UNIT 27 • SESSION 3

SERVANT TO KING

CORE PASSAGE: LUKE 19:28-40

CONTEXT

Since Luke 9:51, the Gospel writer had been preparing his readers for Jesus's entry into Jerusalem. In Luke 19, the time had come. Jesus went to Jerusalem unafraid, knowing what would happen to Him. This was the moment for which He came into this world—to go to the cross to redeem His people from their sins. Everything was prepared, even down to the servants who would provide the donkey for His entry and the upper room for His last supper. Jesus was fully in control.

KEY CONCEPT

Jesus is the humble King as prophesied, bringing peace and glory to God.

As you examine Luke 19:28-40:

- Recognize that Jesus rode into town on a colt, fulfilling prophecy.
- Praise Jesus, the humble King, who is worthy of all praise from all of creation.

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TIMELINE

- Jesus Heals a Blind Man (John 9:1-41)
- Jesus Encounters Zacchaeus (Luke 19:1-10)
- Jesus Raises Lazarus from the Dead (John 11:1-44)
- **SESSION STUDY: Jesus's Triumphal Entry into Jerusalem (Luke 19:28-40)**
- Jesus Foretells the Destruction of Jerusalem and the Temple (Luke 21:5-36)
- Jesus Institutes the Lord's Supper (Luke 22:7-38)

Daily Readings

- ☐ **Day 1:** John 12:12-50
- ☐ **Day 2:** Luke 19:28–21:4
- ☐ **Day 3:** Matthew 21:1–22:46
- ☐ **Day 4:** Matthew 23:1-39
- ☐ **Day 5:** Mark 11:1–12:44
- ☐ **Day 6:** Psalm 150

Scan this QR code to access this session's Scripture passages.

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Notes

JESUS RODE INTO TOWN ON A DONKEY, REVEALING HIS HUMILITY (LUKE 19:28-35).

Underline Jesus's instructions to His disciples, and circle their obedience.

28 When he had said these things, he went on ahead, going up to
Jerusalem. 29 As he approached Bethphage and Bethany, at the place called
the Mount of Olives, he sent two of the disciples 30 and said, "Go into the
village ahead of you. As you enter it, you will find a colt tied there, on which
no one has ever sat. Untie it and bring it. 31 If anyone asks you, 'Why are
you untying it?' say this: 'The Lord needs it.'" 32 So those who were sent left
and found it just as he had told them. 33 As they were untying the colt, its
owners said to them, "Why are you untying the colt?" 34 "The Lord needs it,"
they said. 35 Then they brought it to Jesus, and after throwing their clothes
on the colt, they helped Jesus get on it.

Even though the Jews were already seeking information about Jesus's whereabouts to kill Him, Jesus rode into Jerusalem like He owned the place.[1] Notice how in control He was over everything. Preparations were made in advance. People were waiting. A colt was ready. His disciples were told where to go, what to say, and to whom to say it. The Lord was running this show down to the smallest detail. Yet there is no hint of pride in anything the Lord did. Instead, His humility shines in the text.

> **LEADER NOTE:** The Jews of Jesus's time were familiar enough with Zechariah 9:9 to recognize the significance of Jesus's entry into Jerusalem on a donkey. Beyond recognizing the image, they understood its importance. The Messiah-King was said to be righteous, victorious, and humble. The word translated "victorious" could be translated as "having salvation," but the meaning is similar. The salvation King Jesus provides is victory over sin and death. His righteousness and victory are first revealed on a cross, not in a crown.

How does seeing Jesus in full control even as He walked toward suffering and death strengthen your trust in His control over your own life?

Since Luke 9:51, Jesus set His face toward Jerusalem. Now, finally, Jesus was on the outskirts of the city. The time had come. His hour—the hour when He would redeem His own—was near. The King was about to enter His city. As He did, He knew He was walking right into the grip of His enemies. Yet He did not enter on a war horse with sword drawn. He entered humbly, fulfilling ancient prophecy.

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Key Concept: Jesus is the humble King as prophesied, bringing peace and glory to God.

Notes

CHRIST CONNECTION

Jesus was prophesied to come as the Messiah on a donkey (Zech. 9:9), revealing His humility and His sovereignty as Lord.

