

**Introduction**

Today is known as Palm Sunday; the day when our Lord rode into Jerusalem riding on a donkey, or *Equus africanus asinus* to give it its scientific name.

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The story of this entrance is recorded in all four gospels, so it is most clearly an important event in Jesus' life. But there is also another entry of Jesus on a member of the genus *Equus*; in the book of Revelation we read of Jesus' return, not on a donkey, but on a white horse.

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And today I want to share with you some small part of what we can learn by looking at these two events; one past and one future; one that we can look back on with thanksgiving, and one that we can look forward to with anticipation.

So our title today is "A Tale of Two Entries"

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Let us read the account in Luke's gospel:

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Luke 19:28-48

After Jesus had said this, he went on ahead, going up to Jerusalem. As he approached Bethphage and Bethany at the hill called the Mount of Olives, he sent two of his disciples, saying to them, "Go to the village ahead of you, and as you enter it, you will find a colt tied there, which no one has ever ridden. Untie it and bring it here. If anyone asks you, 'Why are you untying it?' tell him, 'The Lord needs it.'" Those who were sent ahead went and found it just as he had told them. As they were untying the colt, its owners asked them, "Why are you untying the colt?"

They replied, "The Lord needs it."

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They brought it to Jesus, threw their cloaks on the colt and put Jesus on it. As he went along, people spread their cloaks on the road. When he came near the place where the road goes down the Mount of Olives, the whole crowd of disciples began joyfully to praise God in loud voices for all the miracles they had seen:

"Blessed is the king who comes in the name of the Lord!"

"Peace in heaven and glory in the highest!"

Some of the Pharisees in the crowd said to Jesus, "Teacher, rebuke your disciples!"

"I tell you," he replied, "if they keep quiet, the stones will cry out."

**Slide (Map)**

Jesus most probably took the route shown on the map; from Bethany along a ridge to the Mount of Olives, and then down from the Mount into a valley and up again to Jerusalem.

**Slide (text)**

As he approached Jerusalem and saw the city, he wept over it and said, "If you, even you, had only known on this day what would bring you peace—but now it is hidden from your eyes. The days will come upon you when your enemies will build an embankment against you and encircle you and hem you in on every side. They will dash you to the ground, you and the children within your walls. They will not leave one stone on another, because you did not recognize the time of God's coming to you."

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Then he entered the temple area and began driving out those who were selling. "It is written," he said to them, "'My house will be a house of prayer'; but you have made it 'a den of robbers.'"

Every day he was teaching at the temple. But the chief priests, the teachers of the law and the leaders among the people were trying to kill him. Yet they could not find any way to do it, because all the people hung on his words.

So we have here the dramatic story of Jesus' entry into Jerusalem. He comes in a way that is both dramatic and also humble; entering to the cheers and adulation of a crowd of disciples and well-wishers, but also entering on a humble donkey, not on the back of a war-horse such as the Romans overlords used. It is an entry that leads directly to the cross just a few days later, as it puts him into direct confrontation with the Jewish leaders, and also puts him right on their very doorstep, at the seat of their power in Jerusalem.

But this entry into Jerusalem was however only the first of two such entries. In the Book of Revelation we read of a second and much more dramatic entry of our Lord:

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Rev 19:11-16

I saw heaven standing open and there before me was a white horse, whose rider is called Faithful and True. With justice he judges and makes war. His eyes are like blazing fire, and on his head are many crowns. He has a name written on him that no one knows but he himself. He is dressed in a robe dipped in blood, and his name is the Word of God. The armies of heaven were following him, riding on white horses and dressed in fine linen, white and clean. Out of his mouth comes a sharp sword with which to strike down the nations. "He will rule them with an iron scepter." He treads the winepress of the fury of the wrath of God Almighty. On his robe and on his thigh he has this name written: KING OF KINGS AND LORD OF LORDS.

There is a wealth of teaching here, and we can only scratch the surface. Let us look at each of these entries and compare them.

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**The first entry.**

**1. It proclaimed Jesus' kingship.**

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It did this in three ways.

**a. By fulfilling prophecy.** Jesus had been teaching and working miracles for about three years at this point in His ministry. Most of this ministry had been in Galilee, away from the power center of Jerusalem, and he had kept a low profile, sometimes telling people he healed to keep quiet about what he had done for them. But now He deliberately chooses to enter Jerusalem in this very public and unusual way. It is worth noting that this is the first time that we read of Jesus riding anywhere; in all his previous ministry he had walked from town to town and village to village. So why did he choose to ride into Jerusalem in this very public way? It is because He was doing this to announce to the Jews that he was indeed their king, the one who was promised to them by the prophet Zechariah hundreds of years before: he was *proclaiming His kingship*.

