

## “THE ROYAL WELCOME THAT BOMBED” Luke 19:28-44

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A lot of what you see depends on what you're looking for. And you don't see some things because you're not looking for them.

At bedtime some children see horrible monsters in their room, and they're terrified of being alone in the dark. You can buy a lavender scented product for just a few dollars that will banish forever those scary monsters from your child's room. It's called *Monster Spray*. It has this little verse printed on the can: *Last night I saw upon the stair*

*A scary monster that wasn't there*

*It wasn't there again today*

*Because I used my Monster Spray!*

From our earliest years, some of what we see or think we see is projected from within us. It's subjective.

There's a saying, *'We see things, not as they are, but as we are.'* (Talmud)

If you keep looking for something that isn't there, you may eventually see something that isn't there.

· Practically the whole time Jesus was with his disciples—and even after his ascension—his followers saw in Jesus only what they were looking for.

The nationalistic longings inside them shaped their image of who he was—or who they wanted him to be.

When Jesus set out from Galilee for Jerusalem, he warned his disciples that suffering and death awaited him there. But they didn't understand and what he was talking about (Luke 18:31-34). It didn't fit their image of him.

Even after the resurrection, when Jesus met with his disciples they asked him, “Lord, are you at this time going to restore the kingdom to Israel?” (Acts 1:6)

They couldn't erase from their minds their cherished image of Jesus as their hero who would expel the Roman occupation force from their land.

· On Palm Sunday Christians observe the triumphal entry of Jesus into Jerusalem for the beginning of what is called “holy week.”

Jesus' arrival began with hope and hype. But that day ended in disappointment for everyone.

Today many who call themselves Christ's followers have a mental image of Jesus is the answer to people's hopes and dreams. And they're confused and disappointed when Jesus doesn't get them what they expected.

· In Luke 19:28-44 we meet Jesus on his way to Jerusalem to finish what he had come into this world to do.

Many pilgrims were arriving for Passover at the same time. Some of them were from Galilee. They had seen Jesus miracles, and now they expected Jesus to do something huge in Jerusalem to prove that he was the longed-for Messiah.

In these verses we find three **perspectives** on Jesus' spectacular arrival that reveal who he is and what he came to do. The real picture

### **I. EAGER ANTICIPATION Luke 19:28-38**

Jesus had just left the house of a crooked tax collector named Zacchaeus in Jericho. The man had confessed his sins and put his trust in Jesus, and his life was turned around.

That was where Jesus declared what he had come into the world to do: “For the Son of Man came to seek and to save what was lost.” (Luke 19:9)

The people should have listened. Jesus did not come to fulfill their political hopes.

Then Jesus moved on to Jerusalem.

29 *As he approached Bethphage and Bethany at the hill called the Mount of Olives, he sent two of his disciples, saying to them,*

30 *"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.*

· Bethany was just two miles to the east of Jerusalem.

Matthew's and John's Gospels tell us this colt was a young male donkey.

31 *If anyone asks you, 'Why are you untying it?' tell him, 'The Lord needs it.'"*

32 *Those who were sent ahead went and found it just as he had told them.*

33 *As they were untying the colt, its owners asked them, "Why are you untying the colt?"*

34 *They replied, "The Lord needs it."*

35 *They brought it to Jesus, threw their cloaks on the colt and put Jesus on it.*

· There's nothing regal about a donkey. God created the donkey, but in my opinion it's not one of his finest works. It looks ridiculous and it sounds awful.

Where do you think the word “asinine” comes from?

In the southwestern US they call it a *burro*.

The Lord had chosen this *burro* for a very special purpose. Let's call it, '*The Lord's Better Business Burro*.'

A donkey was the common man's beast of burden. It wasn't fit transportation for a conquering king!

· For the adoring crowd that welcomed Jesus, the image of a peasant on a donkey didn't match their image of Jesus.

Doesn't the idea of a victorious Jesus coming on a war horse fit our hopes better?

We'd prefer to bring out the horse for Jesus. We want Jesus to show the cowardly terrorists of the world who is really in charge.

