are you willing to give it?
- 5) We should be like those excited disciples who cried out "Hosanna, blessed is the king who comes in the name of the Lord." We should be excited to tell others who Jesus is. We should be like those rocks that would have cried out if no one else did.

Vs. 48 says "the people were very attentive to hear him." The word "attentive" means "to hang on one's words." Their attention was intently fixed on Jesus. We would do well to follow their example.