

Save Us We Pray
Luke 19:35-40

All throughout the course of human history, there have been many "dividing lines" that have signaled moments of great change within the world order. And for our thoughts today as we read these blessed scriptures about the Lord Jesus, may I take a liberty and declare this one, our Lord's triumphal entry into the city of Jerusalem as being one of the absolute dividing lines in the course of human history.

Let's first pause and read our passage text and we'll talk about it. These words given to us in the Book of Luke chapter 19 verse 35,

³⁵ Then they (some of the disciples) brought . . . (a young donkey) to Jesus. And they threw their own clothes on the colt, and they set Jesus on him. ³⁶ And as He went, *many* spread their clothes on the road. ³⁷ Then, as He was now drawing near the descent of the Mount of Olives, the whole multitude of the disciples began to rejoice and praise God with a loud voice for all the mighty works 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 called to Him from the crowd, "Teacher, rebuke Your disciples." ⁴⁰ But He answered and said to them, "I tell you that if these should keep silent, the stones would immediately cry out." (Luke 19:35-40)

May we begin by asking, "are you, am I, a student of these scriptures, a true student of the truths given to us within our bibles? Do we study them diligently and do we earnestly desire to know their true meanings? And what are our thoughts about these particular words given in today's passage?

Many who read the words in their bibles seem often to be just casual observers of what the words are saying, yes they remember some of them and are able to quote some of them in a conversation, but not much beyond that.

The question again, as you read these scriptures, are you a student, a diligent student, looking for and hoping to comprehend the deeper truths that reside within them, truths that will have an impact and consequence not only for your life today, but also for your eternity to come. Or again, are you just fulfilling a daily commitment to read your bible?

The adult Sunday School class at our church has for some years now followed a "One Year Bible" reading plan, a plan that uses a daily study schedule of four segments of our bible, the Old Testament Books, the New Testament Books, the Psalms and the Proverbs. And the schedule, if followed, will lead a person to read through the whole bible in 365 days.

And it is an excellent plan, helping those who truly want to participate to read through their bible several times over the years.

And yes, the hope would be that the regular reading of the scriptures would ignite a real hungering and thirsting for the truths of God within the hearts of the readers. And it can! It truly can!

Why have these thoughts come to my mind, especially as it regards this passage that we'll study here today? It's this. As I mentioned a moment ago, I find that too often it is easy for me, as a reader, to lapse into the habit of "casual reading", reading yes, but not really absorbing the meanings given in the passages, missing out on many of the deeper truths being revealed by the Holy Spirit.

Also, for the many years that I pastored churches, I was sadly aware that many within my congregation did not have a regular schedule of bible reading, and consequently, had very little personal knowledge of the precious truths given within these scriptures. And they especially seem to have very little intimate knowledge about the Person of our precious Lord that these scriptures tell us about.

And even more sadly, even some of the church leaders, the Deacons and the Elders had a limited knowledge of the truths that are given within these pages. And oh dear Christian, that is not a good thing. That is not a good thing at all!

And here within the passage that we'll study about today, it occurs to me that perhaps much the same lack of knowledge was guiding the acts and the behaviors of many of the people of Jesus day.

Here, a great crowd of people was following along after the Lord Jesus as He rode through the streets of Jerusalem on a donkey. Yes, they were caught up in the excitement of all that was happening, and yes, they knew something really

special was taking place, but sadly, most were probably not really understanding what it was all about.

Yes, some of them might have had a notion, an unction from the Holy Spirit, some with a hopeful idea about Jesus and about what He was declaring as He rode His donkey through those streets. But again, most of them probably did not.

And an even more perplexing question . . . how much did even the disciples realize about these event that were unfolding. Did they really know? And sadly, the answer for them was also most likely not, at least not like they should have known.

But to be generous, it was not entirely their fault that they didn't know. The words of verse 34 tell us that much of the real comprehension was being intentionally withheld from their understanding, "hidden" from them for the time being by God Himself.

But that is part of the broader biblical understanding that our Lord is revealing to us as we open the pages of these scriptures. There is "truth", real revealing "truth" that fills every word and every verse. And we are being encouraged to be ever so very careful as we read and as we study these truths, to store away in our memories every detail that these precious words reveal. And though we might not fully grasp a full understanding in the moments that we read these truths, the Holy Spirit will make them clearer to us later on.

On this occasion, some of the observers in the crowd, especially the Scribes and the Pharisees, were highly educated. And from their seminary training, they were able to recognize what was being implied in the things the people were saying and doing. That's why they called out to Jesus to stop the people from doing what they were doing.

But nothing could stop the things that were taking place. The timing was right and the plans of God were moving forward.

And folks, while yes, much of it was still being hidden from the understanding of those who were there that day, even some of the disciples, it really should not be hidden from you and me as we read these words today. The truths given to

us in 2 Timothy chapter 3 are real and they are true for you and for me. Words that tell us that,

¹⁶ All Scripture (this scripture that we are studying) is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, ¹⁷ that the man of God may be complete, equipped for every good work. (2 Timothy 3:16-17)

And oh dear Christian, if you and I will be the devoted students of these scriptures that we really should be, then as we read and as we hear these words of our Lord preached and taught, more and more we'll be able to recognize when we see the Hand of the Lord at work carrying out His plan.

