

THE TRIUMPHAL ENTRY

Luke 19:28-48

Key Verse: 19:38

"Blessed is the king who comes in the name of the Lord! Peace in heaven and glory in the highest!"

In this passage Jesus enters into Jerusalem triumphantly (28-44). On arriving, Jesus cleanses the temple (45-48). Through these two events, Jesus reveals himself as the Messiah of the world in his divine humbleness. Jesus also reveals that he is the Messiah of the world who fulfills the world mission purpose of God.

First, Jesus, the humble king (28-34).

"After Jesus had said this, he went on ahead, going up to Jerusalem." (28) In this verse, "After Jesus had said this" refers to the previous passages, in which he told his kingship and the parable of the ten minas. Zechariah 9:9 says, "Rejoice greatly, O Daughter of Zion! Shout, Daughter of Jerusalem! See, your king comes to you, righteous and having salvation, gentle and riding on a donkey, on a colt, the foal of a donkey." In the past, it was customary for a king to enter his capital city on a white charger, with a splendid entourage. The king's entry into his capital city was a display of his power, glory and majesty, so that his subjects all would submit to his kingly authority without question. In history, worldly kings were mostly unrighteous. Many a king levied heavy taxation on his people, both rich and poor alike, in order to maintain his magnificent palace. Many a king destroyed countless numbers of innocent people, just to demonstrate his own power and kingship.

But our King Jesus is different. According to Zechariah 9:9, Jesus is a righteous King. Even though he is the Son of God, Jesus enters Jerusalem to die on the cross to save men from their sins. Jesus is also a gentle King. In history, no king was gentle; most kings were absolutely arrogant and ruthless with the support of their military power. When Jesus entered Jerusalem, Jesus did not ride on a white charger, he rode on a donkey, on a colt, the foal of a donkey.

Jesus is a humble King, so humble that he could be a friend of tax collectors and all kinds of social outcasts. Jesus is a humble King, so humble that he was always ready to talk with any kind of person. Jesus even made time to talk with the self-righteous Pharisees.

Someone said, "Reconciliation is greater than victory." If so, humbleness must be the greatest quality in humanity. Jesus is the Son of Almighty God. But Jesus is humble. This may be the reason we like Jesus so much. A girl student said, "Whenever I study the Bible with him, my whole body aches because he is so self-righteous." Bearing one proud person is not an easy thing to do. But Jesus is humble, so humble that people down through the generations have taken rest in him. (Mt 11:28,29) When we know the humbleness of Jesus we can have peace of mind and rest of soul. Without knowing the humbleness of Jesus, one cannot be a spiritual man. Jesus enters Jerusalem to bear all our transgressions and iniquities on the cross. Second, Jesus' entry into Jerusalem was a triumphal entry.

Jesus is the Son of God; so he should have received special privileges and unlimited glory. But God did not allow him to do so. Rather, God let him enter Jerusalem so as to become a ransom sacrifice for the sin of the world. Now, Jesus was going up to Jerusalem to obey the will of God for world salvation. There, he would be handed over to the Gentiles like a criminal. They would mock him, insult him, spit on him, flog him and kill him. On the third day he would rise again. (Lk 18:31-33) It was hard for Jesus to enter Jerusalem to die on the cross. But there was no deviation. When Jesus was nailed down on the cross, it seemed that Satan was winning a victory over Jesus. But through his obedience to the will of God unto death, even death on the cross, Jesus destroyed the kingdom of Satan completely. This is why we call Jesus' entry into Jerusalem the triumphal entry.

Third, the Lord needs it.

Jesus, with all-out determination, impelled his steps along the road to Jerusalem and arrived at the Mount of Olives, which was situated on the east side of Jerusalem, in between the city and the Kidron Valley and facing the Jerusalem temple. From the Mount of Olives the whole view of Jerusalem and its temple could be seen. Bethphage was on the west side of the Mount of

Olives, and Bethany was at the southeast foot of the Mount. Bethany was two miles from the city, and Bethphage was still nearer.

Now Jesus was about to enter Jerusalem. But there was a problem: he had no colt to ride on. How did he get a colt? Look at verses 29b-31. "...he sent two of his disciples, saying to them, 'Go to the village ahead of you, and as you enter it, you will find a colt tied there, which no one has ever ridden. Untie it and bring it here. If anyone asks you, 'Why are you untying it?' tell him, 'The Lord needs it.''" The disciples must have been greatly surprised at his command, because Jesus did not see the colt, yet knew where it was. They were more surprised, thinking that it was a kind of robbery, contrary to their pride being disciples of Jesus. Jesus' command was too hard for them to obey. But Jesus determined to teach his disciples the Lordship of Christ. No one can claim another's property saying, "I need it." But Jesus can say, "I need it" (Jn 1:3).

