

Providence Church (CREC)  
 First Sunday of Advent  
 November 29th, 2009, 39th sermon  
 Sermon: The Triumphal Advent  
 Text: Luke 19:28-40  
 Pastor Uriesou T. Brito

Text: And when he had said these things, he went on ahead, going up to Jerusalem. 29 When he drew near to Bethphage and Bethany, at the mount that is called Olivet, he sent two of the disciples, 30 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. 31 If anyone asks you, 'Why are you untying it?' you shall say this: 'The Lord has need of it.'" 32 So those who were sent went away and found it just as he had told them. 33 And as they were untying the colt, its owners said to them, "Why are you untying the colt?" 34 And they said, "The Lord has need of it." 35 And they brought it to Jesus, and throwing their cloaks on the colt, they set Jesus on it. 36 And as he rode along, they spread their cloaks on the road. 37 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, 38 saying, "Blessed is the King who comes in the name of the Lord! Peace in heaven and glory in the highest!" 39 And some of the Pharisees in the crowd said to him, "Teacher, rebuke your disciples." 40 He answered, "I tell you, if these were silent, the very stones would cry out."

Prayer: Lord Jesus Christ may our lives be living sacrifices unto you, which is our faithful service. Teach us to see in this narrative the majesty of your mighty works, so that in this Advent we may cry out "Blessed is the King who comes in the name of the Lord!" Amen.

Sermon: People of God, this is the first Sunday of Advent. In the fullness of time, God sent His Son born of a woman to be in our midst and redeem us. The Church Calendar teaches us to see Christ as baby and ultimately Christ as warrior-ascended Lord. As the kingdom of God, a kingdom of theocracy and truth comes, we will see that our Lord, as St. Ambrose writes, "though by all the world disowned, (He will be) in heaven enthroned."<sup>1</sup>

We celebrate Advent, but it is not unconnected with the entirety of Messiah's work. As we begin a new year in the calendar of the Church, we will be structuring our minds and our hearts around the Second Person of the Trinity. He is at the center of Redemptive History.

Our passage is about the Advent. It is not about Christ's First Advent, but it is about another Advent. It is the Triumphal Entry into Jerusalem. In many ways, the Triumphal Entry is a glorious picture of Christ's first Triumphal Entry, as He entered this world, born of the Virgin Mary. There are two connections in this Triumphal Advent of Christ with the Advent of Christ into the world as an infant.

The first connection is found in verse 37 where we see an expectation for the coming of the King. The crowds are expecting our King to come. They rejoice at His Advent. We see also in Luke two the expectation of the shepherds for the arrival of the King and also the expectation of

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<sup>1</sup> Savior of the Nations, Come, pg. 225, *Cantus Christi*. For clarity, I added the phrase "He will be."

Herod who did not rejoice in the Advent of Christ, but His expectation was one of fear. There is a connection of expectation uniting these two Advents.

The second connection is in verse 38 where they cry out “Peace in heaven and glory in the highest!” **Where have we heard this expression before?** We heard it in Luke 2:14: “...peace on earth with whom He is well pleased.” I want you to see this connection because it is a strong statement of the effectiveness of the kingdom of Messiah. In the birth of Christ in Luke two, the angels cry out “peace on earth.” But in this Triumphal Entry the people are crying out “peace in heaven.” It appears that they are beginning to see that the Kingdom of Christ has a heavenly origin. In other words, this King coming into Jerusalem brings a peace to earth that is grounded in the authority and peace of heaven. These disciples have seen earthly rulers equate peace with the power of the sword, but this King comes in the Name of the Lord without a sword. Make no mistake: the peace that Christ brings also brings a sword, but a sword of division. There is no contradiction in these two statements. Christ brings peace, but not everyone desires His peace, and so naturally, families are divided.

