

Believing in Jesus Christ is Vitally Important!

Lk 19:28-44 (text: 35-44)

14 April 2019, Reformed Church of Wainuiomata 10:30 am
(Sermon put together by Pieter van Huyssteen with due acknowledgement)

Intro

Congregation of our Lord Jesus Christ,

Just over a decade ago, when our son was a first or second-year student at the University of Auckland, they studied the Renaissance period in their History class (The Renaissance is that period which spans the fifteen-to-seventeen hundreds in Europe)!

Well, *this* was what his History Professor told the class at the beginning of the course:

“Students, this year we will be studying the European Renaissance period.” “Now, I’m sad to say, but, if one studies this period in history, one has to also read some parts of the Bible, for this time in history saw that history-changing movement called the Reformation – yes, that movement led by Martin Luther, John Calvin and some others!” “So, I’m sorry to say, but in doing this university paper, you’ll *have* to read some parts of the Bible.”

“But you don’t have to take the Bible seriously, though, for you know, the Bible is old-fashioned and outdated – yes, it’s about things my grandmother still used to believe in!”

Wow! How shockingly tragic!

And some of our church members have heard similar shocking words from some of their “enlightened” relatives in Europe. You see, when you talk to them about the Bible, their reaction is: “What!?” “Don’t tell me you still believe in that stuff!”

My brother & sister, it’s clear: Gauging by the attitude of the majority of people in the West, being a Christian is no longer a trendy thing! As the Bible has foretold: many have become *scoffers who follow their own ungodly passions!*¹

Indeed, the West has by & largely rejected Jesus Christ! For them, He’s out of fashion – a fairy-tale!

But what do *you* say about Jesus?

In your heart-of-hearts, who is Jesus for *you*?

You see, gauging by our text, most Jewish leaders of Jesus’ day rejected Him! And so, God’s judgement came upon them!

So, look! Here’s the main message of our text: **Receive Jesus Christ, the Son of God, or face untold consequences!**

And here are three points by which I will expound this message...

- Humble King
- Judgement
- Why? (Reason why)

Humble King

Our text shows Jesus as a humble King

Why as a *humble* King?

Well, because His kingdom grows not by the *sword* – not in military fashion like earthly kingdoms – but by the *Word of God*.

¹ Jude verses 17-18, “**But you must remember, beloved, the predictions of the apostles of our Lord Jesus Christ.** ¹⁸ **They said to you, “In the last time there will be scoffers, following their own ungodly passions.”**”

And all true followers of Jesus will take note of this! Yes, they, too, will use the same “weapon” as their Humble King! They, too, will use the *Word of God* to defend and to spread His kingdom!

But, the way of the sword just leads to disaster.

So, who uses the *sword*, and who uses the *Word*?

Well, according to the Bible, *earthly governments* carry the sword to protect and maintain order!² But the *church* (Christ and His followers) carries the *Word*!

And how sad if the *church* tries to act like an *earthly government*! Yes, how absolutely sorrowful if the *church* decides she’s going to take up the *sword*!

Did we not see this e.g. in the eleventh-through-to-thirteenth centuries when the *Church*³ picked up the *sword* and tried to free the Holy Land from Muslim occupation!⁴

And did the same thing not happen again under the “flag” of the Spanish Inquisition when, in the Name of Christ, the Catholic Church picked up the sword to try and brutally force Jews, Muslims and Protestant Christians to convert to Catholicism!⁵

The same happened during parts of the Reformation and the Civil War in England when professing Christians picked up the *sword* against each other, instead of the *Word*!

And every time the Church did that, it didn’t do much for the spreading of the Gospel!

Why?

Well, because, ultimately, it’s the *heart* which is the target! So, it’s the church’s task to *prayerfully* use the *Word* in order to transform people from the inside out!!

Indeed, to transform humanity, a change in the heart is needed! And *this task* is not the business of the government – nor can it be achieved by laws enforced by the sword!

No, *addressing human hearts* (and addressing them with lips *and* action) is part of the church’s prophetic call – a call blessed by the inworking of God’s Spirit!

My brother & sister, may you & I remember this in the day & age in which you & I now live – an age in which minority groups of extremists on all sides are trying to force their warped views upon others by way of the sword!

True followers of Christ should never use the sword in order to enlarge God’s Kingdom, for this is not the way of their King!

So, may you & I continue to spread the Gospel – with our lips empowered by our actions of righteousness and love! If that does not win people’s hearts over for Christ, then you & I have at least done what we should!

