

The Gospel According to Luke

“Finding the Missing Peace”

Chapter 19:28-44

Introduction

We call it Palm Sunday and describe it as The Triumphal Entry. It's the Sunday Jesus entered Jerusalem to the shouts of *Hosanna! Blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord!*

It might be more accurate to call it **Donkey Sunday**, and describe it as **The Tearful Entry**:

1. We call it *Palm Sunday* – because in the Gospel of John the crowd is described as taking palm branches when they went to see Jesus. Why palm branches? In their earlier national history, the Jews had waved palm branches when the Maccabees overthrew Syrian oppression. The palm branch was stamped on to their coins in the period following that great victory. The palm was a patriotic symbol of freedom. The crowd looked upon Jesus as the One who would overthrow Roman oppression and restore Israel as a sovereign nation. For His part, Jesus chose a donkey as His symbol. The donkey was ridden by kings during times of peace, not conflict. It was a symbol of peace. It was personal peace, and not political freedom, that Jesus was offering. It was *Donkey Sunday*.
2. As to describing it as *The Triumphal Entry*... Luke recorded, in verse forty-one, that as Jesus drew nearer to the city, **He wept over it**. The word for **wept** is a strong word that means Jesus *wept*; or that He *burst into sobbing*. This happened as He was approaching; it happened openly, in front of the crowd. While they were shouting their blessings, the Lord was sobbing convulsively. It was *The Tearful Entry*.

Let's take a closer look at Donkey Sunday, when Jesus made His Tearful Entry into Jerusalem. We'll organize our thoughts around two

points: #1 You Find The Missing Peace When You Follow Jesus, and
#2 You Miss The Missing Peace When You Dismiss Jesus.

#1 You Find The Missing Peace
When You Follow Jesus
(v28-38)

I don't mean my use of the word 'donkey' to be funny, or in any way disrespectful. As careful observers of the Word of God, we can't help but note that the donkey occupies a very large part of this entry into Jerusalem. The first seven verses of the account in Luke are dedicated to the donkey.

The gospels of Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John all describe the donkey. When you read the four accounts you discover that there was a donkey with her young foal, or colt, who had never been ridden or carried any burden. Both were brought to Jesus, and He mounted the young foal as the donkey walked alongside.

The donkey was the symbol of peace. It was also a fulfillment of prophecy. Listen to this, from the Old Testament prophet Zechariah:

Zechariah 9:9 "Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion!
Shout, O daughter of Jerusalem!
Behold, your King is coming to you;
He is just and having salvation,
Lowly and riding on a donkey,
A colt, the foal of a donkey.

The **King** referred to by Zechariah was the promised Messiah. Jesus was purposely fulfilling the symbolism – letting the people know He was their **King, having salvation**.

That's the backdrop. This tremendous symbolism, and fulfillment of prophecy that was over five hundred years old, was carried-out in the real life exploits of two disciples. Let's not lose sight of the fact that the eternal plans and purposes God has for this planet all involve you and encourage you to obey Him as He turns ordinary experiences into extraordinary exploits.

Luke 19:28 When He had said this, He went on ahead, going up to Jerusalem.

Luke 19:29 And it came to pass, when He drew near to Bethphage and Bethany, at the mountain called Olivet, *that* He sent two of His disciples,
Luke 19:30 saying, “Go into the village opposite *you*, where as you enter you will find a colt tied, on which no one has ever sat. Loose it and bring *it here*.
Luke 19:31 And if anyone asks you, ‘Why are you loosing *it*?’ thus you shall say to him, ‘Because the Lord has need of it.’”

Jesus’ disciples were mostly common folk, mostly fishermen. But even the most common Jew knew the prophecy of Zechariah. They would have gotten excited about Jesus wanting to ride the foal into Jerusalem.

I’m not so sure how excited they were about going to get the foal! They were to walk by faith:

1. First, they were to believe that a donkey and her foal would be right where Jesus said.
2. Second, they were to go right up to them, loose them, and lead them back.
3. Third, they were to say nothing – unless challenged by the owners or anyone else; and then they were only to repeat a phrase – not really explain themselves.

Some of you are horse-people. Suppose you were out on a ride, resting, and two itinerant ministers came up to your horse, untied it, and began to walk away. It would be teeth-and-eyeballs between you!

Personally, I see this as more of the Lord’s humor. He knew that the owners would be prepared by God for the arrival of His disciples. Perhaps by a dream... Or a word of prophecy... We don’t know. But there are plenty of examples in Scripture where God has already gone before you to prepare hearts.

