

Series: Luke: Who is Jesus?

Title: Palm Sunday – Jesus Save Us!

Text: Luke 19:28-44; Zechariah 9:9-12; Rev 19:11-16

April 21, 2019

Rock of Hope

Palm Sunday – Jesus Save Us!

Luke 19:28-44

²⁸ After Jesus had said this, he went on ahead, going up to Jerusalem. ²⁹ As he approached Bethphage and Bethany at the hill called the Mount of Olives, he sent two of his disciples, saying to them, ³⁰ “Go to the village ahead of you, and as you enter it, you will find a colt tied there, which no one has ever ridden. Untie it and bring it here. ³¹ If anyone asks you, ‘Why are you untying it?’ say, ‘The Lord needs it.’”

³² Those who were sent ahead went and found it just as he had told them. ³³ As they were untying the colt, its owners asked them, “Why are you untying the colt?”

³⁴ They replied, “The Lord needs it.”

³⁵ They brought it to Jesus, threw their cloaks on the colt and put Jesus on it. ³⁶ As he went along, people spread their cloaks on the road.

³⁷ When he came near the place where the road goes down the Mount of Olives, the whole crowd of disciples began joyfully to praise God in loud voices for all the miracles they had seen:

³⁸ “Blessed is the king who comes in the name of the Lord!”

“Peace in heaven and glory in the highest!”

³⁹ Some of the Pharisees in the crowd said to Jesus, “Teacher, rebuke your disciples!”

⁴⁰ “I tell you,” he replied, “if they keep quiet, the stones will cry out.”

⁴¹ As he approached Jerusalem and saw the city, he wept over it ⁴² and said, “If you, even you, had only known on this day what would bring you peace—but now it is hidden from your eyes. ⁴³ The days will come upon you when your enemies will build an embankment against you and encircle you and hem you in on every side. ⁴⁴ They will dash you to the ground, you and the children within your walls. They will not leave one stone on another, because you did not recognize the time of God’s coming to you.”

We see in the reading of this Scripture the First triumphant Entry and the fulfillment of many prophecies and historical understandings within the Jewish people.

Let’s look at some of them.

The First Triumphant Entry

Riding a donkey

The reign of King David was coming to an end. To put it plainly he was old. He was definitely tired. The first half of his life was spent building a kingdom; the second half of his life was spent trying to hold that kingdom together. God had promised that David would never lose his throne, and as long as his descendants were loyal to David's God, a son of David would always sit on a throne in Jerusalem. Now, David was ready to retire. Old, beaten, ready for rest, he decided to leave his kingdom to his son Solomon. Solomon was not David's first born son. That son died trying to steal the throne away from David. First Kings says:

King David said, "Summon the priest Zadok, the prophet Nathan, and Benaiah, son of Jehoiada." So they came to the king, and he said, "Take my officials with you. Put my son Solomon on my mule, and take him to Gihon. Have the priest Zadok and the prophet Nathan anoint him king of Israel there. Then blow the ram's horn and say, 'Long live King Solomon!' Follow him back here when he comes to sit on my throne. He will be king in place of me. I have appointed him to be the leader of Israel and Judah." (1 Kings 1:32-35)

Solomon became king, riding to his anointing on a donkey. Hold on to that image: David's immediate descendant, the heir to the throne of Israel, is riding to his coronation on a donkey.

When Solomon died, the Kingdom of Israel split into the Kingdom of Israel in the North and the Kingdom of Judah in the south. The Bible has very little good to say about any of the kings of the Northern Kingdom of Israel. Immediately after the split between north and south, the northern kingdom sought to establish its own holy place to rival that of Jerusalem. Samaria was established as that religious and political center.