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Zech 9:9-10

Rejoice greatly, O Daughter of Zion!

Shout, Daughter of Jerusalem!

See, your *king* comes to you,  
righteous and having salvation,  
gentle and riding on a donkey,  
on a colt, the foal of a donkey.

I will take away the chariots from Ephraim  
and the war-horses from Jerusalem,  
and the battle bow will be broken.  
He will proclaim peace to the nations.  
His rule will extend from sea to sea  
and from the River to the ends of the earth.

So Jesus fulfilled this prophecy in every detail, even to the extent of riding on a donkey's colt that had never before been ridden. In biblical culture, animals devoted to sacred tasks were ones that had not been put to ordinary use. And the choice of a donkey was significant because it pointed back to the greatest human king of Israel, David, since the donkey was the usual beast of burden in David's time. So Jesus was in effect saying "you have been looking and waiting for your Messiah, your king, to come. Well, here I am, and I am about to begin my reign." And the people understood that this was what he was saying because they responded with words such as "Blessed is the king who comes in the name of the Lord!" and "Peace in heaven and glory in the highest!" And notice also that this reign was not just over Israel; in Zechariah verse 10 we read "He will proclaim peace to the nations. His rule will extend from sea to sea." So Jesus was claiming not only kingship over Israel, but over the nations of the world.

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Writing about this passage John Piper says: "Jesus has chosen to act out the fulfillment of this prophecy and to declare his kingship in the action of riding on a donkey. This means, yes, I am king, for that's what the prophet says it means: "Behold your king." "But," he is saying, "I am gentle and lowly. I am not, in my first coming, on a white war-horse with a sword and a rod of iron. I am not coming to slay you. I am coming to save you. This time. Today is the day of salvation."

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##### **b. By accepting praise and adoration**

As Jesus began to go down the mount of Olives,

The whole crowd of disciples began joyfully to praise God in loud voices for all the miracles they had seen:

"Blessed is the king who comes in the name of the Lord!"

"Peace in heaven and glory in the highest!"

And Jesus accepted this praise and even told the Pharisees that if the people did not praise him the stones would cry out.

Let us just pause a moment to ask ourselves the question; how much do I praise the Lord? Do I praise him for his greatness and love, and thank him for his sacrifice for me? He deserves our praise every day and every minute of the day; do we give it to him?

c. **By cleansing the temple.** The second major event of this eventful day was when Jesus went into the temple and drove out the money changers.

Luke 19:45-46

Then he entered the temple area and began driving out those who were selling. "It is written," he said to them, "'My house will be a house of prayer'; but you have made it 'a den of robbers.'"

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Those who were selling were both moneychangers and the sellers of sacrificial animals, and they would make large profits at the expense of the pilgrims. Every Israelite, rich or poor, who had reached the age of twenty was obligated to pay a half shekel as an offering to Jehovah into the sacred treasury. This tribute was in every case to be paid in the exact Hebrew half shekel. At Passover everyone in the world who was an adult male and wished to worship at the Temple would bring his "offering" or

purchase a sacrificial animal at the Temple. Since there was no acceptance of foreign money with any foreign image the money changers would sell "Temple coinage" at a very high rate of exchange and assess a fixed charge for their services. The family of the former High Priest Annas gained much of their wealth from market stalls inside the temple complex, in the Court of the Gentiles. Through these, they had a monopoly on the sale of sacrificial animals, as well as on the exchanging of money into temple coins for the offerings. This enabled them to charge exorbitant prices, effectively gaining their wealth through the exploitation and oppression of the poor. The temple served in effect as a sort of national bank, holding vast stores of wealth, and this was strongly resented by many of the Jews who were cheated by the system. Jesus saw this activity as fundamentally wrong, so he drove them out, quoting Isaiah as he did so:

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Isa 56:6-8

And foreigners who bind themselves to the LORD  
to serve him,  
to love the name of the LORD,  
and to worship him,  
all who keep the Sabbath without desecrating it  
and who hold fast to my covenant—  
these I will bring to my holy mountain  
and give them joy in my house of prayer.  
Their burnt offerings and sacrifices  
will be accepted on my altar;  
for my house will be called  
*a house of prayer for all nations.*"  
The Sovereign LORD declares—

And so here again we see Jesus not only fulfilling prophecy but also proclaiming that he was not just for the Jews but also for all nations. He is for you, whether you are European-American or African-American, Indian or Chinese, African or Mexican, Korean or even English; Jesus came for you; his house will be called a house of prayer for all nations. It is for you this morning.

