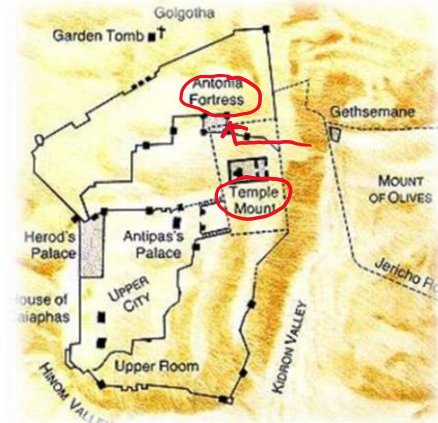


## The Time of the LORD's Visitation (Luke 19:28-48)

The crowd thought Jesus would immediately usher in God's kingdom with a grand entrance into Jerusalem (19:11). But Jesus' coming to Jerusalem on Palm Sunday was not 'the Day of the LORD' they expected, but 'the day of the LORD's visitation' (c.f. Mal 3:1-3; Is 56:3-12). The 'Parable of the Minas' (19:11-27) was to prepare them for His departure from the earth and His eventual return (v28).



### A. The Triumphal Entry into Jerusalem (19:28-40)

#### 1. Day of Emotional Rollercoaster

- The day started with a bang! The whole city was worked up to a frenzy with everyone shouting 'Hosanna!' This day was to mark Israel's 'Independence Day!' But soon afterwards, all the excitement turned into shock and disappointment, then into a murderous rage. No other day started so well, so high in spirit, then plunged so low to an unthinkable anti-climax.
- Jerusalem stood on a hill, surrounded by even higher hills. It is shaped like a bowl with a light bulb inside. It opened on the east to the Kidron Valley, and from there ascended to Mt Olives. From Mt Olives, a road wound sharply down to the lowest point on earth in the city of Jericho, where Jesus has just been. From Jericho to Mt Olives is a 27km journey with a 1km climb. Along the way was a little beautiful village called Bethany, only a 3km walk to Jerusalem. Bethany was like a 'second home' for Jesus.
- It was the Passover season in April and almost two million Jews from everywhere poured into Jerusalem. During this major festive season, people would camp all around the city, and on the hills around the Kidron Valley overlooking the temple. The Galilean pilgrims would be particularly keen on this year's celebration. *'Do you think that Galilean prophet will come? Do you think He will overthrow the Romans and bring peace to this city? I heard the rumour that just a few days ago He was in Jericho. I am sure He is on His way for the Passover. Man, what a timing. Just in time for the Passover!'*

Jerusalem means 'the city of peace', but ironically this beautiful city blessed with natural fortification with its surrounding hills, has known very little peace. Not since the days of the great king David who made this city the national capital a thousand years ago. The Jewish people had been holding on to the hope that one day God will send His anointed King the Messiah, and He will establish the kingdom of God on earth.

- Jesus sent two of His disciples**, saying, 'Go into the village opposite *you*, where as you enter you will find a colt tied, on which no one has ever sat. Loose it and bring *it here*.<sup>31</sup> And if anyone asks you, 'Why are you loosing *it*?' thus you shall say to him, 'Because the Lord has need of it.' (19:30-31)
  - This is the only time Jesus rode on an animal. He always walked. The disciples were sure this was the day they had been waiting for centuries! (C.f. 19:11) *'He is going to ride into the city!'* Riding a horse into Jerusalem was equivalent to entering the city in a military tank today. At last, Jesus was prepared to make a public appearance, they thought, and make a 'royal military entry' and proclaim Himself to be the 'Son of David' (18:38) whom they had been waiting for so long!
  - But in their excitement, they missed a small detail. Jesus was not riding a horse, but a colt of a donkey. Instead of a fully armed military vehicle, He was coming in a 'Honda Jazz'. Donkeys are never used for battle. You never see a conqueror on a donkey. You cannot find a milder animal! And Jesus was riding a baby donkey! Jesus' legs would have hung down the colt's sides with both of His feet almost touching the ground. This colt that has never been trained to carry a grown man, fulfilled the Scriptures, *'Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion! Shout, O daughters of Jerusalem! Behold, your King is coming to you; He is just and having salvation, lowly and riding on a donkey, a colt, the foal of a donkey.'* (Zech 9:9)
  - The colt was shared by several owners. It probably belonged to a group of poor people. But when they were told, 'The Lord has a need of it,' no discussion was needed. (19:33-34) They all accepted the Lord's total ownership over the animal. What a privilege for their colt to be used by the Lord this way!

