

“THE STONES WILL CRY OUT”
Psalm 118:18-29, Colossians 1:21-23, Luke 19:28-44
Palm Sunday, April 13, 2025

A pastor explains a situation he had. He says, “It wasn’t too long ago that I was going down a one-way street, and I noticed somebody coming the other way. Obviously there was a problem. That car was going the wrong way. As I kept driving, I heard sounds all around me. After a while it became clear that all these chorus of voices were trying to get **my** attention, trying to confront me with the reality that **I** was wrong. You see, I thought stuff was wrong with everybody else, when the problem was with me.

“I suspected that there were two reasons for their concern. One is the damage that I could do to myself. The other is the damage I could do to others. They could have simply ignored it, and said, ‘That’s his business.’ Or they could do what they did, which was try to get my attention, because they understood that when you’re going the wrong way, somebody needs to confront you, so that you can reverse your direction.”¹

That’s what took place the week before the Feast of Passover in Jerusalem on the day we call Palm Sunday. A major confrontation took place between the forces of evil and the forces of good, between the things of this world and the things of God. It was an event that determined the events to follow throughout that whole next week. Jesus had come back to Jerusalem to present Himself to all the people; to the common-ordinary person, the leaders of the church, as well as the leaders of the government. It was a time of confrontation to try to turn the lives of everyone around so that they might get going in the right direction, bringing hope and peace and love and security and eternal life to everyone who would take the time to notice and make the proper course corrections needed in their lives. Jesus is the redeemer who turns us around!

¹ (Tony Evans, *Tony Evans’ Book of Illustrations*, [Chicago, IL: Moody Publishers, 2009] pg. 66, #169)

Now, Jesus had already spoken three times with His disciples, explaining that His intentions were to fulfill His mission as the Savior of the world, the Messiah of God. He told them that He would go to Jerusalem, “*suffer many things and be rejected by the elders, the chief priests and the teachers of the law, and that he must be killed and after three days rise again*” (Mark 8:31-32). However they missed the “after three days” part.

But that was drastically different than what the expectation was of the Messiah! Everyone interpreted the coming of the Messiah to mean that he would chase out the Romans, free the nation of Israel, re-establish the kingdom of David, and make the nation powerful for all the world to see. He would bring peace, safety, security and prosperity to Israel so that they might become prominent in the world. That’s what all the people of Israel understood from the prophecies of the coming Messiah. He would become the King of the Jews to lift up the kingdom of the Jews.

But Jesus’ words to the disciples told a very different account of His intentions. He had a completely different understanding of what Messiah was to be. And anyone could begin to question, “Was Jesus really the Messiah?” His intent surely didn’t sound messianic. But the disciples followed Him, trusting that though they did not understand what He was doing, He would continue to do the work of God. And they were with Him for that.

Then, the people were transfixed upon Jesus’ miracles. They had seen Jesus do amazing things, and they were trusting that He could be an amazing leader for their nation. They were eagerly following Jesus to see what He would do next, what extraordinary miracle He would perform. They thought, “If Jesus can do all these wonderful things for individuals, certainly He can change the course of the nation of Israel for the better.” So they were ready to make Jesus King so that He could start rescuing Israel from all her enemies and make her great again.

But look at what Jesus does to accent **His** understanding of Messiah. Listen to these words of Luke 19:28-44. (READ Luke 19:28-44)

Now, Luke's version of Jesus' entrance into Jerusalem varies a bit from Matthew and Mark, but it clearly shows the response of the people, and their misunderstanding of who Jesus was. Each of the synoptic Gospels has Jesus' disciples following His command to get him a donkey colt that had never been ridden before. The disciples obey finding everything just as Jesus told them it would be. So when they get Jesus on the colt, He begins His approach to the city of Jerusalem. And here is where the people begin their misunderstanding.

Jesus is humbly approaching Jerusalem, on a beast of burden. He's not on a white stallion war horse ready to lead His troops into battle to overtake Jerusalem and begin the cleansing of Israel from the Romans. Yet, Jesus is fulfilling the prophecies of Messiah in Zechariah 9:9, "*Rejoice greatly, Daughter Zion! Shout, Daughter Jerusalem! See, your king comes to you, righteous and victorious, lowly and riding on a donkey, on a colt, the foal of a donkey.*" Yes, Jesus is the King of kings, but His arrival to Jerusalem was not as a military messiah. But the people missed it.

