

Why The Triumphal Entry Occurred

On June 20, 1837, all of England mourned when King William IV died. We do not know exactly why he died, but we do know that he left a niece, Princess Victoria, who would become queen one year later on June 28, 1838. It was a Thursday, and 400,000 people are estimated to have attended her coronation. *The Globe*, a London newspaper, reported what happened. The title of the article in *The Globe* was *The Coronation of Her Majesty Queen Victoria*. It was interesting to find an old newspaper clipping about Queen Victoria's coronation. It said in part,

At about half past ten, Queen Victoria's processional reached the corner of St James street ... in the precise order in which it left the palace. Her Majesty's carriages and attendants in twelve carriages, each drawn by six beautiful bays, were the subject of much admiration. As Her Majesty's state carriage approached the church, a shout echoed and re-echoed along St. James Street,

a pall-mall deep, fervent, and enthusiastic was sent up from the immense assemblage. Many an eye gazed upon her, and many a tongue bid God bless. The windows and the balconies were alive with

the splendid assemblage of beauty and loveliness. Even the roofs had their occupants, and scarves and handkerchiefs and hats were waved as Her Majesty passed without intermission. And every balcony was a garden, and every window was a bouquet of

loveliness and beauty.

It was a fabulous event, but not everything went as planned. Arthur Allison Plowden, in the book, *The Young Victoria*, writes the following about some things that did not go quite right.

Unfortunately, she writes,

As the most solemn moments of the ceremony approached, the lack of a rehearsal among the officiating clergy had become painfully apparent. The queen was given dalmatic robes, stiff with gold, and the scepter, despite her anguished protest. The archbishop insisted on crushing the ring onto the wrong finger. The bishop of Durham gave her the orb too soon, and it was so heavy that she nearly dropped it. But the actual crowning was a most beautiful and impressive moment. All the peers and the

peeresses put on their coronets, the trumpets brayed and the drums beat and the whole congregation cheered and shouted and waved hats and handkerchiefs, while outside the tower and the park, guns thundered in salute.



I thought it was very amazing that in the midst of all the pomp and circumstance, all the praise and glory, things did not go quite right. There were problems. The plan was not executed flawlessly as one would have expected. Our study is about an event called the triumphal

entry of Christ, when Christ was honored as king. We are going to discover that Christ was not honored with exquisite carriages. He was not honored with beautiful horses. He was not honored with garden balconies, elegant clothing, jewelry, an orb, scepter or a ring on a finger, but His entry was flawlessly executed nevertheless.

TRIUMPHAL ENTRY MOVES NEAR JERUSALEM. Our passage is in Luke 19:28. It says,

After He had said these things, He was going on ahead, going up to Jerusalem. Luke 19:28 (NASB)

The person in this verse is Jesus Christ, and we are told that He was going on ahead up to Jerusalem. Jerusalem is at an elevation of about 2,577 feet, and that is roughly the elevation of Tucson. It is just rather remarkable to see how similar Tucson's elevation is to Jerusalem. Jerusalem sits on three hills: the Mount of Olives is one of them. Every time you see the statement that He is going up to Jerusalem, it reveals that Jerusalem is at a higher elevation. They were walking up to Jerusalem, because Jerusalem was higher. We will discover He was coming from a region known as Jericho. But before we go there, I would like to make a couple of important points. The first is that most of Jesus' ministry was not in the region known as Judea. Most of Jesus' ministry occurred in Samaria, Galilee, and across the Jordan—that is, east of Jordan. Second, Jesus spent most of His ministry in the north and only on occasions would He come down to Judea.

JESUS GOES TO JERUSALEM - FIRST PASSOVER. In John 2:23-25 we are told that Jesus was in Jerusalem.

Now when He was in Jerusalem at the Passover, during the feast, many believed in His name, observing His signs which He was doing. But Jesus, on His part, was not entrusting Himself to them, for He knew all men, and because He did not need anyone to testify concerning man, for He Himself knew what was in man. John 2:23-25 (NASB)

If you were to look at the very first verse of the chapter you would find that He was in Cana of Galilee. Galilee is in the north, and Jerusalem is in the south. That means He was in

the north and then He came down to the south. He went south to Jerusalem according to verse 23 because there was a Passover. He came to Jerusalem for the Passover. He ended up leaving, we are told in John 4:1-4, because the Pharisees discovered that He was making more disciples than John the Baptist. So Jesus went north and moved through Samaria and met a woman at the well.