At the end of the age, when Christ comes as *King of Kings and Lord of Lords* he will appear riding on a white horse to judge and to rule the nations (Revelation 19:11-16).

But in this age Jesus deals gently with this sinful world. He is extending his mercy to sinners through the good news—the gospel. He is working through his followers.

That's us.

36 *As he went along, people spread their cloaks on the road.*

37 *When he came near the place where the road goes down the Mount of Olives, the whole crowd of disciples began joyfully to praise God in loud voices for all the miracles they had seen:*

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

The prophet Zechariah said it would happen this way: '*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.*' (Zechariah 9:9) Many of these people knew someone who had been healed miraculously by Jesus.

· John's Gospel tells us, "*They took palm branches and went out to meet him, shouting, 'Hosanna!' 'Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord!' 'Blessed is the King of Israel!'*" (John 12:13)

Palms were an emblem of victory. They welcomed Jesus as the Conquering Messiah they had been expecting.

The word “*Hosanna*” means “*save now,*” or “*O save!*”

The crowd was downright giddy.

· But they were in for a huge letdown. Instead of being enthroned as a King, Jesus would be crucified as a criminal.

Nevertheless, Jesus was a king. But when Pontius Pilate questioned Jesus he explained that his kingdom was not of this world (John 18:36).

· Jesus came into the world to save sinners—to seek and to save the spiritually lost. He had to go to the cross to accomplish his mission in the world.

What Christ accomplished was not visible to the natural eye as he hung on the cross. It all took place in the spiritual realm.

The Apostle Paul gives us an insight into what happened, ‘*And having disarmed the powers and authorities, he made a public spectacle of them, triumphing over them by the cross.*’ (Colossians 2:15)

On the cross Jesus defeated Satan and delivered from the enemy’s tyranny all who place their trust in Christ.

· Some people today see Jesus primarily as the answer to their personal dreams and ambitions.

They have a lot of silly notions about Jesus Christ that have nothing to do with his real purpose in coming into the world.

But Jesus came to do exactly what he had just told Zacchaeus in Jericho—to seek and save the lost.

He came to change people’s lives—to rescue them from the power of evil and to give them eternal life.

· An enthusiastic crowd celebrated Jesus’ arrival. But how did that day end?

Mark’s Gospel tells us. ‘*Jesus entered Jerusalem and went to the temple. He looked around at everything, but since it was already late, he went out to Bethany with the twelve.*’ (Mark 11:11)

What an anti-climax! After all that rejoicing at Jesus’ entrance, he and his disciples left the city just like other pilgrims returning to a place where they had arranged to stay during Passover.

The crowd that cheered as Jesus entered Jerusalem was bitterly disappointed a few days later when this same Jesus was nailed to a cross and executed just outside the walls of Jerusalem.

Can you imagine the confusion and disappointment in the minds of Jesus’ followers? They all had the wrong idea.

## **II. BITTER INDIGNATION Luke 19:39-40**

The Pharisees were the religious and political conservatives. They were infuriated by what they saw.

<sup>39</sup> *Some of the Pharisees in the crowd said to Jesus, "Teacher, rebuke your disciples!"*

<sup>40</sup> *"I tell you," he replied, "if they keep quiet, the stones will cry out."*

· The Passover celebration was sacred. It commemorated God’s great rescue of the Israelites from slavery in Egypt and his punishment of those who oppressed his people. The Pharisees were annoyed that a crowd of Galilean peasants and their Jerusalem relatives had the nerve to shout “Hosanna!” in welcoming a nobody from Nazareth as the hoped-for deliverer of the people.

Jesus was becoming too popular and too dangerous.

The Roman forces were on high alert for any disruptions the influx of pilgrims for the Passover might cause.

The Pharisees wanted Jesus to tell his followers to cool it. They might spoil the Passover for everyone.

Jesus said it was too late to stop what was going to happen. “If you shut the people up, the very rocks will cry out.”

All heaven was watching with rapt attention for the culmination of God’s plan of redemption.

· I think this group of judgmental Pharisees typifies some upright and up-tight Christian people today.

