Text: Luke 19:28-46
Title: A Visit from Jesus
Truth: The glorious approach of Jesus to Jerusalem temporarily overshadowed deep spiritual trouble in the Jewish nation; or, If Jesus visited *you*, how would He find you?
Date/Location: Sunday February 16, 2025 at FBC (previously 4/1/2012)

Introduction

Coming on the heels of the parable about the kingdom in Luke 19:11-27, we know that Messianic expectations were running very high among the people. It has reached a fervor that was matched on another occasion in Jesus's ministry when the crowds wanted to take him by force and make him king (John 6:15).

His popularity was helpful in one respect—to slow the hands of the scribes and priests who wanted to kill Jesus (John 7:19, 30-32; Luke 19:47-48). Still, the Lord was bold to face his opposition in such a public manner.

The entire scene is loaded with Messianic significance.

I. Preparation for the Arrival in Jerusalem, v. 28-36

➔ Jesus is worthy to use any or all our material possessions.

A. Geography and Timing, v. 28-29

1. "Going up" indicates the geographical ascent into the Judean hills from Jericho (Luke 19:1), a journey of about 13 miles. This same journey, in reverse, was taken by the man in Jesus' parable of the Good Samaritan. That man was "going down" from Jerusalem to Jericho and was ambushed by robbers who beat him nearly to death.

2. The Mount of Olives is to the east of Jerusalem, on the opposite side of the Kidron Valley. It is the middle of three peaks on the mountain ridge that runs north and south, with Mount Scopus to the north and the Mount of Corruption (of Offense) to the south. The Mount of Corruption is where Solomon built idolatrous altars/high places for his foreign wives (1 Kings 11:7; 2 Kings 23:13). The Mount of Olives' highest point is at an elevation of 2683 feet. Jerusalem itself is elevated at about 2490 feet. Today on the Mount of Olives there are about 150,000 grave sites. In Jesus's time, an olive orchard was probably the prominent feature. This place was also where Jesus ascended into Heaven after the resurrection.

3. Many people were in Jerusalem at the time to celebrate Passover.

B. Jesus' Instruction to Two Disciples, v. 30-31

1. Find a colt, one that is new. This made it undefiled, ready for holy use.

2. Potential objection of the owners anticipated. Jesus told his disciples to explain it this way: "The Lord has need of it." Pause to stop and think what does that mean. Does the Lord "need" anything? Not in His divine nature! But in his human nature? He needed things for his human body like sleep and food and water (Mark 4:38, Matthew 4:2). But did he really need a colt? Couldn't he have walked into the city from the short distance that remained? Hypothetically, yes. But the Lord knew of another kind of necessity—the colt was needed to fulfill ancient prophecy. Read Zechariah 9:9 to see it.

3. There are several things to note about Zechariah. First, there is the call to the people to rejoice and shout. Second, the verse is a prophetic announcement that the king is coming to the nation. Third are three qualities of the king: he is righteous, he has salvation, and he is lowly (humble). And finally, he will be riding on a donkey's colt. They clamored for him to take the kingdom immediately, but did not realize the king would be going on a long journey first. They missed the fact that Messiah would be cut off for the sins of his people (Daniel 9:26, Isaiah 53:6) because He came first to bring *salvation*, and only later a kingdom founded on that salvation.

4. Riding into the city on a colt is a very practical picture of humility. A donkey would be about the size of a pony. You would expect a great king to arrive on a dazzling horse 18 hands high at the withers. Instead, Jesus rode on a donkey. Jesus did not come in as a mighty warrior, but as man bringing peace, the peace of God. Therefore, I wonder if the triumphal entry is the best name for this event. The "Humble Entry"? Perhaps "the Tragic Entry"?

5. The two disciples obeyed the Lord. They did not realize until later that they had done these things in fulfillment of prophecy (John 12:14-16). Jesus was conscious of what He did and was in fact making a point of self-identification. He is saying, "I am the King." He is not only a dying Savior. Palm Sunday reminds us He is Messianic King!

