

## **Series Gospel of Luke**

### **This Message #32 Shouts of Joy, Tears of Grief**

#### **Scripture Luke 19: 28-44**

The final destination of Jesus' ministry on earth had to be Jerusalem. Jesus Himself had announced that fact to His disciples on several occasions. He said that Jerusalem would be the place where He would be put to death (*see Luke 9:28-36, 44-45*).

Jesus arrived in the vicinity of Jerusalem at the beginning of Passover week. He was following a schedule which had been determined by God the Father from eternity past and announced by the prophets centuries earlier. Jesus probably completed the trip from Jericho on Friday. There is no information in Scripture about His activity on Saturday, which was the Sabbath day. The events we are going to think about today occurred on Sunday, just five days before His crucifixion.

#### **Read Luke 19:28-44**

There were a number of important elements connected with Jesus' entrance into Jerusalem. As I stated earlier, His activities had been announced centuries previously by the Old Testament prophets. Jesus carefully followed a plan which had been predetermined by and was being directed by God the Father. The fulfillments of the predictions concerning Jesus can be added to other proofs that He was the Messiah. His miracles authenticated who He was. His authoritative teaching was evidence that He was from God. Fulfilled predictions were another important proof that Jesus was who He said He was.

Jesus Himself had predicted what would happen to Him. On one occasion He had announced to His disciples that "The Son of Man must suffer many things and be rejected by the elders, chief priests and teachers of the law, and he must be killed and on the third day be raised to life."

On another occasion, He had announced “everything that is written by the prophets about the Son of Man will be fulfilled. He will be handed over to the Gentiles. They will mock him, insult him, spit on him, flog him, and kill him. On the third day he will rise again” (*Luke 18:31-33*). Jesus’ statements represented specific actions which had to be fulfilled during Passover week.

The entrance of Jesus into the city was another event which had to be orchestrated in such a way that prophecy was fulfilled. This is why the preparations for Jesus’ entry into the city had to be handled so exactly.

Throughout His three plus years of public ministry, Jesus typically discouraged the enthusiastic crowds which followed Him from openly honoring Him as the Messiah. However, on the Sunday of Passover week, It was necessary for Jesus to be welcomed into Jerusalem by a large crowd because it had been prophesied. It was necessary for Him to be acclaimed with shouts of “Blessed is the king who comes in the name of the Lord.”

It is impossible for us to grasp the mood of the people in Jerusalem at that time. They were eager for, longing for, the arrival of their Messiah. All the Israelites understood that Jerusalem was the place where the Messiah would be enthroned as king. In the opinion of many people, Jesus was the most likely candidate for Messiah to come along in centuries. His miracles had attracted the attention of many people. He was the topic of conversation of those gathered at the Temple (*John 11:56*). Everyone was looking for Him. The expectation levels of everyone were high.

The popularity of Jesus alarmed the religious leaders. Everyone in Jerusalem was aware of the tensions between these leaders and the followers of Jesus. The Pharisees and religious leaders had determined that Jesus could not be the Messiah, and that His influence over the people had to be terminated. Given the right opportunity, they planned to arrest Him and put Him to death. However, because they feared the reaction of the crowds, they knew that they could not do this in an open way, and so they waited, and as they waited, the tensions in Jerusalem increased.

In preparation for His entry into Jerusalem, Jesus had to obtain a young donkey. This was based on the prophecy in Zechariah 9:9 "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."

As Jesus was approaching Jerusalem on the road from Jericho, He came to the small villages known as Bethphage and Bethany. He instructed two of His disciples to procure a young colt for him. Jesus gave specific instructions about the location of the colt, and what to say if the actions of the disciples in taking the colt were questioned. Luke does not explain how Jesus could offer such specific details about the location nor why the owners so unhesitatingly gave permission for the animal to be taken, but it does seem obvious that Jesus understood and was following the sequence of events which had to unfold.

The disciples laid their cloaks over the animal as a saddle. Jesus sat on the donkey and the possession then moved in the direction of the Mount of Olives, which is to the east of Jerusalem on the other side of a low area known as the Kidron Valley. The picture here recalls the experience of Solomon in I Kings 1:33-35, and many people must have recognized the parallels. David had commanded two of his closest advisors to "Set Solomon my son on my own mule and take him down to Gihon," which was a source of water in the Kidron Valley. David had commanded that "Zadok the priest and Nathan the prophet anoint Solomon king over Israel." David had instructed the people to "Blow the trumpet and shout 'Long live King Solomon!' Then, said David, "Solomon is to come and sit on my throne and reign in my place. I have appointed him ruler over Israel and Judah."

The Messiah was, of course, the greater Son of David. The LORD had promised that Messiah would be in the lineage of David, and would be a King to sit on David's throne. Many people recognized the significance of the moment. They spread their garments on the road as Jesus approached. This was a Middle Eastern way of giving someone the "red carpet" treatment. Luke does not mention the waving of branches in his writing although Matthew includes this detail. That is why this event is referred to as "Palm Sunday."

