

Our Lord's Triumphal Entry

Today is Palm Sunday, which is the beginning of Passion Week, in which we commemorate the last week of the earthly life and ministry of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. Today is called Palm Sunday because of the reference in John's Gospel of the people of Jerusalem welcoming Jesus coming to their city by strewing palm branches on the road in front of His procession. Actually, the detail of the crowd spreading *palm branches* is only found in John's Gospel. It is not recorded in the Synoptic Gospels of Matthew, Mark, and Luke. Here are the details of these writers:

Matthew's account, 21:6-9:

⁶So the disciples went and did as Jesus commanded them. ⁷They brought the donkey and the colt, laid their clothes on them, and set Him on them. ⁸And a very great multitude spread their clothes on the road; others cut down branches from the trees and spread them on the road. ⁹Then 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!”

Mark's account, 11:7-10:

Then they brought the colt to Jesus and threw their clothes on it, and He sat on it. ⁸And many spread their clothes on the road, and others cut down leafy branches from the trees and spread them on the road. ⁹Then those who went before and those who followed cried out, saying:

“Hosanna!
‘Blessed is He who comes in the name of the LORD!’
¹⁰Blessed is the kingdom of our father David
That comes in the name of the Lord!
Hosanna in the highest!”

Luke's account, 19:35-38:

Then they brought him (the colt) to Jesus. And they threw their own clothes on the colt, and they set Jesus on him. And as He went, many spread their clothes on the road.

³⁷Then, 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, ³⁸saying:

“‘Blessed is the King who comes in the name of the LORD!’
Peace in heaven and glory in the highest!”

But John's Gospel records the event this way:

¹²The next day a great multitude that had come to the feast, when they heard that Jesus was coming to Jerusalem, ¹³*took branches of palm trees* and went out to meet Him, and cried out:

“Hosanna!
‘Blessed is He who comes in the name of the LORD!’
The King of Israel!” (John 12:12f)

It is because of this account by the Apostle John that today came to be known as Palm Sunday. But for our study today, we will focus our attention to the record for us in Luke’s Gospel. Let us read Luke’s full account of this event of Palm Sunday which is in Luke 19:28-48:

²⁸And when He had said these things, He went on ahead, going up to Jerusalem. ²⁹When He drew near to Bethphage and Bethany, at the mount that is called Olivet, He sent two of the disciples, ³⁰saying, “Go into the village in front of you, where on entering you will find a colt tied, on which no one has ever yet sat. Untie it and bring it here. ³¹If anyone asks you, ‘Why are you untying it?’ you shall say this: ‘The Lord has need of it.’”

³²So those who were sent went away and found it just as he had told them. ³³And as they were untying the colt, its owners said to them, “Why are you untying the colt?”

³⁴And they said, “The Lord has need of it.” ³⁵And they brought it to Jesus, and throwing their cloaks on the colt, they set Jesus on it. ³⁶And as He rode along, they spread their cloaks on the road.

³⁷As He was drawing near—already on the way down the Mount of Olives—the whole multitude of His disciples began to rejoice and praise God with a loud voice for all the mighty works that they had seen,

³⁸“Blessed is the King who comes in the name of the Lord!
Peace in heaven and glory in the highest!”

³⁹And some of the Pharisees in the crowd said to Him, “Teacher, rebuke Your disciples.”

⁴⁰He answered, “I tell you, if these were silent, the very stones would cry out.”

⁴¹And when He drew near and saw the city, He wept over it, ⁴²saying, “Would that you, even you, had known on this day the things that make for peace! But now they are hidden from your eyes. ⁴³For the days will come upon you, when your enemies will set up a barricade around you and surround you and hem you in on every side ⁴⁴and tear you down to the ground, you and your children within you. And they will not leave one stone upon another in you, because you did not know the time of your visitation.”

⁴⁵Then He went into the temple and began to drive out those who bought and sold in it, ⁴⁶saying to them, “It is written, ‘My house is a house of prayer,’ but you have made it a ‘den of thieves.’”

⁴⁷And He was teaching daily in the temple. But the chief priests, the scribes, and the leaders of the people sought to destroy Him, ⁴⁸and were unable to do anything; for all the people were very attentive to hear Him.

