

Luke 19:28-41 is often called "Jesus' triumphal entry," however, for Him, it was far from triumphal. In the previous section of Luke 19 Jesus had given a parable about a nobleman who was going to depart to receive a kingdom. He entrusted his wealth to his servants and expected them to manage it during his absence. Included in the parable were the citizens of the nobleman who did not want him to reign over them. In the end, they were called his enemies and slayed in his presence. The point of the parable was to teach the disciples that Jesus, like the nobleman, was going to depart from them and they needed to steward His resources until He returned. The citizens represented Israel who would reject Him and be judged. In other words, Jesus already knew that the nation of Israel did not want Him to reign over them, that He would "depart" via crucifixion, and that Israel would face judgment. The joy of the triumphal entry would be over in a matter of days; the king would be rejected.

19:29 When He approached Bethphage and Bethany, near the mount that is called Olivet, He sent two of the disciples,

19:30 saying, "Go into the village ahead of you; there, as you enter, you will find a colt tied on which no one yet has ever sat; untie it and bring it here.

19:31 "If anyone asks you, 'Why are you untying it?' you shall say, 'The Lord has need of it.'"

19:32 So those who were sent went away and found it just as He had told them.

19:33 As they were untying the colt, its owners said to them, "Why are you untying the colt?"

19:34 They said, "The Lord has need of it."

19:35 They brought it to Jesus, and they threw their coats on the colt and put Jesus on it.

19:36 As He was going, they were spreading their coats on the road.

Jesus had been by the Dead Sea in Jericho at 825 feet below sea level. He was headed for Jerusalem which was eighteen miles away with an elevation of 2582 feet.

Such a dramatic change in height brought with it a startlingly rapid shift in environmental conditions that must have proven exhausting for anyone making the journey. The steep and confined slope encouraged the formation of a "rain-shadow." While Jerusalem received about twenty inches of rainfall a year and experienced a Mediterranean climate, Jericho received only eight inches of rain a year and was more African in its climatic orientation. In fact, Jericho was (and remains) an oasis situated in the midst of a desert; it would have been desert itself except for the presence of the water source commonly referred to as "Elisha's Spring" . . . Even without the ever present threat of bandits, it was a precipitously arduous, dry, and dangerous trek. (<http://bibleresources.americanbible.org/resource/from-jerusalem-to-jericho>)

The road skirted past Bethphage and Bethany on the east side of Jerusalem and proceeded forward by way of a rather sharp ascent. Both cities were in a hilly area that overlooked the Kidron Valley. It was the Passover season and thousands of people were traveling to Jerusalem along this road and others.

Bethany, on the eastern slope of the Mount of Olives, was used by Jesus as a home base. It was where Mary and Martha lived; Jesus had raised their brother, Lazarus, from the dead a few weeks earlier. The city name probably means "House of Dates." Today Bethany is called el `Azareyeh meaning "the place of Lazarus," for he was their most famous citizen.

The exact location of Bethphage is unknown but it was near Bethany. The city's name means "House of Unripe Figs" (Bock; i.e. "Place of Young Figs" - ISBE). The names of these three locations (House of Unripe Figs, House of Dates, Mount of Olives) indicate that it was a fertile area. Ironically, Jesus had likened the nation to an unproductive fig tree earlier (13:6-9).

A traveler on this road would get his first glimpse of Jerusalem when he circled past the Mount of Olives. The Mount of Olives is the middle of three peaks and rises 2,600 feet above sea level. Luke's selection of words ("the mount called Olivet") draws attention to it as a place of importance (Bock, 1552, 1553). The Mount of Olives appears a number of times in the Bible. In Ezekiel's vision, when the glory of the Lord departed from the temple, it rested on the Mount of Olives (Ezek. 11:23). Zechariah prophesied that the Mount of Olives was the place that Messiah would show Himself (Zech. 14:4-5). And according to Acts 1:9-12, it was the location from which Jesus ascended into heaven. The fact that Jesus was "near" the Mount of Olives means that He was making deliberate progress toward Jerusalem.

When He approached Bethphage and Bethany Jesus instructed two of His disciples to secure a colt for Him to ride. The word translated as "colt" can refer to either a young horse or donkey; the latter is more likely as they were far more common in Israel (Edwards, 545).

When the owners asked the disciples, "Why are you untying the colt?" they said, "The Lord has need of it." We may wonder how such an answer would be sufficient for the owners to let them take the animal but there are a number of possibilities. It may have been a miracle of sorts, or the owners may have known Jesus from a previous visit. However, there is even a simpler explanation. Jesus was well known in that area. He had raised Lazarus from the dead and performed other miracles in Bethany. He often stayed with Mary, Martha, and Lazarus when He was in the area. He was called the Lord by those who loved Him and believed in Him. It was approaching Passover and there were hundreds of people traveling through these small towns. Word that Jesus was nearby would travel fast. Odds are that the owners understood exactly who the disciples were speaking about, and knowing who Jesus was they gave them permission to take it (Edersheim, V, 365).

