

The Gospel of John

Reactions to the Triumphal Entry

Luke 19:28-40

INTRODUCTION:

Today we celebrate the day called “Palm Sunday,” the day of Jesus’ triumphal entry into Jerusalem one week prior to his crucifixion and death. It is called “Palm Sunday”, because according to the Gospels the crowds in Jerusalem threw their cloaks on the ground and put palm branches in front of Him on the road to greet Him.

The story of the triumphal entry is one of the few incidents in the life of Jesus which appears in all four Gospel accounts (Matthew 21:1-17; Mark 11:1-11; Luke 19:29-40; John 12:12-19). Putting the four accounts together, it becomes clear that the triumphal entry was a significant event, not only to the people of Jesus’ day, but to Christians throughout history.

All Stand and Read Scripture

Luke 19:29-40 (NASB)

29 When He approached Bethphage (Beth Fah' Juh) and Bethany, near the mount that is called Olivet, He sent two of the disciples, 30 saying, “Go into the village ahead of you; there, as you enter, you will find a colt tied on which no one yet has ever sat; untie it and bring it here. 31 If anyone asks you, ‘Why are you untying it?’ you shall say, ‘The Lord has need of it.’” 32 So those who were sent went away and found it just as He had told them. 33 As they were untying the colt, its owners said to them, “Why are you untying the colt?” 34 They said, “The Lord has need of it.” 35 They brought it to Jesus, and they threw their coats on the colt and put Jesus on it. 36 As He was going, they were spreading their coats on the road. 37 As soon as He was approaching, near the descent of the Mount of Olives, the whole crowd of the disciples began to praise God joyfully with a loud voice for all the miracles which they had seen, 38 shouting: “Blessed is the King who comes in the name of the Lord; Peace in heaven and glory in the highest!”

39 Some of the Pharisees in the crowd said to Him, “Teacher, rebuke Your disciples.” 40 But Jesus answered, **“I tell you, if these become silent, the stones will cry out!”**

Prayer

The setting of this episode takes place on Sunday, just prior to the crucifixion later that week, as the Lord and his disciples made their way toward Jerusalem.

We learn from the Gospel of John that Jesus and the disciples had actually spent the

night in Bethany on their way to Jerusalem. Bethany was the home of Mary and Martha. Their brother was Lazarus whom Jesus raised from the dead.

John 12:1-3,9-11 (NASB)

12 Jesus, therefore, six days before the Passover, came to Bethany where Lazarus was, whom Jesus had raised from the dead. ² So they made Him a supper there, and Martha was serving; but Lazarus was one of those reclining *at the table* with Him. ³ Mary then took a pound of very costly perfume of pure nard, and anointed the feet of Jesus and wiped His feet with her hair; and the house was filled with the fragrance of the perfume.

⁹ The large crowd of the Jews then learned that He was there; and they came, not for Jesus' sake only, but that they might also see Lazarus, whom He raised from the dead. ¹⁰ But the chief priests planned to put Lazarus to death also; ¹¹ because on account of him many of the Jews were going away and were believing in Jesus.

This set the scene for the triumphal entry the next day. Large crowds of Jews had heard that Jesus was arriving in Jerusalem and wanted to greet Him. The chief priests were getting restless and plotting to kill Him.

In order to appreciate what happens next, you need to understand something of the Jewish feelings toward Rome. In 63 BC Roman legions under Pompey had put an end to an independent Jewish state, conquering Jerusalem and deposing the King. Israel longed for the day that the Messiah, predicted by the prophets, would deliver them from the military dictatorship of the pagan Romans. They wanted Israel to be restored to the throne of David and establish God's Kingdom in the land.

During his ministry, Jesus had shunned the public pronouncement that he was the promised Messiah. Prior to the triumphant entry, Jesus rarely claimed publicly to be the Messiah, and when people did recognize him as such, as in Peter's great confession in **Mark 8.29** "Thou art the Christ" or "You are the Messiah," Jesus strictly charges them to tell no one about him.

Now the time had come to start declaring that He was the Messiah!

This morning, I would like to look at the triumphal entry from several different perspectives.

BODY:

I. TRIUMPHANT ENTRY FROM CHRIST'S PERSPECTIVE.

A. To do the Will of the Father Who Sent Him.

Jesus Christ was on his way to Jerusalem, knowing full well that this trip would end in his sacrificial death for the sin of humanity. Being fully human, it had to be a very agonizing time knowing the pain and suffering that He was about to endure.

Christ's mission was first and foremost to do God's will. It was the only way for man to be reconciled back to God.

John 6:38 (NASB)

³⁸ For I have come down from heaven, not to do My own will, but the will of Him who sent Me.