Luke records our Lord’s arrival to Jerusalem as the completion of a prolonged journey from Galilee. This journey is recorded in Luke’s Gospel as beginning with **Luke 9:51**, which reads, “*Now it came to pass, when the time had come for Him to be received up, that He steadfastly set His face to go to Jerusalem.*” The Gospel of Luke places great emphasis on this journey of our Lord from Galilee to Jerusalem. This travel narrative is a major structural and literary feature of Luke’s Gospel, beginning with 9:51 and concluding with our Lord’s arrival to Jerusalem in Luke 19:28ff. Luke is able to convey to His readers through this travel narrative a sense of urgency and critical importance that they become committed disciples of Jesus Christ, to join in following after Jesus. Increasingly Luke showed that Jesus coming to this city would result in His rejection by the Jews, His crucifixion, and His rising from the dead the third day. In the same manner that our Lord traveled to His cross, His disciples must take up their cross daily and follow Him.

At different points in this journey our Lord instructed His disciples to what was waiting Him in Jerusalem. He told them beforehand that He would suffer and die, but then would be raised the third day. We read this in **Luke 18:31-33**:

Then he took the twelve aside and said to them, “Behold, we are going up to Jerusalem, and all things that are written by the prophets concerning the Son of Man will be accomplished. For He shall be delivered unto the Gentiles and will be mocked and insulted and spit upon. They will scourge Him and kill Him. And the third day He will rise again.

On that occasion Luke recorded for us the ignorance of the Twelve. They did not understand “these things.” We read, “But they understood none of these things; this saying was hidden from them, and they did not know the things which were spoken” (Luke 18:34).

In the account of our Lord arriving to Jerusalem, Luke emphasizes three elements. First, there is the securing of the colt upon which our Lord would ride into Jerusalem. Second, Luke shows that our Lord’s riding of the colt was a fulfilment of the prophecy of Zechariah 9:9. And third, there is the acclaim expressed by His disciples. There is also a suggestion of irony throughout the account. Although our Lord was welcomed with such acclaim initially, His end at their hands would be death upon His cross.

I understand there was a painting once made which portrays the whole event of Jesus and Jerusalem in one scene. The painting depicts in the foreground a lone donkey standing as it is chewing on palm leaves. It is obviously intended to be the donkey that Jesus rode eating the branches that had been strewn in its way. In the background is a hill on which a cross stands.

Let us first summarize the details of this event, then we will consider its implications and lessons for us. We read beginning in **Luke 19:28** of their ascent toward the city of Jerusalem. “He went on ahead, going up to Jerusalem.” He came through the town of Jericho, which lie in the Jordan River Valley, about 1400 feet below sea level. Jerusalem is at 2500 feet above sea level. The road from Jericho to Jerusalem was about 15 miles in length in which the travellers would climb 3900 feet in elevation. It would take about 8 hours to walk this roadway.

We read in **verse 29** that at the little villages of Bethphage and Bethany, just outside of Jerusalem, the Lord sent two disciples to find a colt, that is, a young donkey. He rides this young animal that had never been ridden before toward the city. As He travelled from the Mount of Olives into Jerusalem the crowds gathered and celebrated His entrance into the city. They were welcoming Him as their promised King, the Son of David whom God had foretold would rule on David’s throne.

In **verses 30** through **35** Luke recorded the unusual manner in which the use of a colt was secured that Jesus might ride it into the city. We read that the colt was one “which no one has ever yet sat.” We might think that the reason our Lord rode this kind of colt was to show forth a miracle of being able to tame and control an unbroken animal. But actually that the colt had never been ridden is to show its ritual purity rather than it being an unbroken colt being controlled by Jesus. “The point in Jesus’ riding an untried animal lies in the rural purity of the animal and not in the peaceableness of the animal.”¹

In **verses 36** through **38** we read of the response of our Lord’s disciples along with the people of the Jerusalem as He enters the city. The crowds quote a verse from Psalm 118 as they hail His entrance to the city: “***Blessed is the King who comes in the name of the Lord!***” They recognize that He comes to them as a King of Peace, for they also declare, “***Peace in heaven and glory in the highest.***” His entrance on this ritually clean donkey would have signalled that He was coming in peace, had He been coming as a conquering King of war, He would have ridden into the city on a white horse. They recognized Jesus as the promised Son of David who had arrived to claim and assert His role as the King over Israel, the kingdom of God.

