

Christ Riding into Jerusalem

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[0 : 00] Let's turn again to the chapter that we read in Luke's Gospel, Luke chapter 19. And I want us to just to again follow through this section that we read from verse 28 to the end.

And when he had said these things, he went on ahead going up to Jerusalem. And we read of how he sent two of the disciples ahead to go into the village to find a colt tied and so on.

Now, we've been following Jesus' journey up to Jerusalem. And Luke doesn't really tell us much else that has happened between Jesus going out of Jericho and his more or less arriving into Jerusalem.

He's now at Bethany, which is about two miles east of Jerusalem. And when he gets to the outskirts of Jerusalem, he sends two of the disciples ahead.

And he tells them to go and get hold of an animal for him to ride into Jerusalem, for his entry into Jerusalem.

[1 : 11] Now, some people may wonder at how Jesus would be able to do that. How could he send two disciples into Jerusalem and to come back into the village or the city and come back with a colt?

But apparently, in the custom of the day, a dignitary could get the use of somebody else's property to help them along the way. And this privilege was extended even to the rabbis.

So if you were in urgent need or need of help, you could use what belonged to somebody. Of course, it was just for a time. It would be put back afterwards.

So the request here wasn't a strange request. It was one which was in keeping with the day. But the one thing that really strikes us here is where we see the foreknowledge, where Jesus is being made aware.

It was as if he had already been in the place, already knew where this colt was. And that, of course, this was quite an amazing thing, where he was able to see and to locate and to identify where things were.

[2 : 24] And it shows us how Jesus is in control of everything. He was in control of even the circumstances that are leading up to his own death.

Because we're going to be following very briefly, as we come near the end of Luke, we're going to be following there the series of events that are leading up to the culminating in the death of the Lord Jesus Christ.

And Christ really is ordering these things. He is in control of every step. And that's one of the things that the Bible so emphatically teaches, is that Christ was not a helpless victim that was taken against his will.

That it wasn't a case of him all of a sudden being in the wrong place at the wrong time. That it wasn't just that one of these days that the enemy somehow managed to get him, because they had been after him for a long time.

There was, what is highlighted is the voluntary, the willingness of Jesus' sacrifice, where he gave himself.

[3 : 35] And that's so important for us to understand. Because that's why he came. If we lose sight of that, we lose sight of something which is at the very heart of the gospel. Jesus was not a victim.

Where he was taken without his permission and without his Father's permission. It was all moving to this. For us. All was for us.

Ultimately for the Father's glory. But for us. To enter into the great glory prepared. So, I think it's good for us sometimes, even as we're familiar with reading the Bible, and reading these events, to try and put our mind back, and to try and say, look, this was all taking place for me.

As if you were part of it. You were identified with it. You know how it says that on the cross, that Christ, it says that he tasted death for everyone, for every man.

It was individual. It was personal. Well, Christ is here. He's coming to Jerusalem. Coming to this all-important, this central work.

[4 : 49] For you. For me. And that's why it's so important to personalize it. Because that's what the gospel is about. It's a personal gospel.

And so we find that they get this donkey, this colt that had never been ridden on before. And when they bring the colt to Jesus, they put their cloaks on it, or their coats on it, and set Jesus on it.

And then as Jesus makes his way, they begin throwing their coats down onto the ground. And as we read us, verse 20 to 36 there, and as he rode along, they spread their cloaks on the road.

Now, again, in Matthew's account, it tells us also that they were waving palm branches, which was signifying the Feast of the Tabernacles. But here, the main emphasis is on the Feast of the Passover.

And of course, the Feast of the Passover was speaking about the sacrifice for sin and for the final deliverance. And of course, this is what Jesus is all about.

[6 : 00] Where he is making sacrifice for sin and winning for us a final deliverance. And my friend, if Jesus has forgiven you your sin, if Jesus has made sacrifice for your sin, you have already won a final deliverance.

