

Luke 19:28-44 — The Triumphal Entry

March 28, 2021

Good morning! It is great to gather for worship on Palm Sunday. It is also great to see the kids waving palm branches. They help us remember this special day and get ready to celebrate the resurrection next week. Between Palm Sunday and Resurrection Sunday we remember how the final week of Jesus' life transpired. At the beginning of the week, Jesus entered Jerusalem to the praise and worship of the people. He was betrayed on Thursday night. He was condemned Friday morning. He died Friday afternoon. He lay in the grave until Sunday morning when he rose from the dead. Jesus rising from the dead and conquering the grave changed everything. It went from making it a terrible week to the best week of all as Jesus conquered our greatest enemies of sin and death.

We are not to Resurrection Sunday, also known as Celebration Sunday. That is next week. Today, we are studying Palm Sunday and what is known as the Triumphal Entry.

After almost three years of ministry, Jesus arrived in Jerusalem to celebrate Passover. The crowds were cheering for him like he and his disciples won the Super Bowl and were returning to their hometown. While, on the surface, this looked like a great reception and an enthusiastic welcome, it masked the empty and shallow faith of the people. On the outside they were enthusiastic for Jesus, but in their hearts on the inside they had no genuine love for Jesus. The reason for this disconnect is the crowds completely misunderstood why Jesus came. They viewed Jesus as a political figure. With his popularity and divine

power they reasoned that he was the key to successfully overthrowing Rome, the political power that ruled them. They were cheering for Jesus but for the wrong reasons. They wanted to put him in a political office. Jesus wasn't entering Jerusalem to overthrow the Romans. He was entering Jerusalem to solve a problem much bigger than the Romans, the problem of sin and death. Sin is what cuts us off from God. Sin is what justly condemns us to the lake of fire. There is nothing we can do to free ourselves from the consequences of sin and our addiction to sin. Jesus entered Jerusalem intending to die in our places for our sin. He intended to solve the problem of sin that separates us from God once and for all.

The problem is the people didn't see this. They were short-sighted. They wanted a political solution and nothing more. They misunderstood the greatness of what Jesus came to accomplish.

Not much has changed. Today, we hear the problem in the world is systemic racism, white supremacy, China, Russia or the wrong person in the White House. While there are challenges in all those areas, it is easy to forget that the biggest problem, the problem behind all problems in this world, is sin. That is a problem to which everyone desperately needs a solution. We need forgiveness for our sin. We need a restored relationship with God. We need new hearts and minds. In Jerusalem, Jesus accomplished all that for us. He offers it all to us today by faith. In a world that is focused on all the political problems in front of us, let us not forget that as the church we have the solution to the greatest problem for all of us. It is the problem of our sin and separation from

God. Jesus solved that once and for all on the cross and with the empty tomb. If we miss that, if anyone misses that, we miss everything. The people around Jesus in the Triumphal Entry completely missed it. Let us not also be like them and miss it. Let's turn to Luke 19. We are studying verses 28-44 together. Let's read these, and then we will study them together.

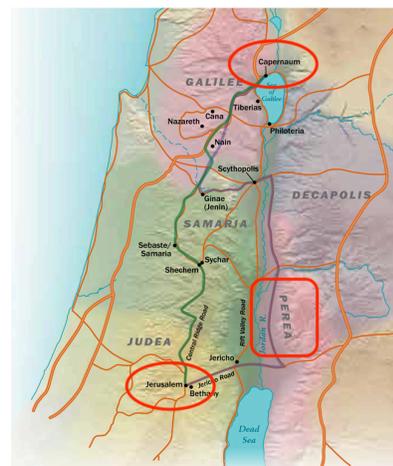
And when he had said these things, he went on ahead, going up to Jerusalem. When he drew near to Bethphage and Bethany, at the mount that is called Olivet, he sent two of the disciples, saying, "Go into the village in front of you, where on entering you will find a colt tied, on which no one has ever 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)

This verse sets the scene for what follows.

As you may remember from our study in the Gospel of Mark, Jesus came to Jerusalem for Passover from Galilee in the north. He passed



through the area of Perea, then crossed over the Jordan River and headed to Jericho. This was the common roadway used by those in the northern half of Israel when they traveled to Jerusalem in the south. It was Passover season so Jesus wasn't alone. He was part of a sea of thousands of people that were traveling the same road to the city of Jerusalem. While Jesus was part of the crowd, he had an especially large group of people around him in the crowd. At this time, Jesus' notoriety was at a peak. After three years of traveling throughout Israel, Jesus' healings were so extensive and common that he virtually banished sickness from the land. Jesus miraculously cured thousands. Doctors were out of work because of a patient shortage. This led to Jesus being incredibly popular at this time. Everyone wanted to be around Jesus and to touch Jesus.

