

The Stones Cry Out

SERMON

By

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TEXT: Luke 19:28-44

PROP: We cannot but praise God with all our heart for his mercies to us in Christ. God will have his praise if even from the stones. Thos who are converted cannot hold back their praise of God.

Luke 19:28-44 (ESV)

28 And when he had said these things, he went on ahead, going up to Jerusalem. **29** When he drew near to Bethphage and Bethany, at the mount that is called Olivet, he sent two of the disciples, **30** saying, “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. **31** If anyone asks you, ‘Why are you untying it?’ you shall say this: ‘The Lord has need of it.’ ” **32** So those who were sent went away and found it just as he had told them. **33** And as they were untying the colt, its owners said to them, “Why are you untying the colt?” **34** And they said, “The Lord has need of it.” **35** And they brought it to Jesus, and throwing their cloaks on the colt, they set Jesus on it. **36** And as he rode along, they spread their cloaks on the road. **37** As 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** saying, “Blessed is the King who comes in the name of the Lord! Peace in heaven and glory in the highest!” **39** And some of the Pharisees in the crowd said to him, “Teacher, rebuke your disciples.” **40** He answered, “I tell you, if these were silent, the very stones would cry out.”

Jesus Weeps over Jerusalem

41 And when he drew near and saw the city, he wept over it, **42** saying, “Would that you, even you, had known on this day the things that make for peace! But now they are hidden from your eyes. **43** For 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 **44** and 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.”

Bethany is on the eastern slope of the Mount of Olives, and according to Origen, Bethphage, which is not otherwise mentioned in the N.T., is between Jerusalem and Bethany, separated from Bethany only by a ravine.

Not since the days of Solomon had any king ridden upon a donkey. Whatever donkeys of superior type and breeding existed in the Orient, the tiny village of Bethpage would be the last place to look for such stock. Nor is the donkey more peaceful than the horse, rather it is much inferior to it. More than anyone else Jesus deserved to ride a mighty horse of war, a great prancing white stallion, but He came "humble, and mounted on a donkey, even on a colt, the foal of a donkey", and strangely, the prophet Zechariah tells us to "rejoice greatly -- shout in triumph -- behold your King is coming to you!" Would we have thought it bizarre for a King to behave in this manner, or would we have shown contempt for Jesus as many must have, expecting Him to display more kingly stature?

Caesar came back victorious from his wars to thunderous accolades from the lips of tens of thousands. But when Jesus entered Jerusalem He rode a small donkey, without saddle and finery, accompanied by a shouting crowd, small perhaps by modern standards. Some embarrassed Pharisees told Jesus to have the annoying crowd silenced. Then as the city came into view Jesus began to weep and the leaders of Israel looked were simply appalled. The shame of the thing!

And if all that wasn't enough, upon entering the temple itself he began to physically remove the sacrifice merchants telling them that they had turned the temple into a den of robbers. He proceeded to set himself up as a Rabbi and without license or ordination. He was teaching daily in the temple for which the "leading men among the people were trying to destroy Him." How could a carpenter's son be the Messiah of which the crowds were singing?

That is exactly the point. We rightly infer from His actions that Jesus is God. His approach to Jerusalem was not as her king but as her God and let us notice again the actions that lead us to that conclusion. First Jesus approach was a humble one which signified peace not war. Jesus' mission was not to conquer His enemies but to seek them and save them.

Secondly there was His mastery of the circumstances which surrounded His approach. He knew, for example, that a donkey colt was in a certain place in Bethpage upon which no one had ever sat meaning that this animal had never been broken to the saddle or to human riders. We know very well what happens when someone mounts such an animal to ride. A horse becomes violent and attempts to throw off the would be rider and a donkey may simply refuse to move. In this case some garments were placed on the donkey and when they put Jesus on its back it gave no trouble at all. Then there were the owners of the donkey. We have no indication that they knew Jesus but when they were told "The Lord has need of it", without any argument they gave it to the disciples who brought it to Jesus for His use.

Thirdly we note the amazing thing His disciples sang as they walked along toward Jerusalem. Matthew writes that they sang "Hosanna to the Son of David" and Mark, that they sang "Hosanna" and "Hosanna in the highest". Matthew, Mark and Luke all record that they also sang the words of

Psalm 118:26 (ESV)

26 Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord!
We bless you from the house of the Lord.

Now "Hosanna" (*hoshea na*) literally means "save us" and perhaps we may translate it to mean "salvation". So "save us", they sang, "salvation in the highest." They could hardly be thinking of salvation from the tyranny of Roman rulers because Jesus was in no position to wage war against all of Rome. Where were his armies and weapons? He was riding not on a war horse but a humble donkey. It was the salvation that God alone can bring to His people. It was freedom from Roman tyranny that is based in pardon from sin; that consists in the knowledge of the truth. After all, "if God is for us who can be against us."

John 8:31-32 (ESV)

31 -- "If you abide in my word, you are truly my disciples, **32** and you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free."