JESUS GOES TO JERUSALEM - SECOND PASSOVER. In John 5:1, we find that Jesus returned to Jerusalem again. So He went from Cana of Galilee to Jerusalem, then went back to Galilee, and now back to Jerusalem. The reason He came back down, according to verse 1, is that there was a feast of the Jews. He went to Jerusalem for a feast. We are not really sure which feast. It appears to be another Passover. He ended up leaving again after healing people and teaching them that He is God. In fact if we look at John 5:18, we find that the Pharisees clearly understood He was declaring that He was God.

For this reason therefore the Jews were seeking all the more to kill Him, because He not only was breaking the Sabbath, but also was calling God His own Father, making Himself equal with God. John 5:18 (NASB)

The Jewish leaders, the Pharisees and the Sadducees, did not like what Jesus was doing. Jesus was breaking their rules, violating their doctrines, and at the same time He was making Himself out to be God. Those who say Jesus never taught that He was God should read verse 18. Or read verse 26 later in the chapter.

In verse 26 we read,

For just as the Father has life in Himself . . . John 5:18a (NASB)

That is, He made the point that the Father was eternal, He is self-existing. Then He says,

... even so He gave to the Son also to have life in Himself. John 5:18b (NASB)

What is the message? Jesus is self-existing. He does not

depend on anyone else. In theology we refer to self-existence as aseity. He does not depend on anyone for His life. This means Jesus is Deity or God! Jesus was clearly teaching that He was God, and the religious leaders did not like that. In chapter 5 we also find that Jesus revealed the Father. He was teaching fascinating truths about the Father. How did the Pharisees respond? They did not like Him and wanted to kill Him.

JESUS RETURNS TO GALILEE. In John 6:1, we find that Jesus was back in Galilee. We are not told in the gospel of John when He returns, but it says,

And after these things, He went away to the other side of the Sea of Galilee. John 6:1 (NASB)

It is not clear if Jesus went straight up to Galilee and then moved to the east side of the Sea of Galilee, but the verse reveals that He went straight to the east side of the Sea of Galilee. In verses 1-14 He fed at least 5,000 people. Then He walked on the water. Later He lost some disciples after they heard Him claim to be God and they heard He was going to die on a cross. They did not understand what He was talking about. Therefore, He lost many of His disciples.

In John 7:1, we find that Jesus was still in Galilee. The religious leaders still want to murder Him. Then in John 8:1, we find that He returned back to Jerusalem. We are told,

But Jesus went to the Mount of Olives. John 8:1 (NASB)

John 10:37 records that He left for Galilee again. In John 7 there was a discussion. Jerusalem was abuzz, trying to understand if Jesus was truly the Messiah. They wanted to know, is Jesus the Messiah? The religious leaders were trying to hunt Him down. There is an incredible conflict after Jesus came down to Jerusalem from the north. What is interesting is that it appears from the gospels that every time Jesus returned to Jerusalem, the Pharisees are re-energized to kill Him. This time it became more important. Question: "Why do you think Jesus kept leaving?" The answer is that the religious leaders want to kill Him and we find in John 10:37-42 this statement,

"If I do not do the works of My Father, do not believe Me; but if I do them, though you do not believe Me, believe the works, so that you may know and understand that the Father is in Me, and I in the Father." Therefore they were seeking again to seize Him, and He eluded their grasp. And He went away again beyond the Jordan to the place where John was first baptizing, and He was staying there. Many came to Him and were saying, "While John performed no sign, yet everything John said about this man was true." Many believed in Him there. John 10:37-42 (NASB)

The people are coming to Christ, and the religious leaders want to arrest Him. So Jesus went back to Galilee. It was like a cat-and-mouse game. Jesus came down from the north. The Pharisees became re-energized, and then He left again. Throughout Jesus' ministry, there is this cat-and-mouse game that happens again, and again, and again. We should not be too surprised, however, because Jesus challenged their doctrine. He was teaching the people, and the people thought there was no one who had ever taught as He taught. The people were enthralled with His teaching. In fact, Jesus disagreed with the Pharisees. He embarrassed them. He was popular, and His popularity was growing. He was more popular than they were, and the embarrassment was getting worse from their perspective. He outperformed them when they tried to embarrass Jesus with questions. He would answer their questions, and every time He outdid them. Jesus did miracles, signs and wonders. He was an embarrassment to them. He was challenging them, and He repeatedly revealed that their holiness was a sham. They were not holy religious leaders.