The implication of the Advent is that Christ is not coming to operate like earthly rulers. His kingdom has a different agenda; Christ’s kingdom does not use the methodologies of the earthly kingdoms. **How do we know this?** We know this because Messiah comes riding a colt that has never been sat on. Jesus sends his disciples to get him a colt. And if anyone asks “Why are you untying this colt?” They should answer: “Because the Lord has need of it!”

What is happening here? What is the significance of this? Why is this text important to us?

Jesus is setting up a scenario that is very familiar to any well-informed Jew.<sup>2</sup> You may wonder why Jesus doesn’t walk the rest of the way to Jerusalem. After all, He is only two miles from His destination. “Jesus is setting up a specific scene so when people see it they will recognize what he is saying.”<sup>3</sup> This scene introduces to us a donkey. Modern American will not associate a donkey with royal transportation. “Though we don’t think much of donkeys and mules, they were royal transportation in ancient Israel; Solomon was taken to his coronation on a mule that had belonged to David (1 Kings 1:33-44), and David’s sons all rode mules (2 Samuel 13:29). Kings who ride donkeys and mules are clearly not war-mongers, but they are kings nonetheless. Further, Jesus knew that Zechariah had prophesied of a king coming to Jerusalem on a donkey (Zechariah 9:9-10).”<sup>4</sup> Jesus is ready to be recognized as the Promised Messiah that Zechariah prophesied.

Jesus comes riding an animal that is not equipped for warfare. He does not come bearing a sword, but He comes in humility. Jesus is coming back to His royal city. But we know the story. The King who comes in humility and peace, will establish His kingship “by being betrayed,

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<sup>2</sup> These thoughts come from Peter Leithart @ Leithart.com. Peter’s observations imply that Jesus is re-enacting the Zechariah narrative (ch. 9).

<sup>3</sup> Steve Wilkins, Sermon on the Triumphal Entry, Luke’s narrative in chapter 19. Auburn Avenue Presbyterian.

<sup>4</sup> Peter Leithart.

oppressed, facing injustice, being condemned as an innocent man and being put to death in a violent way.”<sup>5</sup>

In verses 35 & 36 we see another kingly imagery. The disciples throw their garments/cloaks on the colt for Jesus to sit on, and then they spread their garments on the road. **What is this for?** Are the disciples trying to make Jesus comfortable in his last two miles? Are they providing a road of garments as He enters the city? There is something far deeper going on. Garments represent people.<sup>6</sup> When Jesus sits on their garments and rides over them, they are saying that Jesus is enthroned on them. He is re-enacting the Jehu narrative when Jehu was anointed as King and destroyed the temple of Baal. In II Kings 9 we read when Jehu was anointed King, that in haste every man of them took his garment and put it under him on the bare steps, and they blew the trumpet and proclaimed, “Jehu is king.”<sup>7</sup> “When Jesus arranged His entrance this way, He was symbolically declaring His kingship. He is the Greater Jehu, who rode over his followers’ garments into Samaria to destroy the temple of Baal (2 Kings 9:11-13; 10:18-28).”<sup>8</sup>

In verses 37 & 38 we see the response of the disciples. They now see His mission as the great King coming to completion, and they rejoice over the works of Christ, in particular His miracles. There are echoes of Psalm 24 in this passage. The Psalmist calls us to lift our heads and rejoice those of you who are waiting in the gates for justice. The crowd is waiting for justice at the entrance of the Holy City. They are waiting for this Messianic King to come and bring peace. If Christ raised Lazarus from the dead, then He is able to raise this Jewish nation into greatness.

And in verses 39 some of the Pharisees in the crowd said to him, “Teacher, rebuke your disciples.” As Matthew Henry writes, “Christ's triumph and his disciples' joyful praises of them, are the vexation of proud Pharisees, that are enemies to him and his kingdom.”<sup>9</sup> Luke is the only one to report this response of the Pharisees. Jesus is sharing honor with God, and the Pharisees despise it. Jesus responds in verse 40 with that powerful and memorable response: ...”if these people were silent, the very stones would cry out.”