But we must also observe that his same Jesus who is full of love and compassion for those who came to him with their hurts and their needs was also the Jesus who hated sin corruption and the extortion of the poor, and who flared up with righteous indignation at injustice and singlehandedly cleansed his Father's temple of these people.

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The second result of Jesus' triumphal entry was that it polarized the people

**2. It polarized the people.** Jesus triumphal entry polarized the people into two distinct groups. There was first of all the large group of people who praised him and believed him to be the coming Messiah, calling out "Blessed is the king who comes in the name of the Lord!" and "Peace in heaven and glory in the highest!" These people recognized what Jesus was doing, and they rejoiced in his coming. They may not have fully understood all that was going on, but they understood enough to welcome him as the Messiah. And they showed their love for Jesus by putting their cloaks on the road. These were not for the most part wealthy people, and the cloaks were probably the only outer garments they had. And a cloak does not look nearly as nice once it has been put down on the dirt and walked over by a donkey as it did before, so this show of love was costly to the people.

But there was a second group, and they were not nearly as enthusiastic as the crowd. The Pharisees in the crowd urged Jesus to tell his followers to shut up.

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Some of the Pharisees in the crowd said to Jesus, "Teacher, rebuke your disciples!"

"I tell you," he replied, "if they keep quiet, the stones will cry out."

God ordained that Jesus just had to be praised at this point in his ministry, and if the crowds were silent then God was ready to give voice to the stones!

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**3. It portrayed Jesus' heart of compassion.** As Jesus came to the Mount of Olives the city of Jerusalem came into full view.

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This is a modern view of Jerusalem from the Mount of Olives.

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As he approached Jerusalem and saw the city, he wept over it and said, "If you, even you, had only known on this day what would bring you peace—but now it is hidden from your eyes. The days will come upon you when your enemies will build an embankment against you and encircle you and hem you in on every side. They will dash you to the ground, you and the children within your walls. They will not leave one stone on another, because you did not recognize the time of God's coming to you."

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As Jesus looked over the city he saw its future with prophetic insight. He saw the rebellion against Rome, with the Roman armies encamped around the city.

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He saw the Roman legions under Titus manning their catapults and building their siege ramps.

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And he saw the stones of the temple thrown down after it was destroyed by fire, fulfilling the prophecy he was to give to the disciples

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And he saw the sacred golden candlesticks being carried in triumph through the streets of Rome  
And he saw the death of thousands and thousands of his fellow countrymen, with women and children being dashed to the ground

And he wept at the blindness of the Jews to his love and his forgiveness.

What a loving and tender Lord we have!

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#### **4. It precipitated the path to the cross.**

The final thing we learn from Jesus' entry is that it set the stage for his arrest and crucifixion just a few days later. In Luke 19:47 we read

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"Every day he was teaching at the temple. But the chief priests, the teachers of the law and the leaders among the people were trying to kill him." This desire to get Jesus out of the way, to put him to death, had been brewing in the ranks of the Jewish leaders, the Pharisees and the Sadducees, for some time now, but Jesus' actions on this day galvanized them into final action. All that was wanting now was the opportunity, which would be supplied by Judas in just two or three days' time. The Jewish leaders were scared by Jesus claim to kingship, which they recognized from his entry on a donkey. They had accommodated themselves to Roman rule, they lived comfortably under Roman authority, and they had no desire for someone to come and rock the boat, especially not someone who spoke so scathingly about them and their faults. And the cleansing of the temple must have been the last straw, since it threatened the powerful family of Annas with financial loss.

Jesus of course knew all this. He knew that his actions would bring matters to a head, and that he would soon be arrested, mocked at, beaten, and eventually hung on a cross to die. Why then did he do

it? Why did he deliberately pose this challenge to the Jewish authorities, a challenge he knew he would lose? The clearest answer is found in the prophecy of Isaiah

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Isa 52:13-53:12

See, my servant will act wisely; he will be raised and lifted up and highly exalted. ... He was despised and rejected by men, a man of sorrows, and familiar with suffering. Like one from whom men hide their faces he was despised, and we esteemed him not.

Surely he took up our infirmities and carried our sorrows, yet we considered him stricken by God, smitten by him, and afflicted. But he was pierced for our transgressions, he was crushed for our iniquities; the punishment that brought us peace was upon him, and by his wounds we are healed. We all, like sheep, have gone astray, each of us has turned to his own way; and the LORD has laid on him the iniquity of us all.