Well, our text shows us Christ’s *triumphal & kingly* entry into Jerusalem! However, He’s not riding on a *war horse*, but a *donkey* – and without a sword!

Yet let no one despise Him because of His humble outward appearance, because the fact that He’s riding on a donkey is not a sign of weakness! No, in fact, it’s a sign of enormous strength!

Why?

Well, because everything about this humble King and His triumphal entry is happening exactly as *God* had spoken, years before, through His prophets!

² Rm 13:4 “...***But if you do wrong, be afraid, for he does not bear the sword in vain. For he is the servant of God, an avenger who carries out God’s wrath on the wrongdoer.***”

³ Of course still only Roman Catholic at that time

⁴ For the Crusades, cf. e.g. <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Crusades>

⁵ For the Spanish Inquisition, cf. e.g.

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Spanish_Inquisition#Protestants_and_Anglicans

And if you look carefully, you'll see that this Humble King is *fully in control* of this whole event! Yes, knowing the prophecies better than any other human being, King Jesus is *staging/directing* this whole event!!

He knew exactly what reaction His humble triumphal entry was going to generate.

Indeed, He *planned* that reaction! He *wanted* it, and *needed* it to fulfil God's will!

So, He enters Jerusalem like a *king* in *royal* procession – yes, just like King Jehu once did when *every man took their garment and put it under him on the bare steps, blew the trumpet and proclaimed, "Jehu is King!"*⁶ And just like King Solomon once did when *the people went up after him, playing on pipes, and rejoicing with great joy and shouting, "Long live King Solomon!"*⁷

Yes, Jesus enters Jerusalem triumphantly and in kingly procession! We'd say, they rolled out the "red carpet" for Him!

But He is on a humble donkey!

Thus, He fulfils to the letter the prophecy of Zechariah 9:9, which prophesied the coming of the Saviour as humble and riding on a *donkey foal*.⁸ He also fulfils Zech 14:4-5 which foretold that the *Mt of Olives* would be the place from where the Lord would come. And He also causes the prophetic words of Ps 118 to be fulfilled...

- ***The stone that the builders rejected has become the cornerstone*** (Ps 118:22)
- ***This is the day that the LORD has made; let us rejoice and be glad in it*** (Ps 118:24).
- ***Save us, we pray!*** (In Hebrew: "Hosanna!")⁹ (Ps 118:25)
- ***Blessed is he who comes in the name of the LORD!*** (Ps 118:26).

Is this humble King meek?

Yes, but don't be fooled! For, you see *meek* does not mean *weak*!

Why?

Well, because everything about this King reveals that He is no mere human being! Yes, the way He *fearlessly* stages and *steers* this whole entry – fulfilling with it all the *God-given prophecies* to the letter, and *knowing full-well the pain awaiting Him* – look, do not all these things say but one thing: This King, though humble, must have divine origins! So, look, is He not... the long-promised and long-awaited Son of God!? Yes, is He not the Saviour of the world – saving His loved ones from the greatest "illness" mankind is suffering from – i.e. *sin*!?

So, the disciples – followed by the crowd – break out in shouting and singing! And the air is filled with joy as King Jesus comes down the slope of the MT of Olives on His way to the city gate!

They rejoice!

And the Humble King?

⁶ 2 Ki 9:13 ***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."***

⁷ Cf. 1 Ki 1:38-40 ***So Zadok the priest, Nathan the prophet, and Benaiah the son of Jehoiada, and the Cherethites and the Pelethites went down and had Solomon ride on King David's mule and brought him to Gihon. ³⁹ There Zadok the priest took the horn of oil from the tent and anointed Solomon. Then they blew the trumpet, and all the people said, "Long live King Solomon!" ⁴⁰ And all the people went up after him, playing on pipes, and rejoicing with great joy, so that the earth was split by their noise.***

⁸ Zech 9:9 ***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.***

⁹ More precisely, "Hoshi'anna!" (הוֹשִׁיעָה נָא).

Not He! He weeps!¹⁰
Why?
Well, that brings us to point 2...

Judgement

This Humble King is weeping because the majority of His covenant people and their leaders have rejected Him!

But look, He's not weeping about the pain *He* would suffer a mere five days later when they would kill Him on that cross!

No, He's weeping for the *city* and *all its people* who are going to suffer God's judgement because they have rejected His Son, and, in rejecting God's Son, they have broken their side of God's covenant with them!

And, Jesus, who sees into the future, knew exactly what was going to happen a bare forty years after this triumphal entry!¹¹

And so, through tears, Christ now gives them a message.

