

Grace to You :: *Unleashing God's Truth, One Verse at a Time*

The King Comes to Die

Scripture: John 12:12-17

Code: 1536

Our Father, we come to You with great joy in our hearts because of all that You mean to us. We thank You for the riches of Your grace, unbounded and unmeasured. We thank You especially for the blessed precious gift of Jesus Christ, for His death on the cross, His bloodshed in behalf of our sins which washes us and cleans us whiter than snow. Father, we realize that we have no merit by which to gain Your favor, we deserve nothing. And yet how we rejoice in the blessedness of Your grace which does not care what we deserve but gives us what You love and desire to give. So, Father, we thank You for the gift of Your love, unearned. And, Father, we would also realize that our inadequacies are great, we want to serve You, we desire it. So often the spirit is willing but we find the flesh is weak. God, may we never be preoccupied or stifled by self or by the flesh but may we always be able to reach to the highest point of our desire and accomplish that to Your glory. We know that for every gift You've given us, You've also given us the measure of faith to exercise it. May we operate on total capacity. Give us a sense of priorities. Help us to establish in our life what really matters.

Lord, we would pray that each one in this place this morning might be presented with truth that needs to be applied at some crucial point in their lives. May the Holy Spirit take the message and make it individual and preach it in the heart of every individual, including my own. May we see ourselves as we are. Bring conviction where there is sin. Bring comfort where there is sorrow. Bring balm where there is hurt. Whatever it is we need, Father, may we see it in Thee and apply it. Lord, we realize we live in a world of unrest, a world that is terrorized by fear, and we would pray even as the Bible enjoins us to pray for our leaders, for our President, those around him, God, I would pray there would be a revival at that level, that the Christians who may be there who are rather dormant might take a positive stand for Jesus Christ that other leaders might come to Christ that God may have direction through their lives in this nation. We pray, Father, for missionaries represented by this church around the world. Pray for our young people some of whom are now preparing to serve Jesus Christ totally, completely.

Lord, as we continue in this service, we just rejoice in all that You've done for us. We want to express our thanks for every good and perfect gift for which we give You the praise through Jesus Christ. Amen.

Turn in your Bibles to the twelfth chapter of John. John chapter 12 and we come to a very, very familiar historical point in the life of Christ, what is commonly known as Palm Sunday, a great entry of Jesus Christ into the city of Jerusalem. I entitled the message, "The King Comes to Die." There's so much here and woven in and out of this text that is thrilling and exciting that I want you to think with me on many, many things, this morning, perhaps that you cannot see on the surface, but are there in a profound way. In this historical narrative in John, we find sort of seeping out of the cracks of the historical panorama John's recurring theme which is constantly been all through the gospel of John to present Christ as Messiah and verify His messianic claims. And in this historical narrative John weaves into it conclusive, substantial proof that Jesus is the Messiah of Israel, the Christ of God, the Savior of the world, God in human flesh. It's woven right into the fiber of the historical picture beautifully by John, fitting John's purpose of presenting Christ as Messiah and then verifying His claim.

Now an introduction. As we come to chapter 12, it's Sunday, most likely. It's the day after the feast and fellowship at Bethany. Now you'll remember that the day before Christ had arrived in Bethany and had gone to the house of Simon where a feast was prepared for Him at which Mary and Martha and Lazarus were present, and also perhaps the disciples and other interested friends of Jesus. And they prepared a wonderful feast for Him and it was at this particular feast in Bethany that we saw the climax of love and hate. We saw the tremendous climax of love in the unabashed, unashamed love of Mary who just runs over and spills all this valuable spikenard all over Jesus and does it in a tremendous display of love that can't be restrained. And then we saw the climax of hatred in the heinous plot that's fomenting in the brain of the deranged Judas. At the same time, at the same house, at the same day and the same context we see the full bloom of love and the despicable weed of hatred.

Now by the time we come to verse 12, it's morning on the next day. During the middle of the night Judas has already plotted with the leaders of Israel to betray Jesus. It's only now a matter of finding the right moment at which time Judas can betray Christ into their hands, point Him out, tell them where He is so they can capture Him. But Jesus is not a hunted criminal. Jesus is neither at the mercy of Judas, nor at the mercy of the leaders who want to kill Him. Jesus is no criminal to be subjected to a plot, He is in absolute control of everything that's going on.