Though Luke did not quote this reference like Matthew and John did, Zechariah had prophesied: "Look, your King is coming to you; he is righteous and victorious, humble and riding on a donkey, on a colt, the foal of a donkey" (Zech. 9:9). It was no accident that Jesus chose a donkey to finish His journey into Jerusalem, the city of peace. He came as the Prince of Peace, not a warrior ready to slay but the Savior ready to be slain to make peace between God and man on the cross (Col. 1:20).

The glory of God came down to this world in Jesus, His Son. And waging war on the sin that ruined His creation, Jesus first fought not by trampling underfoot those who rebelled but by being trampled to death by His enemies—by us all—to save the rebels who would turn to Him.

LEADER NOTE: The triumphal entry is a vital event in Jesus's redemptive plan. Especially in Luke's Gospel, this is the moment the reader has anticipated since Jesus set His face toward Jerusalem (see 9:51). Jesus's triumphal entry was a pivotal step toward the cross, where He would die for the sins of His people. Such a moment was vital not only to Luke's Gospel but to the whole biblical storyline. All of history was moving toward this point when the Messiah would come and accomplish salvation.

As followers of Jesus, the Prince of Peace, what weapons do we have for our fight against sin and our gospel mission in the world?



VOICES FROM CHURCH HISTORY

"Our Redeemer is the sovereign Lord and King of all the universe. He did not come to Jerusalem to be made a king. He came into Jerusalem triumphantly as the King. He was going, by way of the cross, to receive his kingdom."[2]

–Don Fortner (1950–2020)

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Notes

JESUS IS KING AND WAS WORSHIPED AS THE MESSIAH
(LUKE 19:36-40).

Circle the way the crowd praised God during Jesus's triumphal entry.

36 As he was going along, they were spreading their clothes on the road.
37 Now he came near the path down the Mount of Olives, and the whole
crowd of the disciples began to praise God joyfully with a loud voice for all
the miracles they had seen: 38 Blessed is the King who comes in the name
of the Lord. Peace in heaven and glory in the highest heaven! 39 Some of the
Pharisees from the crowd told him, "Teacher, rebuke your disciples." 40 He
answered, "I tell you, if they were to keep silent, the stones would cry out."

As Jesus rode the donkey into Jerusalem in His triumphal entry, He was greeted by a whole crowd of disciples who both understood and misunderstood the meaning of this event. Here was the King who would bring peace to the city, making it an abiding reality. No doubt nationalistic hopes began to soar: The Messiah had come, and He would establish His rule on the earth—God would finally get His glory.

Although the crowd rightly praised Jesus as God's promised King, they did not fully understand the true meaning of His entrance. How could they? Who would imagine victory and peace would come through death? Who could comprehend that the cross would lead to the crown?

> **LEADER NOTE:** Most Jews of Jesus's day expected the Messiah to be a warrior-king like David, someone to come and restore Jerusalem to its former glory, to throw off the oppression of Rome, and to redeem their nation from the grip of pagans. But Jesus didn't come to be that kind of king, at least not in His first coming. Instead, He came to die. To many, as Jesus suffered and died on the cross, it looked as if He failed. It seemed He wasn't the Messiah after all. But the foolishness of God is wiser than the wisdom of man (1 Cor. 1:25). God's plan of salvation included the cross first and then the crown. First, the Messiah would die, then He would reign. The people's messianic expectations were turned on their heads in God's perfect will.

What are some ways you have seen God and His gospel defy worldly wisdom?

Jesus had accomplished a lot in His public ministry so far. The disciples had seen the miracles with their own eyes. They knew the prophecies. They recognized Jesus for who He was. So they praised Him on His humble and triumphant ride into Jerusalem. They gave glory to God for His gracious provision of the promised Savior and King.

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THEOLOGY CONNECTION

CHRIST AS KING: God has always been King over His creation, whether in heaven or on earth. Yet some of His creatures in both realms have rebelled against Him, leaving destruction in their wake. To restore His broken world, God promised a King who would deliver His people and restore all of creation. The promise of a coming King finds its fulfillment in Jesus Christ and looks forward to its perfection when Jesus returns for His bride, the church.

