

Why Choose the Donkey *Luke 19:28-44*

Good Morning

Today is the day most Christians celebrate as Palm Sunday.

One of the most baffling things about Palm Sunday and the Easter story is the fact that Jesus' Disciples didn't understand what was happening in Jerusalem that day.

Until Jesus' resurrection, His disciples, who had traveled, studied, and ministered under Jesus for most of His public ministry, seemed confused about what was happening.

During the week leading to His crucifixion, there are many examples of the Disciples failing to comprehend what Jesus told them about who He was, and what His ultimate mission was.

Even after the resurrection, the Disciples still did not understand what happened to Jesus despite the miracles they witnessed and the three years of teaching they received from their teacher.

Please open your Bibles to *Luke 19* as we take a break from our *Book of Acts* study.

My question: *Why did Jesus choose a donkey over a stallion?*

Jesus chose a donkey to fulfill prophecy and to demonstrate to the Disciples, an example of humility, identity, and obedience.

Jesus came from heaven to Earth for the first time as a suffering servant, but He is coming again as King of Kings.

I. The stage is set.

Read *Luke 19:28-36*

The LORD had just finished teaching the parable of the minas to teach His Disciples about the kingdom of God on earth, during His final trip to Jerusalem.

Most of the people there believed that Jesus was going to Jerusalem to establish His earthly kingdom.

Part of the purpose of the parable of the minas was to dismiss the rumors that the time to set up His kingdom, was at hand.

In the parable of the minas, a nobleman left home to travel and to be crowned king.

The nobleman gave ten minas to his servants (about three months' wages), and the future king instructed his servants to put this money to work until he returned.

We are told that the nobleman's people "hated him" and refused to acknowledge his kingship. So, when the nobleman was crowned king, he returned home to set things right.

Each servant had to account for how they had used the money.

The first servant's mina was invested and had earned ten more so, the king called him a good and faithful servant.

The second servant's mina was invested and yielded five additional minas, so that servant was given charge over five cities.

The final servant hid his mina, because he was afraid of the nobleman, as he claimed the nobleman was a hard man.

Jesus said in *Luke 19:26*, '*For I say to you, that to everyone who has will be given; and from him who does not have, even what he has will be taken away from him*'. *NKJV*

At the end of the parable, the king commanded his enemies, who rebelled against him, to be brought before him and executed.

The nobleman in the parable of the minas is Jesus, who left this world after taking the Cross, but will return as **King** someday.

As followers of Christ, Jesus has given us a mission to fulfill, and we must be faithful to serve Him until He returns.

Now, in our passage, Jesus sent two of His Disciples into the village to bring an unbroken colt of a donkey, which no one had ever sat on back to Him.

Jesus is **all-knowing**, so one reason for choosing a donkey was to set the stage for the fulfillment of the prophecy of *Zechariah*.

Zechariah 9:9 "Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion! Shout, O daughter 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. NKJV

Even though His Disciples failed to realize Jesus is God in the flesh, they did realize He is a miracle worker.

The people there wanted a physical King, but they **did not** want to accept the Lord, on His terms.

What are some of the responses from people today when they hear about Jesus Christ?

- Some people hear about Jesus and refuse to believe the miracles He did were even possible.
- Some people hear about Jesus and are convinced that the fulfillment of prophecies were somehow manipulated.
- Some people hear about Jesus and turn a deaf ear to Him.
- Some people hear about Jesus and by faith, place their trust in the LORD for Salvation.

Here in our Palm Sunday passage from the *Gospel of Luke*, we learn of some fulfilled prophecies.

Before this, Jesus deliberately discouraged any kind of public acknowledgment that He was the promised Messiah.

Maybe you remember the story of Jesus feeding the multitude with the five loaves and the two fish.

John 6:14 Then those men, when they had seen the sign that Jesus did, said, "This is truly the Prophet who is to come into the world."

John 6:15 Therefore when Jesus perceived that they were about to come and take Him by force to make Him king, He departed again to the mountain by Himself alone. NKJV

When Jesus cleansed the leper in *Matthew 8*, He told the leper to tell no one but to go and show himself to the priest.

In *Matthew 16*, Jesus told His Disciples not to tell anyone He was the Messiah because the time was not right.

There are many other accounts within the Gospels where Jesus told the witnesses of miracles to keep it private.

Why did Jesus want to keep the people from publicly acknowledging He was the Messiah?

Many times, Jesus said that His hour had not yet come.

The LORD **appointed** a specific day in history when the Messiah would be presented as the King.

Galatians 4:4 When the fullness of the time had come, God sent forth His Son, born of a woman, born under the law,

Galatians 4:5 to redeem those who were under the law, that we might receive the adoption as sons. NKJV

The servants who went to get the colt of a donkey were told what to say to the owner of it, in the event they were questioned.

Do you think this was a pre-arranged lending of the animal?

We really don't know for sure, but it is obvious that Jesus knew what was about to happen once He entered the city.

Jesus also knew what He would face a week after this event because the time had come to present the King to the people.

Jesus rode into Jerusalem on a donkey, which is odd for a king. In war times or during a parade procession, a king would march in on a **stallion**, not a colt, let alone a foal of a donkey.