Now He knew it was time to die. The time had come not when the world decided He would die, but when He decided it was time to die. And incidently, along that line a little footnote, the Sanhedrin, the Jewish leaders, had not wanted Christ to be crucified during the Passover time because they did not want unnecessarily to stir up the multitude of people that would have been present. They would much rather have waited till after the Passover when it was a little quieter and that way handle Jesus. But Jesus did it in His own time and forced the whole issue, brought about the whole thing in order that it might happen exactly on the Passover day, fitting that when all the other lambs were being sacrificed, the One true Lamb of God which taketh away the sin of the world would be sacrificed on

the very same day that all the rest of the sacrifices were going on. So Jesus was not at the mercy of the plots of men, but rather was bringing about the forcing of the issue of His own death so that it would happen on a day when He planned it and God planned it before the world began, not when the Jewish leaders decided it would happen.

And so, Jesus proceeds to prepare to enter the city of Jerusalem, to force the issue of His death. And as we see the scene unfold, we will see many, many people, multitudes of people moving in a way that doesn't appear to be leading to death, but in effect does and as we continue through the gospel of John we'll see how the fickle mob changed their hosannas into hatred and what finally happened to Christ.

Now before we look at the text specifically, let me just say this by way of review. You remember that prior to this time Jesus did not allow Himself to get put into the position where He could die. He avoided very, very strategically the forcing of His death and He did it basically three ways. First way that He avoided death was by avoiding a public display unnecessarily. For example, in Matthew chapter 12 verse 14, "Then the Pharisees went out and held a council against Him how they might destroy Him. But when Jesus knew it, He withdrew Himself from there and great multitudes followed Him and He healed them all and then charged them that they should not make Him known." In other words, one way that He tried to eliminate the confrontation before the right hour, the right time, was to tell people not to say anything or to avoid public display. He went outside the city and did His miracles. And also, I think, is important in the sixteenth chapter of Matthew, the twentieth verse gives us a little bit of the same idea. Matthew 16:20 says, "Then charged He His disciples that they should tell no man that He was Jesus the Christ."

So first of all, He avoided the issue by avoiding public display unnecessarily. Second way that He avoided the issue was just by escaping out of their hands. Back in chapter 6 it tells us in verse 15, John's gospel, "When Jesus therefore perceived they would come and take Him by force to make Him a king, He departed again into a mountain Himself alone." He just disappeared. Then later on a same thing happened in the eighth chapter in the fifty-ninth verse, "They took stones to stone Him, but Jesus hid Himself and went out of the temple going through the midst of them and so passed by." Second way that He avoided the issue was to just directly move right through the crowd and they didn't even know where He went. Miraculous.

The third way, and this perhaps the most interesting of all, the third way that He avoided the confrontation before the right hour was by restricting the ability of His enemies to lay their hands on Him. They couldn't move. They couldn't take Him. They were restricted from doing it. Perhaps the classic example being in chapter 7 when the Jewish leaders sent the temple police to get Him and they couldn't lay their hands on Him, they came back dumbfounded. And all they could say was, "Never a man spoke like that man." And Jesus again and again restricted them from being able to

get Him.

So you see at least those three ways Jesus was waiting for the right hour, the right day and the right moment in which He would die, all according to a divine timetable mapped out and planned before the world began. And no plot or plan of man would alter that. And now it was the hour and now it was the time. He is soon to die for the sins of the world at the hands of the world, a strange kind of paradox. And He's going to die on His own time schedule, not theirs. And so he begins now to move toward Jerusalem. He is going to force the issue of His death because it is time. And He does something that a lot of people have been doing lately, He deliberately plans and masterminds a demonstration. And as you begin to read through all of the four gospels which record this, you find how Jesus had this demonstration all mapped out. He deliberately presents Himself to Israel for the final time as Messiah. And what Israel had done in rejecting Him up to this point is now crystalized into a kind of permanency because what they do with Him now seals it. And in a last great move, He presents Himself as Messiah to Israel and their final act of rejection just crystalizes all the previous rejections.

Now He knows that the massive demonstration with all of the hosannas being thrown at Him, and all of the people singing the words from the Hallel, Psalm 118, is going just to infuriate the Jewish leaders and He knows it's going to cause them to desire to kill Him more than ever and that's exactly what He wants. He wants to bring their hatred to its own head because it's now time to die. And so here Jesus forces the Sanhedrin to change their timetable and execute Him right in the middle of the Passover, even on the very day of the Passover, contrary to what they had originally desired.

