

The Triumphal Entry

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[0 : 00] Now, this triumphal entry passage in Luke 19 is one of the high points of Luke's gospel. Jesus entered into Jerusalem to the sound of the cheers and praises of the people. He spread their cloaks on the road and cried out, blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord, peace in heaven and glory in the highest. As we do with every Bible passage we study together, our primary interest is in understanding what this teaches us about Jesus. And what Luke 19, 28 through 44 teaches us is that Jesus is the king sent by God to rule and to save his people.

Is he your king? Is Jesus your king? In my family's home there's a book entitled *Owned by an Eagle*, *Owned by an Eagle*. It's a story of an eccentric bird enthusiast who adopted an injured Spanish eagle.

The eagle belonged to him, but it wasn't long before he became so devoted to his eagle that he realized that it wasn't so much that he owned the eagle as the eagle owned him.

In our lives it's all too easy to think of ourselves as king and Jesus as our servant doing for us what we want him to do, making us happy, giving us satisfaction, contentment in life. But if we are to make any progress as Christians the opposite must be true. Jesus must be our king and we must be his servants so that if a book could be written about our lives it would have the title *Owned by the King*. *Owned by the King*.

Luke's presentation of the triumphal entry of Jesus into Jerusalem tells us three things about him. First, Jesus is the king of God. Second, he is the king of peace. And third, he is the king of tears.

[2 : 07] Again, I ask you the question, is Jesus Christ your king? Such that you're devoted to him. Serve him. Love him. Live for him.

First of all then, Jesus Christ is the king of God. He is God's king. When I was younger I was taught that the Gospel of Luke was written for a non-Jewish audience. It's written in classical Greek as opposed to the common Greek used by Jewish people. And as we know, Luke was a Gentile. He wasn't a Jew. However, the more I've studied the Gospel of Luke, the more I realize it is deeply embedded in the Old Testament. You can read it without having read first the Old Testament, but if you'd been brought up with the history and the songs and the prophecies of the Old Testament, the Gospel of Luke will mean so much more to you. Now, at face value, the events of Jesus' triumphal entry look random. He arranges for a colt, the foal of a donkey, to be brought to him.

He then rides the colt as the people cheer and praise him. If you had no background in the Old Testament, you'd hardly think of this as a triumphal entry. Victorious kings and generals ride in impressive war horses with intricate leather and gold as saddles, not cloaks. Perhaps you'd scratch your head and wonder, what kind of King Jesus is, if this is how he expresses his royal dignity.

But if you'd been brought up with the history and the songs and the prophecies of the Old Testament, you'd understand so much more. The whole episode of the triumphal entry of Jesus into Jerusalem would remind you of the way in which King Solomon entered into a rebellious Jerusalem 800 years before. As recorded in 1 Kings chapter 1, you can go back and look at that afterwards. At that time, Jerusalem was in revolt against David and had appointed Adonijah, the brother of Solomon, the rebellious son of David, as king.

But King David had different ideas. He ordered his chief officers to make ready for Solomon to ride into Jerusalem and in so doing to proclaim him king. Let me read from 1 Kings 1, 32 through 35.

[4 : 38] King David said, In Luke chapter 19, verses 28 through 44, Jesus is reenacting the way in which Solomon rode in triumph into Jerusalem.

Having already been anointed king, he rode into Jerusalem on the back of a donkey to the sound of praise and worship.

Many years later, after Solomon, in 2 Kings 9, 13, we learn that when Jehu was anointed king of Israel, the people, and I quote, Then they blew the trumpet and shouted, Jehu is king. Can somebody get me some more water, please? I've got a frog in my throat. Thanks, Heidi. So again, in his triumphal entry into Jerusalem, Jesus is reenacting, or perhaps should I say fulfilling, what had happened in the history of Israel.

Four religious Jews brought up with the stories of their people. What's happening in Luke 19 screams. Thanks very much, Heidi. She's lovely, isn't she?

[6 : 35] Luke 19 is screaming that Jesus is the long-awaited king That's the history.

