

## Holy Week in Biblical Perspective

### *Palm Sunday*

#### “The King Is Coming”

Luke 19:28–40

Dr. Harry L. Reeder III

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As we come to Holy Week we are in a familiar text for this time of year. This is where they are affirming Jesus’ entrance into Jerusalem. Luke 19:28–40 says [28] *And when he had said these things, he went on ahead, going up to Jerusalem. [29] When he drew near to Bethphage and Bethany, at the mount that is called Olivet, he sent two of the disciples, [30] 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. [31] If anyone asks you, ‘Why are you untying it?’ you shall say this: ‘The Lord has need of it.’” [32] So those who were sent went away and found it just as he had told them. [33] And as they were untying the colt, its owners said to them, “Why are you untying the colt?” [34] And they said, “The Lord has need of it.” [35] And they brought it to Jesus, and throwing their cloaks on the colt, they set Jesus on it. [36] And as he rode along, they spread their cloaks on the road. [37] 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, [38] saying, “Blessed is the King who comes in the name of the Lord! Peace in heaven and glory in the highest!” [39] And some of the Pharisees in the crowd said to him, “Teacher, rebuke your disciples.” [40] He answered, “I tell you, if these were silent, the very stones would cry out.”* The grass withers, the flower fade, the Word of God abides forever and by His grace and mercy may it now be preached for you.

There is a particular challenge when a pastor gets to Holy Week especially when I have been in ministry a little over 40 years and I have to preach this text because I have preached this text before, perhaps many times before. Although repeated events have great value. I love the cycles of Christianity, six days labor one day rest and worship, that certain hymns will be sung on Palm Sunday, Easter Sunday and during Advent season. I love all of those rhythms and regularities of the Christian life. I think that does something for people where not only is spontaneity and novel exciting but also regularity and anticipation in the Christian life. The challenge for a pastor is how to come to a familiar text freshly.

I believe what I will be sharing with you today you may or may not have seen before in this text and if you have seen it perhaps you haven’t realized how much it is emphasized in this text as Palm Sunday is accounted in the Scriptures from the four Gospel writers – Matthew, Mark, Luke and John. Before I get into this study, I just want to remind everyone due to the corona virus and the stay-at-home guidelines we are doing this by virtual worship but it’s really not worship because worship isn’t virtual. Worship is actual where you are speaking to one another and encouraging one another but I do thank the Lord for our present technology that allows us to still bring God’s message to you. I thank the leadership for years ago investing in this technology for proclamation for little did we know that it would be important for these matters at this time. This is a great outreach opportunity to others as well.

So let’s get to this account in Scripture having taken place on Palm Sunday. This account is given to us in all four of the Gospels. Here is what has occurred up to this point. Jesus has left Galilee which is seen in Luke 9 and from there all the way to this text in Luke 19 Jesus has been

travelling as Luke has recorded what He taught, the miracles He did and various other things that happened which is known as His peregrine ministry. As we pick up in this text He is going up the hill of ascent surrounded by people from Jerusalem coming to the temple to worship for the feast days. They would have been singing the hymns and psalms of ascent just like we always have a hymn of ascent rising to the presence of God in our worship service.

Bethany was a very special place for Jesus for a couple of reasons. One of which had to do with a family that was there where Jesus had developed an important, personal and robust relationship of affection with. This family was made up of two sisters and a brother who were Mary, Martha and Lazarus. A second reason is during His three years of public ministry He had been at Bethany by the Jordan when He was called to this Bethany when Lazarus had died. Jesus came and raised Lazarus from the dead and the reverberations from that are still at the time of this event are going throughout the land. People were very curious to come and meet this Lazarus and then when Jesus showed up they were curious about that as well.

