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The City of Peace

Jesus and his disciples are just outside of the city of Jerusalem. The name “Jerusalem” means “City of Peace.”¹ It was the royal city of David and the kings of Israel. Jerusalem has been a city for more than 3400 years. The temple was there, and important future events will happen there. Even the first-century Roman historian Pliny referred to Jerusalem as “by far the most famous city of the ancient Orient.”

In this lesson, Jesus enters the city. Notice how Luke’s careful historical detail produced an “orderly” account.²

Part One: Palm Sunday

Luke 19:28-40

The title of this section refers to the name of a Christian festival that remembers this day. Palm Sunday is the Sunday before Easter. It is the beginning of Jesus’ last week, often called “Holy Week” or just “Easter Week.” How much do you already know about the events of this week?³

LOOK OVER the Text

1. Underline the words and phrases that tell you **WHERE** in Luke 19:28-30 and 36-37. Look for place names, places, and phrases, such as “the place where.”
2. Read Luke 19:28-40.

19:28 After Jesus had said this, he went on ahead, going up to Jerusalem. 19:29 As he approached Bethphage and Bethany at the hill called the Mount of Olives, he sent

¹ The city was called Jerusalem before the Hebrews arrived. However, the Hebrew word for peace is very similar.

² See Luke’s introduction in Luke 1:1-4.

³ If you are working in a group, share what you know about Holy Week and Easter.

two of his disciples, saying to them, 19:30 “Go to the village ahead of you, and as you enter it, you will find a colt⁴ tied there, which no one has ever ridden. Untie it and bring it here. 19:31 If anyone asks you, “Why are you untying it?” tell him, ‘The Lord needs it.’”

19:32 Those who were sent ahead went and found it just as he had told them. 19:33 As they were untying the colt, its owners asked them, “Why are you untying the colt?”

19:34 They replied, “The Lord needs it.”

19:35 They brought it to Jesus, threw their cloaks⁵ on the colt and put Jesus on it.

19:36 As he went along, people spread their cloaks on the road.

19:37 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 miracles⁶ they had seen:

19:38 “Blessed is the king who comes in the name of the Lord!”⁷

“Peace in heaven and glory in the highest!”

19:39 Some of the Pharisees in the crowd said to Jesus, “Teacher, rebuke⁸ your disciples!”

19:40 “I tell you,” he replied, “if they keep quiet, the stones will cry out.”

NIV

⁴ A colt is a young donkey or horse.

⁵ Cloaks are like coats or robes. Throwing down your coat was like bowing to a king. John adds in his gospel, “[They] heard that Jesus was on his way to Jerusalem. They took palm branches and went out to meet him.” John 12:13 For this reason the day is called Palm Sunday.

⁶ Miracles are special acts of God that are impossible for humans, such as healing a blind person.

⁷ These words are from Psalm 118:26.

⁸ To rebuke them is to tell them they are wrong, and that they should stop.

LABEL the Text

3. What did the people do in Luke 19:35-38? Mark the words that tell you and read the footnotes.
4. Luke 19:1 tells us that Jesus was in Jericho before this. Draw a line on the map⁹ to show where Jesus traveled. Use the information in the text.

**LEARN from the Text**

5. Why *do you think* some of the religious leaders tell Jesus to stop his disciples?

⁹ This map is from *Nelson's Complete Book of Bible Maps and Charts*, 1993, Thomas Nelson, Inc.

6. How does Jesus respond? What *do you think* the leaders said to each other after his response?

LINK to the Old Testament

Riding on a Donkey

Jesus' actions gave an important message to the Jewish people and the religious leaders. We can understand the message by reading from the prophet Zechariah in the Old Testament. However, the apostle John tells us that the disciples did not know that they were fulfilling this prophecy when they spread their cloaks on the road.¹⁰

Zechariah 9:9-10

See, your king comes to you, righteous and having salvation,¹¹ gentle and riding on a donkey, on a colt, the foal of a donkey. ...He will proclaim peace to the nations. His rule will extend from sea to sea and from the River to the ends of the earth.¹²

NIV

What was Jesus' message?