Just before His crucifixion, He prayed in the Garden of Eden,

Luke 22:42 (NASB)

⁴² saying, "Father, if You are willing, remove this cup from Me; yet not My will, but Yours be done."

B. To Fulfill Prophecy.

Both Matthew and John contend that this triumphant entry was the fulfillment of Old Testament prophecy.

Zechariah 9:9-10 (NASB)

⁹ Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion! Shout *in triumph*, O daughter of Jerusalem! Behold, your king is coming to you; He is just and endowed with salvation, Humble, and mounted on a donkey, Even on a colt, the foal of a donkey.

This prophecy was written approximately 400 years before it actually occurred.

C. To Declare That He was the Messiah.

Jesus' purpose in riding into Jerusalem was to make public His claim to be their Messiah and King of Israel in fulfillment of Old Testament prophecy. Matthew tells us that the King coming on the foal of a donkey was an exact fulfillment of Zechariah 9:9.

Up until now Jesus has been very guarded about his identity as Messiah. Rather than using the term Christ (**Greek** for "**anointed one**") or Messiah (the **Hebrew** word for "**anointed one**"), he identifies himself as Son of Man. If Jesus had previously acknowledged publicly that he was the Messiah, the political implications would be such that he could not complete his intended ministry of teaching, healing, and proclaiming the Kingdom. But now that ministry is complete. All that remains is to accomplish his final week in Jerusalem. Jesus now moves to fulfill messianic prophecy, and directs his disciples to find the donkey that his Father has prepared for his public entry into the City of Zion.

His claim as King (or Messiah) must now be clear

D. Prepare the Twelve Disciples.

Another mission was no doubt to prepare the twelve disciples for what was about to take place. Even though they would not fully understand what He was telling them, they would fully understand when it was all over. This would reinforce their faith in Christ and prepare them for the ministry that confronted them.

John 12:16 (NASB)

¹⁶ These things His disciples did not understand at the first; but when Jesus was glorified, then they remembered that these things were written of Him, and that they had done these things to Him.

The events of Jesus' passion or suffering did not catch Him by surprise. On the journey from Galilee to Jerusalem he had taken the twelve disciples aside and told them what would soon happen.

Mark 10:33-34 (NASB)

³³ “Behold, we are going up to Jerusalem, and the Son of Man will be delivered to the chief priests and the scribes; and they will condemn Him to death and will hand Him over to the Gentiles. ³⁴ They will mock Him and spit on Him, and scourge Him and kill *Him*, and three days later He will rise again.”

In Mark's story Jesus displays an uncanny foreknowledge of highly particular events which the disciples will experience in connection with getting the colt. The simple explanation they are to give, “The Lord has need of it” shows Jesus' sense of sovereign mastery. Somebody might think that Jesus had simply made prior arrangements with the colt's owners without telling the disciples. But this seems to miss the lesson that Mark is trying to teach here, namely, Jesus' foreknowledge and control over the events leading up to his suffering and death. Jesus wanted the disciples to see that He is not the victim of events which are spinning out of control; rather He remains the sovereign master of his fate as he chooses to go to the cross.

II. TRIUMPHANT ENTRY FROM THE CROWD'S PERSPECTIVE.

The crowd thought that at last God's anointed king had come, the teacher and miracle-worker from Nazareth, who would cast off the pagan rulers of Israel and establish God's true kingdom, centered not in Rome but in Jerusalem. They are building a carpet of cloaks and palm leaves in front of Him. Amid shouting and singing, with the crowds surrounding him on all sides, Jesus rides in through the eastern gate of Jerusalem, into the Temple precincts, and does—nothing! **He does nothing!** In the accounts of Matthew and Luke, the story of Jesus' cleansing the temple comes on the heels of the story of the triumphal entry, giving the impression that these were consecutive events. But in Mark 11.11 we read,

Mark 11:11 (NASB)

¹¹ Jesus entered Jerusalem *and came into the temple; and after looking around at everything, He left for Bethany with the twelve, since it was already late.*

Talk about an anti-climax! Jesus doesn't cleanse the Temple; he doesn't lead the mob against the Roman fortress; he doesn't even give a stirring speech. He just looks around and leaves! That may explain why Jesus wasn't arrested on the spot. His triumphant entry into the city was **not** something the Romans were expecting or would have understood, and Jesus' procession probably just melted into the Passover crowd. We learn from Mark that Jesus returned the next day and drove the money changers from the temple.

By Friday, enough of the multitude were sufficiently disenchanted with Jesus that the Temple priesthood who had engineered his arrest and delivered him to the Romans on the treasonous charge of claiming to be “King of the Jews” were able to turn them against him. And now they chanted, not cries of “Hosanna!” but “Crucify him! Crucify him!” And so to the cross He went, to die as he knew He must.