The journey on the donkey had all the characteristics of a regal procession. A great number of people going before the honored royal leader; another large group following; all joyfully shouting their praises to God. "Blessed is the king who comes in the name of the Lord," and "Peace in heaven and glory in the highest!" These statements, by the way, were the same pronouncements of the angels at the time of Jesus birth. Thus the truth about Jesus was declared at the beginning and the ending of Jesus life.

As the procession crested the Mount of Olives and began to descend on the road down into the Kidron Valley, Jesus and the people with Him were at a vantage point where they could look on the temple area as well as have a panoramic view of the city of Jerusalem. This also meant that the procession was easily visible to the inhabitants of the city, and within earshot of the shouts of praise. The procession must have attracted a lot of attention from within the city.

There is significance attached to the fact that Jesus was on the donkey. The prophecy in Zechariah described the king as "gentle and riding on a donkey." This was the opposite impression that military and political leaders would want to give. They would ride a white horse or ride in a chariot pulled by a team of horses in order to impress people with their success and achievements. Donkeys were more docile than high spirited horses, and more associated with quietness and gentleness and humility. On this occasion Jesus was not going to enter Jerusalem as a powerful king ready to exercise military or political authority, even though the people expected Him to reveal Himself with such power and glory in accord with their concept of the Messiah-King.

The people praised God for the mighty works He had done through Jesus (*19:37*). In the opinion of the people, the miracles confirmed that Jesus had the qualifications to be their powerful and authoritative Messiah, and it seemed that He was heading into the city to assert His kingship. The enthusiasm of the crowd knew no bounds.

The quotation in verse 38 is from Psalm 118. This Psalm has special significance. It was the last of a group of six Psalms which were sung at the Passover meal. The first two, Psalms 113 and 114, were sung before the meal, the last four after the meal. As a group, these Psalms were an acknowledgement of God's plan and faithfulness on behalf of His people.

Psalm 118 was an expression of thanksgiving for national deliverance. The individual "coming in the Lord's name" was the Messiah. Hence the Psalm was a very timely and appropriate expression of praise for Jesus. *[In all likelihood, it was Psalm 118 which was sung just before the conclusion of the last meal Jesus had with His disciples. See Mark 14:26]*

Luke mentions the religious leaders who were watching and listening to the crowd. They were greatly annoyed by the praises they heard. They approached Jesus in an appeal to get Him to calm the disciples' enthusiasm: "Teacher, rebuke your disciples!" The religious leaders failed to understand the significance of Jesus' actions. Because they had rejected the possibility that Jesus was the Messiah, they did not recognize that Jesus was fulfilling the prophecies of Scripture.

Jesus refused to silence His followers. He said that what was happening was of such significance that creation itself would take up the song if there were no human voices of praise.

The blindness and ignorance of the religious leaders was so bothersome to Jesus that He began to weep over the city. Verse 42 indicates that the truth was hidden from their eyes. The end of verse 44 indicates that they did not recognize the time of God's coming to them.

Through His agony and tears, Jesus could only say, "If you, even you, had only known on this day what would bring you peace." The religious leaders were missing their moment of truth. Jesus knew that peace with God would not be experienced by those who rejected Him. He knew that the consequences of their blindness would be tragic and staggering. How ironic that peace was hidden from the eyes of those who lived in the city which bears the name of "Shalom," Jerusalem, City of Peace.

Verse 43 begins with the words, "The days will come upon you," and then Jesus proceeded to describe the military siege which would choke the city and bring about the death of its inhabitants. The enemy would "cast up a bank around you and surround you, and hem you in on every side, and dash you to the ground, you and your children within you, and they will not leave one stone upon another." The defeat would be total. The temple would be destroyed.

Historians have documented the destruction of Jerusalem in A.D. 70. The reason for the destruction is simple — the people did not recognize the time of God’s coming. The opportunity for peace came, but the default decision of the nation was for destruction. By rejecting Jesus, Israel chose the way of judgment. It missed its day of opportunity, although the purposes of God were fulfilled.

The crucifixion of Jesus brought peace with God to gentiles and Jews alike. The death of Jesus made it possible for the enemies of God to be reconciled to Him, and for sinners to be reconciled to the holy God. However, the refusal to recognize the promises of God and the fulfilled prophecies concerning Jesus had devastating consequences for people 2000 years ago, just as it does for people today.

To reject the truth of Jesus’ death is to miss out on the opportunity to become a child of God. The Apostle John wrote the following words, “He was in the world, and though the world was made through him, the world did not recognize him. He came to that which was his own, but his own did not receive him. Yet to all who received him, to those who believed in his name, he gave the right to become the children of God — children born not of natural descent, nor of human decision or a husband’s will, but born of God.”

**Some Thoughts for Reflection:**

- \*God the Father had a predetermined program for His Son.
- \*Jesus fulfilled all the prophecies and purposes of God.
- \*We must recognize the truth of Jesus as revealed in Scripture.
- \*Even more importantly, we must accept the truth if we are to have peace with God