

Family Worship Booklet



God tells us that Ezra read from the book of the Law,
day after day, and that the people of God
were filled with joy!

Friday – Luke 19:28-40 – The entry into Jerusalem.

As Jesus rides into Jerusalem on the donkey, crowds surround him, and they begin throwing their cloaks on the ground. Matthew tells us that they also throw palm branches on the road in front of him. There is great euphoria surrounding the whole event. Something Luke doesn't mention but both Matthew and John do, as they quote Zechariah's prophecy about what would happen (Zechariah 9:9). It's evident that the multitudes, including many Galileans who had personally witnessed Jesus' numerous miracles, clearly saw Jesus' entry into the city as the fulfilment of this prophecy and greeted him hysterically as the coming Messiah. They had waited for more than two years for him to reveal himself as the Messiah. Now it was happening before their very eyes. It's hard to convey just what this meant to them. The expectation that centuries of Roman rule would be overthrown within a few days made the air thick with anticipation. The fact that he was riding on a donkey and not soliciting any of the usual trappings of power seemed irrelevant as they got caught up in the moment.

All four gospels tell us that the crowd cried, "*Blessed and he who comes in the name of The Lord.*" (Psalm 118:28), but only Luke and John refer to the fact that the people called Jesus *the King*. Luke is the only one who tells us that the people also cried out, "Peace in heaven and glory in the Highest", an interesting reference to the fact that God will reconcile himself to men.

This is a staggering event. One the world had never seen before and one which obviously annoyed the Pharisees deeply, given that they told Jesus to 'rebuke' his disciples. The idea that the masses are hailing this man, who in their eyes is a blasphemer, a sojourner with tax collectors and sinners, even a servant of the devil, as the Messiah, it's unconscionable. He's got to stop it. Jesus' response is simple; it can't be done. Not because he doesn't have the authority to do it, of course, he could have silenced the people instantly, but because it has been foreordained since before time that on this day, at this hour, in this place, he will be hailed as the Messiah. If the people are silenced, then the stones lying on the ground along the roadside would cry out what the people are shouting in their delirious state.

Q1. How do the people react to Jesus as he enters Jerusalem?

Q2. Why is there such euphoria?

Q3. What is the response of the Pharisee?

Q4. What does Jesus tell them?

Thursday – Luke 19:28-40 – The days before the journey into Jerusalem.

Luke now presents us with a brief statement about Jesus going up to Jerusalem. The fuller account is that on the Friday, Jesus went from Jericho to Bethany, where he rested on the Sabbath (remember, the Jewish Sabbath is our Saturday). That evening he enjoyed a meal at the home of Lazarus, Martha and Mary, who anointed his feet with a pound of expensive pure ointment. This drew the wrath of Judas Iscariot, which in turn drew a rebuke from Jesus. Then as the sun is setting, Sunday is beginning, and Jesus prepares to enter Jerusalem. The city is heaving with people. The city population is multiplied by the thousands of people who have come to celebrate the great Festival of the Passover (John 12:1-8).

Jesus stops at the mount called ‘Olivet’ or Olive grove, and he tells two of his disciples, we’re not told who it is, to go into the city and get a colt for him to ride into the city on. They don’t have to go in search of one. Jesus gives them precise instructions; it will be in front of them as they enter the village, tied up and unbroken (no one had ever ridden it). He tells them how to respond if asked what they are doing untying the colt. No detail is left to be worked out. Jesus’ entire life was spelled out for him by the Father as he lived in complete and utter obedience. Sometimes the reality of that doesn’t strike us as we work our way through the gospels, especially Luke, as he can be a bit more random in his recounting of events. But now we are entering the last week, and the details of just how preordained the days, hours, and minutes of Jesus’ life are will come alive to us.

The two disciples go into the village, and everything happens just as Jesus said it would, down to the very conversation about why they are taking the colt. “The Lord has need of it,” is the telling statement. But why a donkey? (We know it was a donkey from Matthew 21:2.) Why not a horse? Donkeys were used for carrying burdens, not human beings and why a previously unridden male donkey? Because it speaks to the humility and authority of Jesus, the King, and that he will be doing something that has never been done before. Interestingly Luke tells us that after the two disciples had brought the donkey to Jesus, they threw their cloaks over its back and then lifted Jesus onto the animal. They are serving Jesus, their master and the King.

Q1. Who does Jesus dine with?

Q2. Is Jesus going to walk into the city?

Q3. What do the events of how the disciples got the donkey tell us about Jesus’ life?

Monday – Luke 19:11-14 - The nobleman leaves his servants to work!

As we saw in chapter 18, verses 31-34, Jesus has told his disciples that they are going to Jerusalem because he is going to die; but as we know, ‘the saying was hidden from them’. Whether in Jericho or on the way to Jerusalem, the issue dominating everyone’s mind, both the disciplines and the crowds of people following Jesus, is whether or not he will establish his Kingdom when he gets there. Jesus addresses this chatter in a parable. He does so because he knows the negative impact such fevered debate can have on people’s emotional state, and their ability to settle and do what they are supposed to.

The idea of a nobleman going off to a far country to claim a Kingdom seems a bit odd to you and me, but not to those listening to Jesus. It happened frequently. In 4 BC, following the death of Herod the Great resulted in his son Archelaus traveling to Rome to claim his father’s throne from the Roman Emperor Augustus.