So Jesus comes and keeps Sabbath. This will be the next to the last Sabbath Jesus keeps. Jesus will keep the old Sabbath and then the next one He will be in the grave having died for our sins on the cross the day before which is known as Good Friday. It is not known as good for the element of the crucifixion but because of the blessings of grace that come from Jesus' atoning death. So Jesus is now at Bethany as His feet had been anointed, He rested and now the first day of the week He arises and what will soon be known as the Lord's Day because it will commemorate the resurrection of Christ. On this Sunday He arises to go to Jerusalem.

Bethphage referred to in Luke 19:29 means house of figs. It is only found here in the Scriptures and not found at all in the Old Testament. It is found in extra Biblical literature so we know it's a historical place. We are not quite sure of its location but it seems as if Bethany is on the eastern side of the Mount of Olives and it seems as if Bethphage is a village right before you get to the summit of the Mount of Olives. It is at that village that Jesus asks two of His disciples, who are unnamed in the text, to go into this village. Many suspect it is Peter and John but we don't know who the two are.

Jesus sends the two disciples into the village with a very specific and intentional mission. Based on all four of the Gospel accounts the two will find a donkey and a colt and the colt has never been ridden at all. In other words, it is unbroken. The Gospel of Matthew tells us that both the donkey and the colt are brought to Jesus, both having cloaks put upon them as both are used as Jesus will ride on the colt as the donkey will still be there. Some ask why the donkey would be there and if the colt has never been ridden there is a great possibility the colt hasn't been completely weaned from its mother yet so it would be necessary for the mother to be there. There is some manliness of Jesus here. Jesus is riding a colt that has never been ridden which means it's wild and needs to be broken. I would have loved to have seen that first moment when Jesus got on the colt and how He tamed it so rapidly. The mother being nearby was probably a help as well.

Now Jesus has told the two disciples what to say if they are asked what they are doing when they untie the colt. People there would be well aware that Jesus was in the area due to the crowds. All they are asked to respond when asked is to say 'the Lord has need of it.' That is exactly what happened. Nothing is recorded that the owner said. Simply freely he gave it and then they brought it to Jesus who said He had need of it.

Why would Jesus have need of that colt? There are two reasons. One is because of what the colt of a donkey says and two was because the Scripture had said this was the way the Messiah would enter. So Jesus is declared King by coming on this donkey. We know the

Messiah was going to be a King. Prophet? Yes. Priest? Yes. He is a Prophet who is greater than Moses. He is a Priest who is greater than Aaron by the order of Melchizedek and He is a King who is greater than David. David comes from the tribe of Judah and the blessing upon Judah was that the scepter, the kingship would not depart from that tribe. David is instructed that he will have a Son that is greater than him and that Son that comes from his line through Mary and Joseph is Jesus. So here Jesus who has been prophesied in the Old Testament now comes as King.

One of the things stated about this King comes from Zechariah 9:9 which says *[9] 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.* Daughter of Zion is language that refers to the church – O covenant people of God! When a king showed up to a city if he was sitting upon a white war horse there was going to be a battle but if he came on a donkey he was coming to make peace. Christ is coming not to make peace with Satan, sin and the world but to make peace for His people whom He is saving out of the world and He will not lose one of them. He is coming to the citadel of God's covenant people, the daughter of Zion and He is coming to die for our sins for our King is coming to redeem us.

We have so many prophecies of the King that is to come to redeem His people in the Scriptures. We see it in the birth announcements of Jesus as well and in the acclamations of the people. He arrives as King mounted upon the donkey as the Messiah King was to be when He came into the city.

There is another interest factor associated with this donkey. Where is there any other time recorded in the Bible where Jesus is not walking as He is doing ministry? He always walked so why a donkey now? Is it because He finally got tired of walking? Is it because He is bowing to the pressure to be a king, like the Gentiles, political, military, powerful king? Or is it exactly what the Scriptures said? Your King comes humbled. This is another step even in His coronation venue/journey into Jerusalem. The King comes arriving in humility. To a cross He will go in humility. To a grave He will go in humility. Then He is raised, exalted on high and then the King comes again but this time on that white horse, to bring to consummation His victory, in judgment but here He comes, not in judgment, but to save His people from their judgment.

