

# **To Seek and to Save the Lost**

## **The Triumphal Entry**

*Luke 19:28-40*

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# The Triumphal Entry

## Scripture

Three years ago I started preaching through *The Gospel of Luke*. I titled the series, "To Seek and to Save the Lost." In the very first sermon of the series, of which this is now the 114<sup>th</sup> sermon, I said that the *key* to understanding Luke's Gospel is given to us in Luke 19:10, where Jesus said, "For the Son of Man came to seek and to save the lost." Jesus often identified himself as "the Son of Man," especially in *The Gospel of Luke*. Jesus declared that he is the Savior who had come on a seek-and-rescue mission. And so Luke organized his entire Gospel to show *who* Jesus is and *what* he had come to do to seek and to save the lost.

One way Luke organized his Gospel is that in the first part of Jesus' life and ministry, Jesus was *seeking* the lost (Luke 1:1-19:27). And in the final week of Jesus' life and ministry, Jesus was *saving* the lost (Luke 19:28-24:53).

Or, here is another way Luke organized his Gospel:

1. Luke 1:1-4:13: The Introduction of the Son of Man.
2. Luke 4:14-9:50: The Ministry of the Son of Man.
3. Luke 9:51-19:27: The Rejection of the Son of Man.
4. Luke 19:28-24:53: The Salvation of the Son of Man.

In whatever manner Luke organized his Gospel, I want us to see that Luke 19:28 is the beginning of the final section of *The Gospel of Luke*. Luke 19:28 is the beginning of Jesus' final week on earth. And it begins with his triumphal entry into the city of Jerusalem.

Let's read about the triumphal entry in Luke 19:28-40:

**<sup>28</sup> And when he had said these things, he went on ahead, going up to Jerusalem. <sup>29</sup> When he drew near to Bethphage and Bethany, at the mount that is called Olivet, he sent two of the disciples, <sup>30</sup> saying, "Go into the village in front of you, where on entering you will find a colt tied, on which no one has ever yet sat. Untie it**

and bring it here. <sup>31</sup> If anyone asks you, ‘Why are you untying it?’ you shall say this: ‘The Lord has need of it.’ ” <sup>32</sup> So those who were sent went away and found it just as he had told them. <sup>33</sup> And as they were untying the colt, its owners said to them, “Why are you untying the colt?” <sup>34</sup> And they said, “The Lord has need of it.” <sup>35</sup> And they brought it to Jesus, and throwing their cloaks on the colt, they set Jesus on it. <sup>36</sup> And as he rode along, they spread their cloaks on the road. <sup>37</sup> As he was drawing near—already on the way down the Mount of Olives—the whole multitude of his disciples began to rejoice and praise God with a loud voice for all the mighty works that they had seen, <sup>38</sup> saying, “Blessed is the King who comes in the name of the Lord! Peace in heaven and glory in the highest!” <sup>39</sup> And some of the Pharisees in the crowd said to him, “Teacher, rebuke your disciples.” <sup>40</sup> He answered, “I tell you, if these were silent, the very stones would cry out.” (Luke 19:28-40)

## Introduction

In Luke 9:51 Luke noted that Jesus “set his face to go to Jerusalem.” At that time Jesus was in Galilee and so he headed south toward Jerusalem. Since he could not pass through Samaria, he crossed east over the Jordan River into Perea, then headed south until he was opposite Jericho, where he crossed west back over the Jordan River into Judea. Luke noted several times throughout Jesus’ journey that he was on his way to Jerusalem (cf. Luke 13:22; 17:11; 18:31; 19:11, 28). Just prior to his arrival in Jerusalem, Luke noted Jesus’ ministry in the city of Jericho, which is on the west side of the Jordan River and on the north side of the Dead Sea.