And it's a beautiful thing to realize that even in the foolishness and the evil of man, God has the initiative. Like the Old Testament says when God was speaking, He said, "You meant it for evil, but I meant it for good." See. God can actually take the plans of men full of hatred, full of Satan, full of sin and move them for His own glory and honor, the greatest illustration being the cross and all of these events that we're talking about. For example, you have His words in the tenth chapter of John, profound beyond our grasp, where He says in verse 17, "Therefore doth My Father love Me because I lay down My life." Did you get that? Then in verse 18, "No man...what?...taketh it from Me, but I lay it down of Myself." And then over later on in the nineteenth chapter of John, in the tenth verse, "Then saith Pilate unto Him...poor misguided Pilate, a wretched character...Pilate saith unto Him, 'Speakest Thou not unto me?'" In other words, Jesus had the audacity not to answer Pilate. "Knowest Thou not that I have power to crucify Thee and have power to release Thee?" And Jesus gives him a devastating answer saying, "Thou couldest have no power at all against Me except it were given thee from above." Somehow the heinous sin and hate of a depraved man operates within the framework of a sovereign God. Jesus with the Father master planned His own death to coordinate with the hatred of men. And now it was time to make His move, calculate it, lay it out, planned in eternity past.

Now by including all the details from the other three gospels, I can paint the picture for you as we arrive at verse 12. Jesus has left Bethany in the morning, it's Sunday morning now, likely. And He begins to approach Jerusalem and, of course, in order to approach Jerusalem He must climb the eastern slope of the Mount of Olives and descend the western slope, cross the brook and into the city. As He arrives evidently at the eastern slope of the Mount of Olives He sends two of His disciples into a village and tells them if they go into this little village they will find an ass, or a donkey, who has a colt or a foal and both of them will be tied to a post at a house on the outskirts of town. Perhaps the little village or suburb of Jerusalem was the suburb of Bethphage, although we don't know. And so the two disciples go to the little village and sure enough at the house at the edge of town is a post and tied to the post is the donkey and the donkey's colt.

And so, they take them and as they begin to take them the people who own them say, "What's going on?" And the answer is very simple, "The Lord needs them." Evidently the people were disciples of Jesus Christ and so they encouraged them to take them, so they took the two animals and Jesus was waiting meanwhile at the slope of Olive. They brought the two animals, the two disciples took off their cloaks and threw them over the backs of the animals, both of the animals, and Jesus then chose to ride on the foal of the donkey, the colt. He climbed upon the colt and began to descend the eastern slope of Olive.

He wasn't alone, however, with Him was a whole multitude of people from Bethany. With all of the people moved into the city at Passover, they overflowed the city and they stayed in lots of other places, Bethany being one of them. And all ready some of the hubbub that was going on around Bethany and Jerusalem regarding Jesus' resurrection of Lazarus from the dead had caused many people to move to Bethany in terms of interest and seeing Christ and Lazarus. We saw that already how the people came because they wanted to see it.

So the crowd is already in Bethany. In verse 9 of chapter 12 it tells us they came there to see Lazarus and also Jesus. So when Jesus leaves Bethany and starts toward Jerusalem, this mob of people who were in Bethany come with Him and the other gospels tell us they're throwing their robes in front of the little donkey and they're throwing palm branches down and here comes this parade and this mob of people who have found the Jesus and completely captivates their interest and their attention.

And so the crowd is moving up the slope and as it descends down the other slope and toward the city of Jerusalem, something interesting happens. That mob of people that's coming from Bethany is then joined by another mob that comes surging out of the eastern gate of the city, this is the second multitude and like two great tides flowing together to make one sea, a mass of humanity now

surrounds Jesus and all of them are waving branches and crying out and Jesus is descending the little mountain across the brook and into the city. As the two crowds surge together, the conversation spreads and the enthusiasm begins to mount and everybody starts hailing, "Hosanna, here's the King of Israel who cometh in the name of the Lord."

Now Jesus does not back off from these Hosannas, He accepts them because they are legitimate, they are justified. He is indeed the King of Israel who cometh in the name of the Lord. He is indeed the only Savior. And He is presenting Himself as Messiah. This is His last great presentation and, in fact, He's introducing them to a Messiah in a completely different way than they anticipated because they...now mark it, and mark it well...they were anticipating purely a political Messiah. They were thinking, "Oh, here He comes and at last our political Messiah, He's going to...He's going to throw the yoke of Rome off of us and here we go and we're off and running, national freedom," and all of this. But Jesus even tries to show them that He's not a political Messiah by the way He enters the city, riding on the foal of an ass, the most humble kind of animal, an animal historically had been used as a symbol of peace. He is, in effect, saying, "I'm not your great war hero, I'm the prince of peace," but they don't get the message. He comes as a prince of peace, not to make war but to die. And so He rides into the city and they hail Him.

Now as we come to our text we find not only the historical narrative, but mark this and mark it well, consistent with John's purpose, John also gives us in this text the two greatest proofs of the messiahship of Jesus Christ. The two greatest proofs of the messiahship of Jesus Christ and they're woven right into the very historical account.

