

Jesus had just finished sharing the parable of the master whose subjects rebelled against him being granted the title king. The parable predicted His departure and later return. It was clearly prophetic of what was about to happen and the distant future. Only looking back on these words would the disciples realize the depth of the parable.

²⁸ And when he had said these things, he went on ahead, going up to Jerusalem.
Luke 19:28 Jesus was at the end of a journey that had begun some nine months before when he purposefully began a zigzag journey first through Galilee, then Samaria, then Perea, and finally Judea. During this final journey he had ministered in at least thirty-five localities, timing the journey just right in order to end up in Jerusalem for Passover.ⁱ

Jesus had warned them multiple times of what lay ahead (Matthew 17:22,23ⁱⁱ; Luke 9:44ⁱⁱⁱ). John tells us that the disciples reminded Jesus of the last time they were in Jerusalem when the Jews tried to stone Him (John 11:8^{iv}). John also adds the account of raising Lazarus which took place in Bethany on the previous trip into the area. That account ended with the chief priests and Pharisees ordering the public to report any sightings of Jesus (John 11:57^v). They even planned to kill Lazarus because his testimony of resurrection was causing many more to believe Jesus was the Messiah (John 12:9-11^{vi}). It was like having wanted posters everywhere you looked and still heading fearlessly right into Dodge. It was time for the showdown. No wonder Mark wrote that those following Jesus on the road to Jerusalem were afraid (Mark 10:32^{vii}).

We should also observe that the Gospels say Jesus was in the lead. John 10:3,4^{viii} tells us the Shepherd knows His sheep by name and leads them, going ahead of them. If there is danger ahead, our Shepherd will face it for the sheep. In the Hebrew parallel of physical and spiritual this is a profound truth that we see repeated in Paul's letters (Romans 4:25^{ix}). While Jesus is willing to face physical threats to keep His flock safe, He lived out the spiritual reality by facing the judgment of sin which is death (Romans 3:23^x) and came out victorious so that we could safely follow Him to our heavenly home. That is why Paul calls Him the firstfruits from among the dead (1 Corinthians 15:20^{xi}).

²⁹ When he drew near to Bethphage and Bethany, at the mount that is called Olivet, he sent two of the disciples, ³⁰ saying, "Go into the village in front of you, where on entering you will find a colt tied, on which no one has ever yet sat. Untie it and bring it here. ³¹ If anyone asks you, 'Why are you untying it?' you shall say this: 'The Lord has need of it.'"³² So those who were sent went away and found it just as he had told them.
Luke 19:29-32 Mark 11:3^{xii} tells us that the disciples were to tell the owner that the colt would be returned immediately. Bethany had seen the miracle of Lazarus being raised (John 11:45^{xiii}). There was a wealthy man there, Simon, whom Jesus healed of leprosy (Mark 14:3^{xiv}). We can see from this and other accounts that this area on the eastern side of the Mount of Olives was very favorable toward Jesus. When the disciples said the Lord needs the colt, the owners would have known they were referring to Jesus. This shows us there were areas that had been convinced that He was the Messiah. The owners of the donkey and foal were not hesitant to lend them for Jesus' use.

Notice that the ownership is plural. Poor folk could not afford a donkey so they would pool their resources to purchase the animal and share it. Letting them take the

animals would be like loaning someone your car or work vehicle today. You have to have faith that they will return it or else be willing to give it away.

One gospel writer tells us Jesus told them that they could find the donkey by following the man carrying a water pitcher (Mark 14:13^{xv}). That may indicate that it was a group of Essenes, for all other Jews had women do the work of carrying water as we see throughout Scripture. Essene men often lived separately from women, so they had to carry their own water.

³³ And as they were untying the colt, its owners said to them, "Why are you untying the colt?" ³⁴ And they said, "The Lord has need of it." Luke 14:33, 34 That's like someone climbing into your car and starting the engine. "Hey, what are you doing in my car?" It seems the owners had such faith in Jesus that they didn't ask any other questions.

The prophecy that was coming to pass was from Zechariah 9:9. I'm going to read verses 9 through 11. *⁹ Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion! Shout aloud, O daughter of Jerusalem! Behold, your king is coming to you; righteous and having salvation is he, humble and mounted on a donkey, on a colt, the foal of a donkey. ¹⁰ I will cut off the chariot from Ephraim and the war horse from Jerusalem; and the battle bow shall be cut off, and he shall speak peace to the nations; his rule shall be from sea to sea, and from the River to the ends of the earth. ¹¹ As for you also, because of the blood of my covenant with you, I will set your prisoners free from the waterless pit.* Again, we see Jesus' boldness and lack of fear in riding into this area full of hostility toward Him and doing so in a way that declared He is the King Messiah.