Commentator Tom Wright gives a marvelous description of the final stage of the journey, the seventeen-mile stretch from Jericho to Jerusalem:

Mile after uphill mile, it seems a long way even today in a car. You wind up through the sandy hills from Jericho, the lowest point on the face of the earth, through the Judaeian desert, climbing all the way. Halfway up, you reach sea level; you’ve already climbed a long way

from the Jordan valley, and you still have to ascend a fair-sized mountain. It is almost always hot; since it seldom if ever rains, it's almost always dusty as well.

That was the way the pilgrims came, with Jesus going on ahead, as he had planned all along. This was to be the climax of his story, of his public career, of his vocation. He knew well enough what lay ahead, and had set his face to go and meet it head on. He couldn't stop announcing the kingdom, but that announcement could only come true if he now embodied in himself the things he'd been talking about. The living God was at work to heal and save, and the forces of evil and death were massed to oppose him, like Pharaoh and the armies of Egypt trying to prevent the Israelites from leaving. But this was to be the moment of God's new Exodus, God's great Passover, and nothing could stop Jesus going ahead to celebrate it.

Even when you drive, rather than walk, from Jericho to the top of the Mount of Olives, the sense of relief and excitement when you reach the summit is intense. At last you exchange barren, dusty desert for lush green growth, particularly at Passover time, at the height of spring. At last you stop climbing, you crest the summit, and there before you, glistening in the sun, is the holy city, Jerusalem itself, on its own slightly smaller hill across a narrow but deep valley. Bethany and Bethphage nestle on the Jericho side of the Mount of Olives. Once you pass them, Jerusalem comes into view almost at once. The end of the journey; the pilgrimage to end all pilgrimages; Passover-time in the city of God.<sup>1</sup>

Jesus was coming to his royal city, the city of Jerusalem. He was coming to complete his ministry of seeking and saving the lost. He was coming to be *the* Passover Lamb, who takes away the sin of the world (John 1:29). But, before he gave his life as a ransom for many (Mark 10:45), he entered the city as the King of kings.

## Lesson

The triumphal entry of Jesus into Jerusalem in Luke 19:28-40

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<sup>1</sup> Tom Wright, *Luke for Everyone* (London: Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge, 2004), 228–229.

shows us that Jesus was indeed the anticipated, coming king.

Let's use the following outline:

1. Jesus Plans His Deliberate Entrance (19:28-34)
2. Jesus Affirms His Sovereign Kingship (19:35)
3. Jesus Receives His Rightful Praise (19:36-40)

## I. **Jesus Plans His Deliberate Entrance (19:28-34)**

First, Jesus plans his deliberate entrance.

Luke said that **when Jesus had said these things**, that is, the parable of the ten minas in Jericho, **he went on ahead, going up to Jerusalem** (19:28). Jesus travelled on foot seventeen miles from Jericho to Jerusalem, which probably took him and those accompanying him about six hours. **When he drew near to Bethphage and Bethany, at the mount that is called Olivet**, better known to us as the Mount of Olives on the east side of Jerusalem, **he sent two of the disciples** ahead on an errand (19:29).

Jesus wanted his disciples to get something before he entered into Jerusalem. And so he said to the two disciples, **"Go into the village in front of you, where on entering you will find a colt tied, on which no one has ever yet sat. Untie it and bring it here. If anyone asks you, 'Why are you untying it?' you shall say this: 'The Lord has need of it' "** So those who were sent went away and found it just as he had told them. And as they were untying the colt, its owners said to them, **"Why are you untying the colt?"** And they said, **"The Lord has need of it"** (19:30-34).

There are four truths that I want you to notice. Commentator William Barclay captures these truths well.

First, Jesus' entrance into Jerusalem was carefully and deliberately planned. It was no sudden, impulsive action. Jesus did not leave things until the last moment. He had apparently made a prior arrangement with the owners of the colt. **"The Lord has need of it"** was a password chosen long ago.