They’re proud, respectable religious people. They don’t want anyone messing with their nice, comfortable, safe way of practicing their religion.

They get upset if anyone is a threat to their religious practices.

Wherever you find religion that makes respectability and orderliness the top priority, there’s no room for God to do what he wants to do.

Jesus could do nothing for the proud religious folk.

· But Jesus came to seek and to save lost people whose lives are messy and they’re not too proud to admit it.

By faith in Jesus Christ people’s lives are being changed. Their sins are forgiven and they’re freed from crippling guilt.

It’s estimated that every 24 hours almost 80,000 people on earth are placing their faith in Jesus Christ as Savior.

### **III. SOBER REALIZATION Luke 19:41-44**

The prophet Isaiah said the coming Messiah would be a “man of sorrows, and familiar with suffering.” (Isaiah 53:3)

You can’t erase the sober, painful parts from Christ’s earthly mission.

<sup>41</sup> *As he approached Jerusalem and saw the city, he wept over it*

<sup>42</sup> *and said, "If you, even you, had only known on this day what would bring you peace-- but now it is hidden from your eyes.*

Jesus wept bitterly; he sobbed. He was heartbroken.

Why was Jesus overwhelmed with sorrow? Was it because he knew he would die in a few days and he was afraid?

No. He wept over the city, shrouded in ignorance of what lay ahead for its people. “If you, even you, had only known on this day what would bring you peace” (v.42)

· In John’s Gospel we read that during these days of the Passover celebration Jesus declared, ‘*Now is the time for judgment on this world; now the prince of this world will be driven out.*’ (John 12:31)

Jesus would go to the cross to win a victory, to assert the claims of God’s dominion. By faith in Christ, people would henceforth be set free from the power of Satan and enter into the kingdom of God’s Son.

But at the very climax of God’s provision of salvation, the people continued to be spiritually blind. They didn’t grasp what Jesus had come into the world to do. They were blind to the truth of what would bring them peace—peace with God. (42).

They had the wrong expectations.

· Jesus came to be the sacrifice for sins and to be our Savior.

When Jesus Christ returns as Lord, then the words spoken in heaven will come true, *'The kingdom of the world has become the kingdom of our Lord and of his Christ, and he will reign for ever and ever.'* (Revelation 11:15)

· So, there was Jesus, God the Savior, surrounded by a cheering crowd as he entered Jerusalem.

They expected him to get rid of the Romans. That wasn't going to happen.

<sup>43</sup> *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.*

<sup>44</sup> *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."*

Soon the city would be destroyed. In AD 70 the Roman army under Titus totally gutted Jerusalem.

· Jesus knew that in a matter of days he would disappoint them because he did not come into Jerusalem to give them what they had in mind.

The crowd gave Jesus a royal welcome into Jerusalem, but Jesus was heartbroken because they didn't see who he really was and what that meant for mankind. They looked at Jesus and saw something that he was not. He was not their national emancipator. Jesus was disappointed by their spiritual blindness—to say the least! And in a few days the people were bitterly disappointed with Jesus.

The royal welcome bombed!

· We should not be surprised that the people didn't see the truth.

But we have no excuse. The gospel of Christ—the truth that the apostles later preached and which we have in the Bible—opens people's eyes to see why Jesus came.

He came to suffer God's judgment on sin in our place so that we might be forgiven. He arose from the dead as proof of his victory over sin and the devil and to set us free from their power and to give us new life—if we confess our sin to God and put our trust in Jesus Christ as our Savior.

That's why he came. Do you see it? Let me ask you a couple of very forthright questions.

· Have you been enthused about Jesus for all the wrong reasons? You expected Jesus to make your dreams come true. It didn't happen and you've been left disappointed.

· Have you been more like the religious leaders who resisted Jesus? Do you like the respectable life you've arranged for yourself, and you don't want Christ upsetting things? Maybe you want a tame, domesticated Jesus who won't interfere. That's not the real Jesus.

I hope that what you really need—what will bring you peace with God—will no longer be hidden from your eyes.