Many centuries later, both kingdoms had been destroyed (Israel was conquered by the Assyrians in 722 and Judah was conquered by the Neo-Babylonians in 586). When the Persians conquered Babylon, they allowed the Jewish exiles to return home. Not long after their return to the region of Judah, the Prophet Zechariah stated:

(Zechariah 9:9-12)

Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion! Shout aloud, O daughter of Jerusalem! Lo, your king comes to you; triumphant and victorious is he, humble and riding on an ass, on a colt the foal of an ass. I will cut off the chariot from Ephraim and the war horse from Jerusalem; and the battle bow shall be cut off, and he shall command peace to the nations; his dominion shall be from sea to sea, and from the River to the ends of the earth. As for you also, because of the blood of my covenant with you, I will set your captives free from the waterless pit. Return to your stronghold, O prisoners of hope; today I declare that I will restore to you double.

Now hold on to that image: a king is going to come to Jerusalem, not riding on a warhorse as was the custom of victory parades, but riding on a young donkey. This is a symbol of humility, not of bragging. The king is a conquering king, but his conquests are won through acts of humility. This new, humble king will set captives free through a covenant made by blood.

Garments Cast Down

About 150 years after Solomon's death, King Ahab became king of Israel, along with his wife Jezebel. The two rulers systematically set out on a program of eliminating worshipers of the Lord and implementing the worship of Baal. Those who worshiped the Lord, the God of Israel and Judah were hunted down and killed. Prophets and Priest of the Lord were executed. This, of course, led to the famous showdown between the Prophet Elijah and the Priests of Baal. Elijah won the contest, the priests of Baal were killed by the people, but Ahab and Jezebel were still on the throne and they were still dangerous. Moreover, they were more bitter toward anyone who worshiped the Lord. So the Lord chose a new king.

The prophet Elisha called one of the disciples of the prophets. He said, "Put on your belt. Take this flask of olive oil, and go to Ramoth Gilead. When you arrive there, look for Jehu, son of Jehoshaphat and grandson of Nimshi. Go inside, and have him get up and leave his companions. Take him into an inner room. Take the flask of oil, pour it on his head, and say, 'This is what the LORD says: I have anointed you king of Israel.' Then open the door and leave immediately." The young man, the servant of the prophet, went to Ramoth Gilead. When he arrived there, the army's generals were sitting together. He said, "I have something to tell you, General." Jehu asked, "Which one of us?" He answered, "You, General!" Jehu got up and went into the house. The prophet poured olive oil on his head and told him, "This is what the LORD God of Israel says: I have anointed you king of the LORD's people, king of Israel. You will destroy the family of your master Ahab. Then he opened the door and left. Jehu came out to his master's officials. One of them asked him, "Is everything alright? Why did this lunatic come to you?" He answered, "You know the man and the kind of things he says." They said, "That's not an answer. Please tell us."

Jehu replied, "We talked for a while, and he said to me, 'This is what the LORD says: I have anointed you king of Israel.'" Then each one of them immediately took off his coat and laid it on the stairs below him. They blew a ram's horn and said, "Jehu is king!" (2 Kings 9:1-13)

Now hold on to that image: The Lord's people were being oppressed and killed by an enemy of the Lord, so the Lord chose a king, and when the people heard about that pronouncement, they threw their garments and coats on the ground before him as he walked. The enemy was still on the throne, but a new king was chosen and he destroyed that enemy and his entire dynasty.

Waving Branches

Centuries later, in the region known as Judah, or Judea, was under the control of Syria. The king of Syria was a descendant of one of the generals in Alexander the Great's army and went by the name Antiochus IV. Antiochus liked to go by the name "Epiphanes," meaning "God revealed," but many of his contemporaries called him "Epimanes" behind his back, which meant "Mad man." In the year 167 B.C., Antiochus decided that all of his subjects were going to become good Greeks. He initiated a program of forced Hellenization on his subjects, including Jews living in Judea. He put a statue of the god Zeus in the Jewish Temple and he sacrificed a pig on the altar. This triggered a revolt led by the Hasmonean family, whose eldest son Judas was nicknamed Maccabeus—"the Hammer"—and the revolt is known as the Maccabean Revolt.