In **verses 39** and **40**, we read that some of the Pharisees object to the kind of acclaim he was receiving. But our Lord responded to them in a manner that reveals that the crowds were right in receiving Him in that manner.

And then in **verses 41** through **44**, as the scene of the city looms before them, we read of ***Jesus weeping***. He voices a lament, and gives a prophecy of the fate of the city that was later fulfilled in its destruction by the Romans in AD 70.

¹ I. Howard Marshall, *The Gospel of Luke, A Commentary on the Greek Text* (William B. Eerdmans, 1978), p. 710.

Jesus entered the temple (v.45ff), and cleansed it of corrupt persons, restoring His Father's house to its intended purpose--*a place where prayer to God was offered, and the Word of God was taught*. He continued to teach in the temple daily, to the delight of the people, but to the consternation of the Jewish leadership. They sought ways to kill Him, but could not due to His popularity.

The way in which our Lord entered the city of Jerusalem and the manner in which He dealt with the people before Him, may instruct us in the ways that God commonly deals with people with respect either to their judgment or salvation. Just as God had done with the Jews and Jerusalem, God gives time for persons, families, churches, and even nations to repent of their sins. He then comes to them and graciously presents them an offer of peace in Christ if they would but hear Him and respond to Him in repentance and faith. They must respond to Him in this manner. They must put away their evil and embrace Him and His message fully. If they refuse, they can be certain of His sore and severe judgment.

Let us work through the passage in more detail. We may consider the passage according to the following outline: (1) The Triumphal Entry (19:29-40), (2) The Tearful Sight (19:41-44), and (3) The Temple Cleansing (19:45-48).

I. The Triumphal Entry (19:29-40)

First, we read of our Lord's...

A. Miraculous preparation for entrance into Jerusalem (19:29-35a)

We read that our Lord made careful and detailed preparations for His arrival to Jerusalem. Jesus instructed His disciples to locate a particular donkey, one that had never been ridden before. Some suggest that He had made previous arrangements regarding the use of this animal and that He was simply sending His disciples at the agreed time and to the appointed place. Others have said that it was common to borrow animals in that day for such purposes. But if this were the case then it would fail to explain why the owners would loan an unbroken animal for that purpose. But there seems to be a miraculous element here. The fact that Jesus had indicated there would be possible resistance or objection to their untying the colt, and that a simple word of explanation of its usage would suffice for gaining its use, as well as the descriptive statement of verse 32 that they "found it just as he had told them," seems to suggest a miraculous element.

Jesus reveals a supernatural knowledge of the details. This serves to show that Jesus knew exactly what awaited Him in Jerusalem. His arrest, condemnation, and death were no surprise to Him. There is no evidence to commend the position of the theological liberals that Jesus came hoping that the city would receive Him as King and God's rule would be thereby established, only to die in disappointment and defeat. There is no suggestion for that kind of thinking. Our Lord knew exactly what was before Him.

We should also reject the teaching of classical dispensationalism that through Jesus Christ coming into the city that God was offering the promised millennial kingdom to Israel. But because Israel rejected their king, having crucified Him, that God withdrew His intention to establish the kingdom, thereby postponing the onset of an earthly 1,000 year millennium until the Second Coming of Jesus Christ. No, our Lord Jesus came triumphant into the city asserting His kingship and His soon enthronement over the Kingdom of God. His death on the cross did not delay or frustrate that coronation; rather, His cross was the very course He would take to be seated on His throne over the kingdom of God upon His resurrection from the dead.

The question might be asked, "Why did Jesus ride a donkey at all?" After all, He had just completed a 100-mile walk from Galilee. The reason is that the Lord was fulfilling the messianic prophecy of Zechariah 9:9. Jesus was the Messiah, the promised Son of David, the King who was coming to Jerusalem to offer "peace", that is, "the peace of God" -- salvation. Zechariah's prophecy reads as follows:

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.
I will cut off the chariot from Ephraim
And the horse from Jerusalem;
The battle bow shall be cut off.
He shall speak peace to the nations;
His dominion shall be 'from sea to sea,
And from the River to the ends of the earth.' (Zech. 9:9f)

A total of 550 years had passed since God spoke this word through His prophet Zechariah. God had promised that He would send the promised king to His people, the elect of God, here described as “the daughter of Zion.”² God would send them their “king.” But the king is described as coming in peace, as a sovereign visiting in order to inspect His realm. Here Jesus was the promised Messiah coming to Jerusalem to offer “peace”, that is, “the peace of God” -- salvation. One described His action was as “a king laying claim to a city” (I. H. Marshall). I see it more as the king visiting his city, to give it a royal inspection.