Unfortunately, the praise the people lavished on Jesus was not because they recognized

Him as their Messiah. They welcomed Him out of their desire for a deliverer, someone who would lead them in a revolt against Rome.

III. Triumphant Entry from the Jew's and Roman's Perspective.

The Romans had seen the miracles that Christ had done and the large numbers of followers that He had. They feared that Christ might try establish a new kingdom on earth and just wanted to eliminate the threat.

After questioning Christ, Pilate came out to the Jews and declared, "I find no guilt in Him".

John 19:7 (NASB)

⁷The Jews answered him, "We have a law, and by that law He ought to die because He made Himself out *to be* the Son of God.

The problem with the Jews was their unbelief. Many of them did not believe that Jesus was the Messiah. They feared that He was going to pull many away from Judaism and God. Thus they sought to kill Him. They thought that they were the seeds of Abraham and did not realize that all men would become seeds of Abraham through Christ not through human lineage.

Jesus laid it out straight to them that they are not Abraham's seed due to human lineage.

John 8:37-47 (NASB)

³⁷I know that you are Abraham's descendants; yet you seek to kill Me, because My word has no place in you. ³⁸I speak the things which I have seen with *My* Father; therefore you also do the things which you heard from *your* father."

³⁹They answered and said to Him, "Abraham is our father." Jesus *said to them, "If you are Abraham's children, do the deeds of Abraham. ⁴⁰But as it is, you are seeking to kill Me, a man who has told you the truth, which I heard from God; this Abraham did not do. ⁴¹You are doing the deeds of your father." They said to Him, "We were not born of fornication; we have one Father: God." ⁴²Jesus said to them, "If God were your Father, you would love Me, for I proceeded forth and have come from God, for I have not even come on My own initiative, but He sent Me. ⁴³Why do you not understand what I am saying? *It is* because you cannot hear My word. ⁴⁴You are of *your* father the devil, and you want to do the desires of your father. He was a murderer from the beginning, and does not stand in the truth because there is no truth in him. Whenever he speaks a lie, he speaks from his own *nature*, for he is a liar and the father of lies. ⁴⁵But because I speak the truth, you do not believe Me. ⁴⁶Which one of you convicts Me of sin? If I speak truth, why do you not believe Me? ⁴⁷He who is of God hears the words of God; for this reason you do not hear *them*, because you are not of God."

CONCLUSION:

So, what does the triumphant entry teaches us?

The disciples heeded Jesus' instructions about obtaining the donkey. We must have faith in Christ God's word and obey Him when he tells us to do something. Just because we don't understand how everything will work out is no reason to refuse to serve Him.

The crowds refused to see Jesus as he truly was. Jesus doesn't always meet our expectations. What I'm saying is that we must tailor our expectations to what God **teaches** us, not try to tailor God to fit our expectations. We must **not** be like the people in Jerusalem, who hailed Christ as their king, just so long as he fit their image of what a king should be. Let us rather acknowledge him truly as He truly is: the Messiah, the Son of God, our King, and our Savior!

We must be diligent to assure that our expectations are from God's Word! If not, we may face the same demise as the Jews who refused to believe.

This triumphal entry into Jerusalem was like an ENCORE. Jesus was God, our Creator. He had come down from the splendor of heaven to live among us on this sinful earth. He lived a sinless life and did everything according to God's will. This was God's Son in Whom He was well pleased! Now He was facing His final week where He would die on the cross for the salvation of mankind. What a time for an encore!

39 Some of the Pharisees in the crowd said to Him, "Teacher, rebuke Your disciples."
40 But Jesus answered, "**I tell you, if these become silent, the stones will cry out!**"

Jesus was stating a fact: Praise for him cannot be silenced. If the Pharisees and Sadducees succeeded in silencing the people, God the Father would cause the stones to cry out praises to him.

Do you ever find yourself unable to contain your praise to God because of all He's done? We are on the other side of Christ's death on the cross. We know the end of the story! We understand much more clearly Who Jesus is and what He has done for us.

But in many ways we are just like the people at the triumphal entry because we fail to praise God for what He has done **for** our lives and **in** our lives. We miss the opportunity to praise God.

If you are going through a difficult time in your life **find reasons to praise God.** Then praise Him with all you have left in you, and see if it doesn't help you through your problem.

What has God done in your life that is worthy of praise?

- He Sent His Son to die on the cross for the salvation of man.
- He understands our frailty as humans.
- He is merciful, not giving us the punishment we deserve.
- He forgives all of our sins.
- He rules over all and is in complete control.

Invitation.

The Family of God.