

04.17.11 / Luke 19:28-40

Passage Insight

While the sermon for this week covers “the life of Jesus” across the Scriptures, this guide will focus on the specific events that are typically celebrated during what the church universal has typically called Palm Sunday, or the Sunday before Easter. A version of this story is found in multiple gospels, and we will focus on the version found in Luke 19.

Jesus has just finished speaking against Israel’s response to God by using a parable, and at the parable’s closing, He instructs His disciples to prepare a scenario and set the stage for His entering Jerusalem. Now, Jesus had entered Jerusalem many times before this, yet He does so in a distinct way this time. He begins by asking His disciples to find a colt, the significance of which we will cover shortly. We don’t want to miss what is implied in Jesus’ command to His disciples, for He knew there would be a colt available for Him to use. He knew it was there, and clearly He had orchestrated this without the knowledge of His disciples. Moreover, He did so with specific purpose, as we will see. If we stop to consider this, we see that Jesus went before those who followed Him and prepared a way for them. He provided what was necessary for the proclamation of His name and kingdom, and He did so without the involvement or knowledge of those who served Him. He was the prime mover in this scenario, and He was in complete control. Jesus is God, and we see this aspect of God’s nature elsewhere in Scripture as well. Just as when a colt was needed, God provided, when Abraham needed a ram for the sacrifice, the Lord provided it in Genesis 22. Matthew 6 tells us that the Lord is in charge of all of our provision, that He alone is the source of all that is necessary. And in Luke 10 Jesus tells Martha that “. . .one thing is necessary. . .”, and that is sitting at His feet hanging on every word that comes out of His mouth. What are the implications here? They are quite simple. We can trust the Lord for what is good and necessary, because He is the source of all that is good and necessary, so if He commands us to do something, we can trust that He has gone before us and that He is in charge. As Proverbs 16:9 reads, “The heart of man plans his way, but the Lord establishes his steps.”

There is much symbolism in the events that Jesus orchestrates here. Remember, He Himself set the stage for this. He meant to communicate these things. He is in charge of all that we see happening in this passage. Jesus’ choice of transportation was no accident. The colt was an animal on which no one had ever sat, indicating its purity and the fact that it was set apart for a specific purpose. Additionally, while conquering kings typically rode into their city on a war horse, denoting their conquering power and authority, Jesus entered on an animal that was weak and submissive and that symbolized peace, displaying elements of kingship such as servanthood and bringing peace to those He came to serve. Jesus tells us in Matthew 5:17 that He has come to fulfill the Law. He does this by loving the Lord with heart, soul, mind, and strength, loving others as Himself, and of course by tangibly living out the specific prophecies of the Messiah. In riding on this colt, Jesus was specifically fulfilling Zechariah 9:9, which reads:

Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion!
Shout aloud, O daughter of Jerusalem!
Behold, your king is coming to you;
righteous and having salvation is he,
humble and mounted on a donkey,
on a colt, the foal of a donkey.

As Jesus’ disciples spread their cloaks on the road before Him, this was done as a show of respect, and the words “the whole multitude” in verse 37 signify such a display of devotion and adoration that had not yet been shown to Him by His disciples up until this point in time. His disciples understood the symbolism of the events that were taking place, as evidenced by their words in verse 38, where Jesus is hailed as the “King who comes in the name of the Lord.” In

this they are quoting Psalm 118:26. Psalm 118 is a Messianic psalm, one that speaks of the Anointed One whom the Lord is sending to save His people. His disciples, fellow Jews, would no doubt have been aware of the significance of their words as they proclaim that Jesus Himself is God's Chosen, Anointed One.

The Pharisees in this passage (Jewish religious leaders) clearly understood what was going on. They were fully aware that Jesus' disciples were proclaiming Him as the Messiah. They mistakenly thought that the disciples were misinformed and off base, and they may have even thought that Jesus was somehow not at fault for what they saw as His disciples' indiscretion at calling Him the Messiah. Jesus, however, left no room for doubt in the minds of the Pharisees as to His own claims about Himself when He says to them in verse 40, "I tell you, if these were silent, the very stones would cry out." In this, Jesus is affirming the cries of His disciples, and He is saying that all creation must testify to the name and nature of their Creator. John 1:3 tells us that all things were made through Him, Colossians 1:17 tells us that He holds all things together, and Romans 1:20 tells us that all of creation reveals to us what can be known of God's eternal power and divine nature. In this single statement to the Pharisees, Jesus is affirming Himself as the Messiah, setting the stage for this proclamation to take place, orchestrating the symbolic events that were taking place, fulfilling the Law, fulfilling the specific prophecies about the Messiah, and stating that all of creation must testify to the magnificence and authority of its Lord and Creator.

Prior to this point in time, Jesus had rejected all attempts to hail Him as a king or conqueror and had skirted public acclamation of His power and authority. So why is He responding differently now, even setting the stage to be hailed as King? As we mentioned before, He is honoring and fulfilling the Scriptures, and He understands that prior to this moment, it was not time – God's timing is not our timing, as His ways are not our ways, and because He is the author and perfecter of our faith (Hebrews 12:2), the sustainer of all things (Colossians 1), and the authority over all things (Matthew 28), we can trust that when He acts, the timing is right. In short, every moment of our lives can and should be entrusted to Him, as He is the One with the authority.

The Lord calls us to righteousness, yet we cannot be righteous apart from the death and resurrection of the Christ. We have a need, and because we cannot provide that need, God provides that need on our behalf, even though He is the One who requires it! He goes before us in all things to provide what we need and to restore us to Himself. He is the author, the perfecter, and the prime mover. He is King of kings and Lord of lords. He is God, and he proclaims Himself thus and calls His kingdom to worship Him forever.

APPLICATION: Timing – where have you seen that God's timing is not your own? How has it been better than your timing? What does this tell you about God? How should this lead you to pray differently?

Application Questions / Prayer

Jesus' Authority

- 1) If Jesus says that even the stones must testify to His kingship, then He is proclaiming authority over all things. Where are you seeking to rob Him of this authority?
- 2) If Jesus is the authority, there is nothing you can do to change that. Authority is simply that – authority. If this is true, then what problems are you creating for yourself by denying Him?
- 3) What qualifies God as the authority?
- 4) What qualifies you to claim authority of your own life?
- 5) What's at the heart of your denial of God's authority?

- 6) How can you repent?

Creation Worships the Creator

- 1) Romans 1:25 says that people have exchanged the truth for a lie and thus denied God. What lies do you accept as truth?
- 2) Where in your life do you give weight and honor to something created rather than to the One who created and sustains all things?
- 3) What are you gaining temporarily when you do this?
- 4) What is this costing you ultimately?
- 5) What does repentance look like?

Timing

- 1) Where have you seen that God's timing is not like your timing?
- 2) How has it been better than your timing?
- 3) What does this tell you about God?
- 4) How will you pray differently as a result?

Sources

- Prayer
- The Bible Exposition Commentary
- The Bible Knowledge Commentary