Second, Jesus' entrance into Jerusalem was an act of glorious defiance and of superlative courage. By this time there was a price on Jesus' head (John 11:57). It would have been natural that, if he must go into Jerusalem at all, he should have slipped in unseen and hidden away in some secret place in the back streets. But he entered in such a way as to focus the whole limelight upon himself and to occupy the center of the stage. It is a breathtaking thing to think of a man with a price upon his head, an outlaw, deliberately riding into a city in such a way that every eye was fixed upon him. It is impossible to exaggerate the sheer courage of Jesus. But he was going to Jerusalem for one final time to fulfill the mission assigned to him by his Father.

Third, Jesus' entrance into Jerusalem was a deliberate claim to be king, a deliberate fulfilling of the picture in Zechariah 9:9, which states, "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." We tend to think of kings riding on great, beautiful horses. And for many kings that is true. However, the donkey in Jesus' day was not the lowly beast that it is in this country. It was noble. Only in war did kings ride upon a horse; when they came in peace they came upon a donkey. So Jesus by this action came as a king of love and peace, and not as the conquering military hero whom the tumultuous crowds expected and awaited. And so in this act of riding on a donkey's colt Jesus underlined the kind of kingship which he claimed. You see, Jesus was coming as the king of peace to save lost sinners.

And fourth, Jesus' entrances into Jerusalem was one last appeal. In this action Jesus came, as it were, with pleading hands outstretched, saying, "Even now, will you not take me as your king?" Before human hatred engulfed him, once again he confronted people with love's invitation.<sup>2</sup>

There was nothing unplanned about Jesus' triumphal entry. The main point to learn here is that Jesus was in complete control over

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<sup>2</sup> William Barclay, *The Gospel of Luke*, The New Daily Study Bible (Louisville, KY; London: Westminster John Knox Press, 2001), 284–285.

every event that was about to take place. He knew what awaited him. He understood what his Father expected of him. And he carried out his Father's will for his life with deliberate control.

That is a great comfort to God's people, isn't it? Jesus is not the victim of circumstances beyond his control. Instead, he is in deliberate control of his circumstances. And he is still in deliberate control over every event today. There is nothing that is beyond his deliberate and purposeful plan (cf. Ephesians 1:11).

## II. Jesus Affirms His Sovereign Kingship (19:35)

Second, Jesus affirms his sovereign kingship.

Having procured the colt, Luke said that the two disciples **brought it to Jesus, and throwing their cloaks on the colt, they set Jesus on it** (19:35).

I mentioned this before, but I want to flesh it out some more. The prophecy in Zechariah 9:9 stated that Jerusalem's king would come "humble and mounted on a donkey, on a colt, the foal of a donkey." This prophecy explains why Jesus told his two disciples to get a colt that had never been ridden. As commentator Phil Ryken said, "Jesus needed the animal to serve as a prop in the drama of redemption."<sup>3</sup>

Jesus' disciples brought the colt to him, put their cloaks on the colt, and set him on it. As Jesus rode from Bethphage and Bethany down the Mount of Olives, which was directly opposite Jerusalem, he was affirming his sovereign kingship. The angel Gabriel told Jesus' mother, Mary, prior to his birth, that "the Lord God will give to him the throne of his father David, and he will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and of his kingdom there will be no end" (Luke 1:32-33). Jesus' royalty was in full view as he rode down the Mount of Olives into the valley below and then up the hill into the city of Jerusalem. Jesus was riding the donkey of Israel's kingship.

The people of Jerusalem immediately recognized Jesus' riding of

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<sup>3</sup> Philip Graham Ryken, *Luke*, ed. Richard D. Phillips, Philip Graham Ryken, and Daniel M. Doriani, vol. 2, *Reformed Expository Commentary* (Phillipsburg, NJ: P&R Publishing, 2009), 332.

the colt as an affirmation of his sovereign kingship, because they shouted in verse 38, “Blessed is the King who comes in the name of the Lord!” When the people saw Jesus riding the colt they knew that this was the fulfillment of Zechariah’s prophecy and that Jesus was affirming his sovereign kingship.