In my sermon on this passage in Zechariah, I explained the implications of this promise. "The first portion of Zechariah pointed to the expectation of God arriving to change curse into blessing and bring security. So, it is somewhat of a shock to see the arrival of God is on a donkey. It doesn't seem to match the expectation that had been building throughout the prophecies of the minor prophets.

In verse ten God is the speaker. It is God who announces the arrival of a king who will proclaim peace to the nations. He is God's king. If we take a closer look, we can see that the One who is coming to reign has already been described. In chapter three of Zechariah, we see the high priest Joshua was symbol of One who was to come. In chapter six we saw the coming One predicted in the crown placed on the head of the high priest Joshua, a priest and king. In those chapters He is referred to as God's servant the Branch, alluding to Isaiah's term for the Branch of Jesse, the Messiah (Isaiah 11:1^{xvi}). He is God's king who will reign over all (Daniel 7:14^{xvii}).

He is a unique king in that **He is righteous!** All kings who have come before had their faults, but this One is flawless. He comes to Zion. That reminds us again of Isaiah who tells us that to us this child is born of a virgin (Isaiah 7:14^{xviii}). The extent of His rule is beyond that of all other kings. **He has salvation!** That is an interesting way to express it, for of any other king one would say that he would save us from our enemies. That is true of the Messiah too, but this king *has* salvation. Yeshua/Jesus means the salvation of God. He is our Savior. Salvation for the lost would be provided through the sinless blood that he *has* and would shed for our sins (Matthew 26:28^{xix}).

He is the divine warrior. Because man is not righteous and so often errs in judgment, there must come a righteous One with the power to set wrongs right and to

cause wars to cease." *"The Bible is testifying to the fact that evil must be actively resisted and done away. It does not disappear by itself. Hitlers must be made to cease their holocausts; civil rights must be guaranteed with the force of law. Someone has got to break the swords and fashion the spears into pruning hooks. But by testifying that God is the Divine Warrior, the Bible is saying that the ultimate destruction of evil belongs to him."*^{xx}

Zechariah 9:11 is the ultimate promise. At that time, the bones of the dead were placed in waterless pits in the ground awaiting the day of resurrection. This promise is that they will be set free. Sometimes prisoners were held in similar pits from which they could not climb out. The passage is suggesting that death is like being imprisoned, but **the coming King will deliver us from death** (1 Corinthians 15:56,57^{xxi}). All of these wonderful promises and declarations of who this King will be and what He will do are tied to Him entering on a donkey, a colt the foal of a donkey.

The Gospels differ in the description of what He was riding. Matthew 21:7^{xxii} tells us there was a donkey and its colt and that Jesus sat on them - plural. Luke focusses on the colt. Just as in other passages in Luke, he leaves out one of the participants, in this case the full-grown donkey. Mark 11:2^{xxiii} tells us Jesus instructed them to bring a colt on which no one had ever sat. Apparently, the focus is the colt and the colt's mother came so the colt would follow. Instead of riding the full-grown donkey, which was trained and used to being ridden, Jesus rode the untrained donkey colt. According to Scripture, the fact that it was never ridden made it acceptable for a holy use (Numbers 19:2^{xxiv}; 1 Samuel 6:7^{xxv}). This identified him with David who used the donkey as a royal animal. After David, the kings of Israel used horses. It presented Him as God's humble servant coming in peace (Philippians 2:5,6^{xxvi}). The donkey is also a burden bearer, and that is what Jesus had come to do for us.

³⁵ And they brought it to Jesus, and throwing their cloaks on the colt, they set Jesus on it. ³⁶ And as he rode along, they spread their cloaks on the road. Luke 19:35,36 We have seen numerous times when Jesus told those He healed to not tell others (Mark 7:36^{xxvii}). When the revelation came to the disciples of who He was, He told them not to tell people (Matthew 16:20^{xxviii}). He seemed to be trying to remain anonymous until that time nine months before when He began this long winding journey to Jerusalem. Then He sent out His disciples to announce it. Now He has orchestrated the fulfillment of the prophecy that publicly declares Him to be the divine King.