### 3. Jesus' Royal Procession into Jerusalem

- a. The news became viral. The whole eastern hill full of Jewish pilgrims was whipped into uncontrollable excitement. They waved the palm branches ripped off the trees everywhere, and laying their garments on the road, rolling out the red carpet to welcome the Lord. The day they had been waiting for centuries was happening right before their eyes. The Jews have been passing this hope to their children from generation to generation. (Still today the Jews say, 'Next year in Jerusalem,' hoping their Messiah would come to deliver them from all their troubles. How impatient and short-sighted in comparison we Christians can be!)

When was the last time Israel saw a similar event as a nation? When Jehu rode his chariot like a mad man as a newly anointed king of Israel and overthrew Jezebel the wicked queen (2 Kgs 9:13).

- b. What kind of a king would Jesus be? King David was the benchmark as the model king for all kings in Israel. David was the people's king who deeply cared for his people. He was a warrior, who slew Goliath and saved the nation. He was an accomplished musician who loved worshipping God and established the revolutionary worship system in Israel. How did Jesus compare to King David? Jesus was a humble servant, but the greatest teacher, and a prophet with mighty signs and wonders. He was a strong person who confronted the hypocritical religious leaders to their face, yet He had a tender Shepherd's heart. He loved even the little children. The rumour had it that even nature obeys this man's voice, and He can multiply food with a simple prayer! This man never failed to cure any kind of sickness and disease. He even brought the dead back to life! Is there anything this man cannot do? What more do you want from a king? Jerusalem, the city of peace, has been trampled down by Gentiles for too long: by Egypt, Assyria, Babylon, Persia, Greece and now the brutal Rome. Finally, this new king, the anointed Messiah was about to replace Herod the imposter king's sons and take the throne of David, which had been vacant for 500 years. At last, they will get rid of the rotten corrupt system and start anew with Jesus as their King!
- c. The crowd shouted, *'Blessed is the King who comes in the name of the LORD! Peace in heaven and glory in the highest!'* (19:38 C.f. Ps 118:26; Luke 2:14 – 'peace on earth'). 'Hosanna' (Jn 12:13) is not a song of praise, but a prayer and a shout of declaration, 'Save us now!' What was behind all this excitement? It was nationalism. The Pharisees didn't like it. They said, *'Teacher, rebuke Your disciples.'* (19:39) Jesus said, *'If you stop it, even the stones would immediately cry out.'* (19:40) And the people needed to let it out. So much emotion bottled up during the centuries of pain and hope was bursting out. (Zech 9:9)

### B. Jesus Weeps over Jerusalem (19:41-44)

1. As the Lord drew near the city, He 'burst into sobs' (Κλαίω). Jesus began sobbing his heart out (19:41). The crowd was shouting with a deafening noise, 'Blessed is the King who comes in the name of the LORD. Peace in heaven and glory in the highest!' (19:38) So why was Jesus weeping? Wasn't He happy about all this excitement and the crowd's welcome? What did the people think when they saw their new Messiah sobbing as He rode through the city gate? Maybe Jesus was overcome with emotion because all the prophecies from His birth were about to be fulfilled! But Jesus sees things totally differently from the way we see things.
2. What did Jesus see that the crowd didn't see? The crowd thought it was the day of their triumph over their enemies. Jesus knew it was the day of their tragedy, which would seal their fate. They thought it was the end of their trouble. Jesus saw it was the beginning of their trouble. Why? They did not understand the things that make up their peace! And now it is hidden from their eyes (19:42).

What makes up your peace? Comfort, health, money, nice house, family, stable job, and retirement fund? What was Jesus' idea of what would truly make our 'peace', 'shalom'? Getting right with God. Getting our hearts and lives right with God. *'Blessed are the poor in spirit for theirs is the kingdom of God. Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness for they shall be filled.'* (Matt 5:3-10)

Jesus was not going along with the crowd's idea of what would make their peace – a political revolution in the spirit of nationalism. They shouted, *'Hosanna', Liberate us from Romans! That would bring peace to Jerusalem and bring peace in heaven'* (v38). It was a bold claim. Little did they know that in a few days,

that shout would turn into 'Crucify him!' What did the crowd want? They wanted a 'freedom fighter' who would fight for them. And they were given one - his name was 'Barabbas', 'the Son of the Father.'