B. A joyful procession and welcome into Jerusalem (19:35b-38)

We read that the people welcomed their king.

“Blessed is the King who comes in the name of the LORD!
Peace in heaven and glory in the highest!” (v. 38)

They witnessed the Lord Jesus riding on a donkey into their city. This would have been the way a king would have been received in that day. The crowd of followers began to cheer loudly, praising God for the Lord Jesus Who was coming in the name of God to reign on His behalf. They acknowledged that He was the promised Son of David entering Jerusalem in order to assume His role as King over the kingdom of God.

The source for the quotation **verse 38** is **Psalms 118**, in which praise to God is the theme throughout the psalm. But more particularly, Psalm 118:26 is cited, the context which reads:

²²The stone that the builders rejected
Has become the cornerstone.
²³This is the LORD's doing;
It is marvellous in our eyes.
²⁴This is the day that the LORD has made;
Let us rejoice and be glad in it.
²⁵Save 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.” (Psa. 118:22-26)

Psalm 118 was one of the Hallel psalms, which included Psalms 113 through 118. The Jews sang these psalms at Passover time. When this event occurred, Palm Sunday, it was during the seven day Feast of Unleavened bread, which culminated at the end of the week on Passover, when our Lord was crucified.

Now although their praise was good and right, as attested by the Lord Jesus, I think that we would have to say that their understanding was defective. Their concern was not for a personal salvation from sin and God's wrath; rather, they desired a liberation that was political in nature. They desired freedom from the

² Zion was one of the four hills on which Jerusalem was built. The name Zion came to be another name for Jerusalem, particularly in its covenantal standing before God.

Romans, but not their sin. People will always respond to a kind of “salvation” that promises to deliver them from the miseries of this life. But it takes a work of God’s grace in the soul of a person to desire above all else to be delivered from his own sin. Had these people seen themselves as they truly were, sinners in need of pardon and cleansing, sinners for whom this Jesus would die in but a few days, they would perhaps have been weeping rather than praising His final entrance into Jerusalem.

As the party moved closer to the city the people’s messianic expectations were aroused to a great degree. Acclamation of praise to God was made, and rightly so. Perhaps they themselves saw the prophecy of Zechariah 9:9 and 10 was being fulfilled before their eyes.

But then, even at the height of the celebration, we see . . .

C. A scornful response of the Pharisees (19:39-40)

We read that that “some of the Pharisees called to Him from the crowd, ‘Teacher, rebuke Your disciples.’” But our Lord came to the defense of His disciples. In spite of the lack of knowledge of these people, they were not to be blamed, criticized, or hindered in their praise. For *though they were ignorant in their conception of the kingdom, they were accurate in their identification of their King*. Ill-informed praise is better than no praise. But some of the Pharisees reacted, “Master, rebuke your disciples!”

Apart from the great multitude of disciples now accompanying Jesus, there are naturally also many other Jews, among whom are some of the Pharisees. The latter are exceedingly annoyed at the Messianic reverence shown to the Nazarene against whom most of them have long ago taken sides. In addition, they are afraid that the public applause given to the Saviour will cause the severe Roman governor, Pilate, to take action against the people by force of arms. However, they do not venture to try and impose silence on the exultant multitude itself. The only alternative is, therefore, that they ask Jesus to silence His disciples (who naturally were playing a prominent part in the applause and reverence shown to Him here).³

And so, why did they want Jesus to do this?

1. Perhaps these Jewish leaders were concerned about the reaction of the Romans to this fevered reception. Riots and demonstrations were not allowed by Rome. Rome held the Jewish leaders in Jerusalem responsible for keeping the peace. The relative freedom of the Jewish people was contingent on their maintaining an orderly community. Public disruption would be a concern.

2. More likely, however, they thought that the crowd was giving Jesus credit for being more than what He was-- the Messiah of Israel. These Pharisees did not believe that Jesus was the promised Christ, the Son of David.