And the message He gives is very much the same as the one Jeremiah once gave!

You see, Jeremiah once told Israel, "You think God would never see your sins; that God would never send judgement on you; that He would never destroy Jerusalem and even the beautiful temple once built by Solomon!"

"Well, go to Shiloh – yes, go to Shiloh where God's holy sanctuary once stood!" "Go there and see for yourselves, what God has done to that former place of worship where He once dwelt!" "Go see how thorns & briars are now growing all over its ruins!"¹²

So, Christ's message is the same as Jeremiah's! But, this time it's not the *Babylonians* who would destroy Jerusalem; no, it's the *Romans*!

Yes, what this Humble King knew ahead of time was the events of 70 AD!

The mighty Roman army beleaguered the city!

And, although the Roman general went back to Rome to become Emperor, he gave his son this command: "Titus, my son, you must execute *all* my instructions!" "Destroy the whole city of Jerusalem!" "Kill all the men, women & children!" "We're sick of this troublesome nation!"

And so, the Roman soldiers came!

¹⁰ ἔκλαυσεν, Aorist Active Indicative 3rd Person Singular of κλαίω: to weep or wail, with emphasis upon the noise accompanying the weeping—'to weep, to wail, to lament, weeping, crying' (Louw, J. P., & Nida, E. A. (1996). [Greek-English lexicon of the New Testament: based on semantic domains](#) (electronic ed. of the 2nd edition., Vol. 1, p. 303). New York: United Bible Societies).

¹¹ And let no one think these are not Jesus own words but the words of Luke who wrote them into his gospel after he had seen the destruction of Jerusalem in 70 AD. No, this could never be, for Luke wrote his gospel account before he wrote the book of Acts, i.e. at least before 61 A.D. (For the dating of the gospel of Luke and of the book of Acts, cf. ELWELL, W.A. & YARBROUGH, R.W. 1998. *Encountering the New Testament: a historical and theological survey*. Grand Rapids, MI : Baker Books p.99 & 210).

¹² Cf. Jer 7:8-15 "***Behold, you trust in deceptive words to no avail. ⁹ Will you steal, murder, commit adultery, swear falsely, make offerings to Baal, and go after other gods that you have not known, ¹⁰ and then come and stand before me in this house, which is called by my name, and say, 'We are delivered!'—only to go on doing all these abominations? ¹¹ Has this house, which is called by my name, become a den of robbers in your eyes? Behold, I myself have seen it, declares the Lord. ¹² Go now to my place that was in Shiloh, where I made my name dwell at first, and see what I did to it because of the evil of my people Israel. ¹³ And now, because you have done all these things, declares the Lord, and when I spoke to you persistently you did not listen, and when I called you, you did not answer, ¹⁴ therefore I will do to the house that is called by my name, and in which you trust, and to the place that I gave to you and to your fathers, as I did to Shiloh.***

¹⁵ ***And I will cast you out of my sight, as I cast out all your kinsmen, all the offspring of Ephraim***" (Emphasis mine).

They encircled the city!
 They hungered it out!
 They built ramps right around it so that they could storm up against it with their battering rams, their ladders and their catapults!
 They catapulted fireballs over the walls into the city!
 When the city was ablaze, they ran into it!
 The Jewish historian, Josephus, tells us that the Romans slaughtered 1.1 million people¹³ (that's two-thirds of the population of Auckland)!!
 Yes, says Josephus, "*while the temple was burning, neither pity for age nor respect for rank was shown. On the contrary, children and old people, laity and priests alike were massacred*" (Book 6.271).
 What an annihilation! We talk of what Hitler did to the Jews during WW-II – we talk of that as the *Holocaust*. But look what *great* holocaust God's people suffered already in 70 AD!
 Apart from a section of the city's western wall, not one stone was left upon another – just as Humble King Jesus had forecast!¹⁴
 Yes, Jesus, as Son of God, foreknew and foresaw all of this, and He wept!
 But, just as God did with Adam & Eve, so did Jesus, too, never force anyone to believe in Him! He only always tells and informs them, but then leaves it over to them to receive Him.
 But they rejected Him!
 So, God's judgement fell upon them!
 You ask, "Why did this have to happen?"
 That brings us to the last point...