3. Jesus told them (1) 'You do not know what truly makes for your peace'; (2) 'You do not know the time of your visitation.' Therefore, your portion will be spiritual blindness until this city is overtaken by God's judgment. '*I can see the day when your enemies will build an embankment around this city and tear it down to the ground. Not one stone will be left upon another.*' (19:43-44) Jesus clearly saw the choice they would make, and where the nationalistic spirit without the true repentance of heart and return to God would lead them. 40 years later Jesus' prophecies came to pass exactly. Josephus tells us that when the Roman soldiers surrounded Jerusalem, they set up siegeworks to starve them out, then the city was ransacked, and literally not one stone was left on another (Bellum v262, 264). Why? They did not realise their God came to save them from their sins first before saving them from the Romans. It was the Day of the Lord's visitation, and He came to cleanse and purify them from their sin (Mal 3:1-3).

### C. Jesus Cleanses the Temple (19:45-48)

When Jesus came through the eastern gate, the Golden Gate, the crowd expected Him to turn right and go straight up to Antonia Fortress where the Roman military was stationed. But Jesus turned left toward the Gentiles court in the Temple precinct.

1. Gentiles court was meant to be a quiet place for gentiles to come and pray. It was the only place of prayer for the Gentile believers. But nobody could pray there because the place was turned into a mixture of the stock exchange and an animal market, so busy and noisy with buying and selling live animals and haggling around the money changers' tables.

Herod's Temple had three main areas: (1) Altar Area (for the priests only); (2) Court of Israel (for Jewish men and women); (3) Court of Gentiles. The first two areas were maintained well, but the Court of Gentiles was used to run the temple business for the priests who made handsome profits from selling sacrificial animals to the pilgrims at jacked up prices, and from running the foreign exchange booths.

2. What was God's purpose for the temple? (C.f. Is 56:4-8) God's deepest concern was for the rejected and the marginalised people outside the temple, such as eunuchs and foreigners. That they too could draw near God in prayer by the intercessory ministry of Israel as the kingdom of priests (Ex 19:5-6). But they corrupted the temple worship system to benefit themselves rather than serving the people. Jesus said, 'It is written, 'My house is a house of prayer [for all nations] but you have made it a den of thieves!' (19:45 C.f. Is 56:7; Jer 7:11) Malachi prophesied about this day of visitation: '*Suddenly the Lord whom they seek would appear in the temple. But when He comes, He would be like a refining fire and launderer's soap to purge the sons of Levi.*' (Ma 3:1-5). Isaiah 56:9-12 shows God's anger toward the corrupt priesthood.
3. This is the only time Jesus used force. *He overturned the money changer's table in the middle of the trading session.* Jesus singlehandedly cleared out the entire courtyard. The gospel of John tells us Jesus made a 'whip'. But instead of whipping the Romans who took away their peace, He whipped the Jews (John 2:13-15 & Mark 11:15-19). *Suddenly all the shouts and Hosannas fell silent.* Jesus entered the city of Jerusalem as their Messiah, but He wouldn't give them what they wanted – freedom from trouble. Jesus came to give them what truly makes for their peace – 'freedom from sin.' This day was the Day of the Lord's visitation, not the Day of the Lord. What did Jesus give God's people that day? Jesus gave them the teaching of the word daily in the temple court after clearing it out. Because that is what they needed to have true and lasting peace, and be free from sin. '*But the chief priests, the scribes, and the leaders of the people sought to destroy Him.*' (19:47).
4. Do you know what makes for your peace? Have you made your peace with God? Jesus came riding on a colt of a donkey to deal with His people first. He came to cleanse His temple. Do you recognise the day of the Lord's visitation? Jesus is coming to His own house to inspect His house and cleanse His house with a trumpet-like voice. We are the temple of God individually (1Co 6:19) and corporately (1Co 3:16-17; Ep 2:21). Jesus is getting His house ready to be His witness to the nations before He returns on the Day of the Lord to judge all evil in this world. Are you ready for His visitation? Are you ready for the Day of the Lord?