Now let me back off and give you a little footnote. There are many ways to prove the Bible is the Word of God. We talk about a lot of them. We talk about experience. We talk about science. We talk about a lot of things, archeology. The two, and mark these well in your mind, the two greatest proofs that the Bible is the inspired Word of God are, number one, fulfilled prophecy and number two, miracles. They are the two supreme proofs, the greatest fulfilled prophecy, the second, miracles. Since those are the two greatest proofs of the truth of the Word of God, they are also the two greatest proofs of the truth of the Messiah of God. So what we have here in the presentation of Christ is an emphasis on number one, fulfilled prophecy, and number two, miracles. And by those two emphases John is declaring to the world, "This is Messiah, the Christ of God and it can be verified by His fulfilling of prophecy, and His ability to do miracles." Those are the two classic supreme proofs of deity messiahship. So we want to see two proofs that verify the claims of Christ: number one, the words of prophecy; number two, the works of power. And that's the outline, just two points...the words of prophecy and the works of power together prove Jesus to be Messiah.

All right, first of all, the words of prophecy. I've told you many times, we've been through prophecy a lot, but prophecy is the most conclusive proof of the claim of the Word of God to be the Word of God. Prophecy is also the most conclusive proof of the claim of Christ to be who He said He was. Now let's see how He fulfilled prophecy on that day, and He did to the very letter and it's exciting. Verse 12, "On the next day," that is after the meal in Bethany, "many people that were come to the feast when they heard that Jesus was coming to Jerusalem took branches of palm trees and went forth to meet Him." Here comes the mob surging out of the city to meet the one coming from Bethany that the other gospel writers tell us was coming. "And they cried, 'Hosanna, blessed is the King of Israel that cometh in the name of the Lord.'"

Now the crowd is swept up in the emotion of the hour. There has been a command that went out in verse 57 of chapter 11 that anybody who sees Jesus Christ is supposed to report Him so that the Jewish leaders can capture Him. But they are totally captured by the emotion of this Bethany crowd and all of the hubbub is going on about His resurrection of Lazarus and so consequently they don't go to capture Him, they go to cry "Hosanna" to Him. And it must have been a massive mob, there's no way to really calculate except there's one account in history around this period when a census was taken in Jerusalem at Passover and when that census, the number of lambs slain at the Passover feast was 256 thousand, five hundred. That's a lot of lambs. That's over a quarter of a million lambs slain at Passover. Now the law of the Passover lamb said that there had to be a minimum...a minimum of ten people per lamb which would make the population of Jerusalem in a conservative figure during Passover somewhere around two million, seven-hundred thousand people. Now that's a massive amount of people and it was spilling out all over the place. Here was a massive kind of mob, unbelievable...tens upon tens upon tens of thousands of people hailing Jesus. And, of course, because of the rumor of the resurrection of Lazarus, I mean, He's popular and the crowd receives Him like a conqueror. Hail the conquering hero, you know, and all that stuff. They grab palm branches which are always the sign of a conqueror. They're the sign, the symbol of strength, no stronger branch than that palm branch, the symbol of strength and the symbol of salvation, the great salvation that a conqueror brings, one who is coming to save the nation, see. They're not hailing Him as a spiritual Messiah, they're hailing Him as a political savior, a political deliverer, a political conqueror. And, of course, the spirit of Passover, you know, was kind of the spirit of being freed from the subjugation of your enemies cause Passover celebrated God delivering them from Egypt, right? So it was kind of in the air anyway. And they knew that for somebody to lead them in a liberation fight against the Romans, He's going to have to be somebody special and, boy, when they heard what Jesus had done with Lazarus and it had been verified because Lazarus was walking around to verify it, they thought...Boy, here He is, friends, this is the guy. And I imagine they begin to think, "Boy, the ancient dream of messianic hope is about to happen, here He comes...the Messiah's here, He's going to come into the city and He's going to blast the Romans right out of here."

And so they cry, and notice what they cry...one word, what is it? "Hosanna," that word means this, it means two words in English, "Save now," that's what it means. This is not a praise nearly as much as it is a prayer. They are saying to Jesus, "O great conqueror, King of Israel, save now," and they're not talking about spiritual salvation, they're talking about political revolution. "Save now," a prayer for deliverance, "Hosanna, save now." Matthew adds that they even called Him "Son of David" so they knew He had the messianic right to be the King. They knew a lot about Jesus. They knew He had the right to be the King, they called Him King. They knew He came from the Lord, "He that cometh in the name of the Lord," they believed...perhaps we ought to say they believed He came from the Lord. It looked like their Messiah had arrived politically.

