

## THE UNEXPECTED JESUS

Luke 19:28-44



APRIL 14, 2019 | DAVID ANDERSON

Can you recall the moment in your marriage where the dream of a so called “perfect” marriage collided with the brokenness of your situation? Can you recall the moment when you came to grips with the fact that not all of your children or grandchildren were going to walk with Jesus? Can you recall the great loss families have endured as a loved one’s life was cut short by cancer, disability or tragedy?

Eventually in life we are confronted with our frail, broken and imperfect lives, and the truth that God has a plan - one that often looks different than we envisioned. It often feels like God is working with a different agenda and timeline.

The more I think about Palm Sunday and the national expectation of Messiah, the more I realize I am no different from all of those with expectations who surrounded Jesus coming into Jerusalem during Passover. From the beginning of time, the people of God have always been convinced of how their lives should look. From the beginning of time, we have had great expectations of grandeur, power and glory. We believe that it is God’s job to underwrite our personal aspirations and expectations.

And then Jesus comes riding into Jerusalem on a donkey in Luke 19:28-44. Jesus says: you think you know what power is - you don’t. You think you know what glory is - you don’t. You think you know what is best for you - you don’t.

*28 After Jesus had said this, he continued on ahead, going up to Jerusalem. 29 Now when he approached Bethphage and Bethany, at the place called the Mount of Olives, he sent two of the disciples, 30 telling them, "Go to the village ahead of you. When you enter it, you will find a colt tied there that has never been ridden. Untie it and bring it here. 31 If anyone asks you, 'Why are you untying it?' just say, 'The Lord needs it.'" 32 So those who were sent ahead found it exactly as he had told them. 33 As they were untying the colt, its owners asked them, "Why are you untying that colt?" 34 They replied, "The Lord needs it." 35 Then they brought it to Jesus, threw their cloaks on the colt, and had Jesus get on it. 36 As he rode along, they spread their cloaks on the road. 37 As he approached the road leading down from the Mount of Olives, the whole crowd of his disciples began to rejoice and praise God with a loud voice for all the mighty works they had seen: 38 "Blessed is the king who comes in the name of the Lord! Peace in heaven and glory in the highest!" 39 But some of the Pharisees in the crowd said to him, "Teacher, rebuke your disciples." 40 He answered, "I tell you, if they keep silent, the very stones will cry out!" 41 Now when Jesus approached and saw the city, he wept over it, 42 saying, "If you had only known on this day, even you, the things that make for peace! But now they are hidden from your eyes. 43 For the days will come upon you when your enemies will build an embankment against you and surround you and close in on you from every side. 44 They will demolish you— you and your children within your walls— and they will not leave within you one stone on top of another, because you did not recognize the time of your visitation from God." -Luke 19:28-44*

Jesus goes up to Jerusalem during Passover at the time when freedom from slavery was being celebrated from Egypt. Great nationalistic expectation was that God would return His people to power and glory. Jesus ascends to Jerusalem, to Bethphage and Bethany and the mountain ridge right next to the eastern gate and the Mount of Olives.

These prophetic actions of Jesus and the disciples were the actions of a king. Kings would requisition an animal but it would not be a donkey. Greco/Roman conquerors would come in riding a white stallion or a decorated chariot. They would be accompanied by singing and anthems of praise.

Matthew 21 tells us this was to fulfill Zechariah 9:9. Many believe that the first 8 verses of Zechariah 9 is prophesying about Alexander the Great. He came from the north to the south and made war with the Persians. He came from Syria down through Tyre but continued down the coast through Ashkelon, Gaza and Ekron. Then Alexander the Great arrived at Jerusalem. Josephus says the Jewish teachers revealed to Alexander the Great the prophecies that were written about his kingdom in Daniel. Alexander the Great allowed Jerusalem to not be destroyed.

Alexander the Great rode one of the most famous horses in all of antiquity named Bucephalus. It was a massive creature with a massive head with exquisite breeding. Zechariah 9:9 says the Jewish king, the Jewish Messiah, will not come in on a white steed; he will come in on a colt or a foal or son of a donkey. He doesn't come as a tyrant; He comes as a suffering servant. He doesn't come as a proud, conquering military warrior, but as a humble Galilean. He doesn't come victoriously, having shed the blood of the enemy, but He has come to shed His own blood as a ransom for many.

The whole crowd proclaim the messianic Psalm 118, "Blessed is the king who comes in the name of the Lord! Peace in heaven and glory in the highest!" Psalm 118 is the rightful king David putting down his enemies as he comes to Jerusalem. The religious leaders rebuke Jesus and say, "Don't allow them to give you this praise." What's Jesus response? "If they keep silent, the very stones will cry out" (vs. 39-40).

Scripture describes creation groaning as it is held in bondage like the sinful human race (Rom 8:19-22, Matt 24:8). What does it groan for? It groans for the revelation of the sons of God, the glorious freedom of God's children. Jesus' point is that if you can't accurately identify the key lynch pin for this liberation, creation will do it for you. The entire creation recognizes its king; don't be dumber than rocks.

Jesus can make praise come from rocks and He could have made praise come from the rock hard hearts of Jerusalem, but they wouldn't let Him. As Jesus approached Jerusalem He wept. He wept because they did not know the things that make for peace. Peace wasn't going to come through the Messiah's use of force and power. Peace wasn't going to come through the destruction of Roman power and Jesus' Jewish enemies. Peace was only going to come through the Messiah's death at the hands of His enemies. It was not force and might that would bring in the kingdom, but the tragedy of the cross.

Instead of Messiah's coming bringing about the demise of Rome, the rejection of Jesus as Messiah meant the destruction of Jerusalem at the hand of Titus in AD 70. Both the city and the 2<sup>nd</sup> temple were destroyed and Josephus claims that over one million people were killed during the siege.

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## THE THINGS THAT MAKE FOR PEACE

*We think we know the things that bring peace - what if we don't?*

*What if the kingdom isn't coming about in the way we envisioned?*

*What if it isn't a big white stallion, but a donkey that Jesus wants me to ride on into life's circumstances?*

*What if some dreams have to die so that God can bring in the new and unexpected?*

*What if it's not our perfect plan that we have signed up for, but it's the perfect Person that God is asking us to trust in?*

We are mesmerized by power, but the power that redeems hearts is merciful power. This is where Jesus stands alone in all human history. Our prayer is that you would be like Him in His mercy. Jesus weeps and He wants us to weep for everyone around us who has no clue the things that make for peace. Especially during Easter, there is no better time to invite others into the one thing that makes for peace.