You may not feel you won a deliverance. You may feel bogged down today and hemmed in, and you feel you might feel you're making heavy weather of things, but rejoice in this. The final deliverance has already been assured in your behalf.

Because what Christ has done for you, it cannot in any way be undone. The salvation that he has won for you is yours today. Nobody can take it from you.

You may lack assurance. Satan may tempt you. None of these things can in any way derail the great work of salvation that Jesus has worked for you.

So that final deliverance is assured for you. Now it's very interesting that as Jesus makes his way down by the Mount of Olives, we have the picture that is unfolding before us here.

[7 : 12] And you can see Jesus on this little colt and this little donkey and making his way down. This is the fulfilling of scripture. Because back in the prophet Zechariah, is painting this very picture for us.

Way, way back in time. And Zechariah says, Rejoice greatly, daughter of Zion, daughter of Jerusalem. Your king is coming to you, righteous and having salvation, humble and mounted on a donkey, on a colt, the foal of a donkey.

Isn't that amazing? Well, it's not amazing in the sense that all scripture ties in beautifully with scripture. But here we have this clear prophecy. And although Jesus rides into Jerusalem in this great moment to the adulation of the crowd of his massed followers, again, while it's a moment of joy and celebration, it's also, when you look at it, it's really a very humble moment.

Because here is the king. Here is the one by whom all things have been made. Here he is coming in, as it were, to the very seat of royal power into Jerusalem.

And how does he come in? On a beautiful white stallion, draped out as for a king? No. On a donkey. It's quite extraordinary.

[8 : 46] And, you see, is this, as we say, you could almost, if you were thinking of a king coming in, that the white stallion would be covered in coats, in the coat of arms, and all the sort of the finery, and embroidery, and all the sort of razzmatazz that you'd expect for these occasions.

No. It's people's coats. That's what's been thrown on the donkey. And that's what Jesus is on. Speaking here of his humiliation, and it's making a nonsense of the claims that the Jewish leaders were making that Jesus was a threat to Rome.

And they were saying, look, he's there to usurp. Does it in any way look like here is somebody who is a real threat to Caesar at a human level?

Well, obviously not. However, as the crowd were worshipping Jesus and singing before him, and it was a time of celebration and joy, there were others in the crowd who were doing anything but.

They were looking on with disgust. That's what we find. They were the religious leaders. They were appalled at the crowd, and they were appalled at Jesus for accepting the worship of the crowd.

[10 : 07] And they wanted Jesus to reject the claims that were being made, and they wanted Jesus to rebuke those who were making these claims. It's quite extraordinary, but you know, nothing changes.

And it's the same to this very day. There are many people who are appalled at the claims that are made in the Bible regarding the Lord Jesus Christ.

There are many people in our land today who would love nothing more than that the Word of God would be removed entirely. Because the claims of the Scripture are claims that are abhorrent to them.

There is a movement and there has always been a movement, but there is a growing movement to have the Word of God cleared out. People do not want God.

They don't want to be answerable to God. And they certainly do not want to know the claims of Jesus Christ as the Son of God, as the only way of salvation.

[11 : 11] And there's nothing new under the heaven. As it was 2,000 years ago, two sections of society, one rejoicing in Jesus, rejoicing, this is the King, this is the Messiah, this is the way of salvation.

And the other crowd saying, no, we don't want this, we don't want to hear this, this is not right. Nothing changes. It's the same to this very day.

But Jesus tells them, and he says, you know, if these people were to be silenced, the very stones would cry out in opposition.

The very stones would cry out. Why? Because this world is his creation. And it's very interesting when Jesus was put to death, the very stones did cry out.

You remember how the stones came hurtling down, the earth shook. As the world looked on, the creation looked on at what was happening, it was as if there was a very reaction from creation itself.

[12 : 21] And Jesus is saying at this particular moment, he's saying to those who tried to silence the crowd, listen, if I rebuked them, if I told them to be quiet, the very creation which you could do nothing about, it would make its point.

And it's an extraordinary moment in the life of Jesus. But as Jesus entered into Jerusalem, and while there was a sound of praise in his ears, there was sadly pain in the heart of Jesus as he entered.

