

## Believing for the Advent-ure!

Living a Life of Daring Faith between Jesus' First and Second Coming

### Luke 19:28-48 The Jesus Revolution

In our study of Luke, we finally come to it: Jerusalem. The last nine chapters of Luke all concern stories, teachings, parables and events that happen on the way to his ultimate destination, his final point.

- Lk 9:51 As the time approached for him to be taken up to heaven, Jesus resolutely set out for Jerusalem.
- Lk 13:22 Then Jesus went through the towns and villages, teaching as he made his way to Jerusalem.
- Lk 17:11 Now on his way to Jerusalem, Jesus traveled along the border between Samaria and Galilee.
- Lk 18:31 Jesus took the Twelve aside and told them, "We are going up to Jerusalem, and everything that is written by the prophets about the Son of Man will be fulfilled."
- Lk 19:11 While they were listening to this, he went on to tell them a parable, because he was near Jerusalem and the people thought that the kingdom of God was going to appear at once.

This week, we finally arrive!

Over the next two months we will see the story of seven days unfold – the final week of Jesus' life. We essentially will experience a "passion" Christmas this year, which will hopefully assist us in staying on track with the real "reason for the season."

#### Overview of Jesus' Final Week

- **Sunday** Lamb selection day – "triumphal entry" into Jerusalem
- **Monday** Cleansing of the temple / cursing of the fig tree
- **Tuesday** Controversies with the religious crowd
- **Wednesday** Day of rest
- **Thursday** Passover preparation / Gethsemane
- **Friday** Betrayal, arrest, trials, crucifixion
- **Saturday** Rest in the tomb
- **Sunday** Resurrection!

## The “Passion” focus of the Gospels

*“The Gospels, said one early Christian commentator, are chronicles of Jesus’ final week with increasingly longer introductions. Of the biographies I have read, few devote more than ten percent of their pages to the subject’s death...the Gospels, though, devote nearly a third of their length to the climactic last week of Jesus’ life. Matthew, Mark, Luke and John saw death as the central mystery of Jesus. Only two Gospels mention the events of his birth, and all four offer only a few pages on his resurrection, but each chronicler gives a detailed account of the events leading to Jesus’ death.” Philip Yancey, *The Jesus I Never Knew**

Robert Capon calculates it this way:

*The extended passion narrative – the events from Palm Sunday to the Ascension (a period of a month and a half at most) -- in Matthew this climactic sequence occupies 29 percent of the book; in Mark 38 percent; in Luke 21 percent; and in John 43 percent.*

So in essence, we must discern here a major slowing down of the Gospel narrative as we enter the final week of Jesus’ life – although in Luke we really started slowing down in 9:51 with his central pivot away from Galilee to Jerusalem.

So we have a familiar text with a familiar story – it’s just that it’s typically the story reserved for springtime, not Halloween.

When it comes to teaching a scripture text, the great temptation every expositor faces is to shape and mold and divide and manipulate the text. The reality is we must allow the story to mold us.

So let’s endeavor to hear it and see it afresh...

<sup>28</sup> After telling this story, Jesus went on toward Jerusalem, walking ahead of his disciples. <sup>29</sup> As he came to the towns of Bethphage and Bethany on the Mount of Olives, he sent two disciples ahead. <sup>30</sup> “Go into that village over there,” he told them. “As you enter it, you will see a young donkey tied there that no one has ever ridden. Untie it and bring it here. <sup>31</sup> If anyone asks, ‘Why are you untying that colt?’ just say, ‘The Lord needs it.’”

<sup>32</sup> So they went and found the colt, just as Jesus had said. <sup>33</sup> And sure enough, as they were untying it, the owners asked them, “Why are you untying that colt?”

<sup>34</sup> And the disciples simply replied, “The Lord needs it.”

### Pause

How’s this for an assignment? Want to try it on the way home – like with that red Corvette? “The Lord has need of it.” Here’s the point: the final week of Jesus’ life is one that starts on the clear note of divine control. Jesus’ life is not spinning out of control – he walks a divine path laid out before the creation of the world.

<sup>35</sup> So they brought the colt to Jesus and threw their garments over it for him to ride on.

<sup>36</sup> As he rode along, the crowds spread out their garments on the road ahead of him. <sup>37</sup> When he reached the place where the road started down the Mount of Olives, all of his followers began to shout and sing as they walked along, praising God for all the wonderful miracles they had seen.

<sup>38</sup> “Blessings on the King who comes in the name of the LORD!  
Peace in heaven, and glory in highest heaven!”

## Pause

What did Luke just leave out that the other Gospels include? Palm branches. The palm branch was Israel’s “stars and stripes” – it was a patriotic symbol of national independence and thus quite inflammatory to the powers that be (namely Rome). The garments on the ground essentially parallel our red carpet for a celebrity or visiting dignitary we would honor. In essence, the crowd of Jesus’ disciples who had just witnessed healings all along the road to Jerusalem and resurrection of a man dead and buried for four days just on the other side of the hill, start a huge celebration with heavy political overtones. And the Savior who has been so reticent refuses to stop them...

<sup>39</sup> But some of the Pharisees among the crowd said, “Teacher, rebuke your followers for saying things like that!”

<sup>40</sup> He replied, “If they kept quiet, the stones along the road would burst into cheers!”

<sup>41</sup> But as he came closer to Jerusalem and saw the city ahead, he began to weep. <sup>42</sup> “How I wish today that you of all people would understand the way to peace. But now it is too late, and peace is hidden from your eyes. <sup>43</sup> Before long your enemies will build ramparts against your walls and encircle you and close in on you from every side. <sup>44</sup> They will crush you into the ground, and your children with you. Your enemies will not leave a single stone in place, because you did not accept your opportunity for salvation.”

