

Last week, I used the illustration of the puzzle, noting how the text gave us an important application as the frame to a more important picture. This week, our text has the same structure, but I'll use the illustration of a feast. First you *cook* the feast, then you *eat* the feast. I'll start by highlighting an important example for us to follow, and then we will spend most of our time on the feast itself, the triumphal entry of Jesus into Jerusalem. But you can tie both parts together by focusing on the question that this passage forces us to ask: **Who is Jesus?** More specifically, **Is Jesus Lord and King?** And if you need help answering the question, check with the stones. Ask the rocks. They know the answer.

But as we begin, notice how things do not “happen” to Jesus. Jesus is in complete control of the situation, and knows what will happen before it happens. That should be your first clue about His authority. Jesus tells his disciples where to find a donkey in a village that they haven't gotten to yet, he knows that it will be *tied up* as opposed to *fenced in*, and he knows that no one will have sat on this colt yet. This would be like saying: “Go to the Enterprise Rent-A-Car in Bowie, and ask for the blue Toyota with less than ten miles on it.” As opposed to saying: “Go rent a car.” It would be a safe guess that a village would have a donkey; but this level of detail is *supernatural*.

And notice what Jesus instructs them to say. If they are asked about it, they are to respond “the Lord has need of it.” Now, this would not have been an unheard of thing, for an important person like a dignitary or a rabbi to make such a request, if request is the right word. It was an expected part of their culture. We see something similar when Jesus invites Himself to Zaccheus' house at the beginning of the chapter. But that raises the question: is Jesus important enough to make use of this cultural custom? Is Jesus “Lord”? The owners of the donkey get it right. *Yes, Jesus is Lord.* They allow the colt to be taken to Jesus.

And this is the example that I want us to consider. Practical Christian life cooking instructions to prepare a feast of worship for Jesus. Here's the question: “Is your stuff available to Jesus?” If Jesus were to ask you for something, are you ready to give it? If Jesus needs a place to stay, can He stay with you? If He needs food, will you feed Him? He needs transportation, can He take your car?

You think that your answer would be *yes*. Good. That's the right answer. But you are thinking *hypothetically* about Jesus showing up and asking, and since He doesn't walk the earth as a man anymore, it's too easy to answer *yes*.

So remember Jesus' words in Matthew 25: one day, Jesus will come and separate the sheep and the goats, and the test will be *whether or not your stuff was available to Jesus*, not in His person, but in His body, the Church. And notice that while He starts with the image of a shepherd, he shifts partway through: “The *King* will say to those on his right or left...”. That's what Luke 19 is

about. **Is Jesus your King?** If He is, then your stuff is freely available to His brothers, His people. Otherwise, you will be sent into the eternal fire! Generosity and hospitality will reward you with eternal life, and failing to be generous and hospitable will bring you eternal punishment! Not because you earn your way to heaven, but because these opportunities are tests that reveal whether or not Jesus is your King!

Because that's the real question. Is Jesus your Lord and King? The rocks and all of creation says yes. What do *you* say? What does *your life* say?

Let's ask the question differently: is your home open to God's people? Do you give to those in need? Are you feeding the hungry, clothing the naked, and caring for the sick? When is the last time you did any of those things? For some of you, it was very recent. For others of you, it's been a while. *Is your stuff available to your Lord Jesus?* Are you using your resources to care for the body of Christ? It's a strong motivation to hear Jesus warn you about eternal punishment if you're not generous. It would be *much better* if all Jesus had to say was "The Lord has need of it." Growing in maturity as a Christian means learning how to respond quickly to "The Lord has need of it." and not waiting for "Depart from me, you cursed."