As here, if we have been listening to the voice of our Lord as we have been reading His scriptures each day, we will know that as Jesus entered Jerusalem that day, a very distinct and demanding chain of events was being put into place, a chain of events that truly was about to change the eternal future of every person who would ever exist, that mounted on that donkey that day was the person who had come to change the eternal future of all mankind, your future and mine.

And dear Christian, just as our Lord was doing with those people there in His day, here as we read these words He is also presenting the same question to you and to me . . . "What are we going to do with this truth that He is declaring to us?" "Is this simply more information that we already know, or are we now supposed to stop everything that we are doing and give our Lord the attention He deserves?"

While yes, all throughout the three and a half years that He had been ministering to the people, His words and His miracles had been revealing who He was, but here in these final days of His life, these events would, more than ever, begin to declare His purpose for coming among us. And that purpose would be summed up in the one simple word, the "Gospel". "The Gospel", His soon coming death, His burial and His resurrection. And while many people would still remain blinded to its power and effect, this "gospel", this soon coming death, burial and resurrection of this Man Jesus would begin to speak a message so loudly and so clearly that every soul from that day forward would be without excuse.

And the response that we spoke about a moment ago would be put to the test. Will we be willing to accept who He is and what He has done, or will we reject Him.

Dear Christian, that was the question being given back then and it is the same question that we are being faced with today. And it is ever so demanding. "Will we accept Him and who He is or will we reject Him?"

Let's return for a moment to these words that we are considering today but let's use the account as it's given in the Book of Matthew chapter 21. There we read,

¹ Now when they drew near to Jerusalem and came to Bethphage, to the Mount of Olives, then Jesus sent two disciples, ² saying to them, "Go into the village in front of you, and immediately you will find a donkey tied, and a colt with her. Untie them and bring them to me. ³ If anyone says anything to you, you shall say, 'The Lord has need of them,' and he will send them at once."

⁴ This took place to fulfill what was spoken by the prophet (Zechariah 9:9), saying, ⁵ "Say to the daughter of Zion, 'Behold, your king is coming to you, humble, and mounted on a donkey, on a colt, the foal of a beast of burden.' "

⁶ The disciples went and did as Jesus had directed them. ⁷ They brought the donkey and the colt and put on them their cloaks, and he sat on them. ⁸ Most of the crowd spread their cloaks on the road, and others cut branches from the trees and spread them on the road. ⁹ And the crowds that went before him and that followed him were shouting, "Hosanna to the Son of David! Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord! Hosanna in the highest!" ¹⁰ And when he entered Jerusalem, the whole city was stirred up, saying, "Who is this?" ¹¹ And the crowds said, "This is the prophet Jesus, from Nazareth of Galilee." (Matthew 21:1-11)

As I read these words, I marvel at the manner in which the disciples expressed and carried forward, in perfect harmony, all the many designs and plans and purposes of God, plans and purposes that had been put into place from eons past, but now in their day, were actually coming to pass.

As Jesus came into Jerusalem that day, I am sure that all that took place seemed quite spontaneous. But that is the way of the sovereignty of God as He inserts His providential hand into the affairs of men bringing His plans and His

purposes to completion. Yes, there was free will, but there also was, and is, ever and always the hand of God intertwined within all that takes place on this earth.

So then, as the disciples and the others gathered that day, and as they laid their garments over the colt and on the pathway, and then placed Jesus on the back of the colt and went before Him rejoicing and praising God with a loud voice for all the mighty works they had seen, "saying: "Blessed is the King who comes in the name of the LORD! Peace in heaven and glory in the highest!" It was all in accordance with the plan of God.

No doubt, many that day, especially the casual observers, understood none of it. To them, it must have all really seemed spur-of-the-moment and even a bit absurd.

Think about it for a moment! Most of the people of that day understood the regal majesty with which those in authority traveled about. No doubt, King Herod had his entourage that accompanied him, perhaps even, at times, carrying him about on their shoulders.

Even the Roman legions presented themselves with some measure of royal stature.

So this lowly provision of a young donkey colt, and the garments being placed on the ground, perhaps akin to the red carpet that might have been placed on the ground before kings, it all must have appeared a bit unreal to those looking on that day, certainly causing no real stir from the authorities, except for the Pharisees in the crowd. They objected to some of the words of praise that the people were voicing.

But then, those Pharisees really did have reason for concern. Many of them were well studied in the scriptures and they knew what they were hearing. They were hearing words of prophecy being declared to be fulfilled. These praises that came out of the mouths of the people were expressing the words of scripture given in Psalm 118. As they shouted out the words "Hosanna, Hosanna in the highest", they were saying of the Lord Jesus, "save us, we pray". Listen, verse 25 of Psalm 118,

²⁵ Save us, we pray, O Lord!

