

Palm Sunday, Peace And Judgment

Luke 19

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Intro:

It's good to be back from my mission trip. Jonathan and I got back yesterday afternoon about 4 pm. And it was fun to see the things that God opened up for Jonathan and me. One of the things that has been fascinating to me in the last two trips is the way apparent chance events (and of course we know there are no chance events – but *apparently* chance events) have led to incredible opportunities for Reformation. I won't go into details, but there have been a whole series of connections that have happened in strategic places, with strategic people and times that show the hand of intricate planning and Providence, not chance happenstance. Yet each of these connections was unplanned by me. This is the way the book of Esther reads – apparent mistakes, problems and chance events all being intricately woven together in the tapestry of God's Master Plan. The same is true of the Gospels. I was memorizing Ephesians on the trip back and could see how chapters 1-2 describe the unveiling of the Gospels as the display of God's predestined plan. The details show wisdom, not tragedy.

I. Christ Went "As It Has Been Determined" (Zech. 9:9-10 with 19:28-38)

One of the things that you cannot miss as you go through the Gospels is that the things that happened were planned out in their minutest details from Eternity past. Christ is quoted as saying phrases like: “as it has been determined,” or “I must” do such and such or “my hour has not yet come.” The Gospel writers use phrases like, “it was necessary,” or “then was fulfilled,” or “His hour had not yet come.” They were keenly aware of Divine Providence governing every moment of His life. And this should give us comfort and security in our lives now. The God who could not fail in the time of Christ is a God who cannot fail in our lives now. The most insignificant happenings in your life are very significant. Let me read you a story of how one little event with a dog kept the English Reformation on course even though the king of England was not Reformation minded, was not a believer and was trying to patch up his quarrel with the pope. The English Reformation is really God moving in the hearts of believers and unbelievers over thousands and perhaps millions of events like this.

"King Henry VIII of England sent a delegation to the Vatican to patch up the political differences between himself and the Pope. The delegation was led by the Earl of Wiltshire, who took along his dog. As was customary

at that time, the Earl prostrated himself before the Pope and was about to kiss the Pope's toe. The pope, willing to receive the homage thrust his foot toward the Earl, and his dog, watching, misunderstood the action and went to the defense of his master. Instead of a kiss, the Pope got a bite on the toe! This enraged the Swiss guard and they killed the dog. And this so angered the Earl that he refused to proceed with the mission for which he had been sent - and he returned home without having accomplished anything. After his return to England, King Henry VIII took steps to separate England from the jurisdiction of Rome.” [Lee Tan]

So there is a sense in which God used a dog bite to bring about the English Reformation. Of course He used many other details as well to reinforce the true motives of the believers. And there are details in this passage that may seem like insignificant details, and yet they were all spelled out in the Old Testament and were essential if Christ was to go to the cross and establish His Kingdom. I want you to turn to one of them: Zechariah 9:9-10, and we will spend about three or four minutes looking at the wonder of God's prophetic Word. Point I is that Christ went as it had been determined. And I'm going to read this prophecy in three parts.

First comes the triumphant entry of a King. Beginning at verse 9:
Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion! Shout, O daughter of Jerusalem! Behold, your King is coming to you; He is just and having salvation lowly and riding on a donkey, a colt, the foal of a donkey.

So this first section spells out in literal detail the triumphant entry. There is a prophecy about the rejoicing and shouting as Christ comes riding in. And remember Christ's words when the Pharisees complained? He said, "If these should keep silent, the stones would immediately cry out." He is basically saying that it is so impossible for God's prophetic word to fail, that if these people were not shouting, God would have to perform a miracle by making the rocks cry out. God's purposes absolutely cannot fail, even in the insignificant details like this shouting. He mentions also that salvation and Kingship go together. Good Friday (or “Good Thursday” if you believe he died on Thursday) and Easter had to occur if He was to reign as King. It mentions a she donkey and a colt, namely the foal of a she donkey in order to get across the idea that there were two animals, and the young animal was unbroken as yet. The Hebrew indicates that. Well, Matthew records that no one had ever ridden the colt and they had to bring along the mother donkey and clothes were placed on both animals so that Christ could ride either. God is a God of detail.

Next comes the significance of this triumphal entry: judgment on Jerusalem because they rejected Him, and this is a reference to the Roman conquest in 70 A.D. that Christ refers to in Luke 19. **I will cut off the chariot from Ephraim and the horse from Jerusalem; the battle bow shall be cut off.** So after Christ becomes King, God would bring a battle against Jerusalem and Jerusalem would lose.