The disciples were always argumentative. But this time the disciples obeyed his command. Look at verses 32-34. "Those who were sent ahead went and found it just as he had told them. As they were untying the colt, its owners asked them, 'Why are you untying the colt?' They replied, 'The Lord needs it.'" Here we see that the disciples made a firm determination to learn the Lordship of Christ. To learn the Lordship of Christ, we must believe that the life in us is God's life given to us for a certain time. We must believe that the U.S.A. and the former U.S.S.R. are the possessions of God. Whenever our Lord wants to use any of our possessions, we must give it to him, as the owner of the colt did. Otherwise, life is too difficult to live, because it is too precious to handle.

How did the owner of the colt react? Probably the colt was a very dear friend to him. His joy of life must have been to stroke the colt on its back two or three times a day and make a smile, saying, "No one could take the colt from me." But the two disciples had in their hearts an absolute attitude toward their Master's words, "The Lord needs it," and everything proceeded favorably. As they were untying the colt, its owner asked them, "Why are you untying the colt?" (33) The two disciples were caught in the very act of robbery. But the owner of the colt said, "Okay. You have my permission. Take it." This event teaches us how the Lordship of Christ works.

Fourth, blessed is the king (35-43).

Most of the time Jesus avoided public attention, but this time he revealed himself before the waving crowd of people as their King, making the triumphal entry into Jerusalem as was prophesied. What was the people's response? Look at verse 35. "They brought it to Jesus, threw their cloaks on the colt and put Jesus on it." This verse tells us that the disciples acknowledged his Kingship and paid homage to him. (36) Then the whole crowd of people frenziedly took off their cloaks and spread them on the road when he came near the place where the road goes down the Mount of Olives, and they praised God in loud voices.

Why did they praise God? Verse 37b says it was "for all the miracles they had seen." They had seen beautiful Jesus, who went around all the district of Galilee, healing the sick and preaching the kingdom of God. They had seen Jesus who became eyes to the blind. In short, they praised God because they had seen the true Messiah in Jesus. What was the content of their praise? Look at verse 38. "'Blessed is the king who comes in the name of the Lord!' 'Peace in heaven and glory in the highest!'" To them, Jesus' entry into Jerusalem meant that the Messiah, the King of salvation, was marching into Zion. To them, Jesus' entry into Jerusalem was peace in heaven and glory in the highest. His entry into Jerusalem was the revelation of God's glory, that is, God's saving grace. (38)

Fifth, a house of prayer for all people (39-48).

How did the Pharisees respond to Jesus' coming into Zion? Look at verse 39. "Some of the Pharisees in the crowd said to Jesus, 'Teacher, rebuke your disciples!'" At that time the Pharisees were the religious leaders. From God's point of view they were supposed to be shepherds of God's flock and Bible teachers and prayer servants, not only for his suffering people, but also for all nations. But they became as unfaithful as the tenants in the parable of the tenants. (20:9-19) They rejected God as their King. They became political animals. They could not see God's high purpose for them. They could not remember how much God wanted to make Jerusalem the City of God, into which all peoples of all nations could stream to study the Law of God.

What did Jesus say to them? "I tell you," he replied, "if they keep quiet, the stones will cry out."(40) His entry into the city, marching into Zion, was the work of God prophesied long ago. His entry into Jerusalem on a colt was glory to God and salvation and eternal life to men. No one could stop this work of God. If men were silent, heaven and nature would cry out for his coming. Even the stones would have cried out for his coming to Zion. But the proud religious leaders wanted to stop this work of God.

Look at verse 41. "As he approached Jerusalem and saw the city, he wept over it." Why did Jesus weep? It was because the Holy City of God had become the city of robbers. God had wanted to make Jerusalem the City of God, from which the Law of God would go out, and where people of all nations could come and study the word of God. But the city was full of Satan's political conspiracy. Jesus wept because he saw horrible judgment impending upon them. Look at verses 43,44. "The days will come upon you when your enemies will build an embankment against you and encircle you and hem you in on every side. They will dash you to the ground, you and the children within your walls. They will not leave one stone on another, because you did not recognize the time of God's coming to you." This prophecy was carried out in AD 70 by the Romans at the fall of Jerusalem. This is a picture of the future judgment.

When Jesus came to Jerusalem, first he entered the temple. It was full of businessmen, selling and buying animals. On seeing them, Jesus began to drive out those who were selling. Jesus is humble. But he is also the righteous King. Jesus drove them out because they made the house of God a den of robbers. The temple was supposed to be a house of prayer. Mark 11:17 says, "And as he taught them, he said, 'Is it not written: "My house will be called a house of prayer for all nations"? But you have made it "a den of robbers."'" Therefore, when we come to church, we must pray for all nations. We must pray for the U.S.A., the U.S.S.R., and all nations. But the religious leaders did not pray. Our Lord Jesus is most sorry when people use a house of prayer as a house of business. So Jesus drove them out, beating them with a whip of cords.

In this passage, Jesus made his entry into Jerusalem in order to obey the will of God for world salvation unto death, death on a cross. We also learn that the lordship of Christ is our basic faith. Humanly speaking, his entry into Jerusalem was a complete defeat. But when we see it with spiritual eyes,

Jesus' entry into Jerusalem is a triumphal entry. For through it, Jesus showed us how to lose human battles and win the kingdom of God.