Later in our passage, the crowd of disciples pray the triumphant king using one of the songs of the Old Testament. Psalm 118, 26. We read this together.

Blessed is the king who comes in the name of the Lord. So that's the history of the Old Testament. One of the songs of the Old Testament. Most famously, I suppose, is how Jesus' triumphal entry fulfills the prophecy of Zechariah chapter 9, when in verse 9 of that chapter, we read, Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion!

Shout, daughter of Jerusalem! Behold, your king is coming to you, righteous and having salvation as he, humble and mounted in a donkey, on a colt, the foal of a donkey.

So you see, all the history, the songs, and the prophecies of the Old Testament are being fulfilled in Jesus' riding in triumph into Jerusalem. He is the king of God to whom all the stories, all the psalms, and all the prophecies of the Old Testament point.

[7 : 55] He is the king of God, the ultimate Messiah. Herod, seated in his royal throne in the palace in Jerusalem, was not the king. Caesar, ruling from his imperial palace in Rome, was not the king.

Jesus, riding into Jerusalem on the back of a colt with cloaks as his saddle, he is the king. In the covenanting times of Scotland, our covenanting ancestors insisted that Jesus was king of the church, not Charles, not James, and such was their conviction that they were martyred.

Many of them hanged in the grass market in Edinburgh. The story of one of them, Donald Cargill, is entitled, No King But Christ. No King But Christ.

Jesus is our king. Are we as convicted of the kingship of Jesus as were our covenanting forefathers? If we are, then, unlike that eccentric bird lover who ended up being owned by an eagle, we'll be willingly owned by Jesus Christ.

We will allow nothing and no one to be our master other than him. We will not allow our relationships, our careers, our pleasures, or our lifestyles.

[9 : 17] We will not allow the pressures of social media, the zeitgeist of societal norms, or the pressures of the modern age own us. We will not devote ourselves to them, nor will we bow down to them, for we as Christians have no king but Christ.

We will willingly spread our cloaks before him. We will cry aloud his praises, and if called, we will give up our lives for him, because, as we shall see, he first gave up his life for us.

If we would make 2026 a breakthrough year in our Christian development, we must start the way we mean to continue, and that is to resolve that if a book was to be written about our lives, it would either have as its title owned by the king, or no king but Christ.

The king of God. Secondly, this passage teaches us that Jesus is the king of peace, the king of peace. There's no doubt here that in this triumphal entry, Jesus is presenting himself as the king. The only question for us is this, what kind of king? As we read through the Gospels, it's quite clear that the people, and even Jesus' disciples, thought of him as a very different kind of king from what Jesus thought of himself.

[10 : 37] For them, to be the king meant that Jesus, riding in triumph like Solomon in Jerusalem, would inspire a rebellion which would overthrow Herod and lead to Jewish insurrection against the Romans.

Then, having got rid of the Romans, Jesus as the king would reinstitute a Jewish empire which would cover the world with its righteousness and justice.

For them, the salvation Jesus was to bring would be economic, societal, political, and military. It would be a salvation won by force and ruled by power.

He would ride into Jerusalem, be crowned on a Jewish throne, and rule over a Jewish world. 200 years before the Gospel of Luke was written, there was a Jewish leader called Judas who had led Israel in revolt against occupying enemies.

He was so successful in battle that he earned the nickname Maccabeus, which means hammer. The disciples and the people envisaged Jesus as a greater than Judas, the ultimate Maccabeus, the ultimate hammer, a warlike figure who would lead the armies of Israel to victory over all their enemies.

[11 : 57] Many sections of Christendom still hold to some kind of political, even military view of the Christian faith. Some sections fall deeply into this trap of the disciples, casting Jesus in very different colors from that in which he cast himself.

Jesus had no intention of leading a revolt, becoming a military king. His intention was always to bring peace. The triumphal entry is a reenactment of Solomon's entry into Jerusalem.

The name Solomon means, literally, the peaceful one. Jesus came as the ultimate peaceful one. The word Jerusalem means city of peace.