It's kind of interesting too to notice that in verse 13 the phrase "blessed is the King of Israel who cometh in the name of the Lord" is taken right out of the Hallel. Hallel being the Psalm 113 through 118 of the Psalms and those are the Psalms that praise God, Hallel from which we get the word hallelujah which is praise. And the 118th Psalm out of the Hallel Psalms, incidently, every Hebrew boy when he was just a child learned the Hallel, it was so much a part of Jewish life, but the 118th Psalm was the conqueror's Psalm. It was the one that was sung when Simon Maccabaeus came back during the inter-testamental period, the 400 years between the Old and the New Testaments. Simon Maccabaeus had conquered the Syrians and shattered their dominion over the portion called Acra. And when he came back to Jerusalem they call cried out and sung to him Psalm 118. So it was the conqueror's Psalm.

So here comes Jesus and naturally they're hailing Him as the conquering hero come to destroy Rome. I don't think it ever entered their brain that He wasn't coming in on a white charger, He was cloppity-clopping in on a little tiny colt of a donkey, see. And I'm sure the Romans weren't scurrying around saying, "Oh no, here comes the conqueror." I doubt very seriously whether they anticipated any kind of a threat at all.

Also, Psalm 118 is a messianic Psalm because it is in that Psalm that it says, "The stone which the builders rejected," talks about that and that's Christ, isn't it? So it's the messianic...they're singing the right Psalm, friends. They knew Jesus...they felt, I should say, that Jesus...in their minds they just knew that Jesus was the conqueror. This must be their Messiah. He was going to come politically and throw Rome out. I'm sure a lot of them were thinking it would only be a matter of time the trumpets will blow and the mobilization of the army will happen and we'll just wipe Rome out.

And, you know, as Jesus enters the city you can't help but kind of think it must have hurt Him deeply, every time somebody said "Hosanna" it must have just cut Him because He knew they weren't saying, "Save us spiritually," they were saying, "Politically save us." And here He was riding in there and they were hailing Him "Hosanna" and they were wanting Him to become something that He could

never be and would never be...a political Messiah. And soon the same crowd that was shouting "Blessed," would be shouting, "Cursed, away with Him, away with Him, crucify Him, we will not have this man to reign over us." Fickle crowd, the same mouth that says Hosanna also hates and spews out Crucify Him, Crucify Him.

Oh, the mob is fickle, aren't they? Boy, they really go with what's happening. So Jesus rides in. I imagine His heart was breaking and aching, and we'll see how we know that a little later, because He could see the fickle character of this mob. And He would not be what they wanted Him to be, a political Messiah.

Now you say, "Where's the prophecy bit?" Well let me tell you. Just those verses there, Jesus riding into the city and the people gathering, fulfill two classic prophecies to the very letter. Number one, Genesis 49 verse 10, and this perhaps you've not noticed as such but it's a powerful prophecy. In the first book of the Bible, thousands of years before Jesus lived, Genesis 49:10, "The scepter," now the scepter is the instrument of authority that a king wields, "The scepter shall not depart from Judah." In other words, that scepter may be set down but it's going to stay there until somebody who comes is the rightful heir picks it up again and rules with it. "The scepter shall not depart from Judah nor a lawgiver from between his feet until Shiloh comes." Shiloh means the one to whom it belongs, the scepter is going to lay there until the one to whom it belongs comes and picks it up. Who's that? That's Christ. Now watch the next verse...the next phrase, I mean, "And unto Him shall the gathering of the people be." And what is it that happened exactly when Jesus Christ entered in to the city of Jerusalem with the claim to be King? What did the people do? They gathered to Him, exactly as the Word of God had said clear back in the book of Genesis. Not only that, verse 11 even says that there's an ass's colt involved in the whole thing. That specific does prophecy become. The first book in the Bible, Genesis, declares He'll come, an ass's colt will be involved and the people will gather to Him and that is exactly what happened when Jesus entered Jerusalem.

My friend, that ought to give you a little idea who is running the universe. He fulfilled it to a letter. You say, "Well, He could have master-planned it." Well He might have been able to master-plan the animal, but He couldn't have master-planned the attitude of the multitude, they were on their own. They chose to cry "hosanna." And so they gathered as Genesis 49:10 said they would.