But because of all of His miracles, they did begin to cry out, "*Blessed is the king who comes in the name of the Lord*" singing Psalm 118:26. They were headed down the wrong way, but they weren't listening to Jesus' correction. They wanted Jesus as their king so that He could continue providing Israel with all kinds of marvelous miracles. But that's not what a Messiah does. The Messiah brings us back into a right relationship with the Lord our God so that we might worship Him in Spirit and in Truth, and work for Him to help everyone come to know Him as Savior and Lord.

So here were all the people praising Jesus as He rode toward Jerusalem, and the number

must have been pretty large, because it began to get the attention of the leaders of the Temple. The Pharisees take notice of what the people are saying, and they are quick to try to squelch their excitement. They fear repercussions from the Roman government. While they should have been at the front of the procession leading it into Jerusalem, here they were at the front trying to stop the procession.

You see, the Romans don't take kindly to riotous crowds, unless it was celebrating their own dominance over Israel. So as the crowd praised Jesus as He rode the colt toward Jerusalem, the Pharisees began to get worried, and they demanded, "*Teacher, rebuke your disciples!*" (Luke 19:39).

Here was another correction that Jesus was trying to make. The Chief Priests, Pharisees and other leaders of the Temple did not want to recognize Jesus as the Messiah. Even though they were aware of all the miraculous and powerful work that Jesus was doing, Jesus had also sought to correct them in their own "wrong-way" drive with regard to the Scriptures. Jesus constantly conflicted with their misunderstanding of the Scripture on a whole range of topics. The Temple leaders had twisted the Scriptures to suit their own positions of power in the nation of Israel, and they had continuously misled the people away from God's Laws and Commands. That was the reason the nation of Israel had become conquered by many other nations. When the people turned away from the Lord God Almighty, and refused to follow His laws and commands, and began practicing the religions of the nations around them, God left them and they were exiled into other nations.

But when the people, guided by the leaders of the Temple, turned back to the Lord God, He brought them home to their own country, gave them relief from their enemies, and put righteous leaders over them so that they could remain faithful to Him.

Jesus had come to turn the Temple leaders back to the Lord God, and to give them the proof they needed to recognize that He was the Promised Messiah of God, come to save all people from their sins. But if the religious leaders would not accept Jesus as the Son of God, their promised Messiah, then they would bring much more damage to themselves and others as they continued to go the wrong way down God's One-Way path.

The Pharisees cried out for Jesus to silence His followers in an attempt to prevent Jesus from gaining even more influence over the people in the city. But Jesus responds very peculiarly by saying in response, "*I tell you...if they keep quiet, the stones will cry out*" (Luke 19:40). All of this created world knows who the Creator is, and they recognized Jesus as their Creator. Even the inanimate objects of trees, flowers, waters and stones recognized the Creator and humbled themselves to Him. So if the people of Israel had stopped their praises to Jesus on that day, the rest of creation would have taken up the call and sung His praises in their stead. Would that have been enough to turn the people around to go back to God? Maybe not.

You see, even though the Pharisees did not recognize Jesus as the Son of God, the Messiah of the world, that did not negate the fact that He was indeed God's Messiah. Even before His conception, God was proclaiming Jesus to be His Only Begotten Son. That was His purpose of coming to the earth, to become the perfect Sacrifice that would atone for all the sins of the world. Therefore Jesus' life was always destined to end up on the cross as our substitute, taking our sins upon Himself so that He could pay the price of death for them, thereby relieving us of the slavery to sin. Jesus' sole purpose of being here on the earth was to die for our sins so that through our belief in Him as our Savior, we could be forgiven and become acceptable before God again so that we could receive eternal life with Him when this life ends here.

Jesus wanted to turn us around so that we were no longer going the wrong way destined

for death, but to get us going along God's way toward life. He was willing to give up His life for us so that we could find life in Him through His broken body and shed blood for us on the cross.

But the decision is all ours as to whether we listen to the voice of God, in order to get our attention and find that we are moving in the wrong direction. If we fail to hear the Word of God, if we reject the advice of changing directions in our lives, then we will be destined to destruction.