It wasn't just Jesus' healings that made him popular. It was also his teaching. As we learned in the Gospel of Mark, thousands would follow Jesus into the wilderness to hear him teach. They would go without food to hear him teach. That is impressive. If I go ten minutes over time, I will hear about it from somebody in the hall after church. For Jesus, people volunteered to go without food for days. That is amazing teaching. No wonder everyone wanted to be around him on the road to Jerusalem.

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, we nicknamed him blind Bart. Jesus healed these two blind beggars, giving them their physical sight. They began following Jesus,

worshiping Jesus, and telling everyone they knew about how they received their sight from Jesus. This means the huge crowd around Jesus grew even bigger!

Jesus performed another miracle in Jericho. He didn't just open physical eyes. He opened spiritual eyes, the eyes of someone's heart. That is just as miraculous. This was a man named Zacchaeus. He was a chief tax collector in the city. This meant he was one of the most hated men in Jericho. He was a Jew that worked collecting taxes for the Romans. While everyone avoided Zacchaeus, Jesus decided to have lunch with him. During that meal, talking with Jesus changed Zacchaeus' heart and life. We would say that he was born again. How do we know he had such a radical heart change? Tax collectors were directed by the Romans how much tax they were to raise. They inflated that tax to line their own pockets and extort money out of the people. When Zacchaeus finished eating with Jesus, he was so radically changed in his heart that he decided to give back all the money he extorted from people. He did more than just give back the money he took by extortion and pressure. The Bible tells us he gave back four times the money he stole!

When an encounter with Jesus means you start giving back four times more money than you stole from people, that means your life is radically changed. Word got around that Jesus changes hearts and lives. That means that even more people wanted to be around Jesus and to follow Jesus. The crowd around Jesus was getting bigger and bigger.

Let us not forget one of the most miraculous miracles of Jesus. Just a few weeks prior, in the small town of Bethany that was just up the road from Jericho

and only 2 miles outside of Jerusalem, Jesus raised Lazarus from the dead. His family had his funeral. They buried Lazarus. Now we have Lazarus down at Starbucks talking to people while he sipped a latte. Word about the Jesus who raised Lazarus from the dead spread around town. When people heard Jesus was coming to town, the people in and around Bethany ran to Jericho to meet Jesus. The closer Jesus came to Jerusalem the more people gathered around him because everyone wanted to see him.

I say all of this background to help us understand the size of the crowd around Jesus. Understand it was huge. There were thousands upon thousands.

What was this crowd hoping Jesus would do for them? Was it more healings like when he gave the blind beggars their sight? No. Was it more changed lives like Zacchaeus? Absolutely not.

The crowd wanted Jesus to use his life changing power to overthrow the Romans and make Israel the new capital city for the world. Jesus had solved everything else, if he could just solve their political problems, they thought the world would be a perfect place.

Let me remind you that Jesus didn't come at that time to solve the political problems in the world. They were far too small. Jesus came to solve the problem of sin and how it brings death and separation from God.

In the Gospel of Mark, we read three times that Jesus told his disciples he was heading to Jerusalem to die, but they could not grasp it. It was not just the apostles who were blind to this reality but the massive crowds could also not grasp it either. All they could think of was an earthly kingdom and political

solutions with Jesus reigning to bring them comfort and power. The problem with Jesus being the political solution at this time is what was needed was a more radical solution, the solution to the problem of sin and death in our lives.

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 his life, Jesus usually didn't allow people to have massive public displays of worship to him. When the crowds wanted to make him king, he slipped out of their grasp.

This was different. Now, for some reason, Jesus changed his tune. As he made his way into Jerusalem to die, he allowed public worship. He allowed the people to call him their king. Why did he change tactics?

From the very beginning of Jesus' ministry, when he healed the man with the withered hand in the synagogue, the religious leaders hated him. They were intimidated by Jesus. They were jealous of Jesus. While they wanted Jesus dead for the last three years, they didn't kill him. It was easier for the religious leaders to tolerate Jesus because most of the time he was up north in Galilee and away from Jerusalem, which was the center of their influence and power.