C. The Owners' Question, v. 33-34

1. The two disciples did face questioning by the owners. How was the disciples' answer sufficient? It is true that they said what Jesus told them to say, but how would the owners believe them? If someone came up unannounced to take one of your horses (or your car!) what

would you think? I am speculating, but perhaps the owners knew of the Lord and his ministry. Jesus had frequented that general area, and it seems likely that Jesus knew the owners of the colt, because they knew who the disciples meant by "Lord." If so, they did not just hesitantly give permission but instead could give wholehearted support to the use of their animal for the Lord ("Absolutely!"). Maybe a plan had been put in place when Jesus had talked to the owners previously, and "the Lord has need of it" is the password. We do not know for sure. We can see that the owners had enough trust in the Lord and the disciples to believe that the animal would be used appropriately and likely returned later.

2. The owners offered their things in service to the king. One commentator pointed out the possibility that these people were poor since there were multiple owners of a single colt! Still, they gave it up for the Lord's use.

D. The Treatment of Jesus as King, v. 35-36

1. The disciples "threw their own clothes on the colt." Putting something on the back of the colt was not unusual. Normally you would use at least a blanket to offer padding between the animal and the person seated on the animal for comfort or absorption of sweat.

2. The use of clothing this way symbolizes the disciples' humility before the King. He is worthy to sit on or ride over the clothing of the people who are welcoming him. Perhaps they want to be able to say, superstitiously, that the Lord had touched *their* clothing. It seems more likely that their gesture was a sign of the king's honor and worth to sacrifice for him by "rolling out the red carpet." The people also spread leafy branches on the road, again symbolizing honor and keeping the Lord from riding in dust.

E. Did any other prophet ride into Jerusalem on a donkey since Zechariah made his prophetic oracle in 520-518 BC? I do not know of one, certainly not in this kind of dramatic setting. This appears to be a singular event that unmistakably identifies Jesus as the coming Messianic King. Jesus was offering Himself to the nation as their Messiah and King. Some were favorable, but the nation's leadership was recalcitrant.

F. Jesus used the colt and the clothing of others as He came to Jerusalem. I draw from this the fact that He is worthy to use our things as He sees fit. Our things are not actually *our* things anyway. They are *God's* things on

loan. If Jesus sent representatives asking you to support what He was doing, would you gladly do so?

II. Praise for the King, v. 37-40

➔ Jesus is worthy to receive our worship.

The crowd praised him as he began to make his way down the mount, getting close to Jerusalem. Jesus accepted the crowd's praise and in fact could not quiet it, lest nature cry out in their place.

A. The Crowd's Praise, v. 37-38

1. Their praise was on account of all the wonderful, miraculous works that He had done and that they had witnessed. Not the least of these was the raising of Lazarus from the dead. Lazarus lived in Bethany, where Jesus had a meal the night before. John 12:18 records that people came out to see Jesus because He had done this. There was no question that this was at least a mighty prophet of God.

2. The pronounced Him blessed (worthy of special favor), but not even the disciples understood what they did until after the fact, so it is doubtful that the crowd did. You might cynically say that the whole situation was manufactured to fulfill the prophecy, but this goes against Jesus's character to "make something up," and it is not realistic to suggest the conspiracy includes somehow inducing the ignorant crowd to start singing a blessing to the coming King. This prophecy was fulfilled organically, in a real-life situation. The crowd was ignorant of the situation and its connection to Zechariah, and simply and spontaneously burst out in praise of the Lord as he came. They hoped he would take the throne back into the Davidic family and smash the Roman occupying power.

3. They pronounced peace, a state of well-being, wholeness, harmony. From the Hebrew term "shalom," this word carries with it the weight of the Messianic Kingdom from Old Testament thought. Far from having peace, the Jews were under Roman domination, and worse yet they were under the domination of sin and the futility produced by the curse. They know that there is peace in heaven, and long for the Messiah to bring it down to earth. When we pray for God's kingdom to come and His will to be done on earth as it is in heaven, we are expressing the same desire for the kingdom of God. This echoes the words of the angels to humanity in Luke 2:14—"Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, goodwill toward men!"