The disciples then brought the colt to Jesus as He had instructed and placed their outer robes upon it as a saddle which Jesus sat upon. The other disciples threw their robes on the ground as the people did when Jehu ascended to the throne (2 Ki. 9:13). Although Luke 19:35-36 most likely refers to the disciples spreading their coats on the ground, Matthew 21:8 makes it clear that "most of the crowd spread their coats in the road, and others were cutting branches from the trees and spreading them in the road."

What is important in all this is the manner in which Jesus obtained a colt: He predicted the colt's location, the fact that it would be tied up, that it was never ridden before, that someone would inquire as to why it was being taken, and how the disciples were to respond to the inquiry. All of this shows that He knew all that was to take place. His knowledge creates an even starker contrast to His humble entry into Jerusalem.

Furthermore, it shows that Jesus' actions were clearly kingly. The commandeering of an animal was the prerogative of a king in ancient times (Hooker, Mark, 258). Furthermore, the king's horse or mule could not be ridden by anyone else; the colt that was chosen for Jesus had never been ridden by anyone else.

Riding on a colt was reminiscent of King Solomon's coronation. In 1 Kings 1:32-34, King David said, "Call to me Zadok the priest, Nathan the prophet, and Benaiah the son of Jehoiada." And they came into the king's presence. The king said to them, "Take with you the servants of your lord, and have my son Solomon ride on my own mule, and bring him down to Gihon. Let Zadok the priest and Nathan the prophet anoint him there as king over Israel, and blow the trumpet and say, 'Long live King Solomon!'"

Jesus was also fulfilling prophecy. The imagery of the messianic king riding a colt is found in Zechariah 9:9: "Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion! Shout in triumph, O daughter of Jerusalem! Behold, your king is coming to you; He is just and endowed with salvation, humble, and mounted on a donkey, even on a colt, the foal of a donkey." Matthew 21:4 makes a direct connection between the event and Zechariah 9:9; Matthew writes that this took place that what was spoken through the prophet (Zechariah) might be fulfilled. Although Zechariah 9:9 was fulfilled, this was not understood until after the resurrection; John 12:16 says, "These things His disciples did not understand at the first; but when Jesus was glorified, then they remembered that these things were written of Him, and that they had done these things to Him."

19:37 As soon as He was approaching, near the descent of the Mount of Olives, the whole crowd of the disciples began to praise God joyfully with a loud voice for all the miracles which they had seen,

19:38 shouting: "BLESSED IS THE KING WHO COMES IN THE NAME OF THE LORD; Peace in heaven and glory in the highest!"

Luke does not mention the waving of branches (Matt. 21:8), but Psalm 118, quoted in verse 38, makes it clear that the event was a regal approach to the city; Jesus was coming as king. The disciples began to praise God joyfully with a loud voice for all the miracles which they had seen (see Lk. 7:22).

Quoting Psalm 118:26 was part of the liturgical ritual of the Jewish pilgrims when they entered Jerusalem; it didn't refer to the Messiah but to the blessing of the travelers in God's name as they entered the temple (Edwards, 547). The OT passage reads, "Blessed is the one who comes in the name of the LORD;" the disciples, however, inserted the word "king" into the passage, making it a royal hymn announcing the king's arrival. It was a royal procession.

Edersheim helps us imagine what it must have been like. He says,

[The people] cut down branches from the trees and gardens through which they passed, or plaited and twisted palm branches, and strewed them as a rude matting in His way, while they joined in, and soon raised to a much higher pitch the hosanna of welcoming praise. . .

Gradually the long procession swept up and over the ridge where first begins "the descent of the Mount of Olives" towards Jerusalem. At this point the first view is caught of the southeastern corner of the city. The temple and the more northern portions are hid by the slope of Olivet on the right; what is seen is only Mount Zion, now for the most part a rough field. But at that time it rose, terrace upon terrace from the Palace of the Maccabees and that of the high priest, a very city of palaces, til the eye rested in the summit on that castle, city, and palace, with

its frowning towers and magnificent gardens, the royal abode of Herod, supposed to occupy the very site of the palace of David. They had been greeting Him with Hosannas! But enthusiasm, especially in such a cause, is infectious. They were mostly stranger-pilgrims that had come from the city, chiefly because they had heard of the raising of Lazarus. And now they must have questioned them which came from Bethany, who in turn related that of which themselves had been eyewitnesses. We can imagine it all – how the fire would leap from heart to heart. So He was the promised son of David – and the kingdom was at hand! It may have been just as the precise point of the road was reached, where ‘the city of David’ first suddenly emerges into view, ‘at the descent of the Mount of Olives,’ that the whole multitude of the disciples began to rejoice and praise God with a loud voice for all the mighty works that they had seen. As the burning words of joy and praise, the record of what they had seen, passed from mouth to mouth, and they caught their first sight of ‘the city of David’ adorned as a bride to welcome her King – Davidic praise to David's greater Son awakened the echoes of old Davidic psalms in the morning-light of their fulfillment. Hosanna to the son of David! Blessed be he that cometh in the name of the Lord! Blessed the kingdom that cometh. . . (Edersheim, V, 367, 368).