In the Triumphal Entry, Jesus changed his strategy. He didn't just allow people to worship him, but he allowed people to worship him as he arrived in Jerusalem, the front yard of the religious leaders! It was as if he was shoving his popularity with the people in the face of the religious leaders to irritate them. Why would he do such a thing?

I will tell you why. Jesus was intentionally infuriating them. He was intentionally irritating them. He was getting under their skin. Why would he do that?

In Matthew 26 we learn of the religious leaders' plans. They intended to arrest Jesus during the Passover but to execute him after the Passover when the crowds died down. That was less risky for them and their political power.

That wouldn't work. According to the Gospel of John, Jesus is the true Passover lamb. God's plans were that Jesus would die at the same time as the Passover lambs during the Passover celebration. The Passover lambs were celebrated in remembrance of the shed blood of a lamb being the means by which God's wrath would pass over his people and be diverted away from us. Jesus is the one true Passover lamb to which all previous Passover lambs pointed. His death on the cross allows God's wrath to pass over us.

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 and not after the Passover like they originally intended? It was by Jesus infuriating them because he accepted the worship and praise of thousands as he came into town.

When the religious leaders in Jerusalem saw Jesus coming into town with thousands of people worshipping him, they knew they had to get rid of Jesus and get rid of him quick. He was too popular. That is why he was killed during the Passover, not after the Passover, as they originally intended.

Another important question for us to ask by way of introduction is, "How many people were worshipping Jesus during the Triumphal Entry?" Here we get

into a lot of guesswork. If you do not agree with my analysis of the number or you have a better way to estimate, feel free to let me know after this message. In the historical record, we have a hard number. In a Passover that took place in Jerusalem ten years later, historical record tells us 260,000 lambs were slaughtered. There was typically one lamb for every 10 people. If that is accurate, simple multiplication leads us to believe they may have been as many as 2 million people in and around Jerusalem for Passover that year. Of course, that is an estimate. Some scholars estimate 90-95 percent of the people in the city for Passover did not come out to welcome Jesus to town for Passover. Possibly only 5-10 percent of the Jews in Jerusalem for that Passover welcomed Jesus to town. That sounds insignificant until you do the math. That means 100,000-200,000 people welcomed Jesus to town during the Triumphal Entry. That is a lot of people!

If you were the religious leaders in Jerusalem, and you hated Jesus but there were 200,000 people cheering for Jesus as he came into your town, wouldn't that freak you out? Wouldn't that put you into a panic? Wouldn't you do anything to get rid of Jesus as fast as you could? That is what happened.

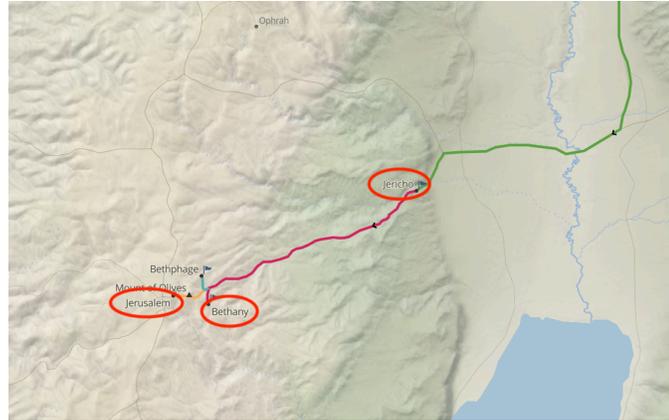
As we work through the remaining verses, they fall under three headings. They are the preparation for Jesus' arrival, the adoration of Jesus at his coming, and the condemnation by Jesus because they didn't understand the reason he came.

The preparation for Jesus' coming

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 not a smooth walk from Jericho to Bethany.

Jericho is 827 feet below sea level. Bethany is 1,516 feet above sea level and is about 13 miles away from Jericho.



Bethany and Bethpage were small towns just 2 miles outside of Jerusalem. Bethany was the home of Mary, Martha, and Lazarus. Today, this town is called Al-‘Ayzariyyah in Arabic. That means the town of Lazarus. The small town was renamed after its most famous citizen. Bethany means house of dates. Bethpage was next to Bethany. Bethpage means house of figs or house of over-ripened 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 can't see Jerusalem when in these town. Jerusalem is visible on the opposite side of the crown of the hill. At this time, Jesus had not arrived at the peak 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)

In Bethpage they would find a colt tied up. It was a colt that had never been ridden. They were to untie it and bring it to Jesus. Today, we call this a car-jacking when you steal somebody else's ride. I guess you could call this a colt-jacking when you steal someone else's colt.

