

## The King's Parade

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Luke 19:28-41

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Our text this morning brings us to what is probably subtitled in your Bible *The Triumphal Entry*. The events in Luke 19 set in motion the final hours of Jesus earthly life and ministry. For three years Jesus has crisscrossed Israel preaching the gospel, healing diseases and sickness, performing miracles, signs, and wonders. He foretold of His death on numerous occasions, but no one understood Him, they could not get their minds around Him – Not even His closest followers. Every step of Jesus' life has been pointing to the events of this final week in which He would publicly ride into the Capital city of Jerusalem on Palm Sunday, be crucified four days later on Passover (literally fulfilling every OT prophesy concerning His life and death), and on the third day rise from the dead victorious over sin and death. Turn in your Bibles to Luke 19:28-41. Luke, the historian, recording the events of the life and ministry of Christ, under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, pens these words:

*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. Luke 19:28–41*

### **I. PREPARATION FOR THE PARADE (v. 28-35)**

Look at verse 28. Luke says, "And when he had said these things (Parable of the Ten Minas), He went on ahead, going up to Jerusalem." Jesus had been ministering north in Galilee, but now He is in Jericho. He spends a couple of days there, where He restores sight to a man named Bartimaeus

and saves Zacchaeus, before he, accompanied by an entourage, sets out for Jerusalem. The Jericho road was the main thoroughfare between Jericho and Jerusalem and was well traveled, but given the fact that we are 5-6 days from Passover, this road would have been brimming with people. At points along the 18 mile dusty road the crowd would have most likely been shoulder to shoulder as they traveled together.

We should note that this passage doesn't mark the beginning of Jesus' journey to Jerusalem, but rather it's end. Just ten chapters back in Luke 9:51 Luke writes, "When the days drew near for Him to be taken up, He set [determined, resolved purpose] His face to go to Jerusalem." Why was Jesus coming to Jerusalem? He was traveling with the Jewish masses to Jerusalem to celebrate Passover. Passover was the annual celebration in which the Jewish people commemorated the fact that God had liberated them from Egyptian slavery. Those events are recorded back in Exodus 12. God instructed, through Moses and Aaron, that every household should sacrifice a lamb without blemish and mark their doorposts with its blood. As the Angel of the Lord passed through the city, striking every firstborn in the land, He would pass over those homes that bore the blood of the sacrificed lamb.

Jesus, along with two million other Jewish people, was descending on Jerusalem to celebrate God's saving act on their behalf. Jesus was coming to celebrate Passover, but more than that, He was coming to be the Passover Lamb for all who would believe. Jesus was coming to Jerusalem to die. This was His purpose from the beginning. It was for this very reason that Jesus divested Himself of Heaven's glory, took on human flesh, and became a man (John 1:14). He came as a suffering servant who would give Himself as a sacrifice for sin. The timing was precise. The day and the hour had been determined in eternity past. Every step of Jesus' life was calculated and premeditated. Every step has been, with unwavering resolve, a step towards the cross and no power of hell and no scheme of man could interrupt the process or make Him forgo His redemptive plan. I love the way Luke writes, "He went on ahead." Jesus, our Good Shepherd, leads the way to His own death. He isn't forced, He comes willingly and He is in complete control!

Jesus' death, His redemptive plan, was no secret. Just one chapter back in Luke 18 Jesus pulled His disciples aside, like he had done several times before, and reminded them for the third and final time, "We are going up to Jerusalem, and everything that is written about the Son of Man by the prophets will be accomplished. For, He will be delivered over to the Gentiles and will be mocked and shamefully treated and spit upon. And after flogging Him, they will kill Him, and on the third day He will rise" Luke 18:31-33. The disciples didn't understand Jesus' plan. The first time Jesus told His disciples he would be crucified is in Matthew 16:21-23 – Peter took Jesus aside and rebuked Him saying, "Far be it from you Lord." The second time He told them is recorded in Luke 9:44-45 – Jesus said, "*Let these words sink into your ears:* The Son of Man is about to be delivered into the hands of men." Even this last time in Luke 18 Jesus' disciples didn't understand. But they would later – after they were given the Holy Spirit (Cf. John 12:16)!

Look at verse 29 and the following. Luke writes:

*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.*

Jesus and the throng of travelers are now within about 2 miles of Jerusalem. We aren't exactly sure the whereabouts of Bethphage (suburb of Jerusalem), but Bethany is the small town just on the East side of the Mount of Olives. Jesus had visited Bethany many times before, as a matter of fact, He would often stay there when He visited Jerusalem. Everyone in Bethany would have known who He was. It was there, just three weeks earlier, that Jesus raised Lazarus from the dead. Turn over to John 12:17-18 for a minute. John writes, "The crowd that had been with him when he called Lazarus out of the tomb and raised him from the dead continued to bear witness. The reason why the crowd went to meet him was that they heard he had done this sign." You can imagine the chatter as Jesus approaches Bethany. "Jesus is coming...Jesus is coming...the one who raised Lazarus, He is here!" The excitement surrounding Jesus was high as He left Jericho, but as He enters Bethany, the fever pitch of the crowd is amplified.