PHARISEES PLAN TO MURDER JESUS. His popularity was huge. When we arrive at John 11, we find that Jesus came down to Jerusalem from the north one more time. He came because He heard that Lazarus was ill. In fact, as we know, Lazarus had died, and Jesus brought him back to life. All of Jerusalem ignited like a forest fire over this news. The religious leaders realized that they finally had to get serious. In John 11:47 we are told,

Therefore the chief priests and the Pharisees convened a council,

and were saying, “What are we doing? For this man is performing many signs. John 11:47 (NASB)

In other words, the message was, “Our plan is not working. Whatever it is that we are trying to accomplish, and however it is we are trying to do, it is not working. We had a plan, and it is not working, for this man is performing too many signs.” You can just hear their frustration and anguish. These men were really upset. Verse 48:

If we let Him go on like this, all men will believe in Him, and the Romans will come and take away both our place and our nation. John 11:48 (NASB)

They had lost control—that is the message. They were thinking, “The people are not going to believe in us. Everyone is going to believe in Him, and the Romans will come and take away both our place and our nation.”

But one of them, Caiaphas, who was high priest that year, said to them, “You know nothing at all, nor do you take into account that it is expedient for you that one man die for the people, and that the whole nation not perish.” Now he did not say this on his own initiative, but being high priest that year, he prophesied that Jesus was going to die for the nation, and not for the nation only, but in order that He might also gather together into one the children of God who are scattered abroad. So from that day on they planned together to kill Him. John 11:49-53 (NASB)

Now what is important about this verse is that they were finally putting together the plan to kill Him. They were now seriously committed. It was THE plan to kill him. Verse 54:

Therefore Jesus no longer continued to walk publicly among the Jews . . . John 11:54a (NASB)

That is, among the Jewish leaders.

... but went away from there to the country near the wilderness, into a city called Ephraim, and there He stayed with the disciples. Now the Passover of the Jews was near, and many went up to

Jerusalem out of the country before the Passover to purify themselves. John 11:54b (NASB)

So they were seeking Jesus, and they were saying to one another as they stood in the temple, “What do you think? Do you think He is going to come?”

The reason they were wondering is that history states thousands upon thousands - about 2,000,000 Jews - would come for the Passover every year. So what were the religious leaders wondering? Wondering if He is coming. What does that mean? They knew He already had left, and are wondering, is He coming back? Verse 57,

Now the chief priests and the Pharisees had given orders that if anyone knew where He was, he was to report it, so that they might seize Him. John 11:57 (NASB)

Their plan is in place and they are committed. They are serious now. They want to kill Jesus—now!

JESUS IS COMING TO JERUSALEM. So when we read in Luke 19:28,

After He had said these things, He was going on ahead, going up to Jerusalem. Luke 19:28 (NASB)

This describes Jesus going to Jerusalem for the Passover. This is what the religious leaders were hoping He would do. They were hoping and wishing that He would come and He was on His way! If we were to look earlier in Luke, we would find that He had just left Jericho, He is traveling south. The religious leaders were waiting for Christ and they hate Him.

In Luke 18:35-43, we find that Jesus had just healed a blind man named Bartimaeus. Verse 36 tells us there was a crowd following Him. He was coming from Jericho. Jericho was near the southern part of the Dead Sea, and Jesus was not too far from Jerusalem. He was on His way, and there was a crowd ready.

Why is there a crowd? In part, everywhere Jesus went, there was a crowd. Every time Jesus was teaching or healing, crowds gathered. But this is a special occasion. Why? Because the Passover feast was in Jerusalem. Two million

people were coming to Jerusalem. The crowds were coming from Galilee, Samaria, and from the region called the Decapolis, beyond the Jordan. Can you just imagine what it must have been like for someone going to the Passover to hear Jesus teaching? That must have been a thrill for some of these people. There was a crowd following Him, and then to see the healing of Bartimaeus - wow! That must have been an awesome experience.