Because as Jesus was entering into Jerusalem, we meet one of the most moving, powerful scenes as Jesus weeps over the city. And here, as Jesus is looking on the city, he's seeing that their rejection of him is leading to their own utter destruction.

and the tragedy of it was it needn't have been like that. If they had accepted Jesus, then they would have enjoyed peace.

It would have been all so different. Now while there were people who followed Jesus and believed in Jesus, it was only a small number, a small group. The vast majority rejected the Lord Jesus Christ.

[13 : 48] And Jesus is saying to them as he wept over, would that you, even you, had known on this day, the things that make for peace.

And you know that message is the same today. Jesus is saying if you had known the things that make for peace, it hasn't changed.

And Jesus is saying I am the one. He's saying to them if only you had taken me, if only you had accepted me, then your future would have been one of peace.

And it's the same today. If you accept Jesus, your future is peace. Because if you have peace with God, my friend, you will have peace in there.

And once you are at peace with God and Jesus, nothing will ever ultimately destroy that peace. There might be times of anxiety in your life and times of disquiet, but nothing will ultimately remove the deep-rooted peace that is found in Jesus Christ.

[14 : 58] And if you don't have that today, my friend, you know, spiritually, you're bankrupt. Whatever else you may have in life, there is one glaring void.

And Jesus is saying to you today, as he said to Jesus, it needn't be like that. It doesn't need to be like that. You see, you're making a choice. You're making a choice either to accept or to reject.

The Jews had a choice to make. The Jews had this choice of either accepting or rejecting. They were going to reject and Jesus knew. That's why he's weeping. Because he says the choice you are making is for your ruin and your destruction.

If you had chosen me, it would have been for your peace. peace. That is the heart of the message of the gospel. It hasn't changed down over the centuries.

And it's as true for us here today as it was then. And as Jesus weeps over the city, he realizes that as they reject him, they're sealing their own doom.

[16 : 07] And what Jesus predicts here took place not very long after in 70 AD when Titus of Rome besieged. He said the siege around Jerusalem and ultimately destroyed the city and slaughtered the people with a fearful slaughter.

When you read the history of the Jews, this is one of the bleakest, grimest, most awful parts of their history with a fearful slaughtering. And that's what Jesus was saying.

And he was saying it didn't need to be like that. God, I'm here for your peace, but because you won't take me, you're going to be destroyed. And let us never think for one moment that the Lord is uninterested in people's rejection of him.

Let us not for one moment think that the Lord isn't moved. Here he is, he's weeping when he sees what they're doing. my friend, Jesus wants you into his arms, into his safety, into his security.

It's a strange thing to reject. Somebody that you know will only do you good. Not only now, but in the future forever.

[17 : 29] Do you know, it's madness. When you think through it logically, and if you're here today and you've never come to peace with God and Jesus Christ, don't push this thought away, because I know what we do.

When we're challenged by these things, we say, push that away just now. I'll think about that again. No, my friend, deal with it here now. It's for your peace, for your future.

You're here and now, and in what is ahead. And then from verse 45 to the end, time is going just very briefly, we see Jesus taking vehement, strong action against the abuses that are taking place in the temple.

Now, while we must always guard against flippancy and irreverence in God's house, we've got to remember that what we term now God's house, the places of worship, it's not the temple.

There's quite a big difference between what we would term today God's house and what would have been termed there, God's house as the temple. Because the temple was built, remember, according to a divine plan, a divine structure.

[18 : 44] And all of it was symbolic, highlighting the work of Christ. It was all, even the furniture, everything was symbolic, speaking about the work and the sacrifice and the way of Christ.

that's not true of our places of worship at all. They are meeting places where we gather together in order to worship the Lord. And that is why there's a big, big difference.

However, we still need to have a reverence. We need to have this sense of worship as we come. But Jesus comes and he finds that there's, as it were, a religious market going on.