It's at this point that Jesus pulls two unnamed disciples aside and gives them instructions to go into the village (possibly Bethany) where they would find a colt tied that had never been ridden (suitable for holy purposes). They were to untie it and if asked, "Why," to simply respond, "The Lord has need of it." The two disciples head into the village and find the colt just as Jesus said they would. As they are untying it they are asked, "Why are you untying the colt," just as Jesus had said, and they replied, "The Lord has need of it." Can you imagine their conversation as they are bringing the colt back to Jesus? These events happened just as Jesus said they would!

Let me press pause here for just a second. How did Jesus know that the disciples would find a colt as they entered the village, which had never borne the weight of a human body? Some have contested that Jesus, or perhaps His disciples, had made prior arrangements with the owner of the colt, but none of the four accounts make mention of such an arrangement. Remember that Jesus is setting his Messiahship and Kingship on display here; I think Jesus is demonstrating His deity here with omniscience.

Matthew 12:25 – Jesus knows the Pharisees thoughts.

Luke 9:47 – Who will be the greatest? Jesus knew the reasoning of their hearts.

John 6:64 – Jesus knew from the beginning those who would not believe.

Passages like this are meant to remind us that Jesus is no mere man. He is God over all, blessed forever (Romans 9:5).

Why a colt? Why, of all animals did Jesus choose a colt? This doesn't seem like a mode of transportation fit for a King – it doesn't appear to signify anything triumphant. There are two clear reasons why Jesus made His grand appearance in Jerusalem riding on the back of a common colt. First, this is the fulfillment of a prophecy. 500 years before the birth of Christ Zechariah prophesied that the Messiah would come riding on the colt of a donkey. Turn to Zechariah 9:9 - I want you to see this. The prophet Zechariah writes, "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." Remember, Jesus told His disciples just one chapter ago, "We are going up to Jerusalem, and everything that is written about the Son of Man by the prophets will be accomplished." Jesus is sovereignly in control ensuring that every prophetic 'I is dotted and T is crossed'.

But there is a second reason Jesus chooses a colt. Zechariah actually made mention of it in his prophesy. He said your King is coming, "*humble* and mounted on a donkey." How strange a contrast to the triumphal entry of ancient warriors and conquerors into the cities which they had taken! This time no wall broken down for entry; this time no garlanded hero standing in his war chariot, driving down the lane of cheering subjects past smoking altars, and followed by captive kings and princes in chains. Instead, just a meek and lowly man riding upon the [colt] of a donkey.<sup>1</sup> The colt is representative of Jesus' humility. Paul reminds us, "He made Himself nothing, taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men. And being found in human form, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross" Philippians 2:7-8. The colt reminds us that Jesus, our Prince of Peace, is our servant-King. But there is another entry! His arrival into Jerusalem was humble, but He will return in glorious splendor. The Apostle John writes of His return in Revelation 19:11-16:

*Then I saw heaven opened, and behold, a white horse! The one sitting on it is called Faithful and True, and in righteousness he judges and makes war. His eyes are like a flame of fire, and on his head are many diadems, and he has a name written that no one knows but himself. He is clothed in a robe dipped in blood, and the name by which he is called is The Word of God. And the armies of heaven, arrayed in fine linen, white and pure, were following him on white horses. From his mouth comes a sharp sword with which to strike down the nations, and he will rule them with a rod of iron. He will tread the winepress of the fury of the wrath of God the Almighty. On his robe and on his thigh he has a name written, King of kings and Lord of lords.*

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<sup>1</sup> Clarence Macartney, *Salute Thy Soul*. (New York: Abington, 1957), 80.