The events described here either happened on Sunday or Monday of the Passion Week. Up to this point in His life, Jesus never allowed this kind of open, public display. Within five days the crowd would change from shouting, “Hosanna to the Son of David; blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord!” (Matt. 21:9) to crying out “Away with this man, and release for us Barabbas!” (Lk.23:18). However, in seven days the praises of Psalm 118 would become new realities when the crucified Messiah arose victoriously from the grave.

19:39 Some of the Pharisees in the crowd said to Him, "Teacher, rebuke Your disciples."

19:40 But Jesus answered, "I tell you, if these become silent, the stones will cry out!"

Things were beginning to escalate. The momentum began to grow. The disciples were spreading their garments on the road. Then the people in the crowds did the same. Christ's colt was walking through a pile of robes as people were chanting, "Hosanna to the Son of David; blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord; Hosanna in the highest!" (Matt.21:9)

Although there was much to rejoice over, the Pharisees wanted no part in it. They saw the disciples' messianic professions as offensive, if not blasphemous and dangerous – their praises needed to be stopped. They, therefore, told Jesus to tell His pupils to be quiet. Jesus was not their king.

Jesus responded by stating that even if He stopped the disciples, the stones would cry out; the praises of God's creation could not be silenced. Even if every mouth was shut, inanimate creation would sing to the glory of God!

The people unwittingly take their spots in the parable of the minas in Luke 19:11-27: some responded in joy (19:16-19, 37, 38); others did not (19:20-26, 39); a third group who were clearly Christ's enemies, faced judgment (19:27, 41-44). Wherever and whenever Jesus appears the response is the same.

**19:41 When He approached Jerusalem, He saw the city and wept over it,
19:42 saying, "If you had known in this day, even you, the things which make for peace! But now they have been hidden from your eyes.
19:43 "For the days will come upon you when your enemies will throw up a barricade against you, and surround you and hem you in on every side,
19:44 and they will level you to the ground and your children within you, and they will not leave in you one stone upon another, because you did not recognize the time of your visitation."**

Once again, Edersehim brings the passage to life:

Again the procession advanced. The road descends a slight declivity, and a glimpse of the city is again withdrawn behind the intervening ridge of Olivet. A few moments and the path mounts again, it climbs a rugged ascent, it reaches the ledge of smooth rock, and in an instance the whole city bursts into view. . . (Edersehim, V, 369)

"In the time of Jesus, Jerusalem was a very impressive city . . . The biggest and most famous building was the temple, which was built on an enormous platform made of gigantic stones that were 36 feet long, 18 feet wide, and 12 feet high. It took hundreds of workers years to build the temple, and when complete it was more than half a mile around the outside. Not only Jewish people but travelers from all over the world came to see it" (<http://bibleresources.americanbible.org/resource/luke-view-of-jesus>)

"He, when he beheld the city, wept over it." . . . The contrast was indeed terrible between the Jerusalem that rose before Him in all its beauty, glory, and security, and the Jerusalem which He saw in vision dimly rising out of the sky, with the camp of the enemy around about it on every side, hugging it closer and closer in deadly embrace, and a very 'stockade' which the Roman Legions raised around it; then, another scene in the shifting panorama, and the city laid with the ground, and the gory bodies of her children among her ruins; and yet another scene: the silence in the desolateness of death by the hand of God – not one stone left upon another! (Edersehim, V, 369)

Jesus' bitter sorrow shows the pain that He felt over Israel's failure to respond in faith.

Jesus sounds like Jeremiah lamenting the coming exile (Jer. 6:6-21), or Isaiah declaring the impending fall of Jerusalem (Isa. 29:1-4). Jesus' response shows that he loved the people of God and mourned that the consequence of rejecting God's messenger would result in national judgment. When God sues (appeals for) peace and His terms are rejected, only judgment remains. Jesus predicts the nation's collapse as a tragic fact. The fig tree of Luke 13:6-9 had a chance to bear fruit and it did not, so it will be cut down (at least temporarily). The door of opportunity for the nation is closed (13:22-30). The house is desolate until it recognizes the one who comes in the name of the Lord (13:31-35) (Bock, 1547).