And very probably, this would have been taking place, no doubt, in the court of the Gentiles. But what no doubt was happening was that there was animals that would be brought up for sacrifice.

And remember, the animals had to be in good condition. You weren't allowed to bring animals that were sort of with blemish or faults or whatever.

[19 : 49] And maybe there were animals coming up that weren't good enough for sacrifice. And rather than take them home, the person would say, oh, well, I might as well just sell it here.

And so there would be maybe at a knockdown price but save taking back. Or maybe others would come up and they couldn't be bothered taking an animal with them. And they would buy an animal there or whatever. But whatever had happened, it had developed into quite a lucrative market.

And there was obviously a lot of sort of underhand dealings going on. in fact, Jesus goes on to term it a den of rubbish, a place like where robbers hide and plan and where they store their cash and where they lie in wait and they plan to steal.

So there were severe abuses going on. And Jesus, who was filled with zeal for the house, in fact, remember how the psalm says, the zeal of thine house hath eaten me up.

Jesus is incensed at what is taking place. This was a place for prayer. And here there were abuses taking place and all they were concerned about was making as much money as they could and buying and selling.

[21 : 09] And so Jesus throws them out. And we have here in this very graphic picture of Jesus cleansing the temple.

We have to just turn it round and ask ourselves this question today. Where do we see the temple today? Well, it's here. We are the temple.

That's what we're told. We are the temple of the living God. And we have to ask ourselves this question. Do we need to be cleansed as well? And I'm sure the answer is yes.

As we face up to who we are in light of God's word, we need to say to the Lord, and we don't want the Lord to come, and he won't come, as he did on that occasion, throwing over the tables of money and being brutal.

But he will come in his love, and he will help us, and he will cleanse us. Because the Bible shows how we are the temple of the living God, to be used by God in this world.

[22 : 18] And the cleaner our temple is, the more effectively it will be used by the Lord in this world. And that's why we need to go to the Lord again and again and again.

That's what we're singing about in Psalm 51, where David is saying, create in me a clean heart, renew a right spirit within me. David was a good man. David was one of the best men this world has ever seen.

In fact, I don't think there is anybody else in Scripture that it says of him he was a man after God's own heart. It was an extraordinary declaration that God made.

And yet David had his faults and his failings and his sin. Great sin. And yet that Psalm was composed after his great sin.

And David had known before, the fellowship, the favor, the closeness of God. But he had lost it, but he knew he would get it back.

[23 : 21] Because he knew the Lord wasn't finished with him. And that's why he begins at that Psalm saying, after thy loving kindness, after your covenant faithfulness, have mercy on me. And so he's saying, create again.

Lord, create a clean heart. Renew that right spirit within me. it's a wonderful psalm. And it goes on then to show how once the Lord has done that, then he will once again be effective in his work for the Lord.

So that's what you and I need. Every day, let's go to the Lord and say, Lord, cleanse me. Create that clean heart within me. Renew that right spirit.

That's a great thing to have in life. A right spirit. That's what was said in the Bible to another person. Your spirit is wrong.

It's so easy to have a wrong spirit. In that dream the man had when we were talking to the young folk, there was a man praying there.

[24 : 28] He had a wrong spirit. Wrong spirit will put everything wrong. It will be a block to our witness, a block to our prayer, a block to our usefulness, to everything.

We need the right spirit within us. Ask the Lord for that. And he'll give that. You know, when we pray according to God's will, he'll hear us and he'll answer us.

And that is a prayer that is according to God's will. Absolutely. You pray today for that right spirit. Let us pray. Lord, our God, we pray that we might indeed know that right spirit within us because we know that we're so prone to have the wrong spirit, to have a wrong attitude to things.

And we pray to help us, help us to believe, help us to trust, help us to follow the Lord with all our heart. Lord, do us good and keep us ever looking to thyself.

Keep our eyes from tears and our feet from falling and give us a desire to know thee more and more. Bless us and keep us and take away from us all our sin.

[25 : 39] In Jesus' name we ask it. Amen.