3. The Pharisees were characterized by envy, and their reaction reflects it. *They* were the leaders, not He. And so, they would have Jesus rebuke his disciples. But He, rather, rebuked them for wanting Him to rebuke His disciples. We know that the Jewish leaders were envious because of the record in Mark and Matthew’s Gospels. We read in Matthew’s Gospel,

Therefore, when they (Jewish leaders) had gathered together, Pilate said to them, “Whom do you want me to release to you? Barabbas, or Jesus who is called Christ?” ¹⁸For he knew that they had handed Him over because of envy. (Matt. 27:17)

Let us be careful that we never repeat their error of unjustly criticizing people in their worship of the Lord. Never place yourself in the position of being critical of someone magnifying the name of Jesus. You

³ Norval Goldenhuys, *Commentary on the Gospel of Luke* (Wm. B. Eerdmans, 1983), p. 481.

might try and correct their misunderstanding or maybe bring them a little farther ahead in their understanding, but do not squash what is good, even if it is somewhat deficient. And, of course, let us not be silent in our praise of the Lord Jesus! No matter who we are, we ought to give glory to God whenever have the opportunity. Even if our character may not be what it should be or could be, do not remain silent. Even guilty Achan, moments before he was executed for his sin, was exhorted to give glory to God.

We next read of...

II. Our Lord's reaction to what He saw and heard (19:41-44)

One can imagine this scene as the crowds increased and began to press closer. The voices become louder and louder. Excitement is building. Persons who were merely curious begin to join in. The summit of Olivet is reached and the panorama of the golden city stretches before them. All are joyful. They are ecstatic in their praise.

But those who are closest to Jesus behold a curious spectacle. The Lord Jesus does not seem to be of the same mood as that of the people. The crowd continued its praise increasing its volume as the city is approached, but those closest to Jesus must have been puzzled. For they see that where all about Him were rejoicing, He was weeping. We read beginning in verse 41:

⁴¹And when He drew near and saw the city, He wept over it, ⁴²saying, "Would that you, even you, had known on this day the things that make for peace! But now they are hidden from your eyes. ⁴³For the days will come upon you, when your enemies will set up a barricade around you and surround you and hem you in on every side ⁴⁴and tear you down to the ground, you and your children within you. And they will not leave one stone upon another in you, because you did not know the time of your visitation."

Excitement and enthusiasm about the things of God is not a true indicator of closeness to Jesus. Zeal is good when it is a zeal accompanied with knowledge. But those who are quite far from understanding and can express ignorant zeal, or mere enthusiasm, even by those who are in actuality under the wrath of God, as were most of these people of Jerusalem. They assumed that all was well with them and that God's blessing was upon them. They were unaware that the wrath of God was upon them and one day would be unleashed upon them.

When one stands back and looks at Christendom one can see a kind of empty, emotionally generated but ill-informed enthusiasm. Millions and millions profess to be Christian. And these people can become quite excited about Jesus. But we are not furthering the kingdom of Christ by producing *mere enthusiasm* for religious things. It is good to be zealous in spiritual matters. The Lord knows. It seems that there is all too much apathy and too little enthusiasm in some places for the glory of God. As Paul wrote in Galatians 4:18, "*It is good to be zealously affected always in a good thing.*" We aim at true, deep, heart-deep, conversion to Jesus Christ so that an experience with Christ will result in joy, enthusiasm, and fervency. But we are to be wise, making sure that zeal is based on sound biblical truth. This really was not the case with this crowd. Paul would write of them, "*I bear them record that they have a zeal of God, but not according to knowledge*" (Rom. 10:2)

Let us consider *the spiritual state of Jerusalem*, the cause of our Lord's tears. **First, we may say that Jesus wept because they had forfeited past opportunity.** They had missed the blessing of His ministry. Most of His ministry had been conducted in far off Galilee. These people in Jerusalem had missed the blessing of His teaching. The time was short, almost past.

We might ask ourselves, how many opportunities have passed us by? How many days have passed when the Lord Jesus would have pulled us aside in His Word and spoken to us from His Bible revealing Himself and His glorious ways to us. But we have neglected the means of grace. We have squandered our time and opportunities. One of the greatest torments of the damned will be a sense of remorse over forfeited privilege and opportunity.