During the revolt, Judas Maccabeus conquered the city of Jerusalem:

Now Maccabeus and his followers, the Lord leading them on, recovered the temple and the city; and they tore down the altars which had been built in the public square by the foreigners, and also destroyed the sacred

precincts. They purified the sanctuary, and made another altar of sacrifice; then, striking fire out of flint, they offered sacrifices, after a lapse of two years, and they burned incense and lighted lamps and set out the bread of the Presence. And when they had done this, they fell prostrate and besought the Lord that they might never again fall into such misfortunes, but that, if they should ever sin, they might be disciplined by him with forbearance and not be handed over to blasphemous and barbarous nations. It happened that on the same day on which the sanctuary had been profaned by the foreigners, the purification of the sanctuary took place, that is, on the twenty-fifth day of the same month, which was Chisleu.

And they celebrated it for eight days with rejoicing, in the manner of the feast of booths, remembering how not long before, during the feast of booths, they had been wandering in the mountains and caves like wild animals. Therefore, bearing ivy-wreathed wands and beautiful branches and also fronds of palm, they offered hymns of thanksgiving to him who had given success to the purifying of his own holy place. (2 Maccabees 10:5-7)

Judas' conquest of Jerusalem led to the purification of the Temple and the creation of the Jewish holiday of Hanukkah. Now hold on to that image: Judas liberated the holy city from foreigners who occupied Jerusalem and who desecrated the holy sites. Judas, upon entering the city, took it upon himself to act as High Priest and re-consecrated the holy sites and the Temple.

In the year 142, Judas' brother Simon was leading the rebellion. Antiochus had been murdered. And the new king of Syria was willing to make peace. Simon was granted the titles of High Priest and Prince of Jerusalem. Simon's Princedom would quickly transform into a kingdom, marking the creation of an independent Jewish kingdom, which had not existed since the Babylonian conquest of 586. This independent nation would be short-lived, lasting only until the Romans moved into the region in 66 B.C. Nevertheless, when the new king announced peace with Simon:

On the twenty-third day of the second month, in the one hundred and seventy-first year, the Jews entered it with praise and palm branches, and with harps and cymbals and stringed instruments, and with hymns and songs, because a great enemy had been crushed and removed from Israel. (I Maccabees 13:51)

Now hold on to that image: Simon, the leader of the revolt, established peace and acted as both High Priest and King in Jerusalem.

Now take all of those images that you have been holding and consider this:

They brought the donkey colt to Jesus and they draped their coats on it and Jesus sat on it. Then a bunch of people threw their coats onto the road, and others cut leafy branches from the surrounding fields and threw them on the road. Those who walked in front of Jesus and those who followed him shouted out, "Hosanna! Blessed is the one who comes in the name of the Lord! Blessed is the coming of our father David's kingdom! Hosanna highest heaven!"

This is an image that has been acted and re-acted throughout Jewish history. Every Jew in Jerusalem who knew history and who knew the Scriptures understood.

A King, like wise Solomon, was riding a donkey on the way to his coronation; a King who would destroy the Enemy of God's people was having coats thrown on the ground before him; a King, humble, yet mighty, was about to establish peace and create a covenant through blood; a King, was coming to conquer the oppressors and rededicate that Temple; a King, who was also a High Priest, was coming to establish peace.

A Second Triumphant Entry -- Then and Now

Open the Gates!

East gate / golden gate now sealed.

2000 years ago, the Sadducees had a tradition in which they believed the Messiah would show up four days before Passover. They kept the gates of the Temple open so that He could walk right in to His rightful place. Because of this, Jewish nationalistic fervor was at its peak on this particular day. The Romans would have all troops activated and on alert for this day. They feared the Jews would try another revolt under some religiously crazed radical as had happened in the past. Tensions were very high on that day.

Additionally, the gate is significant for Jews because according to tradition, on the holiday of *Yom Kippur* (Day of Atonement), a Temple messenger was sent through this gate with a sacrificial lamb to the desert.

Therefore, the gate holds historical and traditional significance for the Jews, as well as remaining an indicator of the Messiah who is meant to come.