Luke 19:1 tells us that when Jesus entered Jericho and was passing through the city, He came upon a man named Zacchaeus. We are told in verse 2 that he was a chief tax collector. He was rich. But the best part of the discussion occurs in verse 9,

And Jesus said to him, "Today salvation has come to this house . . . Luke 19:1 (NASB)

Jesus was talking to Zacchaeus about Himself. Then Jesus said,

"Today salvation has come to this house, because he, too, is a son of Abraham. For the Son of Man has come to seek and to save that which was lost." Luke 19:9-10 (NASB)

Notice that Jesus knew what His mission was. Jesus knew why He had come. But the people did not understand. Verse 11 tells us a couple of very important facts.

While they were listening to these things, Jesus went on to tell a parable, because He was near Jerusalem, and they supposed that the kingdom of God was going to appear immediately. Luke 19:11 (NASB)

The first fact is the crowd was still following Him through Jericho and on to Jerusalem. Second, He was teaching a parable while He is walking. And why are the people following? They think He is going to establish a kingdom. This is a fabulous event! Now you say, "Why do you believe that there were 2,000,000 Jews coming to Jerusalem?" The answer is that historians tell us that roughly a quarter of a million animals were sacrificed in Jerusalem at Passover. Think about

that: 250,000 animals sacrificed during the time of Passover. The priests were very busy sacrificing animals as a huge congregation of people - from Samaria, Galilee, Syria, Turkey, Greece, Rome and Egypt were coming to Jerusalem. They want to encounter Jesus. What an incredible experience! They were talking about the kingdom. In John 6:15, we are told the people wanted to make Him their king. Verse 15 says,

So Jesus, perceiving that they were intending to come and take Him by force to make Him king, withdrew again to the mountain by Himself alone. John 6:15 (NASB)

Is that not interesting that the people wanted to take Him by force. . . .

... to make Him king, and he withdrew to the mountain by Himself, alone. John 6:15 (NASB)

The people wanted to make him king after He fed 5,000 men. We do not know how many women and children. It is estimated there may have been 25,000 to 30,000 people whom He actually fed. We do not know how many people he actually fed, but they wanted to take Him by force and make him their king. How did Jesus react? He escaped to a mountain. He also sent His disciples away, which seems to indicate from the other gospels that the disciples apparently thought this was a great idea - to make Him a king and establish the kingdom! Therefore, Jesus sent the disciples off and they entered a boat and moved out onto the Sea of Galilee. Later Jesus came walking on the water when things did not go well for the disciples. A great storm came up and they become afraid.

Let us look at John 6:26. This happened after Jesus was back on land near Capernaum. It says,

Jesus answered them and said, "Truly, truly, I say to you, you seek Me, not because you saw signs, but because you ate of the loaves and were filled." John 6:26 (NASB)

Jesus said to the crowd, "You are not really interested in me.

What you are really interested in is yourselves, because you want something to eat.” They were very self-centered people. Did you catch the fact that they wanted to force Him to be king? What a way to treat your king - to force Him to be your king! Why would they force Him? Because they wanted something for themselves.

PREPARATION FOR THE TRIUMPHAL ENTRY. In John 7 we are told that Jerusalem was consumed with talk about Him. The people were speculating that He was the Messiah. The speculation was enormous. In John 12: 9 we are told,

*The large crowd of the Jews then learned that He was there . . .
John 12:9 (NASB)*

This occurred when Jesus finally returned to Jerusalem. He had already brought Lazarus back from the dead.

*The large crowd of the Jews then learned that He was there; and they came, not for Jesus’ sake only, but that they might also see Lazarus, whom He raised from the dead. But the chief priests planned to put Lazarus to death also; because on account of him many of the Jews were going away and were believing in Jesus.
John 12:9-11 (NASB)*

What an interesting picture! The people were interested in Jesus for selfish reasons. The religious leaders were interested in Jesus for different reasons. The people wanted something out of Jesus, and the religious leaders wanted to kill Jesus. This was an incredible and dynamic situation that occurred on the day of Jesus’ Triumphal Entry.