It seems the people understood that Jesus was fulfilling the Zechariah passage. They laid their cloaks down as if welcoming a king and offering Him one of their most valued possessions.

The date he entered was the day of choosing a lamb for each family for the Passover sacrifice and meal (Exodus 12:3^{xxix}). It was this very day the Lamb of God presented Himself to the people and for the moment it appeared they were choosing Him.

On the other side of town, Pilate was entering from Caesarea on his war stallion. Those who benefited from Rome would have been along the roads to welcome him and his forces. The Romans were coming to assure peace during the Passover. Because all Jewish males in Israel were required to attend, would-be messiahs used this season to try to advance themselves.

The contrast between these two entrances couldn't have been starker. One was on a stallion with armed forces and the other came with gentleness on a borrowed, unbroken colt. One was trying to assure peace through force. The other was bringing eternal peace through laying down His life.

³⁷ As he was drawing near—already on the way down the Mount of Olives—the whole multitude of his disciples began to rejoice and praise God with a loud voice for all the mighty works that they had seen, ³⁸ saying, “Blessed is the King who comes in the name of the Lord! Peace in heaven and glory in the highest!” Luke 19:37,38 The disciples along with people who had been healed or seen others healed, and with those who witnessed the raising of Lazarus were loudly rejoicing. The crowd was chanting a portion of one of the psalms they sang on feast days (Psalm 118:26^{xxx}). It was the promise of a coming king. Coming in the name of the Lord means to come with the LORD'S attributes.

They also shouted, "Peace in heaven and glory in the highest!" This reminds us of the song of the heavenly host when Jesus was born (Luke 2:14^{xxxi}). It sounds as if they understood the real reason Jesus came, to bring peace between man and God. But other Gospels tell us they were also shouting, "Hosanna!" That means "save now." We'll see later that they meant salvation from Roman oppression. Even after the parable of the mina, the people were still expecting Jesus to vanquish Rome and set up a physical kingdom. John's Gospel tells us they were waving palm branches and saying, "Blessed is the King of Israel" (John 12:13^{xxxii}). Palm branches were a symbol of Israel's sovereignty during the Maccabean revolt.

The ecstatic crowds may have been saying the words they were accustomed to saying on feast days, but now they were said with special enthusiasm thinking they were about to be fulfilled. They were chanting words from the last of the Hallel Psalms, 118 verses 25 to 28, and adding other acclamations. This portion of the psalm was sung antiphonally as they welcomed incoming pilgrims arriving in Jerusalem. The new arrivals would respond with the second clause of each verse, and the last verse would be sung together, "You are my God and I will give thanks to you. You are my God and I will extol you."^{xxxiii}

Consider the words they sang to one another from Psalm 118:25-27. *²⁵ Save us, we pray, O LORD! O LORD, we pray, give us success!* (Which is "Hosanna!" requested of YHWH! How appropriate, and yet how ironic that they did not know what they were saying!) *²⁶ Blessed is he who comes in the name of the LORD! We bless you from the house of the LORD.* (Those coming into the city were referred to as those who come in the name of the Lord, and yet the only One who comes with the attributes of God is Jesus the Messiah!) *²⁷ The LORD is God, and he has made his light to shine upon us. Bind the festal sacrifice with cords, up to the horns of the altar!* Jesus called Himself the light of the world (John 9:5^{xxxiv}). His light was shining in the darkness but those in darkness did not receive Him (John 1:5^{xxxv}, 9-11^{xxxvi}). He did come to be their sacrifice. The sacrificial animals were kept from fleeing by being tied to the horns of the altar. Jesus' love for us kept Him from fleeing. The psalms of those entering Jerusalem ended on that note. The final verse to be sung came from Psalm 103:17 *"But the steadfast love of the LORD is from everlasting to everlasting on those who fear him, and righteousness*

to children's children." They did not realize how this verse was about to be played out before their eyes as Jesus laid down His life in love to give us eternal salvation.

³⁹ *And some of the Pharisees in the crowd said to him, "Teacher, rebuke your disciples."* ⁴⁰ *He answered, "I tell you, if these were silent, the very stones would cry out."* Luke 19:39,40 The Pharisees were very concerned because the disciples of Jesus were saying things that sounded revolutionary and would draw the attention and wrath of Rome. They also understood that what the people were declaring is that Jesus is the Messiah King. Most of the Pharisees thought such a declaration was blasphemous.