On the other hand they sang

Luke 19:38 (ESV)

38 saying, "Blessed is the King who comes in the name of the Lord! Peace in heaven and glory in the highest!"

and this is a most interesting statement. Being a quote of Psalm 118:26 we ought therefore to take note of it in its Hebrew form – *Baruch habah bisham Yahweh*. The proper name of the true and living God is Yahweh. It is here translated with the English words "the LORD" (capital letters). So the sentence translates as follows: baruch - let him be blessed, *habah* - the one coming, *bisham* - with the name, "Yahweh". The *bet* before the word *bisham* can mean either "in" or "with" therefore we may translate "**Blessed be the one who comes with the name Yahweh.**" Why belabor this issue? If Jesus comes "in" the name Yahweh it implies that he is a representative of Yahweh, but if he comes "with" the name YAHWEH it means that YAHWEH is his name.

The practice of translating God's proper name with the words "the LORD" in my opinion obscures some very important truths of scripture and in this case it obscures the truth that Jesus is Yahweh. The Pharisees were of course Hebrew speaking people and when they heard the crowd shouting "Blessed be the one who comes with the name Yahweh" speaking of Jesus they were not just embarrassed, they were appalled. To them it was dreadful blasphemy and the Gospel writers record the fact that whenever Jesus equated Himself, or was equated by others to God, the unbelieving Jewish leaders tried to kill Him. Of course they wanted to silence the crowd.

The crowds were glorifying Jesus, throwing their garments on the ground to form a carpet, waving palm branches and ascribing Kingship to Jesus as it did in the case of Jehu,

2 Kings 9:13 (ESV)

13 Then in haste every man of them took his garment and put it under him on the bare steps, and they blew the trumpet and proclaimed, "Jehu is king."

The Pharisees knew their bibles. They understood this ascription of glory but they refused to believe that this was *Yeshua Hameshiach*, Jesus the Messiah. They refused to believe that Jesus was the one of whom Isaiah wrote,

Isaiah 40:10-11 (ESV)

- 10** Behold, the Lord God comes with might, (*Yahweh Adonai*)
and his arm rules for him;
behold, his reward is with him,
and his recompense before him.
- 11** He will tend his flock like a shepherd;
he will gather the lambs in his arms;
he will carry them in his bosom,
and gently lead those that are with young.

Jesus is Yahweh Adonai who tends his flock like a shepherd

John 10:14-15 (ESV)

14 I am the good shepherd. I know my own and my own know me, **15** just as the Father knows me and I know the Father; and I lay down my life for the sheep.

Jesus is a King, yes, but He is a Shepherd-King. He is not merely an earthly king whose domain is limited to polity and geography. Jesus is the King of Kings and Lord of

Lords, King of Righteousness, King of Peace (Genesis 14:18, Hebrews 7:2) and you see, this is what His entry to Jerusalem meant. Indeed,

Zechariah 9:9 (ESV)

9 Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion!
Shout aloud, O daughter of Jerusalem!
behold, your king is coming to you;
righteous and having salvation is he,
humble and mounted on a donkey,
on a colt, the foal of a donkey.

Jesus told His disciples that "all authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me." John testifies that

John 1:3-4 (ESV)

3 All things were made through him, and without him was not any thing made that was made. **4** In him was life, and the life was the light of men.

Thus the scriptures show that Jesus has all the attributes of Yahweh God, that He is the same in substance and equal in power and glory with God the Father and the Holy Spirit.

I put it to you today, what sort of Jesus do you believe in. Hollywood's Christ is a good man. Many others believe with the Pharisees that Jesus is "of his father the devil". Still others believe the foolish and ignorant irony "you saved others, yourself you cannot save." Some like to think of Jesus as a golden-haired blue-eyed super star to whom they flippantly sing "ho sanna hey sanna ho sanna hey." These words come from *Jesus Christ Superstar* written by Andrew Lloyd-Webber the composer of *Phantom of the Opera* and from the homosexual lyricist, Tim Rice.

Some believe that Jesus' power to save extends only to knocking on the door of the heart but unless the hearts door is opened to Him He can't come in. A well known painting portrays this thought showing a somewhat effeminate man holding a lantern before a door that he is ineffectively knocking upon. Someone has pictured the same person knocking on the side of the United Nations Secretariat building to no avail.

What about you? What sort of Jesus do you believe in? This is the most important question you will ever have to answer for without a heart belief that Jesus is Adonai Yahweh the Shepherd-King you cannot be saved. Paul writes in

Romans 10:9-10 (ESV)

9 because, if you confess with your mouth that Jesus is Lord (*Yeshua is Yahweh*) and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. **10** For with the heart one believes and is justified, and with the mouth one confesses and is saved.

It is the business of the devil to down play, to silence, the praise of Jesus even as the Pharisees who told Jesus, "rebuke your disciples." It is the business of ungodly and unrighteous men to "suppress the truth in unrighteousness." "When these are silent", Jesus noted, "the stones will cry out." According to

Matthew 21:15-16 (ESV)

¹⁵ But when the chief priests and the scribes saw the wonderful things that he did, and the children crying out in the temple, "Hosanna to the Son of David!" they were indignant, ¹⁶ and they said to him, "Do you hear what these are saying?" And Jesus said to them, "Yes; have you never read,

“ ‘ Out of the mouth of infants and nursing babies
you have prepared praise’?”