Second prophecy, Daniel chapter 9. One of the greatest prophetic portions in the Bible, undoubtedly the most significant prophetic portion in the entire Old Testament. Daniel 9:24, you're going to have to think with me a little on this one. Daniel 9:24, "Seventy weeks are determined upon Thy people." "Thy people" means whom? Israel. "Seventy weeks determined upon Israel." Now those are weeks of years, seventy periods of seven years, seventy-times-seven is 490 years. All right, Daniel says there's going to be 490 years of history determined on Israel. At the end of that 490 years, notice verse 24, "The finish of the transgression, the end of sins, reconciliation for iniquity, everlasting

righteousness, seal up the vision of prophecy and anoint the most holy." In other words, the great return of Jesus Christ and the Kingdom will come at the end of that 490-year period.

All right, 490 years determined on Israel. Now if we could figure out when that started by simple addition, we could figure out when it ended, right? Very simple when it started, verse 25, "Know therefore and understand, don't be ignorant about it, know it, from the going forth of the commandment to restore and build Jerusalem." There it is, there's the first...there's the beginning right there. Those 490 years began at the building...at the command to rebuild the temple. You say, "When did it happen?" It happened in 445 B.C. on what would be the equivalent of the fourteenth of March, 445 B.C., it was a decree of Artaxerxes who commanded that Israel restore and build Jerusalem. From that period, notice it back in verse 25, unto the...what?...the Messiah, the Prince, shall be seven weeks and threescore and two weeks. All right, now we've got a week pulled out, that adds up to 69 weeks.

Now stay with me, are you ready? Here we go. From the decree of Artaxerxes to the coming of Messiah the Prince will be 69 times seven years, or 483 years. Now these are years with 360 days in each year because that's the Jewish year. Very simple prophecy...Daniel said, from the decree to rebuild the temple, that's 445 to the coming of Messiah, that will be 483 years to the day and then the Messiah, the Prince shall come.

Now you know something interesting? Do you know that the day and I mean THE day, the sixth of April, 32 A.D. when Jesus rode into the city of Jerusalem was exactly one thousand...pardon me, 173 thousand, 880 days from the decree of Artaxerxes, you divide that up, that equals exactly 483 years of 360 days each, to the very day. If you want to read about it, Sir Robert Anderson, his book The Coming Prince, he marshals all the proofs that Jesus came into Jerusalem exactly on the 360th day of the 483rd year of that prophecy. Now that extra week that's still hanging on there is yet to come, and that's the week of seven years called the Tribulation. The church age being a parenthesis in between.

So, you see, Jesus enters in at the very moment in divine history when God said at least 500 years before through the prophet Daniel that's when He'll come, and that's when He came and the fickle hosannas rang out.

Now, of course, at this point the Pharisees and the leaders are just tearing their hair out. I mean, they love the praise of men and the whole world has gone after Jesus. They already said that back in verse...back in chapter 12, they were afraid the whole world was believing on Him, even in chapter 11. And they are really shook up now. And so they don't know what to do and they're frustrated, they're kind of mingling in the mob and they're shook up and I want you to see what they do, one of

the most fabulous things in all the Bible, just blesses me, I can't hardly keep my feet on the ground when I read this, so exciting. Luke 19:39, just listen to this, some of the Pharisees from among the multitude, really shook up, so they say, verse 39 of Luke 19, "Master, rebuke Your disciples...stop all this nonsense, see, don't let them hail You like this. Tell them to be quiet." Oh, they don't like it a bit. Oh I love the answer of Jesus...oh, powerful. "He answered and said unto them," and I'm sure He had to say it loud because everybody was yelling. "I tell you that if these should hold their peace, the stones would immediately cry out." Oh don't you like that? I mean, this is the day to hail the King, friend, and if you shut the mouths, the rocks will shout. This is God's day.

I don't know how they responded with an answer, but I imagine they filtered back into the crowd. This was the day to hail the King, friend, and if the mouths didn't do it, the earth itself would hail Him. This was the day of exalting the Messiah.

So the people welcomed the conquering hero that they think is their political Messiah. And I wondered...I used to wonder what was Jesus thinking? What was in His mind? Then I stopped wondering because I kept reading in Luke chapter 19. You know what He was thinking? He was...His heart was broken because He knew it was so fickle. In verse 41 of Luke 19, "And when He was come...listen to this...when He was come near He beheld the city." You know what He did? He wept. He began to cry. He burst out into tears. And the disciples, you know, they...they didn't know what was going on. They were probably thinking, "Boy, this is terrific, look at them all going after Jesus, man, it's happened, fabulous." And Jesus is crying. And He cried and then He said, and He didn't say it to anybody, He just said it, "O if thou hast known even thou at least in this thy day the things which belong unto thy peace." O Jerusalem, if you only realized today what could have been yours. "But now they're hidden from thine eyes for the day shall come upon thee that thine enemy shall cast a trench about thee, compass thee around and keep thee in on every side." That's how they used to defeat a city, you know, just surround it and they couldn't get any supplies. "And shall lay thee even with the ground and thy children within thee." Flatten the city with the people in it. "And they shall not leave within thee one stone upon another because thou knewest not the time of thy visitation." God sent a visitor, Me, Messiah, you didn't know it, judgment's coming to your city and it's going to be flattened and leveled. Listen, Jesus loved that city. He loved that people. His heart was broken and He wept. Yes, Jerusalem would be visited by a conqueror all right, but it wasn't this Jesus. It was Titus Vespasian who came and leveled the city and murdered one-million-one-hundred-thousand Jews. And Daniel 9:26 even prophesied that, doesn't it?