How did Jesus know this colt would be tied up on the side of the road as they went into the next town? The answer is obvious, yet simple. Jesus is God. He knows things nobody else knows. He can see things in places where he is not located. We have already seen Jesus told his disciples the future before it happened. He gave them intimate details about what would happen to him in Jerusalem, who would kill him, and that he would be dead for three days. Jesus doesn't just know the future before it happens but he knows what is happening at other places and other times even though he is not there.

Jesus had a staggering amount of supernatural knowledge about the future. When we look at the parallel account of the Triumphal Entry found in Matthew 21, we learn Jesus knew they wouldn't just find a tied-up colt in the next town but they would also find a donkey tied to the colt. Jesus also knew the life history of the colt. He knew it had never been ridden.

Here there is 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 us even when we don't see him standing next to us. This means Jesus knows our complete life history. There is nothing we can hide from him. He knows all about our pain. He knows all about our sin.

What I find amazing is that Jesus knows us completely but he still loves us fully. Isn't that what each of us desperately want in the world? Don't all of us want spouses with whom we can be completely real? Don't all of us want spouses that know all there is to know about us, even our sin and our pain, yet still love us and will do anything for us? That is what each of us want. While we may or may not have that in a spouse, each of us have that in Jesus our God.

Just like the colt, he knows us completely and still chooses us, even though we don't deserve it. He loves us fully. Knowing us and our sin completely, Jesus chose to go into Jerusalem and die a horrid death for us. He chose to become sin for us to save us and restore our relationship to God.

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 they stole the colt and all they needed to say was, "The Lord has need of it." That answer would be enough.

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. Jesus knew everything that would happen in his final week. Just like Jesus knew he would be betrayed and crucified in Jerusalem, he also knew he would rise from the dead after three days.

I know some of you may not buy this. You think that perhaps Jesus arranged ahead of time for this colt to be left for him. This was all a matter of good scheduling and planning on his part, not divine foreknowledge of all events. 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 Nathaniel walked up to Jesus, even though they had never met, Jesus already had intimate and detailed knowledge of Nathanael's 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, but he wasn't even there!

John says 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 knew what was happening in different parts of the world in people's lives. Jesus also knew the future and the way it would unfold. He knew he would be betrayed by the religious leaders, die, and after three days, rise from the dead. Jesus also knows our hearts. In the Gospels, we read story after story in which Jesus knew what people were thinking. Nothing is hidden from Jesus. He knows us completely but still loves us fully! He loves us so fully that he rode that colt into Jerusalem to die for us and forgive us of our sin.

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 this out, the parallel account in Matthew 21 does. This was a fulfillment of prophecy spoken by the Old

Testament prophet Zechariah in Zechariah 9:9, written 500 years before this, that the Messiah would ride into Jerusalem on a colt.

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. It was a way people symbolized they were submitting to a king. It was a symbolic way of people putting themselves under a new king's authority.

Even though Jesus told his disciples many times that he was going to Jerusalem to die, the idea that they could force Jesus to be a great king and overthrow the Romans dominated the apostles' minds and the minds of the people in the crowd. People were sure that since Jesus healed the sick and raised the dead he would be the right leader to overthrow the Romans. This is why they welcomed him as a king and threw their garments under his feet.

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, Jesus crested the top of the Mount of Olives. They were coming down the other side of the mountain into the Kidron Valley. Jerusalem was in front of the crowd. This picture does not do the scene justice. At that time, Herod's great



temple dominated the landscape of the city. It had massive white marble walls. The whiteness of the walls made the building hard to look at in the noon sun. What wasn't white marble on the building was covered with gold. The historical record tells us the gold on the building reflected the sun so brilliantly that people could not look at the building. It was an amazing scene.

Beautiful Jerusalem was in front of Jesus. Possibly 100,000 or more people were around Jesus, singing his praises, cheering him on at the top of their voices for all the miracles he had done from one end of Israel to the other. He healed the sick, banishing sickness from the land. He fed the hungry. He calmed storms. He cast out demons. Everywhere Jesus went he created a story. There's no doubt Zacchaeus was in the group that was cheering for Jesus. The two blind beggars who were just given their sight were in the group cheering for Jesus. Lazarus, who was dead but was now very much alive, was in the group cheering for Jesus.