Jesus knew that the only way he could deal once and for all with sin and judgment by offering himself as the perfect sacrificial lamb of God. And as the lambs were being killed in the temple courtyard on the eve of the Passover, he would be killed on the hill of Calvary. And knowing all this, he entered Jerusalem as the final step on the road to Calvary. What love! What courage!

But now we must turn to our Lord's second entry.

**The second entry.**

**1. It will proclaim Jesus' kingship.** Jesus' first entry into Jerusalem proclaimed his kingship to those who had eyes to see. His second entry will proclaim his lordship to all mankind:

Rev 1:7

Look, he is coming with the clouds,  
and every eye will see him,  
even those who pierced him;  
and all the peoples of the earth will mourn because of him.

So shall it be! Amen.

Rev 19:11-16

I saw heaven standing open and there before me was a white horse, whose rider is called Faithful and True. With justice he judges and makes war... On his robe and on his thigh he has this name written: KING OF KINGS AND LORD OF LORDS.

And Zechariah tells us that this final battle will begin on the Mount of Olives:

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Zech 14:3-5

Then the LORD will go out and fight against those nations, as he fights in the day of battle. On that day his feet will stand on the Mount of Olives, east of Jerusalem, and the Mount of Olives will be split in two from east to west, forming a great valley, with half of the mountain moving north and half moving south.

**2. It will polarize people.** Jesus' second coming will mark the final divide. When the kingship of Jesus appears in the skies like that, it will be too late to switch sides. "Behold, *now* is 'the acceptable time,' behold, now is 'the day of salvation'" (2 Corinthians 6:2). Jesus is *for now* meek, lowly, welcoming, seeking, forgiving, patient. But when he comes again it will be as conquering king and Lord of all. Those who love him and have trusted him for forgiveness and salvation will be welcomed

into his kingdom, but those who have rejected him will be sent into outer darkness. The apostle Paul reminds us of Jesus' glory in the letter to the Philippians:

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Phil 2:8-11

And being found in appearance as a man,  
he humbled himself  
and became obedient to death-  
even death on a cross!  
Therefore God exalted him to the highest place  
and gave him the name that is above every name,  
that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow,  
in heaven and on earth and under the earth,  
and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord,  
to the glory of God the Father.

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3. **It will portray Jesus' justice.** Jesus' second coming will usher in the era of complete justice.

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Rev 21:6-8

He said to me: "It is done. I am the Alpha and the Omega, the Beginning and the End. To him who is thirsty I will give to drink without cost from the spring of the water of life. He who overcomes will inherit all this, and I will be his God and he will be my son.

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4. **It will precipitate the final judgment**

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Rev 21:6-8

He said to me: "It is done. I am the Alpha and the Omega, the Beginning and the End. To him who is thirsty I will give to drink without cost from the spring of the water of life. He who overcomes will inherit all this, and I will be his God and he will be my son. But the cowardly, the unbelieving, the vile, the murderers, the sexually immoral, those who practice magic arts, the idolaters and all liars-their place will be in the fiery lake of burning sulfur. This is the second death."

**The King Has Come and Is Coming**

So as we reflect on these things, there are two key messages. For the majority of you today who are believers, who have put your faith in Jesus Christ as Lord and Saviour, the message gives us more reasons to worship Him with joy and with to look for his return with hope. He is the once and future king; he is the suffering lamb of God who rode on a donkey to Jerusalem to take away the sins of the world, and we can look back with gratitude and thanksgiving. And he is the coming king on a white horse who will judge with righteousness and justice, and we can look forward to his coming with hope.

But for those of you who do not yet know the Lord as your Saviour, the message is more serious and very urgent. John Piper concludes one of his messages on this passage with these words: "So here is the concluding declaration and invitation: Jesus came the first time, and he is coming again, as the king over all kings. King of Israel, king of all the nations, king of nature and the universe. Until he comes again, there is a day of amnesty and forgiveness and patience. He still rides a donkey and not yet a white war-horse with a rod of iron. He is ready to save all who receive him as Savior and Treasure and King. Come to him. Know him. Receive him. Live your life in allegiance to him. There is still time – even now this morning – when you can accept the amnesty that King Jesus holds out to you, and renounce your allegiance to self and success and money and family and physical pleasure and security

– and whatever else rules you more than Jesus. And you can bow and receive Christ as your King and swear allegiance to him, and be on his side with everlasting joy.”

May God bless each one of us as we ponder and learn the truth of Jesus’ two entries.