But not all who saw Jesus praised Him. The Pharisees were disgusted by what they saw and heard. They too grasped the significance of Jesus's riding in on a donkey, but they didn't believe it was right. How could a mere man receive the praises due only to God? So they commanded Jesus to rebuke His worshiping disciples.

Jesus's response to the Pharisees says a lot about who He is. Some skeptics say Jesus never claimed to be God during His life, but no one who understands the Old Testament can read this account and not see that Jesus was boldly claiming to be God's equal. He willingly received praise as God, something that would have been considered blasphemy if He were just any other man. So confident was Jesus in His response that He declared the stones would cry out if the disciples remained silent because He deserved to be praised.

> **LEADER NOTE:** If Jesus had come first to judge the world and restore it to purity through a refiner's furnace, there would be no chance for any other human to remain. Everyone fails the test of holiness. No one is good, not even one (Rom. 3:10). The only hope for the world was for Jesus to come as He did. Praise God that the Messiah didn't rise only to our expectations, for they are far too low for the kind of glory God has planned for Himself and this world.

What are some ways we might be guilty of stifling praise for God and His Son?

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ARRIVAL

PREPARE: Before group time, consider the different roles you fill on a daily basis: parent, employee, church servant, grandparent, housecleaner, cook, repairman, painter, shopper, etc. Bring some household items you wear for each of those duties, such as gardening gloves, an apron, a stained shirt, coveralls, and so forth. Be prepared to display them to the group.

ENGAGE: Explain that you've brought some different clothing and accessories to reveal the different roles you play in life. Hold up each item in turn, allowing the group to guess aloud. For each item, briefly share what you do in that role and how it reveals an element of your identity. At the end, explain that there are many elements to your identity; you are not limited to one.

TRANSITION: Jesus filled many roles on earth. He was a healer, teacher, friend, counselor, storm-calmer, prophet, and more. Yet at this point in His ministry, people were still unsure of His identity and His purpose.

CONTEXT


JESUS AND THE PHARISEES

RECALL: Of all the people who should have welcomed Jesus, the scribes and Pharisees, the experts in the law, should have been first on the list. They knew the Scriptures better than anyone, yet they rejected Him. *(Pass out copies of* **Pack Item 11: Jesus and the Pharisees** *and review their run-ins with Jesus.)* The prophet Zechariah wrote: "Rejoice greatly, Daughter Zion! Shout in triumph, Daughter Jerusalem! Look, your King is coming to you; he is righteous and victorious, humble and riding on a donkey, on a colt, the foal of a donkey" (Zech. 9:9). The reactions of the crowd and the religious elite to Jesus's fulfillment of this prophecy could not have been more different.

RECAP

ASK: What stood out to you about Luke 19:28-40 this week during your personal preparation? How is the triumphal entry different from the other passages we've been studying about Jesus lately?

SAY: The story of Jesus's triumphal entry into Jerusalem involved much more than just Jesus's choice of transportation. In this scene we see prophecy fulfilled, humility revealed, and Jesus, the Son of Man, accepting praise due to God alone.

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Key Concept: Jesus is the humble King as prophesied, bringing peace and glory to God.

GROUP ACTIVITY

Notes

CHART: Direct your group to page 108 in their Personal Study Guide (PSG), where they will find a chart titled "The King Revealed." Recreate this chart on a board so you can record the group's responses as they interact with Scripture.

The King Revealed

Read Luke 19:28-40. In the columns below, write down how these actions of Jesus point to His earthly and/or heavenly identity.

	EARTHLY IDENTITY	HEAVENLY IDENTITY
INSTRUCTIONS TO THE DISCIPLES (vv. 29-31)		
PREDICTING THE FUTURE (vv. 32-34)		
RIDING A COLT (v. 35)		
RECEIVING PRAISE FROM THE CROWD (vv. 37-38)		
REBUTTAL TO THE PHARISEES (vv. 39-40)		

READ: Invite a volunteer to read aloud Luke 19:28-35.

ENGAGE: As a group, consider the three actions from the chart that are found in verses 28-35 and how each action points to an earthly (humble) identity of Jesus and/or to His heavenly (kingly) identity as God the Son. Explore how Jesus's approach to Jerusalem revealed both His humility and royalty, which are, in fact, both earthly and heavenly elements in themselves.

