

Who Is Coming to Jerusalem?

April 10, 2022

Joe Kim

“After he had said this, he went on ahead, going up to Jerusalem. ²⁹ When he had come near Bethphage and Bethany, at the place called the Mount of Olives, he sent two of the disciples, ³⁰ saying, “Go into the village ahead of you, and as you enter it you will find tied there a colt that has never been ridden. Untie it and bring it here. ³¹ If anyone asks you, ‘Why are you untying it?’ just say this, ‘The Lord needs it.’” ³² So those who were sent departed and found it as he had told them. ³³ As they were untying the colt, its owners asked them, “Why are you untying the colt?” ³⁴ They said, “The Lord needs it.” ³⁵ Then they brought it to Jesus; and after throwing their cloaks on the colt, they set Jesus on it. ³⁶ As he rode along, people kept spreading their cloaks on the road. ³⁷ As he was now approaching the path down from the Mount of Olives, the whole multitude of the disciples began to praise God joyfully with a loud voice for all the deeds of power 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 heaven!” ³⁹ Some of the Pharisees in the crowd said to him, “Teacher, order your disciples to stop.” ⁴⁰ He answered, “I tell you, if these were silent, the stones would shout out.” (Luke 19:28-40).

1. New Pastor’s Visit

There is a story of a new pastor who dressed like a homeless man before Sunday worship on the first day at a new church. He asked people for change to buy food. But he didn’t get much help from the congregants. He went into the sanctuary and sat at the front. Some of the ushers came and asked him to move to the back. No one recognized who he was.

Do you think anyone recognized Jesus for who he was when he entered Jerusalem? Most people might have thought he could be the king of Israel. Jesus’ followers never expected that Jesus would die on a cross. Today’s scripture asks us the question, do we really know who Jesus is?

2. The Triumphant Entry

Luke chapter 19 tells us that Jesus was going up to Jerusalem. When Jesus enters Jerusalem, the people are excited because they expect that Jesus would be king of Israel. The crowds hope that Jesus would reign and bring Israel’s independence from Rome. This is what the Israelites prayed for a long time.

Verse 29 says, **“When he had come near Bethphage and Bethany, at the place called the Mount of Olives, he sent two of the disciples, ³⁰**

saying, “Go into the village ahead of you, and as you enter it you will find tied there a colt that has never been ridden. Untie it and bring it here. ³¹If anyone asks you, ‘Why are you untying it?’ just say this, ‘The Lord needs it.’”

Everything happens as Jesus said and the two disciples bring a colt. After they throw their cloaks on the colt, the disciples set Jesus on it. As Jesus rides along, people spread their cloaks on the road.

Why does Jesus enter Jerusalem riding a colt? Zechariah 9:9 says, **“Rejoice greatly, O daughter Zion! Shout aloud, O daughter Jerusalem! Lo, your king comes to you; triumphant and victorious is he, humble and riding on a donkey, on a colt, the foal of a donkey.”** Jesus’ peaceful and humble entrance to Jerusalem riding on a colt was the fulfillment of Zechariah’s prophecy.

That’s why the whole multitude of the disciples begin to praise God saying, **“Blessed is the king who comes in the name of the Lord! Peace in heaven, and glory in the highest heaven.”** This blessing is from Psalm 118:26. The writer of Psalm 118 says, **“Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord.”** But Luke changes “he” to “the king.” In the Old Testament time, the people used Psalm 118 to welcome pilgrims to the temple or the great feasts in Jerusalem, but here the people use Psalm 118 to welcome the coming Messiah, Jesus.

Does everyone welcome Jesus? Of course not. Some of the Pharisees in the crowd say to Jesus, **“Teacher, order your disciples to stop.”** Jesus answers, **“I tell you, if these were silent, the stones would shout out”** (verses 39 &40).

Some of the Pharisees ask Jesus to rebuke the crowd to stop calling Jesus, Messiah, or king. The Pharisees worry about a revolt that would bring the Roman army down on them. But Jesus says that if people were quiet, the stones would cry out. Jesus reminds the Israelites and us of the prophecy of Habakkuk 2:11, **“the very stones will cry out from the wall.”** Jesus says to the Pharisees that God wants everyone to know that Jesus has come as the Messiah not only to save the Israelites but also everyone in the world.

3. Passion Sunday

Churches all over the world celebrate Jesus’ triumphal entry to Jerusalem today. Today is called Palm Sunday. However, today is also called Passion Sunday. Holy Week begins today. Holy Week is a time to pay more attention to the final days, suffering, and crucifixion of Jesus.

4. The Disciples were Devastated

The rest of the Luke's Gospel tells us that Jesus enters Jerusalem not to reign Israel as king but to die on the cross. In Luke 18:31-33, Jesus says, ***“Look, we’re going up to Jerusalem, and everything written about the Human One by the prophets will be accomplished. He will be handed over to the Gentiles. He will be ridiculed, mistreated, and spit on. After torturing him, they will kill him. On the third day, he will rise up.”***

I am sure the disciples were shocked when Jesus talked about his suffering and death. The disciples would have never expected that the Messiah would be killed. So when Jesus was crucified, their hope was gone and the disciples were devastated. But that was not the end of the story.

5. Our Expectations

What about us? Have our expectations been met? Or are we so disappointed because we become ill and die just like everyone else? Some might ask why do we believe in Jesus if there is no difference between Christians and non-believers?

6. Conclusion

Next Sunday is Easter when we celebrate the resurrection of Jesus. The disciples and all of us should remember that Jesus raised Lazarus from the dead and talked about not only his suffering and death in Jerusalem but also his resurrection. And he was risen from the dead.

7. Application

It is sad that Jesus died on the cross. However, if Jesus didn't die, we would not be here today. Because of Jesus' death, we celebrate his resurrection every Sunday. If Jesus did not rise from the dead, there would be no Christianity and the Church. Although everyone will die one day, what makes Christians different is that we praise God for raising Jesus from the dead. Jesus became the evidence of our resurrection and eternal life.

Who is the one coming to Jerusalem riding on a colt? He is the Messiah who gives us hope of resurrection and teaches us that death is not the end of our lives. This is the good news that everyone wants to hear. If we do not shout “Jesus is risen, all God's creation including the stones, plants, and flowers would shout “He is risen indeed.” Amen.