The Eastern gate was ultimately sealed shut in 1541 by the Ottoman Sultan Suleiman. However, prior to this time, the gate was closed in 810 (also by the Muslims), then reopened in 1102 by the Crusaders, and then walled up again by Saladin (the first sultan of Egypt and Syria and the founder of the Ayyubid dynasty) after defeating the Crusaders in 1187 and gaining control of Palestine and the city of Jerusalem.

The final sealing shut of the gate as completed by Suleiman is said to have been a defensive move by the sultan. As derived from the Jewish literature, the gate is said to be the point at which the Jewish Messiah will enter the city of Jerusalem, and therefore, in order to prevent this from occurring, the sultan sealed the gate.

Too late!

That is the very day Jesus chose to enter Jerusalem on a donkey fulfilling the prophecy of Zech. 9:9 (NIV). 9 Rejoice greatly, O Daughter of Zion! Shout, Daughter of Jerusalem! See, your king comes to you, righteous and having salvation, gentle and riding on a donkey, on a colt, the foal of a donkey.

Possibly those who were recently in Israel went up and down Hosanna Street in Jerusalem. If you are coming from Bethlehem and then through Bethany, the road climbs over a ridge and as you reach the crest, spread out before you on the other side of the Kidron Valley is the beautiful city of Jerusalem. The dominant feature in the view of the city is the Dome of the Rock. The Dome of the Rock now stands where the Temple once stood. The rock inside that dome has the footings of the Holy of Holies in the dimensions recorded in God's word. There is even a carved out area on top of the rock in the dimensions of the Ark of the Covenant. That ridge was once called the Mount of Olives. Two-thirds of the way down that hill into the Kidron Valley is the Church of All Nations and the Garden of Gethsemane.

Jesus went down that road on a donkey. It was a donkey that had never been ridden. This donkey had yielded its back to its Creator and willingly carried Him down that road. That donkey happens to be a lot like us when we came to Jesus for salvation. We come, used to having our own way, but knowing we have met our Creator and need to yield our life to Him. What an honor to be of use to the Creator of all things!

Palm Sunday marks the Triumphant entry of Jesus as King of Israel into Jerusalem.

- But his coming coronation will be at the hands of the Romans: he will be crowned with thorns, beaten with a reed that was used to mock a king's scepter.
- His throne will be a cross. His people who cheer for him as King of Israel this day, will shout for his crucifixion a few days later.
- This is how the covenant by blood will be established.
- This is how peace will be established.
- This is how the oppressor will be conquered.
- This is how the Enemy of God's people will be undone.
- This is how the King will reign in wisdom. There is no other way.

We must always remember that Jesus' kingdom comes through suffering and the cross. And this is what people don't like.

- People want a man of action. The people want a man who leads an army into Jerusalem and defeats the Romans, chasing them all the way back to Rome.
- When the people realize that their King is not the king they were expecting, they turn on him.
- He was just another disappointment. Just another unfulfilled promise.
- This is what Holy Week was about to the people who lived it first hand.
- It was unbridled expectation met with staggering defeat and disappointment.

But the events of this week established a New Kingdom.

- The events of this week shatter bondage, liberates captives, gives sight to the blind, hearing to the deaf, heals the afflicted, and gives good news to the poor.
- It is this week that a King executes himself for the crimes of his murderous subjects.
- It is this week that Jerusalem will get a descendant of David, who is wiser than Solomon, to rule from David's throne.
- It is this week that Jerusalem will get a new High Priest.
- And it is this week that all of us will be set free from the oppression of the Enemy, who hates God's people.

It is a new covenant, established by blood, offered in humility by a High Priest and King who liberates the captives and establishes peace.

"Hosanna! Blessed is the one who comes in the name of the Lord! Blessed is the coming of our father David's kingdom! Hosanna highest heaven!"

Cry out Save Us!

The crowds that had witnessed Lazarus resurrection shouted "Hosanna" which means, "Save us now!" *Yasha-anna* in Hebrew.