So Jesus comes as the king of peace into the city of peace. The crowd of Jesus' disciples, presumably far more than the mere twelve, cried out, blessed is the king who comes in the name of the Lord.

Peace in heaven and glory in the highest. The kings of this world, however, ride on impressive war stallions, but Jesus Christ, the king, the prince of peace, rides on the coat of a donkey.

[13 : 15] In the ancient world, donkeys were symbols of peace. The king seated on this donkey is assuming a position of humility and peace, not one of pride.

The prophecy of Zechariah, already quoted, views the king who rides into Jerusalem on a donkey as the prince of peace. Jesus hasn't come to Jerusalem to make war, but to make peace.

The crowd longed for Jesus to assume the kingship of Israel, to rule in the name of the Lord. They viewed this as the greatest glory of God, that the king of God should rule over the nation of God and lead the armies of God in battle.

However, they then cried out, peace in heaven and glory in the highest. Quite what they understood by this phrase, peace in heaven, is beyond us.

Heaven is the place of ultimate peace, the ultimate shalom of God. However, it strikes me we can interpret this phrase, peace in heaven, in a couple of ways. First of all, it could mean peace from heaven.

[14 : 26] Peace from heaven. Jesus has come to take up his reign as God's king and in so doing make the peace of heaven a living reality for the people of Israel. He's come to make a heaven of the earth, Israel, by ruling in power, in might, by establishing, by overthrowing the Romans and by establishing a nation of freedom, prosperity.

The nation of Israel will become a kind of kingdom of heaven and earth. How narrow and naive this view. Over the centuries, many Christians try to make their nation a kingdom of heaven and earth. But they fail. They always fail because man, even regenerate man, is sinful and our sin always gets in the way. We end up producing societies where all men are equal.

It's just that some are more equal than others. That's not to say we shouldn't try to make our world a better place. That's not to say we shouldn't pray your will be undone on earth as it is in heaven and strive with all our might to encourage the values of heaven such as love, peace, forgiveness and selflessness.

We should be the salt of heaven, adding the flavor of God in our communities, feeding the hungry, healing the sick, campaigning for righteousness at every level of society.

[15 : 48] But the idea of an earthly nation ever becoming a heavenly kingdom is narrow, naive and not in Jesus' mind here.

So peace from heaven doesn't work. But secondly, it could mean peace with heaven, peace with heaven. This is the sense in which I think we could understand the ultimate mission of Jesus and what it means for him to be the king who comes in the name of the Lord.

Now we're approaching the final chapters of Jesus' earthly life. They're all going to be concentrated in or around the city of Jerusalem. Shortly, as we all know, Jesus is going to be betrayed, arrested, tortured and crucified.

Even where he is on the hill called Olivet outside Jerusalem, perhaps he could see the hill called Golgotha on which his cross would be raised.

You see, he, the king of peace, will give himself as the ultimate sacrifice for the sins of the world.

[16 : 59] He will make peace between peoples by first making peace for them with God, the God who is righteous and just and must judge and punish sin.

He, the king of peace, is coming to Jerusalem, the city of peace, not to sit on an earthly throne and make peace by the sword, but to hang on an earthly cross and to make peace by his sacrifice.

This is the sense in which there will be peace with heaven for heaven's king will take away our sin and transform God's enemies into God's children.

furthermore, contrary to those who thought that God's greatest glory will be served by making a kingdom of God here on earth, God's greatest glory will be served by the cross and resurrection of his son.

The Latin phrase here is *gloria in excelsis*. The excelling glory of God is seen in the victory of his son over the greatest of all enemies, sin, death, the devil, the cross on which he died, the tomb from which he rose.

[18:11] In this way, Jesus is the king of peace who has made peace between people and God and then between people and people. Little wonder then that Jesus places making peace at the top of his agenda.

Blessed are the peacemakers for they shall be called sons of God. The greatest way in which any of us can make peace is to proclaim the good news of Jesus, to tell this lost world that Jesus has made peace with God for us through his cross and that all anyone needs to do to be at peace with God is to have faith in Jesus, to claim Jesus' death as the ground of our peace with God.