And that was what caused Jesus to weep as He approached Jerusalem. Jesus saw the hardness of the hearts of the religious leaders, and He knew that that rebellion against His being the Savior of the world would once more turn God's face away from the city, thereby allowing it to become surrounded by her enemies, having embankments built against the city walls, and the destruction of everything within those city walls. The city of Peace, Jerusalem, would be reduced to rubble and ashes, all because the people did not recognize the Prince of Peace who came in God's time to bring Salvation. And in the matter of just 40 years after Jesus' earthly ministry ended, His prophecy was fulfilled, and the city was wiped away.

Folks, Jesus called out to the people in Jerusalem to receive Him as their Savior, not to be the earthly king many thought the Messiah was going to do, but to become our Spiritual Messiah. Many on that day of Jesus' last entry into Jerusalem called out to Him, "*Blessed is the king who comes in the name of the Lord!*" (Luke 19:38). However, by the end of the week they were calling out, "*Crucify him! Crucify him!*" (Luke 23:21). Through the influence of their religious leaders, the people would reject Jesus as their Messiah, and would sentence Him to death.

Of course, their death sentence was the fulfillment of the prophecies of the real Messiah, one who would be "*despised and rejected by mankind, a man of suffering, and familiar with pain...*" But "*Surely he took up our pain and bore our suffering, yet we considered him punished by God, stricken by him, and afflicted. But he was pierced for our transgressions, he was*

crushed for our iniquities; the punishment that brought us peace was on him, and by his wounds we are healed” (Isaiah 53:3-5).

This was the decisive moment in all of human history. For Jesus to be rejected by the religious leaders and the people of Jerusalem, He began His claim over all of our sins, and all that happened to Him opened the portal of all of human hostility to be poured out onto Him. All of that which was due to us when we come before God in judgment was accumulated against Him. And He accepted all the anger, all the malice, all the animosity, all the cruelty, all the rejection and all the violence the world could give, Jesus experienced on our behalf so that we would not have to suffer the consequences of it all on our own.

On Palm Sunday, Jesus rode into Jerusalem, the victorious King, the triumphant Messiah, the suffering Servant, and the conquering Christ. But He was rebuffed, ridiculed, repulsed and refused by most. And even the brave ones who continued to follow would also fall away for a little while, only to gain new strength as Jesus fulfilled His prophetic words “*and after three days rise again*” (Luke 18:33).

So what does all of this mean for us? Plenty! Jesus rode victoriously on the donkey’s colt for all of us so that we could make up our own minds as to what to do with Him. Many are curious about what is said about Him in the pages of the New Testament, but they doubt if anyone could really be their Messiah. Many have lived their lives in outright rebellion to any and all of God’s ways, only to find themselves light-years away from Him.

Many have followed the wiles and cries of the world to do all they can to get all they can, from whomever they can, for as long as they can, in any way that they can, only to be surrounded by wealth and riches, but still empty on the inside, cold and heartless. They have all they want except the hope for real life. They become slaves to their possessions.

Many have sought the pleasures of the world, using people to get what they want, and abusing drugs and alcohol in an attempt to ease their emptiness. But in the end they self-destruct in overdose or addiction or suicide or murder, never once finding the satisfaction they so desperately craved.

Many, sadly, see the Light of Jesus for a time and find ease and comfort in their souls. They experience peace like they never have before, yet their lives are easily convinced to turn on Jesus, only to give up on Him and they to return to the ways of the world.

But some, some are able to find the Light of Jesus in the midst of their darkness. They hear His voice and see Him as He is, and they joyfully welcome Him into their lives as Savior and Lord. These are the ones who willingly give up all of the stuff of the world in order to follow Jesus. These are the ones who experience inexpressible love and joy and peace and kindness and hope and life, and nothing in all of this world can ever separate them from Jesus. Their hearts are sealed for Christ Jesus, for they have heard Him call them by name and invite them to turn from their wicked and selfish ways and follow God's narrow road to eternal life.

Friends, Jesus confronts each one of us today, to have us turn from going the wrong way in life and begin to go in the ways of God. It's a monumental decision that is before you, but it is an easy one to make when we consider the end result. Let Jesus be your King in all things, and He will lead you to eternal life. Let's pray...

Father, thank You for the gift of Your Son, Jesus Christ our Lord. Thank You that He was willing to come here to be our King of kings and Lord of lords, so that we might have life through Him. Guide each one of us into His tender arms of mercy and grace so that we might follow Him all the days of our lives with joy and gladness. Empower us to remain faithful to Him so that He may be glorified in all we do and say, in Jesus' Great Name we pray. AMEN.