So we have Christ, the colt and this crowd. How does this crowd get together? It is a big crowd and it has four elements to it. One there is Matthew, Mark and Luke who bring us in the journey from Bethany to Jerusalem. Secondly, John's account is those coming from Jerusalem back out to meet Jesus. When you put the four accounts together there are Jesus and His disciples, not just His 12 Disciples but also those following Jesus which are a significant group of people. Then there are those who were curious which include those who came out to see Lazarus and Jesus who raised Lazarus and the fourth group are the Pharisees. The Pharisees hear the worship and praise of God that is taking place as they sing the psalms of the Messiah – *"Blessed is the King who comes in the name of the Lord! Peace in heaven and glory in the highest!"*

It's interesting how Luke is juxtaposing this at the beginning for he is the one who gives us the announcement to the shepherds in Luke 2 that this One is coming to bring peace on earth from the heavens and now he is declaring the One on earth is going to make peace for His people in the heavens. He is going to establish a relationship between His people and the Lord of glory in the heavens.

So here the crowds are singing praises of adoration as they sing ‘Blessed is He’ and praises of affirmation – this is the Lord, the King, the Son of God who has come to save us from our sins – and there is acclamation. The acclamation rises up so loudly and joyfully that the Pharisees just can’t stand this adoration, affirmation and acclamation any longer. And Luke 19:39–40 says [39] *And some of the Pharisees in the crowd said to him, “Teacher, rebuke your disciples.”* [40] *He answered, “I tell you, if these were silent, the very stones would cry out.”* All creation sings glory to the King of Kings.

Yet we made in the image of God can raise our voices in acclamation, affirmation, and adoration and the joy of the Lord. I always tell young pastors when they look at the congregation not to look at the crowd but at the faces. These are people and not just a crowd. In today’s present distress that’s just not hard for I’m only speaking to 10 people right now but I wish I could see all the people at home listening and watching remotely. I really want to see your face. Does the world see the joy of the world and will they hear it? Why would someone who can’t sing any better than me sing as loud as I do? I can’t help it for I wish I could do it better but I will do it because I’m not going to let any stone take my place. I refuse to be silent, to mumble and to be downcast. The King has come to save His people, blessed be the name of the Lord!

This text is so rich and even though I can’t remember how many times I’ve preached on this I just got so excited about it. Here is the takeaway. Christ intentionally and unmistakably declares that He is the Son of God and the Messiah King who has come in fulfillment of all the Scripture to save His people from their sin to the glory of the Father. It is interesting that this event would be in all four of the Gospels because according to John in John 12:16 it says, [16] *His disciples did not understand these things at first, but **when Jesus was glorified**,* (speaking of Jesus’ ascension) *then they remembered that these things had been written about him and had been done to him.*

Somehow after the ascension it clicked with His Disciples. The Bible tells us very clearly that all that Jesus did, He did to fulfill the Scriptures. For the rest of this Holy Week, as you go through all the readings of what happened during this week, notice the number of times it says that Jesus did this to fulfill the Scriptures. As Jesus hung on the cross it says in John 19:28, [28] *After this, Jesus, knowing that all was now finished, said **(to fulfill the Scripture)**, “I thirst.”* It wasn’t for Him to have wine, but it was to fulfill the Scriptures. Did He get the sour wine? Yes but that wasn’t the point. The point is that Jesus is intentionally fulfilling His Word step by step.