4. They pronounced glory to the Lord, splendor, and radiance. These things are manifestly present in heaven around the throne of God, and here on the Mount of Olives they are reflected in Jesus.

5. Finally, they called out *Hosanna* (see the Matthew, Mark, and John's parallel passages). This was from Psalm 118:25 "Save us, we pray!" The word hosanna is from two Hebrew words that have a slightly shortened form in the Aramaic language, which is probably what the crowds were using. As part of the Hallel (Psalm 113-118) it was familiar to every Jew, especially around Passover. It became a formulaic kind of saying that was a shout of praise. It may have been a call for the son of David to provide relief from oppression.

   The context of 118:22-26 is significant with its references to the stone rejected by the builders and blessing in the name of the Lord.

B. The Pharisees' Rebuke and Jesus's Response, v. 39-40

1. The Pharisees were indignant at the praise Jesus was receiving.

2. Jesus replied, explaining that prophetic necessity demanded that someone or something cry out in praise and honor to the king who was riding into Jerusalem. (Zechariah called for rejoicing; it *had* to happen!) Like the angels praising God at the birth of Jesus (Luke 2:13-15), and the hills breaking out in singing at the imminent prospect of the Messianic kingdom (Isaiah 55:12), the rocks would cry out in the presence of the King of kings.

C. Many interpreters have suggested that the crowd was fickle. A few days later, they suggest, the same people called for Jesus to be crucified. I am not convinced this is the case. I imagine one crowd basically favorable to Jesus, and a different crowd who was not. After all, the population in Jerusalem was large enough, especially around the time of Passover, for there to be two sizable factions (example: John 7:43).

In so saying, I do not suggest that the Triumphal Entry crowd was all perfectly motivated by the love of God. Since Jesus knows the hearts of all people (John 2:24), it seems likely that He knows they were of mixed motivation. Some thought the kingdom of God would appear immediately (Luke 19:11) and had unspiritual ideas about His kingdom. Others may have been enthusiastic but were primed to turn away in time of persecution (Matthew 13:20-21, Mark 14:27).

Whatever their exact condition, the crowd receiving Jesus was not large enough in proportion to the entire populace of Israel to avoid the fate that Jesus pronounced in verses 41-44.

D. Jesus is worthy to receive our worship. If we do not worship Him, God will see to it that someone (or something) else will. We should not at all be like the Pharisees, demanding Jesus to tell the people to shut their mouths. He cannot do that, for as the divine Son of God, He is worthy of all our worship and more.

III. Jesus Prophesies of Jerusalem's Demise, v. 41-44

➔ Jesus weeps over our unbelief and lack of recognition of who He is.

A. Weeping. Instead of triumph, rejoicing, and shouting, we now have an atmosphere of sadness and grief. The emotional state of Jesus is much more sober than the crowd. Jesus cares for his people. Jesus wept over Lazarus. This case is much worse. Jesus saw a city under the pallor of spiritual darkness at the moment it should have been looking to God in great anticipation. This is as lamentable as it gets.

B. Ignorance. The people do not know what they just did: they participated in fulfilling a great prophecy of the King of kings. Yet Jesus wept, declaring that the large part of the city and even many of these disciples did not know the way of salvation—that is, the Messianic peace that they could have if only they embraced the Prince of Peace.

1. Ignorance of timing. The people did not know the time of their visitation. The general outline of the time had been available for over five centuries from the prophet Daniel. To him God had revealed a detailed timeline which has been computed down to the very time Jesus was killed (Daniel 9:24-27).

2. Ignorance of the nature of the Kingdom. Many of the people seemed to recognize that something significant was happening regarding the Davidic Kingdom (Mark 11:10). But in the main, they were looking for temporal deliverance. They were looking for a savior of sorts, but not the real Messiah who would take away sins. Jesus was offering spiritual deliverance from sin. Some people today still think that the kingdom appeared immediately (Luke 19:11). Many people have heard the facts of Jesus's life and work, but the real purpose of His coming still eludes them. Some think He is a wonderful moral teacher, but not a substitutionary Savior as we know He is.