Jesus' answer must have infuriated them. He told them if the disciples stopped praising Him, the rocks would cry out His praise (Habakkuk 2:11^{xxxvii}). Jesus knew the hour had come, so He was no longer holding back but boldly riding into the jaws of death. The tension that was coming to a head would lead to His crucifixion. Jesus knew it and was no longer hiding the fact of who He is. He knew the ending, but it seems no one else did, even though He had explicitly told them (Luke 9:44^{xxxviii}; 13:33^{xxxix}). It is the story with the most surprising end of all!

The stones piled around the ancient temple's walls even to this day testify that Jesus' tears shed in the following verses flowed because He foresaw the destruction of the people and the city. Those tears were truly prophetic (Luke 19:43,44^{xl}). The Jews did not know the time of their visitation. Do we? Jesus is the light that lights every man who comes into the world (John 1:9^{xli}). He comes to us gently and peacefully presenting Himself as the sacrificial lamb for our sins. It is the time of our visitation. Will you welcome His forgiveness and deliverance from sin and death, or will you demand a physical deliverance like these Jews did? He cries with chest heaving sobs for those who praise Him today but reject Him as King over their lives. Times of crisis like the current pandemic are times of visitation, for we are faced with the brevity of life. Everyone must choose between the world and Jesus! Like the temple in which the Jews put their hope, in time, the empires of this world will all lie in ruin. Our choice is between that which is passing and that which is eternal. Won't you accept the Lamb of God to be your King?

Questions

- 1 Why were the disciples fearful as they followed Jesus?
- 2 What does Jesus do in front of the group picture?
- 3 What does His entry on a donkey declare?
- 4 To whom does the destruction of evil belong?
- 5 Why was that day special to the Jews?
- 6 What are the two contrasting entries?
- 7 What did the crowd call Jesus?
- 8 How do the words of Psalm 118 declare who Jesus is?
- 9 Why did the Pharisees want to silence the crowd?
- 10 Have you recognized the time of your visitation.

ⁱ Preaching the Word - Luke, Volume II: That You May Know the Truth quoted from Johnston M. Cheney, *The Life of Christ in Stereo*, pp. 145, 146

ii **Matthew 17:22-23 (ESV)**

²² As they were gathering in Galilee, Jesus said to them, “The Son of Man is about to be delivered into the hands of men, ²³ and they will kill him, and he will be raised on the third day.” And they were greatly distressed.

iii **Luke 9:44 (ESV)**

⁴⁴ “Let these words sink into your ears: The Son of Man is about to be delivered into the hands of men.”

iv **John 11:8 (ESV)**

⁸ The disciples said to him, “Rabbi, the Jews were just now seeking to stone you, and are you going there again?”

v **John 11:57 (ESV)**

⁵⁷ Now the chief priests and the Pharisees had given orders that if anyone knew where he was, he should let them know, so that they might arrest him.

vi **John 12:9-11 (ESV)**

⁹ When the large crowd of the Jews learned that Jesus was there, they came, not only on account of him but also to see Lazarus, whom he had raised from the dead. ¹⁰ So the chief priests made plans to put Lazarus to death as well, ¹¹ because on account of him many of the Jews were going away and believing in Jesus.

vii **Mark 10:32 (ESV)**

³² And they were on the road, going up to Jerusalem, and Jesus was walking ahead of them. And they were amazed, and those who followed were afraid. And taking the twelve again, he began to tell them what was to happen to him,

viii **John 10:3-4 (ESV)**

³ To him the gatekeeper opens. The sheep hear his voice, and he calls his own sheep by name and leads them out.

⁴ When he has brought out all his own, he goes before them, and the sheep follow him, for they know his voice.

ix **Romans 4:25 (ESV)**

²⁵ who was delivered up for our trespasses and raised for our justification.

x **Romans 3:23 (ESV)**

²³ for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God,

xi **1 Corinthians 15:20 (ESV)**

²⁰ But in fact Christ has been raised from the dead, the firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep.

xii **Mark 11:3 (ESV)**

³ If anyone says to you, ‘Why are you doing this?’ say, ‘The Lord has need of it and will send it back here immediately.’”

xiii **John 11:45 (ESV)**

⁴⁵ Many of the Jews therefore, who had come with Mary and had seen what he did, believed in him,

xiv **Mark 14:3 (ESV)**

³ And while he was at Bethany in the house of Simon the leper, as he was reclining at table, a woman came with an alabaster flask of ointment of pure nard, very costly, and she broke the flask and poured it over his head.