Here were 12 year old boys having come to Temple in Jerusalem, even as Jesus did when He was 12 years old, for their first Passover. Not yet having a mature and informed understanding of Messianic things they were imitating the singing and dancing of their parents in the streets the day before, singing, 'Hosanna to the Son of David.' As in the Luke account, the chief priests and scribes were angered by this praise of Jesus and Jesus responds by quoting

Psalms 8:2 (ESV)

2 Out of the mouth of babes and infants,
you have established strength because of your foes,
to still the enemy and the avenger.

He said in effect that God will have the praise due Him even if inarticulate stones and babes must offer it to the shame of men. If grown and intelligent men will not render to Yahweh Jesus the praise He deserves as their God and Creator, then God will cause stones and nursing infants to praise Him.

Do we praise God as we ought? Have things improved over the centuries? If we were not to praise God, the very stones might cry out against us. We must praise the

Lord. Woe is unto us if we do not! It is impossible for us to hold our tongues. As Spurgeon put it, "Saved from hell and be silent! Secure of heaven and be ungrateful! Bought with precious blood, and hold our tongues! Filled with the Spirit and not speak! Restrain, from fear of feeble man, the Spirit's course within our souls! God forbid. In the name of the Most High, let such a thought be given to the winds. What, our children saved; the offspring of our loins brought to Christ! What, see them springing up like willows by the water courses, and no awakening of song, no gladness, no delight! Oh, then we were worse than brutes, and our hearts would have been steeled and become as adamant. We must praise God! What, the King in our midst, King Jesus smiling into our souls, feasting us at his table, making his word precious to us, and not praise him. Why if Satan could know the delight of Christ's company he might begin to love; but we, we were worse than devils if we did not praise the name of Jesus! What! the King's arm made bare, his enemies subdued, his triumphant chariot rolling through our streets, and no song! Oh Zion, if we forget to sing let our right hand forget her cunning; if we count not the King's triumph above our chiefest joy. What, the King coming! His advent drawing nigh, the signs of blessing in the sky and air around, and yet no song! Oh, we must bless him! Hosanna! Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord!"

When the stones speak to us what would they say? They would tell of their Maker. Shall not we tell of him who made us anew, and out of stones raised up children unto Abraham? They would speak of ages long ago. They would tell of chaos and order, and the handiwork of God in various stages of creation's unfolding. Would not these ancient stones speak God's decrees, of God's great work in ancient times, and all that he did for his Church? If the stones were to speak they would tell of the one who took them from the quarry, and made them fit for the temple. Cannot we tell of our Creator and Maker, who broke in peices our sinful hearts with the hammer of his word that he might build us into his temple? If the stones were to speak, they would tell of their builder, who polished them and fashioned them after the likeness of a palace. Shall not we talk of our Architect and Builder, who has put us in our place in the temple of the living God? If the stones could speak, they might have a long story to tell by way of memorial, for often great stones have been rolled as a memorial unto God. We can tell of Ebenezers, stones of help, stones of remembrance. The broken stones of the law cry out against us, but Christ himself, who has rolled away the stone from the door of the sepulcher, speaks for us. Stones might well cry out, but we will not let them. We will silence their noise with ours. We will sing and praise and bless the majesty of the Most High all our days. Let this day and the Passover week ahead of us be especially consecrated to holy joys, and may the Lord in infinite mercy fill your souls full of it, both in service to God and works of praise! Blessed be his name who lives for ever and ever!

Having finished with the unbelieving Pharisees Jesus took notice of the city of Jerusalem and weeping at the sight of her Jesus said,

Luke 19:42-44 (ESV)

42 --“Would that you, even you, had known on this day the things that make for peace! But now they are hidden from your eyes. **43** For 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 **44** and 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.”

The Greek text indicates by the phrase *"if these become silent"* that it is a future certainty that Jerusalem will be destroyed and all who are in it will perish and there will be no more shouts of Hosanna. These very Pharisees did indeed put the Messiah to death and now the stones cry out. Jerusalem **has** been destroyed because she did not repent. The stones cry out judgment for all who reject Christ as Adonai Yahweh. Do you recognize that this is your day of visitation? Do you recognize the time in which God comes to bring salvation and blessing. Like Jerusalem will you refuse to recognize the hour of grace. Once again you are confronted with the claims of Yahweh Jesus. Now is the day of salvation. Hosanna to the Son of David. Yahweh is our righteousness and this is the message that the stones cry out. Referring to Jesus the Messiah Jeremiah writes,

Jeremiah 23:5-6 (ESV)

5 “Behold, the days are coming, declares the Lord, when I will raise up for David a righteous Branch, and he shall reign as king and deal wisely, and shall execute justice and righteousness in the land. **6** In his days Judah will be saved, and Israel will dwell securely. And this is the name by which he will be called: (Yahweh Tsidkenu) ‘The Lord is our righteousness.’

We cannot but praise God with all our heart for his mercies to us in Christ. May Yahweh our righteousness call us to himself and may we be moved by his Spirit to praise him and serve him with renewed zeal as we should.