They were cheering for Jesus to rise up and take leadership of the nation. They wanted him to rise up and overthrow Rome. They would back him. They would stand behind him. Look what they were saying about 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 of this Psalm when Judas Maccabeus went to war to gain freedom for the Jews from Syria. They quoted this verse because they 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 use his divine power to lead them to freedom from Roman oppression. They didn't want freedom from sin. They wanted to win in the game of politics. They desperately wanted a lesser victory. They didn't want a solution to the problem behind all problems.

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 tells us they cut branches from palm trees. 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 they were asking of Jesus. They wanted him to rise us and be the King of Israel. They want him to lead a rebellion.

Notice what else they were saying about Jesus. They began by saying "Hosanna" to Jesus. Hosanna means, "Save us now." "Jesus, we are not interested in waiting around any longer. Accept our offer. Declare yourself to be king. Rise up and lead us to freedom from the Romans and do it now, not later. Do it now!"

So we have a huge crowd of people that loved and praised Jesus but all for the wrong reasons, for superficial reasons. They loved Jesus because of his miracles. They thought Jesus was the answer to their political troubles.

Remember the truth is that Jesus was entering Jerusalem to free them from something far greater than Roman oppression. He entered Jerusalem to

free them and us from the greatest oppression of all, Satan, sin and death. He would conquer all three once and for all.

Here is something I find funny.

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 Jesus was. Nobody was going to report him. Nobody needed to report him. The religious leaders wanted to arrest Jesus, but at this point they couldn't touch him. He was too popular. There were 200,000 people around him asking for him to be king.

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 worshipping you. Put a stop to this. This isn't right. You can't allow them to worship you. You can't allow them to declare you king."

As we will see, 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 they could.

Jesus condemned the people.

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. What does that mean? This is an often misunderstood phrase. Let's see if we can faithfully and accurately understand what Jesus meant by these words. The natural assumption most of us have when we read of

stones crying it is the stones would grow a mouth and literally sing. I don't think that is what Jesus was saying.

Let's follow the story as it unfolds. From this point forward, the scene moves from joy to horror. It moves from a high moment to a low moment. The massive crowd wanted to worship Jesus and make him king, but they were following Jesus for the wrong reasons. Their love for him was superficial. Jesus now turned everything on its head.

Jesus said that if these people stopped 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 where they called for Jesus' death. That is quite a change to what they were saying about Jesus only a few days prior.

The governor again said to them, "Which of the two do you want me to release for you?" And they said, "Barabbas." Pilate said to them, "Then what shall I do with Jesus who is called Christ?" They all said, "Let him be crucified!" Matthew 27:21–22 (ESV)

They wanted Pilate to release a murderer instead of Jesus. A few days before this they were worshipping Jesus, but when he didn't fulfill their expectations as a political ruler, they hated him.

Jerusalem fell silent in its worship of Jesus. Jesus told us that if that happened, the very stones would cry out. What does that mean? Habakkuk 2 gives us a window of insight into what this means. In Habakkuk 2, the prophet was making a statement about the Chaldeans. As a society, they prospered not

through productivity but by extortion, charging exorbitant interest, and the conquering of other nations. They built their cities by the abuse of other people. They literally built their homes from the valuable materials stolen out of the cities they conquered. The stones and beams of their houses were a permanent and lasting testimony to the wickedness and depravity of their lives. Look how the prophet Habakkuk spoke about this and the similarity to the language used by Jesus.

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 in the houses of their buildings served as lasting symbols, as permanent reminders of their wickedness. Jesus was saying the same thing about the city of Jerusalem. The very stones of Jerusalem would one day cry out against God's people and be a continual reminder that instead of accepting Jesus as their true king, they rejected Jesus and only wanted him as a political king. As we go a little further into the text, we see a radical change in Jesus' attitude as he saw Jerusalem.

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

There are a number of different words for weeping in the Greek. In John 11:35, when Jesus wept over Lazarus, that is the simple word for weeping. It simply means crying. 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 as the temple shone in all of its glory. Jesus had 200,000 people singing his praise.

Jesus had coats, palm branches, and tree branches thrown on the road in front of him to give him a red carpet welcome into town because people loved him, and he just lost it in anguish and sadness at that moment.