Jesus rode in on a colt which symbolized **Peace** and Salvation.

Romans 5:8 God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us.

Romans 5:9 Much more then, having now been justified by His blood, we shall be saved from wrath through Him.

Romans 5:10 For if when we were enemies we were reconciled to God through the death of His Son, much more, having been reconciled, we shall be saved by His life. NKJV

We were all born sinners and sin separates us from God. But if we have received the gift of Salvation by faith in Christ, we are no longer enemies, but we become children of God.

Here, Jesus showed Himself as King, even riding on a colt of a donkey. This revealed Jesus as a humble, suffering servant King, but when Jesus comes back, He will ride in on a horse.

Revelation 19:11, Now I saw heaven opened, and behold, a white horse. And He who sat on him was called Faithful and True, and in righteousness He judges and makes war. NKJV

In our passage, as Jesus traveled toward Jerusalem, a large crowd gathered around Him.

This crowd should have understood, because of over 305 Old Testament prophecies, that Jesus was their promised Messiah.

However, this crowd did not understand that it **was not** yet time to set up the kingdom of God.

Before Jesus could take His position as King of Kings, He had to become our suffering servant and be crucified for our sins but the people failed to understand those prophecies about Messiah.

Luke 19:36 many spread their clothes on the road. NKJV

Matthew 21:8 And a very great multitude spread their clothes on the road; others cut down branches from the trees and spread them on the road. NKJV

By laying their clothes on the road and waving Palm branches, the people were giving Jesus the royal treatment, proclaiming Him as their **rightful** king.

With His resurrection and ascension, Jesus defeated sin and death, and He gave the **Holy Spirit** and gifts to the Church.

1 Corinthians 15:55 "O Death, where is your sting? O Hades, where is your victory?"

1 Corinthians 15:56 The sting of death is sin, and the strength of sin is the law.

1 Corinthians 15:57 But thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ. NKJV

The hour had now come, the day had arrived, the time for the Messiah to come riding into the city on a donkey.

This whole scene foreshadowed what was to come in the future.

II. For some, Jesus' arrival caused anger.

Read *Luke 19:37-40*

As Jesus rides into town, the crowds are growing, and the festivities are all in full swing.

The people were preparing for the coming week and celebration of one of the greatest Jewish holidays of the year, **Passover**.

Passover was the celebration of how God delivered the Children of Israel out of Egypt, by killing the firstborn in Egypt of those who would not put blood from a Lamb on their doorpost.

Even before Jesus arrived in town, the news that Jesus had raised Lazarus from the dead preceded His arrival.

Can't you feel the excitement have you heard who this man is?

The Pharisees saw this going on and started to put things together as the people were rejoicing and calling Jesus the King.

"Blessed be the King who comes in the name of the Lord, Peace in heaven, and glory in the highest".

The multitude was crying "*Hosanna to the Son of David*", a **Messianic** saying. *Hosanna* means save now.

So, the Pharisees commanded Jesus to rebuke His disciples because their acclamation of Him as the Messiah was considered blasphemy to them.

Jesus said, "*I tell you that if these should keep silent, the stones would immediately cry out.*" **Even matter, knows the Creator!**

Jesus is Lord of all creation, and if people will not Praise Him as King, then creation will shout it out.

Romans 8:22 For we know that the whole creation groans and labors with birth pangs together until now.

Romans 8:23 Not only that, but we also who have the firstfruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, eagerly waiting for the adoption, the redemption of our body. NKJV

Jesus gained so much popularity the Pharisees were in danger of losing their position, so they wanted Jesus to quiet the crowds.

We know, there will come a day when every person ever born must face a decision to accept or reject Jesus as the Messiah.

Jesus realized the crowd was shouting Hosanna this week, but there would be a crowd shouting "Crucify Him" the next week.

So suddenly, right in the middle of this Triumphant Entry, the parade stopped...*What is going on?*

III. Jesus looked over Jerusalem.

Read *Luke 19:41-44*

Jerusalem rejected their Messiah, and Jesus *wept* as He looked at the city. Jesus *wept* because they lost their opportunity to know peace and receive heaven by receiving Him.

The word, “*wept*” in *Luke 19:41* means **audible** weeping, lamenting, or mourning. Jesus loudly “*wept*” over Jerusalem.

Jesus saw the people of Jerusalem and realized that were empty, and without hope because they refused their Savior.

Jesus knew what this rejection was going to cost them because they did not recognize this was the day of their visitation.

What do Jesus’ tears tell us about Him?

These tears reveal exactly who Jesus really is.

1. The tears reveal Jesus is the Messiah, the **God-man**, who came to rescue lost sinners.

Jesus is fully God and fully man in one being. As God, Jesus foreknows the future. As a man, Jesus had real emotions and reacted to the Jew's future judgment for unbelief.

2. The tears reveal that Jesus **already** knows what will happen to each one of us.

Jesus also predicted the destruction of the Temple that would happen almost forty years later.

How many of us here this morning would like to be able to predict the future, know how to avoid pitfalls, and help our families with their problems?