So when Luke 19:28 tells us,

After He had said these things, He was going on ahead, going up to Jerusalem. Luke 19:28a (NASB)

The verse informs us that Jesus was talking while walking from Jericho up to Jerusalem. In verse 29 we are told,

When He approached Bethphage and Bethany, near the mount that is called Olivet, He sent two of the disciples . . . Luke 19:29 (NASB)

When we arrive at verse 29, we are told Jesus gave some directions. His plan was being executed. It was in its final stage. It is only days now until His death on a Friday. Jesus executes the final steps of the plan. The religious leaders, unfortunately, were filled with envy, pride, fear and hate for Him. They wanted to kill Him. But the people? The people are selfish, just like the leaders, but for different reasons. Now Jesus sends two disciples on ahead. The king has come. The time has arrived. Jesus has returned to Jerusalem. He has returned to the capital city.

Verses 30-32 describe what happened next. Jesus was . . .

. . . saying, “Go into the village ahead of you; there, as you enter, you will find a colt tied on which no one yet has ever sat; untie it and bring it here. If anyone asks you, ‘Why are you untying it?’ you shall say, ‘The Lord has need of it.’” So those who were sent went away and found it just as He had told them. Luke 19:30-32 (NASB)

Now there are a number of views as to what actually happened here. Some people say Jesus preplanned this event. On a previous visit, He had arranged for the colt to be tied. It is very possible that is true. It is also possible that in His omniscience, He knew exactly what was going to happen. It is very possible that the person who owned the animal was a believer. It is very possible that when they said “Lord,” the owner knew exactly about whom the disciples were talking. It is also possible that they recognized the disciples. There are many questions about which we cannot be certain. What is important is that there was a plan. Jesus told them there would be a colt tied up at the entrance to the city. How did that happen? While we do not know, it speaks of a plan executed flawlessly by God, by Christ.

THE TRIUMPHAL ENTRY. Verse 33-35 are our next verses,

As they were untying the colt, its owners said to them, “Why are you untying the colt?” They said, “The Lord has need of it.” They brought it to Jesus, and they threw their coats on the colt and put Jesus on it. Luke 19:33-35 (NASB)

Verse 35 is rather fascinating, because it refers to the disciples. We are told that they put their coats on the colt. It served as a saddle, a comfortable seat. Jesus did not climb on the colt. His disciples picked Him up and put Him on the colt. Why? They thought the kingdom was coming. So the procession of the king began. There was no exquisite carriage, no beautiful horses or chariot. There are no garden balconies, no elegant clothing, no jewelry, no orb, no scepter - just people, a donkey, some leaves, people, and that is it.

Verse 36 adds that the crowds were spreading their coats on the road.

As He was going, they were spreading their coats on the road.

Luke 19:36 (NASB)

COATS ON THE ROAD. Matthew 21:8 tells us that they were putting branches of trees on the ground. It does not say palms branches. In Mark 11:8 we are told “leafy branches.” It is John 12:13 that tells us they placed palm branches on the road. There might have been other types of branches also - but we do not know.

Verse 37 says that He was now approaching Jerusalem.

As soon as He was approaching, near the descent of the Mount of Olives, the whole crowd of the disciples began to praise God joyfully with a loud voice for all the miracles which they had seen

... Luke 19:37 (NASB)

Did you notice why the crowd of Jesus’ disciples were there? Did you notice why they were shouting joyfully with a loud voice? Somebody would say that they were shouting joyfully with a loud voice because they recognized that He was their king and was worthy of adoration and honor. Some people would say the reason they were shouting joyfully is because they recognized His wonderful character. But that is not what the verse says. The reason the disciples were shouting joyfully was because of all the miracles they had seen. I do not know about you, but that does not excite me because they were looking for something for themselves—they were selfish. It is sad. If you ask me, their joyful shouting was about themselves. Yes, they honored Jesus as a king. Yes, the

king deserves it—Jesus deserved everything that was given to Him. But the motivation was wrong—self-centered.

Verse 38 tells us what they were shouting.

... shouting:

“BLESSED IS THE KING WHO COMES IN THE NAME OF THE LORD;

Peace in heaven and glory in the highest!”

Luke 19:38 (NASB)

John 12:13 says they are shouting, “Hosanna.” In Mark 11:9-10 we are told,

Those who went in front and those who followed were shouting:

“Hosanna!