So the time of prophecy fulfilled would come. Jesus came fulfilling the Old Testament prophecy in Genesis and fulfilling the Old Testament prophecy in Daniel to the very day. How could any man knowing that deny Christ is the Messiah of God? Everything was on prophetic schedule and Christ fulfilled the prophecy right to the letter.

So we come to verses 14 and 15 and we see another fascinating prophecy that He fulfilled. Verse 14, and Jesus...this is skipping a lot of the other narrative from the other gospels, "Jesus when He had found a young ass sat upon it.." Why? Why did He want to do that? Well, as it is written, "Fear not, daughter of Zion, behold thy King cometh sitting on an ass's colt." Now that's a quote out of Zechariah 9:9 and it says there, "Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion, shout, O daughter of Jerusalem, behold thy King cometh unto thee, He is just and having salvation lowly and riding upon an ass and upon a colt, the foal of an ass." Zechariah six hundred years before Jesus lived said He'd come that way and He did. Precise prophecy. He didn't come as a warrior, He came as a prince of peace and He rode on an animal of peace to illustrate how He was coming. You see, when a king came riding a white charger, that meant war. When he came riding on a donkey, that meant peace. Donkey had long been the symbol of peace.

It's kind of interesting when you think about Revelation 19, isn't it? Because in Revelation 19 the next time Jesus comes, what's He riding? A white horse, the symbol of war and the next time He comes He doesn't come in peace, He comes to judge and to make...what? War. But this time He came in peace and cried over the city of Jerusalem. He really loved those people.

Well, the disciples must have been standing around scratching their heads at the tears of Jesus and what He was doing riding this...this little colt and all that was happening because verse 16 John kind of gives true confessions. He was there. He says at the first part, "These things understood not His disciples at the first." We didn't know what was going on. They were probably thinking...what's all this? How could this all happen? They're all running after Him, and one minute they're trying to kill Him, and they're scratching their heads, now they're all yelling hosanna and He's crying, and what's He doing on this donkey? And they didn't know what was going on. Poor disciples were really confused. They just didn't know how to figure it out. People were hailing a political hero that Jesus wouldn't be.

You say, "Well, did the disciples ever get the message?" Yeah they did. Look at verse 16. "But when Jesus was glorified," I like that. That's His ascension, you know. He was humbled when He came, right? But what happened after His humiliation? Philippians 2, "Wherefore God hath highly...what?...exalted Him." See. He went back and He was glorified. Remember in the garden in John 17 He said, "O Father, glorify Thou Me with the glory I had with You before the world began." And after Jesus died, rose again, stayed for 40 days, He ascended unto heaven, after that glorification then it says, "Remembered they that these things were written of Him." Oh yeah, they said, hey, those were prophecies in the Old Testament that He'd ride like that and then He'd come on that day and the people would gather. Right, now we see it.

You say, "How come they got to be such great scholars after that?" I'll tell you why, simple. Christ ascended, who did He send back? The Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit came into them, John 14:26,

when He the Spirit of truth is come, He will lead you into all truth. They knew because they had the indwelling Spirit and 1 John 2:27 says, "You have no need that man teach you, you have an anointing from above and He teaches you all things."

Listen, the only reason anybody knows anything about God in fact and truth is by the teaching ministry of the Holy Spirit, isn't it? Can't you imagine what a joy it must have been for those disciples to have the indwelling Spirit and all of a sudden wake up to everything in retrospect that they had seen going on in the life of Jesus? Fantastic. I'll bet those guys tore through that Old Testament like wildfire. Oh that one applies, look at that one, that's what He did, you know, all the way through. And the whole Old Testament...bang...came alive, see.

So Jesus fulfilled prophecy in His, some people call it a triumphal entry, I call it a tearful entry. It wasn't really a triumph, it was a classic mock, a defeat in the close of a triumph. He came to die because it was time to die. So we see in the words of prophecy how He is vindicated.