Why? (Reason why)

Well, everything the Jewish leaders heard & saw during that triumphal entry – the Humble King on the donkey, the palm branches, the hosanna shouts, and the words from Ps 118 – these all, they unmistakably understood as saying just one thing, i.e. that, right in front of their eyes, Jesus of Nazareth is being proclaimed as the *God-promised Messiah!* And thought they, "But what arrogance!" "Who does He think He is!?" "He doesn't look anywhere near a Saviour who could lead us in overthrowing the Romans!"
 So, they shouted, "Jesus, don't You hear what the crowd & children are shouting!?" "Are You so arrogant as to accept such holy praises for Yourself?" "Tell the children & the crowd to stop claiming these holy prophetic words for You!"
 Says the Humble King: "If *they* keep quiet, the *stones* will cry out!"
 "Yes, you blind leaders!" "Even creation – these rocks – know more about God's plan than you who have rejected God!"
 "And," says Jesus, "Because you did not recognise the time of God's coming to you¹⁵ (His visitation¹⁶ of you; yes, the Day of the Lord), God's judgement will come upon you!"
 So, they missed it! As John says (in Jn 1:11), "***He came to his own, and his own people did not receive him.***"¹⁷

¹³ For this and more, cf. Josephus, History of the Jewish Wars, books 5-6

¹⁴ Cf. Lk 19:44 and 21:6

¹⁵ ἀνθ' ὧν οὐκ ἔγνωσ τὸν καιρὸν τῆς ἐπισκοπῆς σου.

¹⁶ But Zechariah. John the Baptist's father (cf. Lk 1:68) and the crowd in the town of Nain (cf. Lk 7:16) did recognise His visitation!

¹⁷ εἰς τὰ ἴδια ἦλθεν, καὶ οἱ ἴδιοι αὐτὸν οὐ παρέλαβον.

And so, they broke their part of the covenant God had made with them.
Thus, this time, not the covenant *blessings*, but covenant *curses* came upon them – curses which God forewarned that, if they reject Him, He would send judgement upon them – judgement in the form of foreign nations who would attack them & deport them!¹⁸
Such was the reason why God poured out His judgement upon His unfaithful people!
And since 70 AD, when the Romans destroyed Jerusalem, killed her inhabitants and deported others to Rome – yes, since 70 AD until 1948, the Jews had been scattered outside their country!
What now? Will Israel now receive her promise?

Well, as amazing as the reestablishment of the nation of Israel was in 1948, that date is not necessarily the fulfillment of Scripture re Israel's promise.

Why?

Well, going by the Bible, as long as Israel, as a nation, rejects her Messiah, it is possible that God could displace them again from their land, as painful as that may be!

But fulfilment will come when the nation of Israel turns back to God on His terms – i.e. by receiving Jesus Christ as their Saviour & Lord!

You see, the Apostle Paul (in Rm 11:25-27) anticipates a day when *a renewal of the Jewish faith will take place! This will happen after the full number of God's non-Jewish¹⁹ loved ones have received Christ! Yes, then the Jewish nation will embrace the One they previously rejected!*

*At that time, all God's promises made to Israel long ago, including the prospect of peace within her homeland, will come!*²⁰

But as in 2017, although the Christian Church is growing among the Jewish nation, the estimated number of Messianic Jews in Israel stands at (only) 20,000.²¹

My brother & sister, what does this all say – yes, what's the message from our text?

Well, is it not about *decision* and *judgement* – yes, that every generation is called to decide!?

And is it not that, if you decide *against* God's Chosen One, *that* will leave you exposed to God's judgement!?

Indeed, Jesus is the *hub of God's plan!*²²

So, yes, you are free to reject Jesus, but take note: then you are also responsible to pay the frightful consequences for that choice!²³

How do you choose?

Amen (2,490 words excluding footnotes)

¹⁸ Cf. Deut 28-32

¹⁹ i.e. Gentile

²⁰ My adaptation of the well-said words of Bock, D. L. (1996). *Luke* (pp. 491–498). Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House.

²¹ For **Christianity in Israel**, cf. https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Christianity_in_Israel

²² Good phrase used by Bock (ibid)

²³ Indeed, as for Israel, so too for every NT believer, the reality of covenant curses is true! If the churchgoer (yes, even the Gentile) is unfaithful to God's covenant, then the divine principle re unfaithfulness remains in place (cf. Rm 11:17-21), **But if some of the branches were broken off, and you, although a wild olive shoot, were grafted in among the others and now share in the nourishing root of the olive tree, ¹⁸ do not be arrogant toward the branches. If you are, remember it is not you who support the root, but the root that supports you. ¹⁹ Then you will say, "Branches were broken off so that I might be grafted in." ²⁰ That is true. They were broken off because of their unbelief, but you stand fast through faith. So do not become proud, but fear. ²¹ For if God did not spare the natural branches, neither will he spare you.**