## II. PRAISE FOR THE KING (v. 36-40)

Look at verse 36. Luke writes, “And as he rode along, they spread their cloaks on the road.” Can you imagine the scene here? Here is Jesus, God in flesh, the one who upholds the universe by the word of His power (Hebrews 1:3), seated on a humble colt, with literally hundreds of thousands of people lining the road with their garments. Never before has Jesus done anything to promote a public demonstration. As a matter of fact, He went to great lengths to keep His ministry relatively silent, often withdrawing from the crowds (Matthew 12:15, 14:13, Mark 3:7, John 5:13). Why? Because the settled, sovereign plan of God was that Jesus would die in a particular place, at a particular time - in Jerusalem on Passover. But word about Jesus was traveling fast. I mean, it’s not everyday that someone turns water into wine at a wedding (John 2:6-9); it’s not everyday that someone commands an unclean spirit out of a man by the power of His words (Luke 4:35-36); it’s not everyday that someone heals a paralyzed man and claims to forgive his sin (Luke 5:18-20); it’s not everyday that someone feeds 5000 people with five barley loaves and two fish (John 6:8-11). As Jesus traveled and ministered, He became somewhat of an icon. Matthew records that:

*He went throughout all Galilee, teaching in their synagogues and proclaiming the gospel of the kingdom and healing every disease and every affliction among the people. So his fame spread throughout all Syria, and they brought him all the sick, those afflicted with various diseases and pains, those oppressed by demons, epileptics, and paralytics, and he healed them. And great crowds followed him from Galilee and the Decapolis, and from Jerusalem and Judea, and from beyond the Jordan. Matthew 4:23–25*

Not only had He healed diseases and sickness all throughout Israel, Not only had He performed miracle after miracle, but He also taught as though to leave those who heard Him astonished (Matthew 7:28, 13:54, Mark 1:22). Excitement surrounding the ministry of Jesus was already high. And to add to the buzz, Jesus is entering the same city where just three weeks prior He had raised Lazarus (who is most likely among the mass of people heading to Jerusalem) from the dead. Jesus isn't withdrawing from the crowd today. This Sunday, Jesus seems to invite public attention – and all eyes are on him.

Keep in mind that the people aren’t looking for a sin-bearer or a redeemer; they are looking for a political king. They are looking for the one who would ride in and free them from Rome’s heavy-handed, oppressive rule. They know that Jesus is a miracle worker. And every pious Jewish person would have been familiar with Zechariah’s prophecy that their King would come riding on the colt of a donkey. As the enthusiasm mounts and the excitement surges, the people are undoubtedly thinking, “This is Him... this is Him... This is our king. Now is the time. He is going to inaugurate the kingdom and save us from Rome.”

And so what do they do? Look at the text. They begin to throw their cloaks on the ground in front of Him – making a royal carpet. What is the significance of His followers divesting themselves of their clothing and spreading out their cloaks on the road? This was a gesture of reverence and submission. They were in essence saying, “Take everything we have – we will gladly place ourselves under your rule.” Getting low in the presence of the king is symbolic of submission to his majesty and authority. It’s interesting to note that we see a similar thing taking place back in the book of 2 Kings. 2 Kings 9 records Jehu’s anointing as King of Israel and in verse 13 we read, “Then in haste every man took off his garment and put it under him on the bare steps, and they blew the trumpet and proclaimed, ‘Jehu is King.’” Their response of reverence and submission are right – Jesus is the King. But their expectations are wrong. He hasn’t come to slay their oppressors, He has come to save sinners.

Look at verse 37. Luke says, “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.” Jesus and the following entourage have made the ascent up the Mount of Olives, reached its summit, and now begun the descent down the hill and into Jerusalem. Having crested the mountain’s small peak, the panorama of the entire city of Jerusalem would have filled their view. There in front of them would have been the city wall and the Eastern gate. Like a diamond in the setting of a ring stood Herod’s magnificent temple overlooking the city. At this moment hundreds of thousands of people who had been following Jesus from Jericho and Bethany are met with hundreds of thousands of people who have caught wind of Jesus’ coming and have filed out of Jerusalem to see him. John’s account says, “The large crowd that had come to the feast heard that Jesus was coming to Jerusalem. So they took branches of palm trees and went out to meet him” (John 12:12-13). And here the excitement reaches it’s crescendo as the mass of expectant people break into song singing, “Blessed is the King who comes in the name of the Lord! Peace in heaven and glory in the highest!”

The praise of the people is fitting. They are actually quoting Psalm 118:26, an enthronement Psalm, “Blessed is he who comes in the name of the LORD! But they modified it from “Blessed is the *one*,” to “Blessed is the *King*.” Luke leaves this out, but the three other gospel writers include that they were shouting, “Hosanna, Hosanna,” which literally means, “Save us now, save us now.” Unfortunately, the multitude encircling Jesus with ardent words of praise is praising a fantasy. They are worshipping a Jesus of their own imagining. Oh how sad it is that the same is true today. There are countless people who worship a Jesus of their own making. A Jesus that is just like your golden retriever – he loves you unconditionally, He protects you, and He comes when you call. But that’s not the Jesus we see in the Bible. The Jesus of the Bible is a humble servant, but He is also a Master. His call is clear, “If anyone would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross daily and follow me” Luke 9:23.