God had answered Israel's prayers for salvation and peace by sending them the Savior, the Prince of Peace (Isa. 9:6-7), but they rejected Him. Their failure resulted in blindness; instead of peace they would

receive destruction. They did not recognize the time of God's coming; it had been hidden from their eyes (terminology that implies divine agency).

Potentially, Jerusalem could have experienced peace, but in reality it would be the object of wrath from the nation's enemies. The judgment that Jesus announced is consistent with the prophets of the OT who predicted similar events for Israel's rebellion against God. God would use human agency to accomplish His purposes. God would allow the enemies of Israel to surround the city and build a barrier to hem the inhabitants in from every side. The prediction is reminiscent of God's words to the nation in Isaiah 29:3-4, where God makes it clear that He is the source of the destruction: "I will camp against you encircling you, and I will set siegeworks against you, and I will raise up battle towers against you. Then you will be brought low. . ."

The imagery of not one stone being left upon another describes total destruction. This was fulfilled in 70AD when Rome became the sword of God that razed the temple to the ground.

***19:45 Jesus entered the temple and began to drive out those who were selling,
19:46 saying to them, "It is written, 'AND MY HOUSE SHALL BE A HOUSE OF PRAYER,' but you
have made it a ROBBERS' DEN."***

Luke 19:45-21:4 consists of nine episodes that all take place early in the holy week and make up nearly 20 percent of the Book of Luke (Edwards, 554). The events begin with Jesus cleansing the temple. Jesus had cleansed the temple in a nearly identical manner at the beginning of His ministry (John 2:15-17). Three years later nothing had changed.

The temple represented both the presence of God and the seat of Jewish religion and religious authority. Thus, Jesus could call it either His Father's house or a den of robbers.

Jerusalem was the hub of Israelite worship. It had a constant flow of travelers in need of necessary items to offer sacrifice (animals, wine, oil, salt, doves). Therefore the outermost court, the Court of the Gentiles, was used to provide goods to the pilgrims who arrived there.

The temple industry was enormous. Josephus, the Jewish historian, commented that in the year 66 255,600 lambs were sacrificed at Passover (Edwards, 555). The normal pattern was to sacrifice one lamb for ten people; this would put the numbers in Jerusalem at over two million people. Prices were marked up since there was no competition. Then prices were raised even higher since a portion was to be given to the high priest's family for allowing the temple to be used for business. In essence, the high priest was renting the temple court to vendors. On top of that, since only a special currency was accepted in the temple, foreign currency needed to be exchanged by moneychangers; they gladly did so for a price. Instead of the temple being a place to approach God and pray, as it was intended to be (read Solomon's prayer at the dedication of the Temple in 1 Kings 8:27-61), there was the constant bleating of animals, bargaining over prices, and other noises and activities. The temple court was nothing more than a business venue, and the worship of God was used for material gain.

The noise, the filth, the stench of all the animals, the corruption, the robbery, and the thievery were nauseous to Christ. Jesus called it what it was – a den of robbers. In a righteous rage He overthrew the tables of the moneychangers and overturned the seats of those who sold doves (Matt. 21:12). Mark 11:16 adds that He wouldn't allow any man to carry anything through the temple. That is, they were forced to leave without their merchandise. There must have been animals milling around whose owners had been thrown out, money scattered on the ground, birds fluttering, tables overturned, stools rolling around, and debris strewn in every direction (MacArthur). But at least momentarily the desecration was stopped.

The Jews expected the Messiah to clear the temple *of* foreigners when He came; instead Jesus cleared the temple *for* them. For a brief moment, Jesus returned the temple into “a house of prayer for all the peoples” (Isa. 56:7). Needless to say, Jesus’ actions in the temple and the condemnation of the religious establishment did not endear them to Him.

19:47 And He was teaching daily in the temple; but the chief priests and the scribes and the leading men among the people were trying to destroy Him,

19:48 and they could not find anything that they might do, for all the people were hanging on to every word He said.

Jesus kept going to the temple on a daily basis and was drawing crowds after Him. According to Matthew, He was also healing the lame and giving sight to the blind (Matt. 21:14); there was an aura of power around Him. The temple became both a holy place and a hostile place (Edwards, 556). Luke says that the people “were hanging on to every word He said.” The leaders wanted to kill Him.

The chief priests and the scribes constituted the temple aristocracy, the power-holders of Jewish society. Opposition to Jesus did not come from the worst of humanity, but from those most knowledgeable about God and those authorized to serve in God’s house.

“The passion of Jesus is a prototype of virtually all expressions of Christian service: great potential on one hand, great opposition on the other; limited resources in the face of unlimited opportunities; disappointment by those we overvalue, and surprise by those we overlook; the house of God as both ‘My Father’s house’ and a ‘den of robbers’. Within such contrarities God accomplishes a redemption very different from our expectations, yet greater than we can imagine” (Edwards, 557).