They are quoting from Psalms 118:25-29 (NIV)

²⁵ O LORD, save us; O LORD, grant us success. ²⁶ Blessed is he who comes in the name of the LORD. From the house of the LORD we bless you. ²⁷ The LORD is God, and he has made his light shine upon us. With boughs in

hand, join in the festal procession up to the horns of the altar. ²⁸ You are my God, and I will give you thanks; you are my God, and I will exalt you. ²⁹ Give thanks to the LORD, for he is good; his love endures forever.

Save Us

They are saying Jehovah (LORD) save us!

- To come in the name of the LORD is to come in His authority.
- He has made His light to shine on us. Jesus said He was the Light of the world. Isaiah predicted the Messiah would be a Light to the Gentiles.
- Then in verse 27 we have variation in the texts. The NIV is more accurate in translation representing a clearer understand of the original language and predicts they will be waving boughs before Him unto the altar in the Temple.
- Then verse 28 – *You are my God!* Oh, if only they would have heard their own prophecies that they had memorized so faithfully.
- And verse 29 is incredible as this is what was sung when the Presence of God filled the first Temple built by Solomon. By the way, it's a chorus. As the people sang this in Solomon's day, and I think they sang it more than 2 or 3 times, the Presence of God so filled the Temple that everyone had to step outside.
- (2Chron 7)
- And what was happening right there in Jerusalem on that first Palm Sunday?
 - The presence of God is about to walk into the Temple, the incarnation of God!

Do you see this morning that this is a picture for you?

- The Lord wants you for a Temple of the Holy Spirit.
- He wants to fill you, so that it is no more you that live but Christ that lives in you.
- We need to sing, "He is good, and His love endures forever" until we are filled to overflowing with the presence of the King.
- Are we welcoming His presence into us as a Temple?
- Are our doors open and waiting?
- And do we recognize Him when He comes?
 - He comes to us just as humbly, and sometimes we think it is just our brother, just a passage of Scripture, just an event in an ordinary day, but it is the King!
 - The Jews sang Psalm 24 about a generation that sought the face of God. Psalms 24:7(NIV) "*Lift up your heads, O you gates; be lifted up, you ancient doors, that the King of glory may come in.*"

Be always ready for humble King Jesus to come in ways you least expect.

The offering of Peace

The welcoming crowd shouted, Luke 19:38 (NIV) "*Blessed is the king who comes in the name of the Lord!*" "*Peace in heaven and glory in the highest!*"

Luke 19:42 (NIV) "*If you, even you, had only known on this day what would bring you peace--but now it is hidden from your eyes.*"

This was a very dangerous thing to be expressing at that moment. The Pharisees knew the verse in Zechariah about the King coming on a donkey and were aware of the watchful eyes of Rome. It wasn't helping the tense

situation to shout about a king on this particular day. They asked Jesus to rebuke his disciples. But Jesus told them if the disciples were quiet the stones would cry out. Jesus was familiar with the prophecy too. He saw the command to the daughter of Jerusalem to “Shout” and knew it would be fulfilled with or without people.

Our culture is fascinated with prophecies. One of the ways I like to get my weekly dose of humor is to look at the tabloid headlines as I go through the supermarket checkout line. They are always proclaiming some hidden prophecy is found or some secret code has helped to understand what some ancient prophet said. What is amazing to me is even when they are in error year after year, people still want to read it. The Bible has never been wrong. Its prophecies are accurate in every detail. It tells us what is coming in detail and yet most people never pick up their Bible!

This prophecy about our Lord entering Jerusalem is amazingly detailed. Zechariah 9:9 speaks of the Daughter of Zion and Jerusalem rejoicing greatly and shouting. The sisters of Lazarus were indeed rejoicing for the resurrection of their brother. The women that followed Jesus were rejoicing that they were loved of God and forgiven. In ancient Israel a shout would be lifted up as an army went into battle. Here is a little rag tag army entering Jerusalem to conquer, but they have come led by the Prince of Peace on a donkey. They lift up a shout of praise.