“Blessed is the King”

The people sang a song to Jesus, a song that they sang at Passover festivals. It is about the coming Messiah. Find the song in Luke 19:38. Compare those words with the words in Psalm 118. Mark the one word that is different.

Psalm 118

Blessed is the one who comes in the name of the Lord!

¹⁰ See John 12:16.

¹¹ He will save the people.

¹² In times of war, a king rode into a city on a horse, in front of an army. However, in times of peace, a king rode into a city on a donkey.

Part Two: Jesus Weeps

Luke 19:41-44

LOOK OVER the Text

1. Look for and mark these words in the text, “If you, even you, had only known....” These words describe a missed opportunity – something that was possible, but is no longer possible. As you read, find out what the people of Jerusalem have missed.
2. Read Luke 19:41-44.

19:41 As he approached Jerusalem and saw the city, he wept¹³ over it 19:42 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. 19:43 The days will come upon you when your enemies will build an embankment¹⁴ against you and encircle you and hem you in¹⁵ on every side. 19:44 They will dash you¹⁶ 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.” NIV

LABEL the Text

3. How *do you think* Jesus felt about these people? Put a star ☆ next to the words that help you understand.

¹³ To weep is to cry very hard. “Wept” is in the past tense.

¹⁴ An embankment is a dirt wall. It was built up against the wall of a city.

¹⁵ To “hem you in” is to keep you in, and to keep you from getting out. If an army does this, it is called a siege.

¹⁶ To “dash you to the ground” is to violently throw you down.

4. **Circle** the verb phrases in Luke 19:43-44 that tell you what is going to happen. Write these questions near the answers in the text: “Who will do this?” “Who will get hurt?”
5. What opportunities did the people of Jerusalem miss? Find the answers in these two verses. Discuss their meaning.

vs. ____

If they had only known _____, this would not happen.

vs. ____

If they had only recognized _____, this would not happen.

LINK the Text to History¹⁷

Jesus’ sad words of prophecy come true. The people of Jerusalem failed to see that peace is only found in Jesus. They thought if they could overthrow the Romans, they would find peace. They had a revolt¹⁸ in 66 A.D. The Jewish historian Josephus wrote about it in The History of the Jewish War.¹⁹

The Romans sent their army to Jerusalem. They built a dirt wall around the city so that the people could not get out. Josephus said that 600,000 Jewish people died because they had no food. In 70AD the Romans destroyed the city and burned the temple. They carried the temple treasures to Rome. Another attack in 132 AD destroyed the rest of the city.

The Jewish people lost their homes and their way of life. Without the temple, they could not sacrifice animals. There is still no temple in the city today. In fact, there is an Islamic mosque²⁰ where the temple was.

According to Jesus, what is the cause of the fall of Jerusalem?

¹⁷ This information is from *The Dictionary of Jesus and the Gospels*, InterVarsity Press, 1992, pages 172-176, 393 and 696.

¹⁸ It was a rejection of Roman rule. It was both violent and non-violent.

¹⁹ Flavius Josephus lived from 37 –100 AD. He was in Jerusalem at the time of the war. He wrote several books about the history of the Jews. He also wrote about Jesus and John the Baptist.

²⁰ A mosque is an Islamic place of worship. This mosque is called the Dome of the Rock. It is very important to Muslims.

LIVE What you Learn

Discuss one of these questions:

1. Do you have any “if only” stories? Have you ever lost a good opportunity?

“If only I (we) had _____, then _____.”

2. Jesus wept when he saw the city. Have you ever felt this kind of sadness for a group of people?

Consider this:

When Jesus rode into the city on a donkey, he came on a mission of peace and salvation. His peace was not a political peace, but peace with God. It is not a feeling of agreement with God, but a completely new relationship. The irony²¹ is that his mission was not complete until he was killed.

The Final Word

These words are from the book of Isaiah in the Old Testament.

“This is what the LORD says ...

‘I am the LORD your God, who teaches you what is best for you, who directs you in the way you should go. If only you had paid attention to my commands, your peace would have been like a river, your righteousness like the waves of the sea.’”

Isaiah 48:17-18

²¹ One meaning of irony is something completely unexpected.