The third section is the second half of verse 10, and it speaks of blessing to the Gentiles. As Romans 11 says, the fall of Israel brings salvation to the Gentiles. And that's what Zechariah says too. Zechariah words what happens after the fall of Jerusalem this way: **He shall speak peace to the nations; His dominion shall be from sea to sea, and from the River to the ends of the earth.**

All three of these are connected to the same time period. Jesus is declared to be King, the King judges Israel, and His kingdom grows to embrace the earth. I hope that gives you are real excitement, not only about prophecy, but also that the God who was in control of details back then continues to be in control of the details of your life now. You can trust Him.

Well, let's turn back to Luke and see how he draws out these three themes of Zechariah's prophecy.

- A. Triumphant Entry (v. 9)
- B. Imminent Judgment On Israel (v. 10a)
- C. Imminent Blessing To The Gentiles (v. 10b)

II. The Triumphal Entry And Apostate Israel (19:11-27,39-48)

I'm going to take points II and III together and quickly how show Zechariah's talk of judgment on Israel and blessings to the Gentiles are woven into the story throughout the entire chapter. Many people read the triumphal entry out of context, but look at verse 28: "**when He had said this, He went on ahead...**" He's linking the two sections together. Christ first of all gave the significance of what He was going to be doing and Luke tries to draw our attention to that. Verses 1-27 all happened at Zaccheus's house. You know the story. The Jews are offended that Christ would associate with this tax collector, this despised man who was treated as worse than a Roman. Look at verses 9-10 and keep in mind Zechariah's prophecy of judgment to Israel and blessing to the Gentiles. **And Jesus said to him, "Today salvation has come to this house, because he also is a son of Abraham; for the Son of Man has come to seek and to save that which was lost.** Here is a tax collector; a man rejected by the Jews as vile; one who is treated like an enemy Roman who is welcomed by Christ as a son of Abraham. Now that is significant. He is just the first of a long stream of

people who would become the seed of Abraham by faith; not physical descent necessarily but faith descent. Both Romans and Galatians say that you and I are children of Abraham by faith. John the Baptist (in response to the Pharisees claim to be children of Abraham) said that God is able to raise up children of Abraham from these stones, if He wanted to. This is a description of the true Israel. In the next section, verses 11-27, Christ treats those who were true blue Jews physically as being outside the kingdom; rejected. Let's read verses 11-27.

Luke 19:11 ¶ Now as they heard these things, He spoke another parable, because He was near Jerusalem and because they thought the kingdom of God would appear immediately.

Luke 19:12 Therefore He said: “A certain nobleman went into a far country to receive for himself a kingdom and to return.

Luke 19:13 So he called ten of his servants, delivered to them ten minas, and said to them, “Do business till I come.’

Luke 19:14 But his citizens hated him, and sent a delegation after him, saying, “We will not have this *man* to reign over us.’

Luke 19:15 ¶ “And so it was that when he returned, having received the kingdom, he then commanded these servants, to whom he had given the money, to be called to him, that he might know how much every man had gained by trading.

Luke 19:16 Then came the first, saying, “Master, your mina has earned ten minas.’

Luke 19:17 And he said to him, “Well *done*, good servant; because you were faithful in a very little, have authority over ten cities.’

Luke 19:18 And the second came, saying, “Master, your mina has earned five minas.’

Luke 19:19 Likewise he said to him, “You also be over five cities.’

Luke 19:20 ¶ “Then another came, saying, ‘Master, here is your mina, which I have kept put away in a handkerchief.

Luke 19:21 For I feared you, because you are an austere man. You collect what you did not deposit, and reap what you did not sow.’

Luke 19:22 And he said to him, “Out of your own mouth I will judge you, *you* wicked servant. You knew that I was an austere man, collecting what I did not deposit and reaping what I did not sow.

Luke 19:23 Why then did you not put my money in the bank, that at my coming I might have collected it with interest?’

Luke 19:24 ¶ “And he said to those who stood by, ‘Take the mina from him, and give *it* to him who has ten minas.’

Luke 19:25 (But they said to him, “Master, he has ten minas.’)

Luke 19:26 “For I say to you, that to everyone who has will be given; and from him who does not have, even what he has will be taken away from him.