xv **Mark 14:13 (ESV)**

¹³ And he sent two of his disciples and said to them, “Go into the city, and a man carrying a jar of water will meet you. Follow him,

xvi **Isaiah 11:1 (ESV)**

¹ There shall come forth a shoot from the stump of Jesse, and a branch from his roots shall bear fruit.

xvii **Daniel 7:14 (ESV)**

¹⁴ And to him was given dominion and glory and a kingdom, that all peoples, nations, and languages should serve him; his dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and his kingdom one that shall not be destroyed.

xviii **Isaiah 7:14 (ESV)**

¹⁴ Therefore the Lord himself will give you a sign. Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel.

xix **Matthew 26:28 (ESV)**

²⁸ for this is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins.

xx Interpretation: A Bible Commentary for Teaching and Preaching - Nahum-Malachi

xxi **1 Corinthians 15:56-57 (ESV)**

⁵⁶ The sting of death is sin, and the power of sin is the law.

⁵⁷ But thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.

xxii **Matthew 21:7 (ESV)**

⁷ They brought the donkey and the colt and put on them their cloaks, and he sat on them.

^{xxiii} **Mark 11:2 (ESV)**

² and said to them, “Go into the village in front of you, and immediately as you enter it you will find a colt tied, on which no one has ever sat. Untie it and bring it.

^{xxiv} **Numbers 19:2 (ESV)**

² “This is the statute of the law that the LORD has commanded: Tell the people of Israel to bring you a red heifer without defect, in which there is no blemish, and on which a yoke has never come.

^{xxv} **1 Samuel 6:7 (ESV)**

⁷ Now then, take and prepare a new cart and two milk cows on which there has never come a yoke, and yoke the cows to the cart, but take their calves home, away from them.

^{xxvi} **Philippians 2:5-6 (ESV)**

⁵ Have this mind among yourselves, which is yours in Christ Jesus,

⁶ who, though he was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped,

^{xxvii} **Mark 7:36 (ESV)**

³⁶ And Jesus charged them to tell no one. But the more he charged them, the more zealously they proclaimed it.

^{xxviii} **Matthew 16:20 (ESV)**

²⁰ Then he strictly charged the disciples to tell no one that he was the Christ.

^{xxix} **Exodus 12:3 (ESV)**

³ Tell all the congregation of Israel that on the tenth day of this month every man shall take a lamb according to their fathers’ houses, a lamb for a household.

^{xxx} **Psalms 118:26 (ESV)**

²⁶ Blessed is he who comes in the name of the LORD! We bless you from the house of the LORD.

^{xxxi} **Luke 2:14 (ESV)**

¹⁴ “Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace among those with whom he is pleased!”

^{xxxii} **John 12:13 (ESV)**

¹³ So they took branches of palm trees and went out to meet him, crying out, “Hosanna! Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord, even the King of Israel!”

^{xxxiii} (Midr. on Ps. cxviii., ed. Warsh., pp. 85 *b*, last 3 lines, and p. 86 *a*)

^{xxxiv} **John 9:5 (ESV)**

⁵ As long as I am in the world, I am the light of the world.”

^{xxxv} **John 1:5 (ESV)**

⁵ The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it.

^{xxxvi} **John 1:9-11 (ESV)**

⁹ The true light, which gives light to everyone, was coming into the world.

¹⁰ He was in the world, and the world was made through him, yet the world did not know him.

¹¹ He came to his own, and his own people did not receive him.

^{xxxvii} **Habakkuk 2:11 (ESV)**

¹¹ For the stone will cry out from the wall, and the beam from the woodwork respond.

^{xxxviii} **Luke 9:44 (ESV)**

⁴⁴ “Let these words sink into your ears: The Son of Man is about to be delivered into the hands of men.”

^{xxxix} **Luke 13:33 (ESV)**

³³ Nevertheless, I must go on my way today and tomorrow and the day following, for it cannot be that a prophet should perish away from Jerusalem.’

^{xl} **Luke 19:43-44 (ESV)**

⁴³ For the days will come upon you, when your enemies will set up a barricade around you and surround you and hem you in on every side ⁴⁴ and tear you down to the ground, you and your children within you. And they will not leave one stone upon another in you, because you did not know the time of your visitation.”

^{xli} **John 1:9 (ESV)**

⁹ The true light, which gives light to everyone, was coming into the world.