

Bible Study Luke 19:28-48

The Text

READ Luke 19:28-48 [see also Matthew 21:1-17; Mark 11:1-11, 15-19; and John 2:13-22, 12:12-19]

The Setting

It was about five days before Passover. This was the most important of all the Jewish feasts. During one such Passover Feast a Roman governor once had a census taken of the lambs slain during the Feast. The number given was 256,500. That may seem like a lot of lambs, but you must also know that a minimum of ten people were required for each lamb. So if we estimate correctly it means that there were a **minimum** of 2,565,000 people crowding into Jerusalem and swelling its city limits, suburbs, and hillsides. Camp fires would light up the hills all around Jerusalem; impossible to count...like the stars in the night sky.

Jesus and the disciples are coming in from Bethany (about 2 miles away) and all along the way the throng of people lay down branches or cloaks in his path.

First, it was the fulfillment of prophecy. [*Isaiah 62:11* (prophecy of messiah coming to Israel); and *Zechariah 9:9* (prophecy of messiah riding into Jerusalem)].

Second, for Jesus' part, this was no sudden impulsive action. He didn't leave things to chance at the last moment. Like the arrangements for the upper room that they will use at the end of the week (*Luke 22:7-13*); Jesus pre-arranged things with the owners of the donkey. Even going so far as to give them a code phrase, "The Lord needs it..." by which they would know his disciples were the one's coming to get it.

Jesus' choice to ride a donkey into Jerusalem was also very intentional. The donkey was a traditional mount for kings and rulers in the ancient Near East (*Judges 10:4, 12:14; 2 Samuel 16:2*) during peace time. When they were at war, either riding out for war or returning victorious from war, they rode on a horse. By choosing to ride in on a donkey Jesus is making an implicit claim to be the king of his people coming in peace.

Additionally, the act of riding into Jerusalem on a donkey near the time of the Passover brought to mind a central image of Messianic hope, which was linked to key Biblical passages like *Genesis 49:10-11* (the blessing of Judah by Jacob);

Isaiah 62:11 (prophecy of messiah coming to Israel); and *Zechariah 9:9* (prophecy of messiah riding into Jerusalem). Even in extra-biblical Jewish literature of the time the image of a king on a donkey approaching Jerusalem was consistently understood to signify the arrival of the Messiah. So, by his arrival in this way, Jesus is unequivocally claiming to be the Messiah, but also that the Messiah comes in peace, rather than to wage war.

Something else for us to remember is that by this time in Jesus' ministry, there was a price on his head. On at least three other occasions during feast days in Jerusalem, the religious leaders either sought to arrest him or stone him to death. We must not underestimate Jesus' courage. Courage that was without a doubt anchored in the promises of God. For after arriving in such a high profile way he goes straight into the temple. The very place from which he had to escape on other occasions when he had angered the priests and Pharisees.

But enter he does and then proceeds to chase the money changers out...overturning their tables and setting their "sacrificial animals for sell" free to roam the streets of the city. John tells us that he fashioned a whip when he did this. Luke tells us that Jesus went again and again daily to the temple to teach (v. 47). And you can bet that if any of those money changers had returned with their tables and stocks of animals, he would again chase them out. Mark tells us that he wouldn't allow anyone to carry anything through the temple. Matthew tells us that the blind and the lame came to him and he healed them all, as children ran about imitating the singing of the adults at the city gate... "Hosanna!, Hosanna!, The Son of David!" A hymn of praise for the coming of God's Messiah.

Can you imagine the courage it must have taken to walk into that temple every day, surrounded by the powerful and zealous religious leaders who only want you dead? Paul tells us in 2 Timothy 1:7, that "God did not give us a spirit of cowardice or timidity, but rather a spirit of power and of love and of self-discipline..." Oh, to exhibit this same spirit of power, love, and self-discipline that Jesus so courageously displayed those final days in the temple!

How has Jesus' entry affected you?

Luke 19:28-48

Questions for Further Reflection

The Triumphal Entry — vv. 28-40

Why do you think Jesus arranged this “triumphal entry”? What does Jesus’ arrival on a donkey portray? If you had been in the crowd that day, would you have responded the way that they did? Have you ever jumped onto a religious or political bandwagon? Why? Why not?

Why did the people respond the way that they did? What did the people expect Jesus to do when he reached Jerusalem (v. 11; *Zechariah 9:9*)? What kind of king and kingdom were the people expecting? How do their wishes compare to the reality of Jesus? How might this discrepancy between expectation and reality account for this same crowd jeering and shouting later, “Crucify him”?

Have you ever had wrong assumptions about how God works? What kind of reception would Jesus get if he rode into our town today? Would the reality of who Jesus actually is shock our expectations?

How did Jesus enter your life: lowly, on a donkey’s colt or brash, like a warrior?

Jesus Weeps Over Jerusalem — vv. 41-44

What caused Jesus to weep over Jerusalem? What did he see, that others could not? What would it take to see our own world, country, and neighborhoods...the way that Jesus sees them?

Jesus Cleanses the Temple — vv. 45-48

When you see something wrong are you more likely to act without thinking or think without acting? Why does Jesus take such extreme action in clearing the temple? What upset Jesus so much about what he saw (*Isaiah 56:6-7*)? In John’s account (*John 2:12-25*) we are told that Jesus “fashioned a whip out of cords.” This description implies his actions were premeditated. Scripture is clear that God gets angry, and it is obvious that Jesus is angry here. How would you explain this behavior and still maintain that Jesus never sinned (*Ephesians 4:26*)? What “tables” would Jesus overturn in your life if you gave him access? If he were to visit our church, where would he begin turning over tables?