Of course, what they did not understand was the nature of his kingship. The colt should have given them a clue, but they misunderstood it. Jesus was not making a political statement. Rather, he was making a spiritual statement. Jesus had not come to overthrow the government through military might. Instead, Jesus had come in humility to be the Savior of his people. He was coming to Jerusalem to die for the sins of his people. He was offering himself to be the sin-bearer so that sinners might be reconciled to his Father in heaven. As Phil Ryken said, “If people accepted him, he would receive their praise. But if they rejected him, he would do nothing to defend himself, even to the very point of death.”<sup>4</sup>

Jesus rides the same way into our lives today. He comes in humility to be our Savior. Humility is said to be “the personal quality of being free from arrogance and pride and having an accurate estimate of one’s worth.”<sup>5</sup> It is thinking of and serving others, which is exactly what Jesus does. He does not come now with crushing power, although he will do so when he comes a second time at the end of the age. He still comes now to seek and to save the lost. He says, “Come to me, all who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn from me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls” (Matthew 11:28-29).

So, if Jesus is the king of humility, then we who know him and love him should serve him with same kind of humility. One of my Old Testament professors, Thomas McComiskey, said that Jesus did not ride into the city on great, beautiful horse but on a colt because the donkey “stands out as a deliberate rejection of this symbol of arrogant

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<sup>4</sup> Philip Graham Ryken, *Luke*, 332.

<sup>5</sup> Gary Hardin, “Humility,” ed. Chad Brand et al., *Holman Illustrated Bible Dictionary* (Nashville, TN: Holman Bible Publishers, 2003), 792.



trust in human might, expressing subservience to the sovereignty of God. Jerusalem's king is of humble mien, yet victorious, and so it has always been that the church does not effectively spread the gospel by sword or by arrogance, but by mirroring the humble spirit of its king and savior."<sup>6</sup>

Phil Ryken applies the truth by saying, "Rather than riding in to set everyone straight, we are more like Jesus when we come to people with our Savior's gentleness and peace."<sup>7</sup>

### III. Jesus Receives His Rightful Praise (19:36-40)

And third, Jesus receives his rightful praise.

Luke said that **as Jesus rode along**, the people of Jerusalem **spread their cloaks on the road** (19:36). The other Gospels tell us that the people also spread palm branches on the road (Matthew 21:8; Mark 11:8; John 12:13). This was the ancient manner of welcoming a king. It was a way of saying that Jesus was too worthy to ride an ordinary road and that he deserved a carpet. So, as Phil Ryken said, when the people threw down their cloaks, they were saying, "King Jesus, you are so much greater than I am – so much more worthy of honor – that when your donkey walks all over my clothes it is not an insult to me, but my privilege."<sup>8</sup>

Then the crowds quickly began to swell. **As Jesus was drawing near – already on the way down the Mount of Olives – the whole multitude of his disciples began to rejoice and praise God with a loud voice for all the mighty works that they had seen, saying, "Blessed is the King who comes in the name of the Lord! Peace in heaven and glory in the highest!"** (19:37-38). These words of praise came from Psalm 118:26. *The ESV Study Bible* notes that Psalm 118 "describes a festive procession into Jerusalem after some great

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<sup>6</sup> Thomas E. McComiskey, "Zechariah," in *The Minor Prophets: An Exegetical and Expository Commentary*, 3 vols. (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1998), 3:1166.

<sup>7</sup> Philip Graham Ryken, *Luke*, 332–333.

<sup>8</sup> Philip Graham Ryken, *Luke*, 333.

deliverance. The original occasion is hard to identify. It could be the rebuilding of the temple or the walls of Jerusalem. In later times it was sung at the Feast of Tabernacles as well as Passover.”<sup>9</sup> Psalm 118 was a promise about the coming Messiah. And so the crowds gave Jesus his rightful praise as the coming Messiah and king **for all the mighty works that they had seen.**

True to form, **some of the Pharisees in the crowd said to him, “Teacher, rebuke your disciples”** (19:39). They knew that the crowd was affirming his sovereign kingship, and they wanted Jesus to shut them up. But Jesus **answered, “I tell you, if these were silent, the very stones would cry out”** (19:40). That is a remarkable statement. Jesus, the one who created the sun, moon, and stars, the one who created the innumerable galaxies, the one who created even the tiniest molecule *will* be worshiped. The Bible says that the creation “waits with eager longing” for the day of salvation, when it will be “set free from its bondage to decay and obtain the freedom of the glory of the children of God” (Romans 8:19, 21). Jesus indicates in his response to the Pharisees that all of creation is almost bursting with eager anticipation to praise its Creator.