True peace isn't made by diplomats, but by Christians sharing the good news of King Jesus and proclaiming to the world, blessed is the king who comes in the name of the Lord, peace with heaven and glory in the highest.

If we want to grow and mature as Christians this year, we need to reprioritize our proclamation of the gospel, even to begin praying for our non-Christian family and friends and workmates to be receptive to Jesus Christ so that he may ride in triumphal entry into their hearts as he already has ours.

The king of peace. He is the king of God, the king of peace and thirdly, well, the king of tears from verse 41 through 44.

[19:49] The king of tears. The final few verses of this chapter draw near, make very painful reading for us but even more so for Jesus. Jesus, the prince of peace, looks out over Jerusalem, the city of peace which he's soon going to enter to make peace on the cross but rather than adopt an attitude of triumph, he weeps.

Imagine. You ever seen a king cry? Of what value are the tears of Jesus? When one of my children was being born, I can't remember which one, I had the bright idea to wipe Kathmer's birthing tears on a handkerchief.

My idea was that later in life when that child was behaving badly, I could show him or her, because I can't remember which one it was, the handkerchief and say, this contains the tears your mother shed during your birth.

It represents how much she loves you and how much she has sacrificed for you. Now, it's probably all the better that I lost that handkerchief in the days following the birth, but of what worth would be the handkerchief with which Jesus wiped his tears?

See, even the king of glory cries. We'd never be ashamed of crying. One of my greatest weaknesses is that I don't cry.

[21:27] Jesus, however, was a man of deep expression. To be the king of peace, he had to be. But other than nostalgia, why was he weeping? Let me suggest a couple of reasons.

The first reason for his tears was the stubbornness of Jerusalem, the stubbornness of Jerusalem. This is the city of David, the city which God had chosen to place his temple in, the earthly symbol of his presence with his people.

It should have been the joy of all the earth, the first place to receive its king with joy and praise, but it wasn't. As during the days when Solomon entered Jerusalem, in Jesus' days, Jerusalem had become a place filled with lying hypocrisy and religious unfaithfulness, as we'll see in the following weeks.

Imagine you came home after a long time of being away, but instead of being welcomed with open arms, you were rejected and treated with hostility. This was the attitude of Jerusalem toward its Messiah.

Jesus was going home, but rather than being welcomed, he knew that he would be condemned and crucified. The city of God became the place in which God was most hated, and Jesus wept.

[22 : 48] But the second reason for his tears was the coming judgment, the coming judgment. With prophetic eyes, Jesus could see what would soon come upon the city of Jerusalem. Still insisting upon their Jewish supremacy, in the mid-60s AD, about 30 years after these things in Luke 19, the people of Jerusalem would rise up against the Romans.

The Romans would retaliate by sending three legions, a massive army, against the city. They besieged it for three years, building huge barricades to prevent any aid from reaching the people of Jerusalem.

Finally, Jerusalem fell in AD 70 and was completely destroyed. The people were massacred, and the temple was torn down. With prophetic eyes, Jesus saw what was going to happen.

He could hear the cries of the people. He saw in his eyes the fires, and he felt every bit of it.

Ultimately, Jerusalem's time was over.

Its unfaithfulness was complete, and God used the mighty Roman army as his tool of judgment. But it pained God so to do. Jesus wept tears over the city and its people.

[24 : 08] does Jesus wept tears over our nation and over our world? Are, on account of our spiritual stubbornness, on account of our rejection of him, on account of our future judgment, does Jesus wept tears over you?

The King of Peace is offering himself to you today. The whole Christ for the whole person, the Christ who wept, the Christ who died.

What will you do with him? To go back to the very beginning of this sermon, I can have no greater wish for you than this. May 2026 be the year when King Jesus rides in triumphal entry into your heart.

may this be the year when finally, finally, you drop your resistance and put your faith and trust in him.