3. Ignorance of True Peace. They did not know the things that make for their peace—real peace with God. They shouted about peace in heaven (19:38) but did not understand the real peace they needed with God because of their sinfulness.

C. The inhabitants were much like their forefathers—hard in heart and steeped in self-righteousness. All of us are this way from the beginning of our lives until the Lord graces us with salvation, so we are permitted no superiority complex. They had this more opportunity to receive God's peace. But Jesus knows they will not do it.

D. Result of the spiritual ignorance: future destruction of the city which came about in 70 AD when the Romans destroyed the city. They did just what Jesus said—built a siege works and eventually destroyed everything. They were a tool of God to judge Israel because of the nation's unbelief in Christ.

E. So many people today are in the same boat, not recognizing the time of their visitation. Christmas comes and goes, representing as it does the coming of Jesus into the world, and people ignore Jesus. His name is proclaimed week after week, year after year in the pulpits of our churches, and it goes in one ear and out the other. Eventually that will end and the "days will come upon us" when judgment will fall.

IV. Jesus Cleanses the Temple, v. 45-46

➔ Jesus is troubled over our sins.

A. The parallel passages in Mark 11:1-24 and Matthew 21:1-22 cover the triumphal entry, the cleansing of the temple, and the withering of the fig tree. Luke does not mention the fig tree so we will not cover it in these notes, but Luke does recount Jesus's second cleansing of the temple (compare with John 2:14-16).

B. Instead of carrying their tithe from a long distance, the Jewish people could bring money to Jerusalem and purchase an animal or other things for their sacrifices (Deut. 14:24-26). Entrepreneurial Jews built businesses to satisfy this need and weaseled their way as close to the temple confines as they could. The religious leaders permitted them to come right inside the temple precinct.

C. But these were not non-profit businesses. They amounted to a "den of thieves." They may have been price gouging like at a tourist trap. This carnal activity was contrary to the purpose of the temple, which Isaiah 56:6-7 taught was designed to be a house of prayer for all nations. This upset the holy Jesus and He criticized them sharply for it.

D. Jesus physically drove out the buyers and sellers. Matthew and Mark add further detail, that he overturned the moneychangers' tables and drove out those who were selling doves, presumably to the poor among the

people who needed to make a sacrifice but who could not afford the larger sheep (Leviticus 5:7).

4. Jesus is troubled over our sin. Our temple is our body. Too often, we are not using our temple the way the Lord intended, as an instrument of righteousness, as a place of prayer, and as a servant of God. Does Jesus need to do a cleanout on your temple?

Conclusion

Jesus approached Jerusalem for the week of His suffering amidst great fanfare, but ended up weeping over the city because its residents did not know Him and a calamity was in store because of their evil.

In Jesus's coming to Jerusalem and cleansing the temple, Malachi 3:1 seems to be prefigured analogously to its actual fulfillment:

"And the Lord, whom you seek,
Will suddenly come to His temple,
Even the Messenger of the covenant.[1]

Palm Sunday is about the fulfillment of Old Testament prophecy and praise for the King; yet the outward glory hides a darker reality. All this excitement would turn around within days as Jesus would be killed.

Jerusalem is a microcosm of all people of all times, including people today who do not recognize Jesus for who He is. And who is He? The Holy Son of God, the divine man who came to earth to satisfy God's holy demands against sin by living a perfect life and then dying as a morally spotless sacrifice, rising from the dead and offering peace with God to all who repent and believe in Him.

I see a parallel here between Jerusalem and us. Suppose that Jesus came to visit *us*. How will He find us, either as a church or as individuals? Would He observe us using our things for Him? Would He be able to ask us to borrow our "donkey" and put it to use for the church or kingdom? Would He weep over our spiritual condition? Would He find us ignorant of the things that make for peace (salvation) with God? Would he have to "cleanse our temple"? MAP

[1] The following verse (Mal. 3:2) speaks about the wrath of His coming, indicating that the actual *fulfillment* of the prophecy happens during the "Day of the Lord" where judgments will be poured out at the beginning of the kingdom.