Secondly, Jesus wept for them because of their present blindness. He said, “Would that you, even you, had known on this day the things that make for peace!” (19:42). They were blind spiritually; that is, they were ignorant of their true condition and God’s attitude toward them.

There are causes for spiritual blindness in people. (a) Spiritual blindness is present even at birth due to *the effects of inherited sin*. (b) Spiritual blindness results due to *the grieving of the Spirit of God*. (c) Spiritual blindness results due to one’s *refusal to respond to previous light*. We need to see and respond while there is light, for the time may come when there is none. When we do have light we need to get our bearings so when the light fails, you still know the direction you have to go. (d) Spiritual blindness results from the direct judgment of God. This is apparently the case for Jerusalem at this point. The judgment of God was upon it. They would not hear Him. They would not respond to Him. They would put Him to death. He came to His own and His own received Him not.

Thirdly, Jesus wept because of their judicial blindness. God makes the seeing eye and the hearing ear, both physically and spiritually. But further, for those who refuse to see and hear, He blinds and deafens so that they can no longer see and hear, that is, they cannot discern their condition or His will so as to remedy their condition. Their judgment is thereby sealed.

Fourthly, Jesus wept because of their future destruction. He knew their fate, and it broke his heart. I wonder if any of us are a cause of Jesus weeping as He looks upon us?

Let us consider *Jesus Himself, the source of the tears*. **First, we see His preference for mercy over judgment.** This is why He was weeping, and not rejoicing. God does not delight in the overthrow of the wicked. He does not apologize for it, but He does not rejoice in it. When God was warning Judah for its sins, He instructed Ezekiel to declare these words:

¹¹“Say to them: ‘As I live,’ says the Lord GOD, ‘I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked, but that the wicked turn from his way and live. Turn, turn from your evil ways! For why should you die, O house of Israel?’” (Ezek. 33:11f)

Second, we see His genuine concern for His enemies. When God had determined He would judge and overthrow the people of Judah He declared, He instructed his prophet Jeremiah, **“Go and tell the men of Judah and the inhabitants of Jerusalem, ‘Will you not receive instruction to hearken to My words?’”** (Jer. 35:13). The Lord is loving even to His enemies who He has determined to overthrow.

Third, we see His sympathy for those who encounter judgment. The ancient historian, Josephus, wrote that the Roman General Titus, who destroyed Jerusalem in AD 70 was moved with sympathy as well as indignation over the inhabitants of the city for their obstinacy and refusal to surrender. Viewing the bodies of those who had perished from famine, we read in Josephus of Titus, “spreading out his hands to heaven, (and) called God to witness that this was not his doing.” He offered them terms of peace. They refused, bringing destruction upon themselves. God offers terms of peace. He takes no pleasure in the death of the wicked, but desires that they turn to Him, and surrender, ceasing their defiance to His rule over their lives.

If our Lord showed great compassion toward the lost at Jerusalem, should not we, His disciples similarly have pity and compassion on lost souls about us? Here are the comments of **J. C. Ryle** based on this passage:

We know but little of true Christianity, if we do not feel deep concern about the souls of unconverted people. A lazy indifference about the spiritual state of others, may doubtless save us much trouble. To care nothing whether our neighbours are going to heaven or hell, is no doubt the way of the world. But a man of this spirit is very unlike David, who said, “Rivers of water run down mine eyes, because men keep not thy law.” He is very unlike Paul, who said, “I have great heaviness and continual

sorrow of heart for my brethren” (Psalm 119:136; Rom. 9:2). Above all, he is very unlike Christ. If Christ felt tenderly about wicked people, the disciples of Christ ought to feel otherwise.⁴

Our Lord spoke of the great accountability that the people of Jerusalem had before God for their privilege and opportunity that they had squandered. The Lord Jesus made reference to the fact that they had failed to respond in their day of *visitation*. What is indicated by this is the occasions of opportunity that God affords individuals and peoples to respond to Him and His Word that God had graciously made known to them.