It’s kind of interesting to speculate on how such an important event depended, in a sense, upon the obedience of two disciples. God would have accomplished His will without them. But He chose to use them; they had to go, and they had to grow.

Great prophetic truths are being revealed in our lifetimes. The small, day-to-day experiences of your life can become extraordinary whenever the Lord sends you.

So there they were, untying the donkey and its foal:

Luke 19:32 So those who were sent went their way and found *it* just as He had said to them.

Luke 19:33 But as they were loosing the colt, the owners of it said to them, “Why are you loosing the colt?”

Luke 19:34 And they said, “The Lord has need of him.”

I would have wanted to explain the entire situation.

Explanations can sometimes be excuses. Instead, just speak the Word of God – which is essentially what they did. You don’t need to explain how obeying God “works.” The Word of God has its own power:

1. For unbelievers: It’s the power of God unto salvation.
2. In the believer: It discerns between the soul and the spirit, empowering you to walk by faith and not by the flesh.

Luke 19:35 Then they brought him to Jesus. And they threw their own clothes on the colt, and they set Jesus on him.

Luke 19:36 And as He went, *many* spread their clothes on the road.

Jesus sat upon, and tread upon, their clothing. This would primarily be their outer garments – their cloaks. Clothing was valuable – more so to them than to us, poor as they were. It was their way of symbolizing their submission to Jesus; it was their way of saying that everything they had was His.

It was also a makeshift way of preparing the road. Whenever a king or important dignitary was coming to town, the road leading in would be repaired and prepared. It was more evidence of their desire to submit to His rule.

Luke 19:37 Then, as He was now drawing near the descent of the Mount of Olives, the whole multitude of the disciples began to rejoice and praise God with a loud voice for all the mighty works they had seen,

Luke 19:38 saying: “*Blessed is the King who comes in the name of the LORD!*”
Peace in heaven and glory in the highest!”

It was Passover season. Many pilgrims would be on the road to Jerusalem. Those ahead, and those behind, continually joined the disciples following Jesus. They shouted a portion of Psalm 118, but with a slight change. The Psalm reads, *Blessed is He Who comes in the name of the Lord*. Applying it to Jesus, they said, *Blessed is the King Who comes in the name of the Lord*.

They were expecting the King to bring *peace* with the power of Heaven and establish *glory*. In other words, they were expecting the Kingdom of Heaven to be established on the earth.

The kingdom would be delayed. The Jewish authorities would officially refuse and reject Jesus. Instead of political peace, there would be global conflict for the Jews. It continues today, as Israel is still missing the peace.

The followers of Jesus would find the missing peace. Not on earth; but in their hearts. Jesus was crucified, then raised from the dead. As a result, your sins can be put upon Him; and His righteousness can be given to you. Describing this transaction, the apostle Paul wrote,

Romans 5:1 Therefore, having been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ,
Romans 5:2 through whom also we have access by faith into this grace in which we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God.

Peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ is the missing peace. Our hope for peace is in a personal relationship with God; not in a political revolution.

Christians have a sound-byte that captures exactly the nature of the problem. You’ve seen it on bumper stickers. It’s the two-line play on the words “No,” n-o, and “Know,” k-n-o-w. It reads like this:

*No Jesus, No Peace;
Know Jesus, Know Peace*

Sometimes the answers to seemingly complicated issues are simple. Finding the missing peace in life is a matter of knowing God through Jesus Christ.

Jesus' rejection by the religious authorities is anticipated by the reaction of the Pharisees on Donkey Sunday.

#2 You Miss The Missing Peace When You Dismiss Jesus (v39-44)

Everyone in the crowd understood that Jesus was claiming to be their King, in fulfillment of centuries of Bible prophecy. The Pharisees were offended by His claims:

Luke 19:39 And some of the Pharisees called to Him from the crowd, "Teacher, rebuke Your disciples."

I'm not suggesting you be rude... But you ought to be so exuberant about the Lord that, at least occasionally, unbelievers want you rebuked. Talk about the Lord... Carry your Bible... Wear Christian clothing... Pass out tracts, or leave them lying around... Until you're rebuked for it!

Luke 19:40 But He answered and said to them, "I tell you that if these should keep silent, the stones would immediately cry out."