Look at verse 37 again. The crowd adds to the praise chorus, "Peace in heaven and glory in the highest." Does that sound familiar? It sounds a whole lot like the song of another multitude. The host of Angels who announced Christ's birth exclaimed, "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace among those with whom he is pleased" Luke 2:14! The angels sang of peace on earth, but the throng encircling Jesus sings of peace in heaven. There will be no peace on earth until the final triumphal entry. But praise God that because of Christ's work on the cross there is peace with God in heaven (Romans 5:1, Colossians 1:20, 2 Corinthians 5:17-21).

All of the commotion has garnered Jesus not only the attention of the multitudes, but now He has the attention of the Pharisees as well. Look at verse 39. Luke writes, "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." The Pharisees hated Jesus. To the Pharisees, Jesus was nothing more than a blasphemer who stirred up the people. They wanted Him dead. Matthew tells us that the chief priests and the elders didn't want to disrupt the celebration so they planned to kill Him when Passover concluded (Matthew 26:3-5). But Jesus forced the issue. Not only did He claim to be God, but now the streets in Jerusalem are empty because the whole town is worshipping Him and He is accepting it.

The Pharisees knew that they couldn't do anything to quiet the crowd. That would be like walking out to the 50-yard line at the Super Bowl and saying, "Shhhhh." Their only hope of quieting the enraptured multitude was to entreat Jesus to silence them. How does Jesus respond to their request? He says, "I tell you, if these were silent, the very stones would cry out." In other words, "If they are silenced, I command the power to raise up inanimate objects to complete the task." Jesus was making a crystal clear declaration that He is the Messiah who is worthy to receive power and wealth and wisdom and might and honor and glory and blessing [forever] (Revelation 5:12).

*Let the heavens be glad, and let the earth rejoice; let the sea roar, and all that fills it. Psalms 96:11*

*Let the sea roar, and all that fills it; the world and those who dwell in it! Let the rivers clap their hands; let the hills sing for joy together before the LORD, for he comes to judge the earth. He will judge the world with righteousness, and the peoples with equity. Psalms 98:7-9*

*For you shall go out in joy and be led forth in peace; the mountains and the hills before you shall break forth into singing, and all the trees of the field shall clap their hands. Isaiah 55:12*

We see a fulfillment of Jesus' words that the rocks would cry out in Matthew 27:51 after His crucifixion:

*And behold, the curtain of the temple was torn in two, from top to bottom. And the earth shook, and the rocks were split.*

How different was the vision of the future in their minds and His - they dreamed of a throne, but [Jesus] knew it was a cross.<sup>2</sup> Jesus knew the superficiality of their worship. Many of the multitude who were shouting, "Bless Him," would four days later cry, "Crucify Him, crucify Him." You see, Jesus would finish this procession on another street lined with people, struggling to carry a wooden cross upon which He would lay down His life.

We refer to this Sunday as Palm Sunday. But that is not what it was originally called. The Sunday before Passover was known as lamb selection day. Just as throngs of people were flooding into Jerusalem from all over Israel, hundreds of thousands of lambs were being brought to Jerusalem in preparation for Passover. Josephus, a Jewish Historian, wrote that in one census over 250,000 lambs were brought to Jerusalem. Jesus entered Jerusalem literally surrounded by lambs. Four days later as those lambs were being sacrificed in celebration of Passover, on the other side of town, hanging on a cross was the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world (John 1:19).

### **III. PAIN-STRICKEN HEART OF A SAVIOR (v. 41)**

Look at verse 41. Luke writes, "And when he drew near and saw the city, he wept over it." Jesus' heart ached over the lostness and obstinate rebellion of his people. It wasn't that long ago that Jesus stood in front of another crowd with a broken heart. Matthew wrote, "When He saw the crowds, he had compassion (to be moved to the core) for them, because they were harassed and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd (Matthew 9:36).

With the panorama of Jerusalem filling His eyes, Jesus was overwhelmed with grief. Amidst all of the cheers of the procession came tears – the King's tears. His people have rejected him. John reminds us in John 1:29, "He came to His own, and His own people did not receive Him." What did Jesus see? He saw the hearts of rebellious people. He saw the proud, unrepentant city smoldering in a pile of rubble that had been drenched with blood. The passage continues with Jesus' prophetic words that because she had rejected her King, Jerusalem would be destroyed. In AD 70, within one generation of Jesus' words, we see a picture that is far from peace on earth as Rome decimated Jerusalem.

The humble servant-King that we see here in Luke 19 calls all men everywhere to repent. Are you worshipping and following the Jesus of the Bible or a Jesus of your own imagination. There is salvation in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved" Acts 4:12.

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<sup>2</sup> Alexander Maclaren, *Expositions of Holy Scripture*.