How about you? Jesus created you. Do you worship him? Is it your joy and delight to rejoice and praise God with a loud voice for all the mighty works that Jesus has done and is doing? There is no higher privilege than to rejoice and praise God with a loud voice for all the mighty works of Jesus.

## Conclusion

Therefore, having analyzed Jesus’ triumphal entry into Jerusalem in Luke 19:28-40, we should worship him as king.

Our text today teaches us three truths. First, it teaches us that Jesus planned his deliberate entrance into Jerusalem. Jesus was and is in control of all events. Therefore, you can trust him to lead you and

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<sup>9</sup> Crossway Bibles, *The ESV Study Bible* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Bibles, 2008), 1091.

guide you in every circumstance of your life.

Second, Jesus affirmed his sovereign kingship by riding on a colt of a donkey into Jerusalem. He came in great humility to save his people. Therefore, he now calls his people to live and serve him with similar humility.

And third, Jesus received his rightful praise when he rode into Jerusalem. In just a few days the crowds would turn against him and have him crucified. He voluntarily went to the cross and died to pay the penalty for sin, our sin. Therefore, you can rightly praise him when you turn from your sin and believe that he is your Savior.

This passage shows us the greatness of our Savior, Jesus. Once we have turned to him in faith and repentance, our task is to show all around us his greatness. Joseph Bayly put it this way:

King Jesus, why did you choose a lowly ass to carry you to ride in your parade?

Had you no friend who owned a horse – a royal mount with spirit for a king to ride?

Why choose an ass, small, unassuming beast of burden trained to plow not carry kings?

King Jesus, why did you choose me, a lowly unimportant person to bear you in my world today?

I'm poor and unimportant, trained to work not carry kings – let alone the King of kings, and yet you've chosen me to carry you in triumph in this world's parade.

King Jesus, keep me small so all may see how great you are; keep me humble, so all may say,

“Blessed is he who cometh in the name of the Lord,” not what a great ass he rides.<sup>10</sup>

May God help each one of us to live in such a way as to show the greatness of Jesus, our King and our Savior. Amen.

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<sup>10</sup> Joseph Bayly, “Psalms of My Life,” *Christianity Today*, Vol. 33, no. 5.



# Mission Statement

The Mission Statement of the Tampa Bay Presbyterian Church is:

*To bring people to Jesus Christ  
and membership in his church family,  
develop them to Christlike maturity,  
equip them for their ministry in the church  
and life mission in the world,  
in order to magnify God's name.*

## Sermons by Rev. Freddy Fritz

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1. [www.tampabaypresbyterian.org/sermons](http://www.tampabaypresbyterian.org/sermons)
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**PRAYER:**

Our Father, your Son, the Lord Jesus Christ entered Jerusalem as King of kings and Lord of lords on that first Palm Sunday. All the people blessed him as the King who comes in the name of the Lord.

And yet, just a few days later those same people shouted for him to be crucified. And although his crucifixion seemed like a crushing defeat, even that was part of the deliberate plan to seek and to save the lost.

O God, if there is anyone here today who does not know Jesus as Savior and Lord, will you enable that person to affirm Jesus' sovereign kingship? Will you grant that person faith and repentance? And will you cause all your people to give Jesus his rightful praise. May his greatness be seen in the way we serve each other with great humility.

And for this I pray in your name. Amen.

**BENEDICTION:**

May the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all, now and always. Amen.

**CHARGE:**

Now, brothers and sisters, go and serve God wholeheartedly!