This was Jesus' way of letting them know that what was happening at that very moment was something so important that it affected and involved all of God's creation. It was, in one sense, an exaggeration – giving stones a voice. But once you understand the scope of what was happening, you'll agree with Jesus.

First we must deal with Jesus' weeping:

Luke 19:41 Now as He drew near, He saw the city and wept over it,

In front of the multitudes, while they were shouting their blessings, Jesus sobbed convulsively and wailed these words. It is an extreme contrast – not to be overlooked.

Why the weeping? Jesus saw something in their prophetic future:

Luke 19:43 For days will come upon you when your enemies will build an embankment around you, surround you and close you in on every side, **Luke 19:44** and level you, and your children within you, to the ground; and they will not leave in you one stone upon another, because you did not know the time of your visitation."

Jesus saw the siege by Titus and the Romans, around 70AD. The Jews in Jerusalem would be mercilessly slaughtered; many would be enslaved; they would be scattered throughout the world. Their scattering would continue from that siege up until our own times. It wasn't until May 14 of 1948 that Israel would have their national home. And everyday since that day has only magnified their plight as a despised people. Convulsive sobbing, and words of wailing, were appropriate.

The Middle East has been center stage in the news this week as Israel attempts to withdraw its settlers from the Gaza Strip. Will it further peace in the region?

Probably not. As recently as 2002 a poll was cited in which two-thirds of Palestinians supported suicide bombings. Another poll, by al-Jazeera, found that 84.6 percent of 12,000 surveyed said Zionism is worse than Nazism.

Here's a quote from a Jewish scholar, a man named Kenneth Cohen:

It is a myth that the Palestinian Authority is preparing its population for a peaceful coexistence. Rather, PLO covenants call for the extermination of Israel and the extension of Palestinian borders from the Jordan River to the Mediterranean Sea.

It's not just the Middle East. Conflicts of various magnitude are raging all over the planet. We talk historically about World War One and World War Two. There's a sense in which we could talk, at any given time, about the World at War. It's World War 2005 right now; it will be followed by World War 2006, and so on.

The Pharisees in our story; and later the Jewish religious authorities; would dismiss Jesus as their Messiah. When you dismiss Jesus, you miss the missing peace.

Anyone and everyone who is not a follower of Jesus is dismissing Him. You are dismissing His claim to be the only One Who can give you peace with God. Whether you openly dismiss Him, or do so from indifference, makes no difference. No (n-o) Jesus... No (n-o) peace for you!

Jesus used an interesting phrase in verse forty-four: **the time of your visitation**. I purposely skipped verse forty-two, where He said something similar about that day:

Luke 19:42 saying, "If you had known, even you, especially in this your day, the things *that make for your peace*! But now they are hidden from your eyes.

He called that moment in time, **the time of your visitation** and **this your day**. Jesus was talking as if this was a particular day that could have, and should have, been anticipated and commemorated.

It was – in a truly amazing sense! Palm Sunday – Donkey Sunday - involves one of the most astonishing passages in the entire Bible. In the Old Testament book of Daniel, in chapter nine, there is a prophecy. It was given to Daniel by the angel Gabriel. It's called the Prophecy of the Seventy Weeks. We don't have time to go into it, or through it. But I can tell you that it exactly predicts the history of Israel. In it, there is a computation of days that told the Jews the exact date on which to expect their Messiah to arrive in Jerusalem and present Himself as their King.

Let me just read one verse, Daniel 9:25,

9:25: "Know therefore and understand, that from the going forth of the commandment to restore and to build Jerusalem unto the Messiah the Prince shall be seven weeks, and threescore and two weeks: the street shall be built again, and the wall, even in troublous times."

The Jewish (and Babylonian) calendars used a 360-day year; 69 weeks of 360-day years totals 173,880 days.

In effect, Gabriel told Daniel that the interval between the commandment to rebuild Jerusalem until the presentation of the Messiah as King would be 173,880 days.

Scholars can argue about the exact date, depending on the particulars of certain ancient calendars. **Jesus knew the date.** And the Jews could have, and should have, known the date.

Remember when Jesus was born? Wise men came from the East. They came to Herod, to ask where was the King of the Jews. Herod called upon the Jewish scholars to find out where Jesus was to be born. They told him it was in Bethlehem, accurately interpreting the prophecy. Even though they knew exactly where Jesus would be born... They did nothing about it!

Similarly, the Jews could have and should have known the day their Messiah would arrive.

Now can you see why the stones would cry out if the crowd remained silent? It was a day anticipated from eternity past by all of creation.