Just as clearly as Jesus could see the colt in another town and just as clearly as Jesus could see Nathaniel under a fig tree, he could see these people's hearts. He knew all of their love and worship of him was superficial. When he disappointed them and refused to lead a rebellion against Rome for them, they would hate him. They would crucify him.

Jesus didn't weep for himself and the agony of the cross that was only a few steps in front of him. He wept for the people. He wept because they were rejecting him as their savior and the king of their lives because all they wanted was a lesser political solution instead of a greater sin solution.

...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? It certainly wasn't political in nature. It is what Jesus had preached for the last three years, and they were blind to it. It was repentance of sin. It was faith in God and in trusting in Jesus to bring them into a right relationship with God. It was trusting in Jesus to be their savior with God, not the man who reduced their taxes.

As we have seen, Jesus knows the future and can see the future. As Jesus sobbed for them, 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 and cut off the food and water supply for the people. Jesus spoke these words in 30 A.D. They were fulfilled as God's judgment fell upon the city a little more than three decades later. Josephus, the ancient historian, tells us that in 66 A.D. the Jews rebelled against Rome and stopped paying their taxes. They were tired of Roman rule. The Romans tried to negotiate with the rulers of Jerusalem, urging them to return to paying their taxes, but they refused. The Romans then sent Titus Vespian and Roman legions and surrounded the city in 70 A.D. They built a barricade around the city to cut off food in the city. The first perimeter barricade they built was of wood, but the Jews in Jerusalem burned it down. The Romans build another solid barricade that could not be burned down. Then they waited and watched the city starve. Everyone who tried to escape they crucified.

Jesus said that as a city they would be hemmed in on every side. That means they would be squeezed to death as a city, choked to death. That is literally what happened as all food was cut off from thousands upon thousands of people.

Jesus also prophetically said the city would be torn to the ground. That means the great city of Jerusalem would be leveled, completely destroyed. It was not just the city that would be destroyed but the city's children that would be destroyed, that is the people of the city.

That is exactly what happened. After five months of starving the city, the Romans succeeded in breaching 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 men. They were saved to be used in the gladiatorial games in the Roman arena.

Jesus also prophetically said they would not leave one stone upon another. That is exactly what happened. Most of us don't know that Israel is a land filled with rock. Most of ancient Jerusalem was built out 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. It took 80 years to build. It was almost all rock. Just the foundation of the temple took 10 of those 80 years to build. Herod used 10,000 people to build that rock foundation. Some stones in the temple were 30-feet long by 6-feet wide. They were more than 40 tons each. They were all carved with engineering-grade precision and fit together with the intent that they would last for thousands of years.

Yet shortly after the temple was complete, when Titus Vespian attacked the city and destroyed the people, the Romans made the decision to decimate the buildings of the city, tearing them all down, not leaving one rock upon another. They only left a portion of the west wall of the temple that still exists today and a few of the tallest towers as a small reminder to what once existed but had now been completely destroyed because the Jews dared to rebel against the mighty forces of Rome.

The Romans wanted the demolished rocks of the city to be a continual warning to all cities to not dare rebel against Rome. Jesus said the demolished rocks of Rome would cry out, serving as a continual reminder that Jesus the savior had visited the Jews in Jerusalem, but they rejected him.



Almost all that followed him followed Jesus for the wrong reason. As a result, God's judgement fell upon them. Jerusalem was completely destroyed.

Why did this judgment come? Jesus told us.

"...because you did not know the time of your visitation." Luke 19:44 (ESV)

People of Jesus' day didn't recognize Jesus' coming when he visited them to provide them salvation. Most of those who worshipped him worshipped him for the wrong reasons, seeing him as a political hero.

My friends, today is the day of our visitation. I ask you, why are you following Jesus? Why are you worshipping Jesus? It is so easy to worship Jesus for the wrong reasons. We think that if we worship Jesus, God owes us a good life or an easy life. We think that if we follow Jesus, our children will turn out perfect. God owes that to us. We think that if we follow Jesus, we will not get sick. We will not experience the death of those we love. If that is why we are following Jesus, we are no different than the people who worshipped Jesus at the Triumphal Entry.

Jesus came into Jerusalem that day to solve a much greater problem, a much more serious problem in our lives. He paid for our sin. He paid for our sin

with his own blood in order to bring us back into a relationship with God. My friends, Jesus came to solve the most important problem in our lives, the problem behind all problems, the problem of our sin. This Easter, as we celebrate Jesus' resurrection, let us thank him for solving the greatest problem of all. That is the good news of Easter.



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