He came as the righteous One. How many people can be said to have entered Jerusalem in righteousness? And next are those powerful words, “having salvation”. Jesus came offering them peace with God. He came in peace to give the people peace. They preferred salvation from taxation to salvation of their souls – and so in a few days they would prefer Barabbas to be freed instead of Jesus. Jesus could see that this was their mindset, and so in the midst of this praise, with people waving the palm branches like a national flag, Jesus wept.

Luke 19:42 (NIV) *"If you, even you, had only known on this day what would bring you peace--but now it is hidden from your eyes.*

Peace was not a new king that would war against Rome. It was a King that would offer them peace with God. Jesus could see that their desire to have an earthly king would be their destruction. If they had received the salvation that Jesus offered, they would not have revolted against Rome and been destroyed, crucified by the thousands.

I want to stop here and ask if Jesus weeps for you this morning, because He sees your choice is to try to find peace in something other than Him. He sees the devastation that choice will reap in your life. How He would love to gather you into His arms. Don't be like Jerusalem.

Receive His peace this morning. Recognize that only your Creator knows what will truly fill your emptiness. It is not in the things He made, but His very life.

Peace between you and God – no more war of the Spirit within you. Re-united by the prince of Peace.

Open the Gates of Your Heart and Let him enter.
He will save you and give you peace.

Look at the last part of that amazing prophecy, “gentle and riding on a donkey...” This is how the Lord comes to us today too. He gently knocks upon the door of our hearts. He enters only at our invitation. I'm amazed at His patience. It should break our hearts that He is so persistent and yet so gentle.

A Third Triumphant Entry

The Romans don't seem to have been too concerned. After all, there are no swords. When the ancient kings of Judah, from whom Joseph and Mary were descended, came into a town on a donkey it meant that they came in peace. The town could relax and prepare to welcome them. But if they came on a war-horse, it meant a battle was about to ensue. The time for Jesus to humbly and in gentleness offer Himself to man is drawing to an end. Just as this prophecy and Psalm 118 have been fulfilled in amazing detail, so the other prophecies will soon come to pass.

Turn to Zechariah 14 for the real triumphal entry.

Zech. 14:2-4 (NIV) ² I will gather all the nations to Jerusalem to fight against it; the city will be captured, the houses ransacked, and the women raped. Half of the city will go into exile, but the rest of the people will not be taken from the city. ³ Then the LORD will go out and fight against those nations, as he fights in the day of battle. ⁴ On that day his feet will stand on the Mount of Olives, east of Jerusalem, and the Mount of Olives will be split in two from east to west, forming a great valley, with half of the mountain moving north and half moving south.

For more detail we'll turn to Rev 19:11-16 (NIV) ¹¹ *I saw heaven standing open and there before me was a white horse, whose rider is called Faithful and True. With justice he judges and makes war.*

THE COMING JUDGEMENT

Now the King of Judah comes on a war-horse.

- No more gentle Jesus for the time for justice has come.
- What kind of God would He be if He never called man to account, if He never executed justice on the wicked?
- Man cries out now when a Hitler or Saddam is allowed to go on. "Where is God?" they ask, when some tyrant kills the innocent.
- All rebellion against God will be required to face justice when that day comes. No one is going to ask then, "Where is God?" for every eye shall see Him.
 - Of course, then wicked man will be asking, "Where is the God of love?" He is right here, right now on the donkey, gently asking you to realize that the route you're on leads to death.
- The Day of Lord is coming and then it will be too late for those who have ignored His pleading all their life.

That is the Triumphal Entry! The day is coming when armies will surround Jerusalem. At that time Jerusalem will fall and half the people will be removed. But then the LORD Himself will fight against those nations that have taken Jerusalem.

Palm Sunday! The ones who shouted 'yasha-anna' will be shouting, "Crucify Him" in just four days, because He did not do what they wanted Him to do. They wanted Him to fulfill their expectations, not be LORD of their life.

Where do you stand?

- Total surrender to the Lordship of Christ,
- or expecting Him to fulfill your expectations?

Yasha-anna – save now – not from Rome, but from my own misguided desires. If He reigns in you now, He will reign in and through you then.

Open the Gates of your heart.

Cry out to Jesus – Save Us.

Receive Peace!