Some have viewed this statement to say that even if the humans will not praise God, the stones will do so. There is a sense in which this idea is true. When our Lord Jesus died, the gospels tell us that the earth shook and the rocks were split, as if they uttered the praises of Christ.<sup>10</sup> In other words, the stones were witnesses of the sacrifice of Christ. But in this passage it appears that Luke is drawing an allusion to Habakkuk 2. In Habakkuk, God tells Habakkuk that He will destroy Israel at the hands of the Babylonians. God will use a wicked nation to bring justice against His chosen people who have committed far greater idolatry. In Habakkuk 2 we read, “For the stone will cry out from the wall, and the beam from the woodwork respond.” The stones refer to the stones of the temple; the temple that represented God’s presence. The witness of the

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<sup>5</sup> Comments from Steve Wilkin’s sermon on Luke 19, AAPC.

<sup>6</sup> We are clothed with Christ. James Jordan’s observations on this matter are also profitable. The Jews understand precisely the nature of this Zecharian scene.

<sup>7</sup> II Kings 9:13.

<sup>8</sup> Leithart.

<sup>9</sup> Matthew Henry, Commentary on the Whole Bible. Luke 19:39

<http://www.ccel.org/ccel/henry/mhc5.Luke.xx.html>

<sup>10</sup> Matthew 27:51. Matthew Henry found this idea plausible.

temple itself is against them. Jesus in Luke alludes to this passage. The prayer of Habakkuk is beginning to be answered. If my peoples are silenced, then the very stones will bring witness against you. Their house will oppose them.”<sup>11</sup> The stones will cry out in judgment. And indeed they do cry out in AD 70 when the Romans armies surround the Holy City and bring God’s judgment upon apostate Israel.

You may say: “But what about the peace Messiah brings?” What is peaceful about judgment? The peace of Christ comes to those with whom He is well pleased. Those who reject the message of the Kingdom find no peace and will leave this world without peace. But those who embrace Messiah’s message can truly say: Blessed is the Advent of Messiah, the King who comes in the Name of the Our Lord.

### **How shall we then live?**

There are two central applications in this text.

The first application is in the willingness of the disciples to follow the commands of Jesus in this narrative. They symbolize their submission by spreading their garments. They go about their Lord’s business, even if the message sounds extremely unusual. And when someone asks why you are doing this, the answer is because the Lord needs me to do so; because it is beneficial for the Kingdom, because it exalts my Master. Because it is what the Lord requires of me. We are called to be faithful disciples of Christ in this world, according to His commands. What we do for Christ seems utterly contrary to the world’s expectations. It is easier to walk by sight than by faith, but Christ tells us the opposite. It is easier to give our children over to be educated in the curriculum of the humanists, but the Bible says that every thought must be captive to Christ. It is easy to succumb to the immoral behavior of our youth today, but young men and women seek to follow after Christ. The way of Christ seems hard and unconventional, but it is always the best way. We are to follow the example of the disciples in their willingness to serve their Lord.

Finally, we see that whereas the Pharisees lead by intimidation and manipulation, and arrogance, Christ leads in humility and gentleness. “We have to learn that the way to have influence is not through boasting and bragging, it is by worshiping God, confessing your sins, denying your own desires and serving others happily.”<sup>12</sup> Christ came to be a Servant/King. His way was the way of the cross. We as a body need to be aware of those in our midst that are in need. If you are part of the community you will know about one another. You will know their needs, and consequently you will know how to help them. How much service have you offered to your brothers and sisters? How can you serve your brothers and sisters? How can you live as Christ lived? We lead by service, and the Christ’s example provides an infallible model for service.

The message of Advent is that Christ comes in peace, He comes to serve, and He enters this world to receive our joyful praise. “Blessed is the King who comes in the name of the Lord! Peace in heaven and glory in the highest!” In the name of the Father, Son, and Spirit. Amen.

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<sup>11</sup> Steve Wilkins.

<sup>12</sup> Wilkin’s application of this text.