

Exegetical Notes, Luke 19:28-44
“If Only You Had Known”

Prepared by Charles H. Jensen, Pastor, Cornerstone Fellowship
101 Kylies Road, Coatesville, PA 19329
610-384-1375
charleshjensen@aol.com

Luke 19:28-44

Verse 28

After Jesus had said this, he went on ahead, going up to Jerusalem.

- In the passage preceding this one, Jesus had been in Jericho, a city about 15 miles from Jerusalem. In Jericho, he had encountered the man known as Zacchaeus and then taught in parables. Leaving Jericho, Jesus set out for Jerusalem.
- The phrase, “going on ahead,” simply means that Jesus led the procession from Jericho to Jerusalem with the others in his group following his lead.

Verse 29-30

As he approached Bethphage and Bethany at the hill called the Mount of Olives, he sent two of his disciples, saying to them, “Go to the village ahead of you, and as you enter it, you will find a colt tied there, which no one has ever ridden. Untie it and bring it here. If anyone asks you, ‘Why are you untying it?’ tell him, ‘The Lord needs it.’”

- Bethphage and Bethany are small villages just outside of Jerusalem near the Mount of Olives. The Mount of Olives plays a significant role in end time events. See Zechariah 14:4. Bethphage means “House of Figs.” It was probably the place where the fig harvest was gathered for distribution to market. Bethany has two possible meanings. It could mean “House of Dates.” In which case, it would be the place where the date harvest was gathered for distribution to market. The other possible meaning is “House of Death.” While the first meaning is the most likely, the second became popular in Christian circles because Bethany was the place where Lazarus died, whom Jesus raised from the dead.

- The book of Zechariah seems to play largely in the story of the Triumphal entry. See Zechariah 9:9.
- The “village ahead of you,” was most likely Bethphage. There, Jesus told selected disciples where to find a colt which had never before been ridden. They were to bring this colt to him for his use. If asked what they were up to, they were to say that “The Lord needed the animal.” When the owners of the colt asked the selected disciples why they were untying the colt, the disciples gave the answer as directed and the colt was released to them for the Lord’s use. All of this suggests that Jesus had made arrangements concerning these events with the owner of the animal without the knowledge of his followers.
- In what follows, Jesus deliberately offers himself to the Jews as their Messiah according to Zechariah 9:9. He is doing this at this moment in time to make a very clear and firm statement concerning his own identity and historical/theological role. That this was prearranged should not alarm or surprise us. This is a deliberate action on Jesus’ part to show who he is.

Verse 31-35

Those who were sent ahead went and found it just as he had told them. As they were untying the colt, its owners asked them, “Why are you untying the colt?” They replied, “The Lord needs it.” They brought it to Jesus, threw their cloaks on the colt and put Jesus on it.

- This verse confirms that this was Jesus’ deliberate plan. Everything happened just as he said it would. Nothing was amiss. It all unfolded exactly as Jesus planned for it to happen.
- When the disciples had brought the colt to Jesus, they made a kind of saddle out of their coats and Jesus sat upon the animal intending to ride it into Jerusalem according to Zechariah 9:9.

Verse 36-38

When he came near the place where the road goes down the Mount of Olives, the whole crowd of disciples began joyfully to praise God in loud voices for all the miracles they had seen: “Blessed is the king who comes in the name of the Lord! Peace in heaven and glory in the highest!”

- The place where the road goes down the Mount of Olives into the Kidron Valley is very near the village of Bethany where Lazarus lived whom Jesus had raised from the dead. See John 11. This is most likely the miracle which caused the disciples to begin to praise God.

However, given this reminder, other miracles must also have been called to their minds.

- Their words of praise come from Psalm 118:26.

Verse 39-40

Some of the Pharisees in the crowd said to Jesus, “Teacher, rebuke your disciples!” “I tell you,” he replied, “If they keep quiet, the stones will cry out.”

- The Pharisees understood what was happening, that Jesus was proclaiming himself to be Israel’s Messiah through these events. They, therefore, called upon him to silence his disciples and stop the demonstration. They believed that what they were witnessing was blasphemy.
- In response, Jesus again shows that this is a deliberate part of God’s plan. He told his critics that even if the disciples were silenced the proclamation could not be stopped, for nature itself would bear witness to his true identity.

Verse 41-44

As he approached Jerusalem and saw the city, he wept over it and said, “If you, even you, had only known on this day what would bring you peace -- but now it is hidden from your eyes. The days will come upon you when your enemies will build an embankment against you and encircle you and hem you in on every side. They will dash you to the ground, you and the children within your walls. They will not leave one stone on another, because you did not recognize the time of God’s coming to you.

- Looking at the city of Jerusalem from the Mount of Olives, Jesus wept over it because he knew that the people of Jerusalem would reject his claim to be Israel’s Messiah. They did so when they joined their leaders in calling out for his crucifixion. Jesus claimed that their own incorrect discernment of the facts caused them to miss the very event that would have brought them peace.
- Jesus predicted that a day of destruction would come upon Jerusalem when her enemies would completely destroy her. This happened in 70 AD. Jesus makes it clear that this happened because the Jews did not recognize God’s favor to them in sending them his son, the Messiah.

(These exegetical notes are the foundational study for the sermon entitled *If You Had Only Known*. They have been prepared by the Reverend Doctor Charles H. Jensen, Senior Pastor at Cornerstone Fellowship, Coatesville Pennsylvania. All rights are reserved by Dr. Jensen and *Cornerstone Fellowship*.)