

I. Read Luke 19:28-44

- A. In verses 28-40, we read of Jesus' *triumphal entry* into Jerusalem. The manner in which He approached the city had been prophesied in Zechariah 9:9. Read the Old Testament passage and explain what it told the people about Jesus.

It told them He was the Messiah.

What is the significance of Jesus riding on the back of a donkey?

According to the commentators in the *New Geneva Study Bible*, a donkey symbolized "a man of peace." A conquering king would ride a horse.

Why do you think the people of Israel missed the significance of Jesus riding on the back of a donkey?

Because of their preconceptions about who and what the Messiah was. They thought the Messiah would be a political leader. Their misunderstanding of Jesus' purpose in coming blinded them to the truth.

- B. How does the Church (or individual Christians) sometimes make the same sort of mistake that the people of Israel were making?

By projecting our own prejudices and misconceptions onto Christ and into our understanding of what He expects of us. In the extreme cases, one might fail to apprehend the substance of the gospel (that Jesus came to die for our sins and then was raised for our justification). Some are misdirected to some particular thing Christ did rather than to the real purpose of His incarnation. For example, healing, feeding the hungry, cleansing the temple, and raising the dead are all things that Christ did, but they were ancillary activities supporting His mission of salvation.

- C. In what way did Jesus truly come as a man of peace? (See 2 Corinthians 5:18-21.)
He provided the *means* by which men might find peace with God. That *means* was His active and passive obedience; that is, living a life of perfect obedience and submitting to death on the cross.

In what way did Jesus come with a sword to separate and alienate? (See Matthew 10:34-36.)

Jesus not only spoke the truth, but also He embodied it. Truth does separate. We need not be happy about this; it is simply a fact. Nor should we be surprised when others refuse to listen to or receive the truth. The Scripture is clear that many hate the truth. (See John 1:9-12.)

- D. In Luke 19:40, Jesus responds to the efforts of the Pharisees to quiet the people as they offered praise to Him by saying that, if necessary, "the stones will cry out!" Discuss the importance of Jesus' statement. (Don't be afraid to speculate!)

First of all, it was a rebuke to unbelieving religious leaders, making it clear that God has no need of them. Secondly, it alluded to Christ's position as Creator and Lord. (See Colossians 1:16, 17; Philippians 2:9-11.) Thirdly, it was an allusion to the cosmological and eschatological importance of this particular moment in history. All things from the Fall of man to this moment in time would culminate in this final chapter of Jesus' life. Fourthly, it was a reference to the fact that *all of creation*, not just man, suffered under the curse of the Fall and hence looked forward to redemption in Christ. (See Romans 8:20-22.)

- E. Why did Jesus weep as He looked at Jerusalem?

He saw the destruction and devastation that lay only a few years ahead. Jerusalem was utterly destroyed in 70 AD. He also was terribly burdened by the consequences of unbelief on the people of Israel. He loved His family and His fellow countrymen and took no pleasure in their impending doom. It is important to note that, though we believe in the doctrine of election, this in no way implies that God takes pleasure in the unbeliever's ultimate destination. Nor should we! Notwithstanding this, God is glorified as His justice is rendered in perfect measure to wicked men.

In what way should believers in our day share the concerns and burdens of Christ as we observe what is happening in our own country?

As our nation turns its back on God and His commandments, it flirts with judgment and destruction. This should give us no pleasure, but rather should produce great sadness in us. It is also important to recognize that the effects of the destruction of Jerusalem in AD 70 were suffered by all — righteous and wicked. There was no secret rapture delivering the righteous from the tribulation that came upon Israel.

Can you think of a genuine prophet of God that was called to preach to a people and who actually *wanted* those people to suffer the judgment of God? If so, what can we learn from him? (Read Jonah 3:1 to 4:1.)

Jonah and the Ninevites. We can learn not to allow our hearts to become hardened to the plight of those who are about to incur the judgment and wrath of God. We can also learn that God places us in circumstances and with people for reasons that may not be to our liking, but that are always related to our responsibilities as Christians.

F. Consider the following:

- * If Jesus was a Jew, why do the Jews (as a people) reject Him?
The Scripture tells us that the Jews (as a nation) have been blinded for a time. What this means at the human level is that the hardness of their hearts that was manifest in their rejection of God's Word Incarnate has made them prone to being deceived. They created their own idea of what the Messiah would be and, when He actually came, they didn't like what they saw! Also, it is important to note that the first believers were in fact Jews, and today there are many individual Jews who have trusted in Christ. Hence, we know that there is certainly nothing intrinsic in being a Jew that makes one immune to the message of Christ's gospel. People are people.
- * If God elects *some* to eternal life, why doesn't He elect *the others* too? (Or, another way to express the question is, "Why does God allow some to go to hell?")
No one can answer such a question. Isaiah 55:9 addresses this point. Truly, the better question is, "Why does He show mercy on *any* of us?" After all, we are all sinners by nature, hostile toward God and deserving of His justice. This is the point of the hymn "Amazing Grace."
- * Did all the people that shouted praises to Jesus during His *triumphal entry* really believe in Him?
No. In fact many of those welcoming Him would be shouting, "crucify Him!" at Pontius Pilate's palace in a short time. In order to better understand this phenomenon, read the parable of the sower (Matthew 13:18-23).