O Lord, we pray, give us success!

²⁶ Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord!

We bless you from the house of the Lord.

²⁷ The Lord is God, and he has made his light to shine upon us. Bind the festal sacrifice with cords,
up to the horns of the altar!

²⁸ You are my God, and I will give thanks to you,
you are my God; I will extol you.

²⁹ Oh give thanks to the Lord, for he is good,
for his steadfast love endures forever! (Psalm 118:25-28)

And listen again to those words that we read a moment ago in the Book of Matthew!

⁴ All this was done that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophet, (Zechariah 9:9) saying: ⁵ "Tell the daughter of Zion, 'Behold, your King is coming to you, Lowly, and sitting on a donkey, A colt, the foal of a donkey.' " . . . 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. ⁹ Then the multitudes who went before and those who followed cried out, saying: "Hosanna to the Son of David! 'Blessed is He who comes in the name of the LORD!' Hosanna in the highest!" (Matthew 21:4-9)

Again, most of those in authority who observed these events taking place, the Romans in particular, had little concern for this sudden parade of people. It represented no real threat to them.

But the objections being raised by the Pharisees had real reason and purpose. They recognized the words being shouted out by the people as being very serious words of prophecy. They knew that the word "Hosanna" meant "save us we plead", and such words called the whole structure of the Hebrew faith into question.

All their lives they had learned and they themselves had taught their congregations that salvation was based solely upon good works in obedience to the Laws of Moses. But now, here was a man being presented as someone who might provide salvation through some other means, salvation without works, salvation through what He was about to do.

And the things being said and done were so very intentional on the part of the Lord. Because it presented the Pharisees with a dilemma that they would need to face up to and respond to.

And that is the very nature of the gospel! It presents us with choices and it demands that we choose. First, do we, as the Pharisees seemed want to do, hang onto the beliefs and traditions that we have grown up with, or are we willing to go back to the Word of God and to reexamine our beliefs. And further, if the word of God is clear and if it demands that we change our ways of belief, will we be willing to make that change.

When anyone, whether it be the status quo religious leaders or it be you and me, is presented with the truths of Christ, we are all faced with making these same choices.

Is this Jesus really the Savior that He is declared to be? Is Jesus the Messiah that the Old Testament prophets spoke about. And is He the Savior that these disciples and followers are declaring Him to be.

This is a true and absolute "Dividing Line" that was being placed before the people of that day, a "Dividing Line" being put into place by God Himself, a "Dividing Line" that would require the people then, and consequently you and me now, to make a real choice. Would they, and we, continue to depend upon our own "goodness of soul" to get us entrance into salvation and eternal life, or would we be willing to choose the "saving provisions of the gospel"?

May I say it again? This was an absolute "Dividing Line" being placed in the path of all who would see this event taking place, especially the Scribes and the Pharisees.

And the choice extends beyond simply knowing and understanding and believing that Jesus really is the Son of God, the Savior, sent to save our souls from an eternity in hell.

Mere knowledge is not enough. The choice carries with it the necessity of either receiving or rejecting Him. And please note that I said, "receiving or rejecting Him", not just accepting or rejecting the ideas and principles and beliefs of Christianity about Him. The choice is whether to receive or to reject the very person of Jesus Christ as our personal Savior and Lord.

In other words, it is one thing to believe all the things that we hear and read about Jesus. Many, many people do that. These scriptures tell us that even the

demons believe who Jesus really is. In fact, they know exactly who He is and they “shudder”.

So then, what is the difference that we see in all of these things? The difference is, it is one thing to know who Jesus is, even to actually believe who He is, that He is the Savior of men's souls. But it is another thing altogether for us to “receive” Him personally, as the Savior of our own personal souls, but yet, that must be the choice that is made.

And those words are spoken so very clearly to us in John 1:12-13 where we are told,

¹² Yet to all who did receive him, to those who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God— ¹³ children born not of natural descent, nor of human decision or a husband's will, but born of God.
(John 1:12-13)

Here in these few words is the sum total of our personal response to the grace of salvation that is brought to us by the Lord Jesus. And the requirements are twofold. Yes, we must “believe” in His Name, but we must also take the step to “receive” His blessed salvation personally.

And His gift of eternal life is completely free. The only part that we ourselves must do is that we must personally make the choice to receive His free gift. If we do not do that, if we do not “receive” His free gift of salvation, we will never be truly saved.

And that is the choice that all people will ultimately need to make. We will either receive Him or we will reject Him. There is no in-between, no other choice that can be made.

And so once again, while there were other dramatic declarations given in these scriptures about who Jesus was and what He had come to do, for me, this event as the Lord Jesus made His triumphal entry into Jerusalem was one of the most “Defining Moments”, clearly declaring that a new understanding of “Ordo-Salutis”, the true order of salvation, the “Gospel” was beginning to be put into place, and that it must be believed and received. And Praise Be to God for it!

May we pray.