3. The tears reveal how great the Savior's **love** is, for lost sinners.

Mark 6:34 And Jesus, when He came out, saw a great multitude and was moved with compassion for them, because they were like sheep not having a shepherd. NKJV

This is the heart of God we all should have as His followers.

We should have compassion for lost sinners, showing them the love of Christ and a better way to live.

It is tragic to see Jesus but not recognize Him for who He is.

On that Palm Sunday, the crowds were crying out “Hosanna” but one week later there were crowds crying out “Crucify Him!”

There is coming a day when every knee will bow, and every tongue will confess that Jesus Christ is Lord.

If God's heart is to rescue lost sinners, then we need to have the same heart, to want the lost and dying around us, to be rescued.

Jesus knew what His mission was because He was on His way home; this world was not His home.

Christian, this world is not your home so let's get busy with our mission knowing that our homecoming is not that far away!

IV. Practical Application.

Why did Jesus choose a donkey over a stallion?

The King of the universe came in on a foal of a donkey?

Jesus chose a donkey to fulfill prophecy and to demonstrate to the Disciples an example of humility, identity, and obedience.

1. Like Jesus, we should be **humble**.

The twelve Disciples had a special relationship with Jesus, as mentor, spiritual advisor, boss, king, Lord, and Rabbi.

We learn in the Gospels, that Jesus gave His Disciples the power to preach and heal the sick in his name, but Jesus often taught them lessons on humility.

In our passage, when Jesus sent two of the Disciples to go and retrieve a foal of a donkey they must have been confused.

Instead of healing the sick and preaching the Kingdom of God, we find these two disciples retrieving a donkey.

This is similar to your church asking you to volunteer to clean toilets. *Who would volunteer for that?*

The two Disciples may have thought donkey duty was humiliating and they were taken out of the limelight, but they became main characters in the Gospel story of Palm Sunday.

James 4:10 Humble yourselves in the sight of the Lord, and He will lift you up. NKJV

Stay humble and let the LORD raise you up.

Jesus Himself demonstrated the ultimate humility. ***Philippians 2:5 Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus,***

Philippians 2:6 who, being in the form of God, did not consider it robbery to be equal with God,

Philippians 2:7 but made Himself of no reputation, taking the form of a bondservant, and coming in the likeness of men.

Philippians 2:8 And being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself and became obedient to the point of death, even the death of the cross. NKJV

The Kingdom of God is different from the world. If you have a position, power, or money, you are considered important.

But in the LORD's economy, you are recognized by how your service to the King and your humility.

Matthew 23:11 he who is greatest among you shall be your servant.

Matthew 23:12 And whoever exalts himself will be humbled, and he who humbles himself will be exalted. NKJV

2. Like Jesus, we should learn to know our identity.

Greatness comes from your identity in Christ, not from the possessions you own.

Jesus was an ordinary 33-year-old Jew, riding on a small donkey. He was probably too tall for this young animal, and this did not seem very kingly at all.

But the people were all shouting, "*Blessed is He that comes in the name of the Lord! Hosanna to the king.*"

What a difference from our opinion today, as the people didn't care what He looked like on a donkey.

The Disciples had experienced His love, mercy, and great compassion. The crowds had witnessed His miracles, so His appearance on a colt of a donkey didn't matter to them.

Jesus was confident in who He is and He wants us to understand who we are in Christ.

Jesus is the ONE who said, "*Before Abraham was, I am*", and He said, "*I and my Father are One.*"

Jesus is the ONE who said, "*that they may behold My glory which You have given Me; for You loved Me before the foundation of the world.*"

When they came to arrest Jesus later that week, He echoed God's self-revelation of "*I am Who I am*" and the soldiers that came to arrest him fell over backward.

In other statements, Jesus professed He was God in the flesh.

What did the Disciples learn on Palm Sunday? It was who they were in Christ that mattered, not how the world viewed them.

Do you know who you are in Christ? You are an ambassador for the King of Kings and the Lord of Lords.

A vital part of Christianity is finding our identity in Christ, as a child of God, a new creation, and a part of His family, because we received the gift of salvation by **faith** in Christ.

By being saved we become a New Creation, as we are adopted as a Child of God, we are co-heirs with Christ.

We are united with Christ, we gain Freedom, purpose, and meaning. Jesus chose a donkey **out of obedience** to the Father.

As we grow in our relationship with Jesus, we learn how to live out our new identity.

Living out our identity in Christ reflects God's character in our thoughts, speech, and actions, living a life that honors Him.

3. Like Jesus, we should **obey** the will of the Father.

The Disciples also learned that a servant lives their lives for the benefit of others first. Even as God the Son, Jesus didn't need to be popular, but He wanted to do the Father's will.

John 6:38 For I have come down from heaven, not to do My own will, but the will of Him who sent Me. NKJV

*Are we willing to humble ourselves to serve Jesus, even retrieving a donkey? **Are you willing to do donkey duty?***

Are we chasing the things of this world and the opinion of man; or do we serve Jesus because we know who we are?

Are we going to live for ourselves or are we living out God's purpose for our life, and obeying His will?

Jesus came the first time as a suffering servant, but He is coming again as King of Kings and the King will receive His own to Himself!