So when you get home today, look around at your possessions, and mentally put a tag on *everything*: "The Lord has need of it." Maybe not *right at this moment*, but at some moment. Make a plan with your spouse and family so that the next time someone shows up a needs a place to stay, needs to borrow a car, needs a meal, needs *whatever*, you will be waiting for that email as if you were waiting to hear Jesus' voice. Back then, Jesus sent disciples. Now, Jesus sends emails. But when Jesus speaks to you, remember that He is Lord and King, and be ready to make your stuff available to Jesus.

Okay, we've prepared the feast. Now let's eat. The main course is Jesus' triumphal entry into Jerusalem. In verse 37, the disciples realize that something incredibly significant is happening. They still don't quite understand, which is why Jesus just gave them the parable of the king returning from his journey starting in verse 11 of chapter 19, which is why verse 28 begins with "when He had said these things", meaning, *when He had told them a parable to explain the that the kingdom was coming in a different way than they expected*. But the one thing they do understand is that *the kingdom is coming*, and that Jesus' entry into Jerusalem signals the arrival of the king. They've been "going to Jerusalem" for ten chapters. The climax has been building for a long time. Jesus has been doing wonderful things all along the way, and so they can only imagine what will He do when He actually gets there!

And so when they are about two miles away, they remember how the people of Israel spread their garments before Jehu when he was declared king, and they remember how Solomon rode on King David's mule when he was declared king (interestingly, both of these were *contested* kingships, like Jesus' must be, since there's already a king in Jerusalem).

They also remembered how Zechariah had promised that Lord would come as king on the Mount of Olives, and so as they come down the Mount of Olives, they take up part of a song from Psalm 118: "Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord!" And they combine it with part of Psalm 148, echoing the song that was sung over Jesus at His birth by the angels: "Peace in heaven and glory in the highest!"

Another strange connection: When Solomon, the Son of David, is heralded as king, the people shout so loudly that the earth splits. In Zechariah's prophecy of the Lord coming as King on the Mount of Olives, he says metaphorically that the mountain would split in two. I don't know if you've ever heard the sound of rocks splitting apart, but I don't think it would be a bad description to say that it would sound like stones crying out.

And here's a quick application: if you are excited that Jesus is your King, this should result in a measurable increase in volume. Why don't your neighbors know about Jesus? Why hasn't Annapolis been split apart by our joyful praise? Because you aren't singing loud enough! Is Jesus King or not? If He is, then you need to sing like it!

And in Psalm 118, especially, the song describes how God has worked mighty deliverances and wonders for His people, (which is what the disciples are remembering when they start to shout their loud praises), and so in both Psalm 118 and the Triumphal Entry, the leader of the people is taking them *to go and worship*. This is what makes Jesus' triumphal entry so different from the processions of other kings: A Roman king comes riding a mighty *horse*; Jesus comes on a humble *donkey*. A Roman king comes surrounded by *soldiers*; Jesus comes surrounded by *singers*. A Roman king comes leading *captives*; Jesus comes leading those whom He has *set free*. A Roman king comes *to be worshiped*; Jesus comes to lead His people to worship God. Jesus enters Jerusalem as a humble king, a peaceful king, a king who leads His people to worship, not to war.

But in spite of all these differences with other kinds of kings, the fact remains that the disciples are announcing that Jesus is coming into Jerusalem as Messiah and King. They are taking sides and making an inescapably *political* statement. Their king isn't coming to engage in a literal battle, but He is fighting a great war. And so we need to ask: Since the disciples have repeatedly shown that they don't understand Jesus or His kingdom, are they right? *Is* Jesus coming as a King? Does His rule have this political dimension? Are they right to bring in all these associations with Jehu and Solomon and the Messiah?

The Pharisees don't even bother to ask the question. They have already ruled it out beforehand. Jesus *is not* and *cannot* be the king. And so they try to rebuke Jesus for allowing His disciples to give Him this kingly welcome. If Jesus does not silence His followers, then He is implicitly agreeing with them. If He accepts their praises, then He is claiming to be Lord and King in Jerusalem. “Teacher, rebuke your disciples! Stop allowing them to treat you as king!”