If the King coming to Jerusalem intentionally fulfilled His Word down to an unridden colt that He would ride in with kingly palms spread in front and with cloaks over the colt so He didn’t touch this colt, then do you hear Him say ‘the King is coming again’? The King who intentionally fulfilled the Scriptures coming into Jerusalem to save His people from their sins is the King who says ‘I’m coming again and bringing a new Jerusalem for My people in a new heavens and a new earth.’ If He unmistakably and intentionally in His sovereign power fulfilled every prophecy down to a colt then how much more can we be assured that the trumpet will blow, the voice of the arch angel will be heard and He shall descend again that we may ascend into a new heavens and a new earth, but only if this King is your Savior and you have surrendered to Him.

Here is a King who is unmistakably and intentionally declaring His rule and reign in humility to save us from our sins, coming in on the donkey yet look in the text at what this King calls for, this immediate sacrificial, unquestioning stewardship. The Lord has need of a donkey,

take mine, with no questions asked. The two disciples sent didn't need to come up with something to make the owner feel bad to give up his donkey for all they had to do was say 'the Lord has need of it' and He's got it. Also the two disciples were told to go do this and they just do it. They obey. Here is the unquestioning stewardship and the immediate discipleship. We see His disciples joining in as they praise and worship Him as King of Kings and Lord of Lords. 'Lift up your gates O Jerusalem, let this King of glory come in to do His work of grace for us.'

We see discipleship, stewardship and insistent worship here. It's absolutely crucial that we understand that gathered worship as we see it here on the road into Jerusalem, now there is a mixed group where there is no doubt that everyone in the crowds are not saved, but we see adoration, affirmation and acclamation with the whole heart and they are not going to be silent. Praise the Lord whenever unsaved people come in to see what worship is all about. There is going to be no need to supply a stone to praise the One who comes this time, not on the horse of judgment but on the donkey of humility.

In Matthew 21:5 the colt Jesus rides in on is referred to a beast of burden and here a beast of burden through stewardship and discipleship is requisitioned to bear the King of glory into Jerusalem so that He could ultimately, as our King, go to the cross to bear our burdens to save us. As the hymn says;

*At the Cross! At the Cross! where I first saw the light,  
And the burden of my heart rolled away,  
It was there by faith I received my sight,  
And now I am happy all the day!*

It is there our burdens are rolled away. Our King bears our burden. This beast of burden brought the King who will be our Savior taking our burdens away. Have yours been taken away? Have you surrendered to this Savior? Have you given your life to this King who died for you that you might sing unto Him who has saved you from all your sins?

This King is coming again and on that Day there will be the books of judgment and the Book of Life. If you are in the books of judgment that King will send all away to eternal condemnation for all of their sins. Over here is the Book of Life and you can be there for if you put your trust in Him that same King who came to go to that cross that the burdens of your sin can be rolled away will save you and give you everlasting life. This day I invite you to Him. Let's pray.

Prayer:

Take a few moments in silent prayer. What a glorious King we have! He is the King of Kings and Lord of Lords. He is the King who came to the Royal City, the greatest King to ever enter it, yet upon the colt, a donkey, to fulfill Scripture and to humble Himself to the point of death, even death on the cross, for sinners like you and me. Have you come to your King for His salvation and out of love have you brought to your King unquestioned stewardship, responsive discipleship, not as a burden, but out of the joy of our heart to praise Him with adoration, affirmation, and acclamation with our lips and our lives because He has saved us? O God I thank You for that Day in which another Scripture is fulfilled, the Old Testament predicted and anticipated Christ, the Gospels reveal Christ, the Epistles explain Christ, Revelation anticipates the return of Christ and now I pray O God by Your Spirit that any and all who are reading this today might know, not about Christ, but know Christ as Lord, Savior and their redeeming King so that with our lives we might crown Him with many crowns, the Lamb who saved us, upon the

throne of glory and who will bring us to glory, giving us the crown of His righteousness for all eternity. Ride, reign, and rule forever King Jesus, Amen.

### POWER POINT

### LIFE TAKEAWAY

*Christ intentionally and unmistakably declares that He is the Son of God and the Messiah King who has come in fulfillment of all of the Scripture to save His people from their sin to the Glory of the Father.*