Before the man goes off to claim his kingdom, he calls in ten of his servants because he has a job for them to do. He gives each of them ten minas; a mina was about three months wages for a labourer, and he tells them explicitly that he wants them to invest the money so that his wealth will increase. There’s a problem, though; those living in what would be his kingdom hate the nobleman, and they’re determined to do everything they can to prevent his getting his hands on the throne. So, they send a delegation to the far country to lobby against him getting the kingdom.

Does it sound familiar? Jesus is telling this parable in the week leading up to his death, and he is pointing to the lengths that the chief priests, the lawmakers, King Herod, and the people will go to in order to get rid of him as King; of course, they don’t know that their actions will, in the providence of God, ultimately lead to Jesus being anointed Mediator King.

But what is the giving of the ten minas to the ten servants about? That speaks to the fact that Christ has given to His Bride the gospel, which is to be invested to produce a return, a harvest. And that is what Jesus desires and, more than that, what he rightly expects. He hasn’t saved us from living for ourselves and pursuing whatever comfort we can find in our life this side of eternity. We have been made alive to go forth with the good news of the gospel; yes, on occasions sowing the seed with tears, knowing that it will not return unto God having achieved a harvest.

Q1. What is the big talking point among those following Jesus?

Q2. Why does the nobleman leave to go to a far-off land?

Q3. What does he give his servants, and what does he expect them to do?

Tuesday – Luke 19:11-26 – It’s not our call.

So, the nobleman is made king in the far-off land, and he returns to rule his kingdom. And one of his first acts of ruling is to order the servants, each of whom he gave one mina to, to come and report on how their investments have gone.

The first man that comes in speaks of how well he has done; his one has produced another ten minas. The nobleman, now King, is delighted and gives him ten cities to rule over. The second man also does well, but not as well as the first. His one mina investment has produced five minas, but the King still rewards him with five cities. These two men took on the assigned task with integrity and effort and reaped a reward accordingly. Interestingly, we are not told about how seven of the servants got on, but there is one man who, when asked how he had got on with his investment, replied that, out of fear of the king, he had hidden the one mina in a handkerchief. Why? Because he wasn’t going to take any risks in case he lost the money, and the king would be angry with him. The man was right about one thing - the king was someone not to be messed with, and we see that in his response. In summary, he says, ‘if you were so scared of taking a risk with my money, which was why I gave it to you, you should have at least put it into the bank where it would have gained some interest’. The king then takes the mina from the man, and he gives them to the first man who had gained ten minas by his prudent investing.

What point Jesus is making? Well, he’s not talking about how we should invest the financial resources he blesses us with, although we need to be wise with what God gives us and not squander or lose it foolishly. Jesus’ focus is on the critical issue of ‘obedience’. The man was told to do something - invest the money, but he refused to do it because of the consequences he thought might come his way. But that wasn’t his call; he was a servant; his job was to take instruction and ‘do’ it.

We are blood-bought servants; we are not volunteers who can choose what we do and do not want to do in the Kingdom of God. God has called us to engage with Him in labouring in the furtherance of His Kingdom. Will that be easy? No! Will that involve difficulties? Yes. Psalm 126, verses 5-6 clearly says, “Those who sow in tears.... He who goes out weeping, bearing the seed for sowing,”. So, God is clear that it will be challenging, but it’s not our call to decide whether or not we’re going to do what He tells us to do. Remember, for the saved, the reward is based on the work done in obedience (James 2:18).

Q1. What does the king do when he returns home?

Q2. What responses does he get from his servants, and how does he react?

Q3. How does this apply to you and me?

Wednesday – Luke 19:26-27 – The final Judgement and the gospel.

Yesterday, we saw how the King rewarded those who were faithful in doing what they were told to do. What a glorious thing for us to know that as we live deliberately paying attention to God’s Word and obeying His commands, He will bless and reward us both in this life and in the one to come. As John writes, “And now little children abide in him so that when he appears, we may have confidence and not shrink from him in shame at his coming.” (1 John 2:28). (See also Luke 18:29,30 for your encouragement.)

Then we saw how the King responded to the servant who didn’t do what he was told. It wasn’t encouraging. What he had was taken from him and given to another. That’s quite sobering for those who don’t invest the blessings God has given them through their experiences in the Bride for God’s glory.

Today we read about how the King deals with those who tried to prevent him from becoming King, his enemies. It was horrific. They were brought before the king, not for a ‘telling-off’ but to be slaughtered. There is no opportunity to argue their case or appeal the judgment once it has been declared. They stand condemned, the decision will be straightforward, and the execution of that judgement is immediate. So it will be for each person, who having been conceived in sin, live their one short life dead in their trespasses and sins, following the course of this world, following the prince of the power of the air. They are without hope and God in the world. They stand condemned; it is a present reality, not a future prospect. Come the Day of Judgement, they will not be brought before the King of Kings to be slaughtered. They will wish that would be the case. No, they will be sent to a place of just, terrible, appallingly horrific eternal punishment, and the word eternal means that it will never ever end.

Oh, how we must praise God that we are his blood-bought servants. How we must spend ourselves as we seek first His kingdom and live solely for His glory. And how we must take this one, incredibly short life that He has given us and engage in the business of the King until he comes. What does that mean? It means several things, but it includes the thoughtful, prayerful investment of the good news of the gospel into the lives of the lost around us, for were we not numbered among them at one time.

Q1. What happened to the enemies of the King?

Q2. What will happen to the enemies of God?

Q3. What should we be doing with our lives?