Secondly, and just quickly cause there's just one verse. The second thing that shows us He was the Messiah was the works...the works of power that He did. Verse 17, He had done some powerful things in His life but nothing more powerful than resurrecting Lazarus who was dead four days, right?

Now you say, "Well how come miracles are such a great proof of deity?" Why that's the most obvious proof of deity, right? I mean, let's look at it this way. The only person who has a problem with miracles is what you call an atheistic humanist, that's a guy who believes there is no supernatural, nothing. We are here by some strange accident, there's no God, there's no nothing up there. There's nothing but us and that's it. Which, of course, is perhaps the most ridiculous position in all of philosophy because it's based on the premise that "nobody times nothing equals everything," which is a little ridiculous.

Anyway the only person who wouldn't account for any supernatural being would be an atheistic humanist. And there are some. Anybody else who believes in any kind of a supernatural has no problem with miracles.

You say, "Well wait a minute, I believe there's something up there but I've got problems with miracles." No, no, no you don't, you just think you do cause I'm going to relieve you of your burden. See, the point is this. If you believe in a supernatural then all a miracle is is just the supernatural sticking his finger in the natural. That's no big thing. And if the supernatural is there, he can inject himself into the natural any time he wants at any point. That's nothing. What's such a big deal about that? So therefore when I see a miracle I say, "Aha, there is a supernatural and He's here." So when I see a Christ who lives a life of miracle I say, "Aha, He must have come from there," and I don't stand

alone when I say it either, Nicodemus knew it, he said, "Listen, Rabbi, we know that no man can do the things Thou doest except...what?...God be with Him." It doesn't happen. And then the blind beggar said to the leaders, he said, "Huh, funny thing, you don't know who He is or where He came from, and yet He opened my eyes. What's the matter with your theology? You know where miracles come from."

So, you see, the greatest, next to prophecy, the greatest proof of the validity of Scripture are the miracles. They just prove that God's there. When you see what miracles are they're nothing but God, the supernatural, sticking His fingers into the natural. It's no big thing. He can do it any time He wants, this is naturally supernatural.

Now if you want to know the true Messiah, if you want to know who really came from God, then you go find the Messiah that did the miracles. There are a lot of messiahs who claimed to be able to. I always think of the guy who decided he'd dive off the pinnacle of the temple. There was nothing wrong with the dive but the landing messed him up something terrible and he was, you know, he was a false messiah, he couldn't do a miracle. So if you find the Messiah who does the miracles, you've found the one who came from God because it's the nature of God to invade the natural with his own power and presence and that's all a miracle is. And so when I pick up a book and I read it and it doesn't have any miracles, I'll put it down and say, "Nah." Pick up a Bible and it tells me miracle after miracle that can be verified and substantiated, I say that book was written by God. When I see a Messiah who says this is Me, this is Me but I don't do miracles, I say, "Good bye." But when I see one who does, that's from God.

The second great proof of the deity of Jesus Christ and His claim to be Messiah was the fact that He did miracles. Look how they affected the people in verse 17, they were convinced. "The people therefore that were with Him when He called Lazarus out of his grave and raised him from the dead did...what?...bore record, bore testimony, bore witness." Boy, they didn't have any doubts. I mean, let's face it, if you had been standing there at that grave when Jesus said, "Lazarus, come out!" and he had come out, be a little hard not to believe that Christ had supernatural power. Miracles are a powerful witness and everywhere Jesus went He did miracles. And the people were convinced who saw it.

There you have the two classic proofs, the two greatest proofs of divine revelation and of the right of Jesus to receive the homage as Messiah...prophecy and miracles. My friend, the case is closed. Doesn't need to be any more evidence. Nobody's gathering evidence about Jesus any more, it's a closed case. He is Messiah, He is the Christ of God, He is the Savior of the world, that's a settled issue...prophecy, miracles finish off the case. The only thing that remains is what you do with Jesus Christ. The statement of Pilate comes to my mind. "What then shall I do with Jesus who is called the

Christ?" That's the only thing left to discussion, friend. The case is closed on who He is, it's still maybe open on what He is in your life. Let's pray.

Our Father, we thank you, this morning, for the case being closed. The evidence is in, substantial, conclusive, Jesus is God, the Savior of the world. But, Lord, we know in the hearts of a lot of men the ballots are still out, they haven't decided, they haven't received Jesus Christ as Savior. Father, I pray this morning that Your Holy Spirit will do His perfect work that no one will leave this place this morning who has not given their heart and life totally and unconditionally into the hands of Jesus Christ.

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