In Scripture a divine visitation is an occasion in which God manifests His presence to either bless or bring forth His judgment, to bring either good or judgment. God often comes with the promise to bless, but if His gracious offer is not responded to by faith and repentance, then His judgment results. The visitation which Jesus makes reference here in verse 44 is “intended to be the occasion of salvation as proclaimed by Jesus; unrecognized as such, the same visitation becomes the basis of judgment.”⁵

Here are some more words of **J. C. Ryle**:

The subject before us is a deep and mysterious one. It requires careful stating and delicate handling, lest we should make one scripture contradict another. There seems no doubt that churches, nations, and even individuals are sometimes visited with special manifestations of God’s presence, and that their neglect of such manifestations is the turning-point in their spiritual ruin. Why this should take place in some cases and not in others we cannot tell. Facts, plain facts in history and biography, appear to prove that it is so. The last day will probably show the world, that there were seasons in the lives of many who died in sin, when God drew very near to them, when conscience was peculiarly alive, when there seemed but a step between them and salvation. Those seasons will probably prove to have been what our Lord calls their “day of visitation.” The neglect of such seasons will probably be at last one of the heaviest charges against their souls.⁶

III. The temple cleansing (19:45-48)

It would seem that one moment our Lord was weeping and the next moment He is waging battle in the temple area. What will cause Jesus to bypass mercy and exhibit this kind of wrath? The people had been dishonouring His Father’s name. They were desecrating His house with their thievery and corruption. The city’s leaders were afflicting the poor by imposing upon the poor exorbitant fees for exchanging foreign currency so that they could purchase and sacrificial animals to offer in their worship. The Lord Jesus cleanses the temple of these wicked men and their evil practices.

We see the Lord Jesus in verse 47, having restored the temple to its rightful and intended function, a place sinners could come and pray and a place where the Word of God would be taught. And yet the opposition is present (v. 48). And their description suggests that their wickedness, although held in check for a time, would find a way to vent itself upon the Lord Jesus.

Conclusion:

The triumphal entry—Was it actually triumphant? Well, yes, in a manner of speaking. The King of peace came offering peace. He accomplished His work on the cross, whereby He secured peace for His people with their God. He came forth triumphantly from the grave. He ascended into heaven. He was seated on the throne promised Him through His father, King David. We should rejoice with the same joy that characterized His disciples on this first Palm Sunday. Spurgeon described the joy that we should experience as those redeemed by His death and resurrection:

⁴ J. C. Ryle, *Expository Thoughts on Luke*, vol. 2 (The Banner of Truth Trust, 1998, orig. 1858).

⁵ Marshall, p. 719.

⁶ Ryle, p. 316.

This is the day of Zion's trouble—at this hour the Church expects to walk in sympathy with her Lord along a thorny road. She is outside the camp—through much tribulation she is forcing her way to the crown. She expects to meet with reproaches. To bear the cross is her office, and to be scorned and counted an alien by her mother's children is her lot. And yet the Church has a deep well of joy of which none can drink but her own children! There are stores of wine, and oil, and corn hidden in the midst of our Jerusalem upon which the saints of God are evermore sustained and nurtured. And sometimes, as in our Savior's case, we have our seasons of intense delight for "there is a river, the streams which make glad the city of our God."

Exiles though we are, we rejoice in our King! Yes, in Him we exceedingly rejoice, while in His name we set up our banners! This is a season with us as a Church when we are peculiarly called upon to rejoice in God. The Lord Jesus, in the narrative before us, was going to Jerusalem as His disciples fondly hoped, to take the throne of David and set up the long-expected kingdom. Well might they shout for joy, for the Lord was in their midst—in their midst in state, riding amidst the acclamations of a multitude who had been glad partakers of His goodness. Jesus Christ is in our midst today! The kingdom is securely His. We see the crown glittering upon His brow. He has been riding through our streets, healing our blind, raising our dead and speaking words of comfort to our mourners!⁷

But the entry is also a prelude to tragedy. I would encourage us all to read again this week the account of our Lord's Passion. As one proceeds through the story, the reader sees the Lord Jesus faithfully declaring God's Word to the people, but at the same time there is seen a stubborn refusal of the leaders to respond. The result is the cross and the grave, from which the Lord rose. The completion of this triumphal entry was when the Lord walked into heaven after the resurrection where He was crowned with glory and He sat down in His Father's throne. But the path to the crown and throne lay by way of the crown of thorns and the cross.

"Peace to the brethren, and love with faith, from God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. Grace be with all those who love our Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity. Amen." (Eph. 6:23f)

⁷ Charles Spurgeon, *The Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit*, vol. 12 (Pilgrim Publication), sermon #678, "Praise Your God, O Zion."