BLESSED IS HE WHO COMES IN THE NAME OF THE LORD;

Blessed is the coming kingdom of our father David;

Hosanna in the highest!”

Mark 11:9-10 (NASB)

Once again, why were they shouting? They wanted a king. They wanted a kingdom. Jesus was being honored because He deserved it - every bit of the praise.

Luke 19:39-40 puts the spotlight on the Pharisees,

Some of the Pharisees in the crowd said to Him, “Teacher, rebuke Your disciples.” But Jesus answered, “I tell you, if these become silent, the stones will cry out!” Luke 19:39-40 (NASB)

People, including me, become very excited about this passage because it speaks of the stones crying out. That would have been an amazing event. But I am excited for different reasons. The passage tells us that Jesus deserved all of the honor and the praise that He was given! He deserved it. If the people had not praised Him, the stones would have cried out. But it also tells me something else: unlike Queen Victoria’s coronation, this plan, Jesus’ plan or God’s plan, was executed flawlessly - absolutely flawlessly. It was a plan designed to result in His death.

Jesus had repeatedly returned to Galilee every time the

Pharisees wanted to murder Him. But this time Jesus stayed in Jerusalem. Why? Because it is the right time to die! It was a plan designed to result in His death. Consequently, by faith in Christ we can have our sins forgiven. By faith we trust that Christ can and will forgive our sins.

CONCLUSION. There are two things I want to point out. First of all, it is the right time from a prophetic viewpoint. In Daniel 9:24-26 we find that Daniel prophesizes the week in which Christ would die. Daniel's prophecy reveals that Christ would die after Nissan 10, A.D. 33 and He did. He died on Nissan 14, A.D. 33. The day of the triumphal entry of Jesus into Jerusalem occurred on a Monday, Nissan 10, and Daniel says that the Messiah is cut off after that date. He did die after that date. He died on Friday, Nissan 14, A.D. 33.

In Zechariah 9:9, we are told that the king is coming, humble on a colt. The prophecy of Zechariah 9:9 described the Triumphal Entry about 500 years before the event actually occurred. What is Jesus described as? He was described as a king coming humbly on a colt. What is significant about a colt? The answer is that the kings in the East came on a horse, but not on a colt, a donkey, or an ass. Kings did not do that, but Jesus did. This tells us that Christ is a king, but not a pompous king. He is a king, but not an arrogant and proud king. Jesus was and is a king, but He came to humble Himself.

The third aspect of the flawless plan reveals His divine omniscience. The plan was executed perfectly. The people were ready to give Him praise, even though they gave Christ self-serving praise. They were ready to give Him the praise that He deserved and deserves. The religious leaders were ready to crucify Him—to make Him Savior of the world. That was the whole reason for the plan. He came to become the Lamb of God who would die so that He could pay the

price for the forgiveness of and to take away the sin of the world.

Finally, what really affects my heart greatly are verses 41-44. They say,

When He approached Jerusalem, He saw the city and wept over it, saying, "If you had known in this day, even you, the things which make for peace! But now they have been hidden from your eyes. For the days will come upon you when your enemies will throw up a barricade against you, and surround you and hem you in on every side, and they will level you to the ground and your children within you, and they will not leave in you one stone upon another, because you did not recognize the time of your visitation." Luke 19:41-44 (NASB)

What was Jesus talking about in these verses? The destruction of Jerusalem in A.D. 70, when the Romans came and leveled Jerusalem. Why? Because they rejected their King and Savior. They rejected Jesus as Savior. Yes, some were willing to honor Him as king, but they did not want Him as a Savior. They were not looking for a Savior. A fascinating fact about this passage is that there are only two times in all the pages of scripture when we are told that Jesus wept. The first time was in John 11:35, when He wept over Lazarus' death. Do you know the second time scripture records that Jesus wept? It happened right here in verse 41, "And he wept over Jerusalem." Jesus is our Savior King! He is humble and is deserving of our praise.

I absolutely agree with the crowd, He deserved the praise. But I believe that He deserved the praise because of His character, because of who He was, because of what He did for you and for me! He is our Savior who can save you from your sins if you believe in Him and trust Him only for the forgiveness of your sins!