## Pause

So much for celebration...two times in the Gospel records we are told that Jesus cried, and both incidents occurred within days of each other: Jesus wept (shed tears) over the grief accompanying the death of his friend Lazarus in Bethany, and Jesus wept (loud, demonstrative wailing) over the devastation that awaited this city that had no clue as the opportunity of salvation, deliverance and hope that was literally passing right through it’s gates.

A comment also about this being a “triumphal entry.” Picture this through the eyes of a Roman soldier who has witnessed triumphal processions in Rome with their pageantry and their pomp...a ragamuffin band of peasants and children, with a “king” riding a donkey – the king then breaking down with loud sobs as he wept. To those eyes this no doubt seemed an “*a-triumphal* entry”!

<sup>45</sup> Then Jesus entered the Temple and began to drive out the people selling animals for sacrifices. <sup>46</sup> He said to them, “The Scriptures declare, ‘My Temple will be a house of prayer,’ but you have turned it into a den of thieves.”

## Pause

Let's catch this event *Word of the Street* style:

*Jesus walks into the religious HQ at Jerusalem and thinks he's in a market: animal stench, sale signs with "You'll go coo at our dove deals!" on them, traders shouting, "Spotless sheep here, don't Passover this great buy." For those who can't stretch to the rip-off prices, there's an aquarium of loan sharks. Jesus takes his time creating a rope whip, then makes like a demented cowboy driving the animals into stampede. He vandalizes every cash kiosk out of business, creates total havoc. He's screaming, "Vamoosh! Get this filth out of here! My Father's place is no shopping mall!" One of his team quietly starts singing David's song, "Passion for your place pumps me up." The rest get the reference. But the religious leaders are livid, frantically working out how to eliminate him.*

And so Luke continues...

<sup>47</sup> After that, he taught daily in the Temple, but the leading priests, the teachers of religious law, and the other leaders of the people began planning how to kill him. <sup>48</sup> But they could think of nothing, because all the people hung on every word he said.

And at this point let me read to you the words of **Alfred Edersheim**, a Messianic Jew and scholar from the 19<sup>th</sup> century:

*With rapt attention the people hung entranced on his lips, "astonished" at those new and blessed truths which dropped from them. All was so other than it had been! By his authority the Temple was cleansed of the unholy thievish traffic which a corrupt priesthood carried on, and so, for the time, restored to the solemn service of God; and that purified House now became the scene of Christ's teaching, when he spake those words of blessed truth and of comfort concerning the Father – thus realizing the prophetic promise of a "House of prayer for all the nations." And as those traffickers were driven from the Temple, and he spake, there flocked in from porches and Temple-Mount the poor sufferers – the blind and the lame – to get healing to body and soul. It was truly springtime in that Temple, and the boys that gathered about their fathers and looked in turn from their faces of rapt wonderment and enthusiasm to the Godlike Face of the Christ, and then on those healed sufferers, took up echoes of the welcome at his entrance into Jerusalem – in their simplicity understanding and applying them better – as they burst into "Hosanna to the Son of David." It rang through the courts and porches of the Temple, this children's hosanna... These children's voices were angel's echoes, echoes of the far-off praises of heaven, which children's souls had caught and children's lips welled forth. Not from the great, the wise nor the learned, but "out of the mouth of babes and sucklings" has he "perfected praise." And this, also, is the Music of the Gospel.*

And so, what is the point?

*The great temptation we face with Jesus is to frame him with our story, to make him a part of our unfolding drama as a bit or even a central player — just so long as he follows our*

*script. The first century world had its own scripts in the offing. The Roman script of pax romana — the peace and prosperity of Rome established and maintained by its considerable military might — was one story, the Jewish zealot counter-narrative of heroic struggle against impossible odds another. Laid alongside these were the Pharisee story of religious conformity and the Essene story of extreme avoidance — just to name a few.*

*Jesus refused to fit into any of them.*

*Put on front and center display through his triumphal entry into Jerusalem is a kingdom of “crying stones” and “flying tables.” Though men don’t see it, creation is moved and human systems will not remain untouched. Jesus came offering a new frame, a new story — a story of a world ultimately restored and redeemed and changed by an unlikely king on a donkey riding to ignominious death followed by a resurrection through which everything will change.*

We must not cram Jesus into the mold of our expectations!

The Gospel is not about escaping from the world; it’s not about regulating or controlling the world; and it’s certainly not about being conformed to the world with Jesus and the church being just so much fodder for a world system that doesn’t have a clue...

The Gospel is about us waking up and doing more than shouting slogans, it’s about us become active agents in a worldwide revolution of grace called the kingdom of God – a revolution of giving sight to the blind, life to the dead, justice to the oppressed, freedom to the captives, food to the hungry and salvation to the soul.

Hear it in Eugene Peterson’s words:

*Jesus doesn’t impose salvation as a solution: he narrates salvation into being through leisurely conversation, intimate personal relationships, compassionate responses, passionate prayer, and – putting it all together – a sacrificial death.*

Listen – Jesus overturned tables in the Temple twice; but he spent three years walking the dusty roads of Galilee “doing good and healing all who were oppressed by the devil.” That’s the Jesus’ revolution. It’s not a revolution of taking up arms, but of laying down our lives; of being **DIA** – disciples in action – who are ready to be **KIA** for the kingdom, and who sure don’t want to be **MIA** as we narrate salvation into this world...not only telling the Story, but by living it, by embodying it as our every step, every breath, every move strikes a note in the Music of the Gospel – *the Jesus’ Revolution.*

Amen