Luke 19:27 But bring here those enemies of mine, who did not want me to reign over them, and slay *them* before me.’ ”

So Christ has just introduced two themes in these verses. First theme: tremendous joy and salvation that comes as a heathen and a tax collector; an

excommunicated pagan becomes a true son of Abraham; Second theme: judgment that comes upon those who refuse to have Jesus reign over them. Do you see how he is developing the themes of Zechariah? This slaying of the enemies mentioned in verse 27 was the Pharisees who didn't want Christ to reign over them. And that theme is developed in greater detail in verses 41-48. Let's read these verses. **Now as He drew near, He saw the city and wept over it [He had a premonition of what would happen to Jerusalem because of its rejection of Him], saying, "If you had known, even you, especially in this your day, the things that make for your peace! But now they are hidden from your eyes. For the days will come upon you when your enemies will build an embankment around you, surround you and close you in on every side, and level you, and your children within you, to the ground; and they will not leave in you one stone upon another, because you did not know the time of your visitation."**

This is dealing with the judgment that came upon that generation. A judgment prophesied by Zechariah - a judgment brought by Rome in 70 A.D. You may be interested in knowing how not one stone would be left upon another. When the Roman general conquered Jerusalem he gave his soldiers strict orders not to harm the beautiful, costly buildings of the temple. Yet God overruled his orders by making the soldiers go completely out of control and burn the city including temple. All the gold of the temple melted and ran into the joints of the mortar. Since soldiers received most of their pay from booty (they were allowed to plunder), the soldiers pried apart every stone in order to get the gold out. And so again you can see how God is in complete control of even devastating armies like that Roman army. Not one stone left upon another.

But to summarize this section. The Triumphal entry was an awesome fulfillment of prophecy and it was an awesome event in Israel's history where their destiny was hanging in the balances. Reject Christ and find judgment, receive Christ and find peace. When He comes as King He demands that we be either for Him or against Him. There can be no neutrality. This King comes primarily for peace and that is why He comes on a donkey. That's a marvelous image - when kings were being coronated, they rode on a donkey or a mule, not a war horse. It was a symbol of peace and amnesty to enemies. The Gospel is primarily good news. But those who reject the things that make for peace will find judgment and will find that God's message is bad news. But it's always one or the other, just like the Lord's Table is always one or the other.

III. The Triumphal Entry And The New Israel (19:1-27,45-48)

IV. What This Means To Us

A. He is King And His Kingdom Has Come (Zech. 9:9-10)!

1. Trusting Him Brings Peace (vs. 38,42)

And the meaning of Palm Sunday continues to be the same for today. Christ is King and His Kingdom has come. Zechariah was very clear on that, but so is Luke. Look for example at verses 11-12. **Now as they heard these things, He spoke another parable, because He was near Jerusalem and because they thought the kingdom of God would appear immediately.** [He needs to explain the Triumphal entry and He needs to explain that some things need to happen first before the kingdom comes.] **Therefore He said: "A certain nobleman went into a far country to receive for himself a kingdom and to return.** Christ later identifies Himself as the nobleman. And notice that it doesn't say the nobleman comes back to receive a kingdom. He has to go away to receive the Kingdom. It was at Christ's ascension that He sits on the throne at the right hand of the Father. Daniel 7:13-14 makes it very clear that when Christ comes to the Father in His ascension that the Kingdom was given to Him, so that all nations would serve Him.

Now if Christ is presently King; if He is currently reigning from heaven, then that has enormous implications for our lives. It means that Christ continues to confront people today with the choice of peace or the choice of verse 27: **bring here those enemies of mine, who did not want me to reign over them, and slay them before me.** And don't just think that this King judges nations like Israel. He continues to judge the nations with calamities; He continues to rule with a rod of iron. We are seeing His judgments all over the world. There can be no neutrality among the nations. Psalm 2 says that you either kiss the Son or you receive His wrath. And Acts 2 applies that Psalm to Pontius Pilate and Israel.

But it's not just the nations that are judged. Churches are judged as well. In fact, judgment begins at the house of God. Don't think that He was content to cleanse the temple only once. He continues to cleanse the temple of His church today. He continues to say, **If you had known, even you, especially in this your day, the things that make for your peace!** Many Christians are so content with being saved from hell that they forget that this holy King calls us to purity of life. Christ tells the churches in Revelation exactly what He told the church of that day in verses 11-27. He tells them that if they fail to develop the minas that He has given to them, He will bring judgment. For example, He tells Ephesus. **Remember therefore from where you have fallen; repent and do the first works, or else I will come to you quickly and remove your lamp stand from its place - unless you**

repent. He tells Pergamos, **Repent, or else I will come to you soon and will fight against them with the sword of My mouth.** He tells Thyatira, **I will cast her into a sickbed, and those who commit adultery with her into great tribulation, unless they repent of their deeds. And I will kill her children with death. And all the churches shall know that I am He who searches the minds and hearts.** And He speaks to the other churches in a similar manner. Palm Sunday reminds us that we have a King who offers peace or trouble. Palm Sunday does not confront us with an academic question. It confronts us with a living person who makes demands upon our lives.