ASK: What are some of the details that Jesus gave in His instructions to His disciples? What do we learn about Jesus in His attention to detail? How does this reveal that Jesus was God on earth? Why is it important that we see Jesus as God of the big plans and also God of the details?

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GROUP EXPERIENCE

Notes

READ: Invite a volunteer to read aloud Luke 19:36-40.

DIG: Say: "This passage points to several Old Testament Scriptures that may not be immediately obvious to us. Let's look at a few of those." Enlist volunteers to read 1 Kings 1:32-35; 2 Kings 9:11-13; Psalms 118:19-26; 148:1-6; Habakkuk 2:9-11; and Zechariah 9:9-10. After reading each passage, engage your group in considering how that Old Testament insight helps us better understand Luke's description of Jesus's triumphal entry.

ENGAGE: Complete the chart by noting how each action found in verses 36-40 provides insight into Jesus's "earthly identity" and/or His "heavenly identity." Call to mind that for much of His earthly ministry, Jesus commanded people (and even demons!) to keep His heavenly identity quiet. Then ask: "Why do you think Jesus was so explicit about His identity in this passage?"

DEBRIEF

How do Jesus's humility and royal identity encourage and challenge us to live as we follow in His footsteps?

SUMMARIZE



Jesus walked on earth as a humble servant, yet His disciples occasionally saw glimpses of His deity. Today, we as His followers should remember that Jesus is our humble King. *(Display* **Pack Item 12: Christ as King** *and point out how Jesus's obedience to the do's and don'ts of Israel's kings revealed His humility and authority as God's promised King.)* One day Jesus will return in His glory to set up His kingdom on earth. Until that time, we trust His power, authority, and promises as we invite others to join His kingdom through sharing the gospel.

HEAD, HEART, HANDS

Walk the group through the Head, Heart, Hands section in the PSG (p. 109). If running short on time, specifically highlight the **Heart** section in this week's study, inviting volunteers to share their responses to the question in this section.

HEAD: Passages like this call us deeper into the Bible to see the Old Testament promises and their fulfillment in Jesus. When we start to see the Bible's bigness, we come away amazed, like the disciples in Luke 24. Jesus showed them that He is the hero pointed to in every story, a revelation that caused their hearts to burn within them (Luke 24:32).

What practices could help you read the Bible in a way that sees its bigness and leads your heart to burn with worship for Christ?

HEART: Seeing Jesus ride on a donkey toward the cross could not be more moving when you understand that the King of the universe did that for you. He humbled Himself for you. He lived a perfect life for you. He died

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for you. He rose again for you. The gospel is not just general good news for the world but particular good news for *you* to fill your heart with the love of Christ.

How does seeing Jesus's humility change the way you see yourself and others?

HANDS: Praise is the natural reaction to the coming of any king, but especially to the coming of the King of kings. Jesus scolded the Pharisees for asking Him to squelch His disciples' praise. That was not arrogance on Jesus's part because He is the true King of the world. Jesus is the only rightful King, so praise is the only appropriate response.

How will you praise Jesus as your King with your words and actions this week?

NEXT STEPS

Challenge the group to consider these actions as responses to this session.

- In light of Jesus's role as a servant, choose to live a humble life: serve others, help the helpless, and give to those who can't repay in Jesus's name.
- Let today's passage inspire you to become a more diligent student of the Old Testament. Take the time to look up cross-references in your Bible to help you understand the significance of this week's passage.
- As you pray this week, believe that Jesus has glory, power, and authority in the heavenly realm, interceding for us as we come before His throne.

Invite volunteers to share prayer needs for this week. Encourage them to record these in the space on page 109 in their PSG so they can pray for others throughout the week.

PRAYER REQUESTS AND PRAISES

PRAYING SCRIPTURE

CLOSE: Pray through Psalm 150:1-2 with your group. Invite volunteers to call out powerful acts of God's abundant greatness that God has performed in their own lives.

References

1. Leon Morris, *Luke: An Introduction and Commentary*, vol. 3, Tyndale New Testament Commentaries (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1988), 293–94.
2. Donald S. Fortner, *Discovering Christ in the Gospel of Luke*, vol. 2 (Durham, England: Go Publications, 2012), 234.

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