But despite all that the disciples don't understand, in spite of all their wrong expectations and confused ideas about how Jesus comes as king, they have understood the most important thing: **Jesus *is* king!** They are telling the truth, and so Jesus refuses to take that away from them. Jesus is coming into Jerusalem as God's chosen king, His anointed Messiah, the Lord of Israel, and the Savior of the world. And so Jesus says, “I tell you, if these were silent, the stones would cry out.” If God's image-bearers refuse to acknowledge their king, all of the lower creation knows better. The rocks recognize the one who made them. The stones remember hearing this voice before when they were called out of nothing into being by a word.

The Pharisees who protest this kingly parade are dumber than rocks. A stone that has no eyes can see more clearly than they do. A rock that has no mouth speaks more truth than they do. A king has come bring heaven's peace to Jerusalem and glory to God in the highest by leading His people back to the altar where God will be worshiped rightly and the sins of the people will be covered, and *the rocks on the road* are more ready to receive Him than His own people! Tragic!

The following verses tell of Jesus' weeping over Jerusalem. His disciples and followers are a great crowd, and they lift His praises to heaven, but Jerusalem *as a whole* refuses their king. “We will not have this man to rule over us!” They throw themselves back into the time of the judges, when there is no king in Israel and every man does what is right in his own eyes. This brought ruin on Israel back then, and it will bring ruin on them now, especially when Pilate stands before them and asks: “Shall I crucify your king?” The Jews reply, “We have no king but Caesar.” Jesus does not weep for Himself – His kingship is secure. God has set Him as King on Zion, His holy hill. He weeps for the rebels who refuse their king and call down destruction on their own heads.

He came to His own, but His own received Him not. Jesus does not *force* you to accept Him as king. This is an astonishing change to the way the world understands kingship. Jesus comes to preach and work miracles, to astonish you with the goodness and grace of His kingship, to persuade and attract you to the glories of His kingship, to bless you and amaze you with the wonders of His kingly power. *But He does not use that power the way a worldly king does.* Your unbelief *does not threaten His kingship*, and so He does not threaten you. Your unbelief *does* threaten your eternal happiness and joy, and so He *warns* you, He *woos* you, and He *weeps* over you.

And here is the most amazing thing that the King does: in the OT, Psalm 118 celebrated the kingly role of leading the people to the altar in a joyful worship procession, so that the people can be healed and made right with God through sacrifice. This is how the king makes peace in heaven: by leading the people to sacrifice to God. This is exactly what King Jesus is doing when He enters Jerusalem riding on a donkey.

But here is the shocking twist: this time, ***the King IS the sacrifice***. Jesus doesn't just lead the people to sacrifice, He doesn't just show them how to sacrifice, and He doesn't just offer sacrifices on their behalf. He offers *Himself*. He sees a kingdom full of rebels who reject Him as king, and choose a cruel tyrant instead. They are destroying the peace between God and men. But Jesus does not turn around, and He does not silence His disciples. They don't want Him as their king, but He still does what a good king does. He leads His people to the festal altar and offers Himself as the sacrifice that restores peace in heaven and glory in the highest.

Palm Sunday, where the King enters royal David's city, leads to *Good Friday*, where the King offers Himself on the altar, which leads *Resurrection Sunday*, where God shows the world that Jesus really is King, and that His sacrifice was accepted by raising Him from the dead, which leads to *Ascension Sunday*, where the King ascends to His throne on His coronation day, which leads to *Pentecost Sunday*, where the King gives the gift of the Spirit, who convicts the King's rebellious subjects of their great evil, and where the King's heralds offer the King's pardon to all who repent and believe the good news that was made public on Palm Sunday: Jesus is the King who comes in the name of the Lord. Peace in heaven and glory in the Highest! Hosanna to the Son of David! Hosanna in the highest! Blessed is the King who comes in the name of the Lord!

- *In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, Amen.*