2. Rebellious Against Him Brings Trouble (vs. 43-48)

B. He Claims Ownership Of All We Have (vs. 8,11-27,30-35)

It also reminds us that this King has been given ownership of everything that we have. Verse 13 says, **So he called ten of his servants, delivered to them ten minas, and said to them, "Do business till I come."** And throughout the parable He refers to the money he has given to them and all of the accrued interest as "my money." Like those servants we are stewards. What we have, has been given to us and we are expected to use our gifts, our resources, our minas for our King's benefit. We need to be thinking about everything we have in relationship to Jesus. We are His and everything we own is His. Your work must be done to God's glory; your recreation; the raising of your children; whether you eat or drink or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God. This parable shows that Christ holds us accountable.

I think this is illustrated beautifully in Christ's failure to ask permission for the donkey. If any other person had taken that donkey it would have been theft. That's why the people objected. They were no doubt thinking, "What are you doing stealing our donkeys?" But as soon as the disciples told them that the Lord had asked for it, they were satisfied. They realized that were merely stewards of God's property. If He wants the donkey, fine. It is God who owns the cattle on a thousand hills, not the cattle rancher. If the Lord calls for your donkey to be loosed and used in His service, what is your response? If the Lord calls you to open your home for hospitality, or to use your car to give someone a ride to church, what is your response? Do you question His right to Kingship or do you rejoice over the privilege of being a steward of the King? If your heart has not yet found the joy of laying your garments under the Lord as He rides into Jerusalem, ask Him to give you a steward's heart. Think about what it would mean to have your expensive garments to be ridden on by a donkey. The sharp hooves would grind the garment into the dirt and no doubt ruin it. It was a statement

that was being made: “Lord, all that I have is at your disposal. It is a privilege to give up my coat for you.” If your heart has not yet found the joy of giving up your donkey in His service, ask Him this morning to give you a steward’s heart. Ask Him to help you to embrace His Kingship. It’s not just a theoretical concept. His Kingship demands a response. In what ways is it evident that you submit to the King?

C. We Are His Ambassadors (vs. 36-40)

And then finally, Palm Sunday means that we are to be ambassadors for this King. Zechariah's prophecy said, **He shall speak peace to the nations; His dominion shall be from sea to sea, and from the River to the ends of the earth.** But how does He speak peace to the nations? Does He speak out of heaven? Does He send His angels? No. Well, it depends upon how you define “angel.” The word “angel” just means messenger. But he doesn’t send heavenly messengers; He sends earthly messengers. He does it through people like you and me. The Great Commission tells us that upon receiving His Kingdom (“**all authority has been given to me in heaven and in earth**”) He commissions ambassadors to represent him and claim this dominion from sea to sea (“**go therefore and make disciples of all nations**”). We are ambassadors for Christ beseeching all men to be reconciled to Him. And even when Christ was physically here on earth, He still spoke of the absolute imperative of His having ambassadors. **If these should keep silent, the stones would immediately cry out.** He *must* have ambassadors. Thankfully His disciples were not ashamed to speak out in spite of the opposition of the Pharisees. Verse 37 says, **the whole multitude of the disciples began to rejoice and praise God with a loud voice for all the mighty works they had seen.** And Matthew tells us that included in that multitude were a lot of little children who were singing about their King too. Don't you children ever think that you have to wait to do kingdom work. He has called you to speak for Him as well. Every believer, young and old, has a general call to talk about King Jesus. Have you done so? If the Great Commission is to be fulfilled; if all the nations are to be discipled so that His dominion reaches to the ends of the world, then we must do what Zechariah says and "shout" forth His praises. You are gathered in the presence of King Jesus this morning and He calls you to trust Him, give your all to Him and be ambassadors for him. There were those in that day who were embarrassed over Jesus, and others who thought that talking about Him was too radical, too religious. Jesus wept over them. But He may be weeping over us as well and saying, **If you had known, even you, especially in this your day, the things that make for your peace.** He would weep over us if we have not acknowledged His Kingship over every

area of our lives; He would weep because you are hugging to yourself what rightfully belongs to Him; or like the man who buried his mina, you have been failing to invest what God has given to you. He would weep because you are ashamed to be witnesses for Him. And Christ tells us, **whoever is ashamed of Me and My words, of Him the Son of Man will be ashamed... (Luke 9:26)** The King has come, and those who have embraced the things that make for peace will find peace and joy and fulfillment. Those who seek to bypass Palm Sunday will find trouble. I exhort you this day to be consistent in your acknowledgment of Christ as Lord of Lords and King of Kings. Find the excitement that the men, women and children found on that day. Tell Him, "You are my King, and where you send, I will go, what you ask for I will give, and all that you have commissioned me to say, I will say." Amen.