

Story #3: Your Deliverance,
Pt. 4
Our King

The Three Stories of the
Bible

Luke 19:29-40
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Crippled by a collision in the sky over international waters with a Chinese fighter, an American military plane entered China's airspace and landed on Chinese soil this past week. Immediately, the craft and crew came under the dominion of a foreign power. Even though the United States is regarded as the world's only superpower and our President as the world's most powerful person, the crew and craft have been detained for over a week. Their fate and fortune dangle in the hands of the less powerful people who, nevertheless, have dominion.

The power of dominion is amazing. We were made to have dominion. That is the first story of the Bible. We were designed in God's image to be partners and princes with God. Through a single action, however, we became crippled and fell under the dominion of our enemies. That is the second story of the Bible. We have far greater reason to fear our celestial enemies because our death is their passion. The third story of the Bible begins in Genesis 3 and ends in Revelation 22. It tells how God's deliverance is unfolding and can encompass us. Today we explore a momentous event in God's unfolding deliverance.

Jesus was on his way to Jerusalem. Although he was the anointed ruler, he was on his way to die. Again and again, he warned his disciples what would happen in Jerusalem. Although denial was the common response, some of his disciples suggested that they would go to Jerusalem and die with him.

Jerusalem was the royal city. Parades in Jerusalem had welcomed leaders who returned victorious from battle. It rolled out the carpet and welcomed new kings. However, the anointed one of God was approaching Jerusalem to surrender his life rather than protect it, to serve rather than to be served. Jesus was going to Jerusalem in obedience to his Father's will.

All four gospels record what happened as Jesus neared the city. Three gospels tell what Jesus did. He sent a few of his followers ahead to a small village. He described the location of a donkey and its colt and told them to untie the colt and bring it to him. He described the response of the owners and what would satisfy their concern. The followers found everything to be exactly like Jesus described. What does Jesus' knowledge suggest?

God was revealing something to Jesus. God had something planned, and Jesus was to partner with God in it.

When the young colt was brought to Jesus, he climbed on and began the final leg of his journey to Jerusalem. Those who observed this trip realized something as they later read their Hebrew Bible. The trip was prophesied. God had planned this unfolding parade. They read:

Rejoice greatly, O Daughter of Zion! Shout, Daughter of Jerusalem! See, your king comes to you, righteous and having salvation, gentle and riding on a donkey, on a colt, the foal of a donkey (Zechariah 9:9).

That is what had happened. They remembered how unusual Jesus' instructions were in getting the colt, but most likely they thought that the rest of the parade, the crowds and the praise, was by chance. It dawned on them as they read that prophecy that this was all planned. They had participated in an inaugural parade planned and orchestrated by God.

Even the followers' cry in the parade was prophesied. "Hosanna," they shouted as they watched Jesus ride on the colt. They had tasted God's love and power in his presence. "Hosanna" was their Hebrew. "Save us now!" is the English. Their words came right out of Psalm 118. That ancient Psalm spilled out of their mouths as they shouted, ***"Blessed is the king who comes in the name of the Lord."*** Those were the words of an inauguration. They were the cry of a people whose deliverer had arrived.

The cry continued. ***"Peace in heaven and glory in the highest."*** Heaven and earth were together on this. God was reaching out and the crowds believed it.

The Psalm of Deliverance that filled the mouth of people that Sunday was part of the Hebrew "Hallel." It was recited publicly each year. The mouths of the crowd had been trained for this moment by the very leaders that hated Jesus. Fueled by the wonders many had seen and heard, they lifted their voices. A huge crowd gathered. The word of how Jesus raised Lazarus from the dead had spread like wild fire, and both the curious and convinced lined the road.

Some grabbed palm branches and laid them along with their coats before the young colt. Others waved them and shouted. It was as if King David himself had returned to restore Israel. But the Psalm on their lips said much more:

The LORD is God, and he has made his light shine upon us. With boughs in hand, join in the festal procession up to the horns of the altar (Ps 118:27).

The horns of the altar were in the temple at Jerusalem, and that is where the parade headed. Jesus was bound for the temple.

The followers' cry brought the Pharisees' complaint. "Rebuke your disciples!" they demanded. This sacrilege must stop.

These leaders could read the scriptures. They could quote them fluently. They could worship at the temple and zealously observe the Sabbath and every other religious holiday, but they could not recognize God at work in their day. They were religious. They were very religious, but they were out of touch with God. They not only could not see what God was doing. They found themselves opposing God.

No matter how religious we are, you and I can oppose God. We can do wonderfully religious things, be very moral people, but be completely out of step with God. Do you know what God is doing right now? For those walking with Jesus in that parade, it was obvious. You had to be an ostrich to miss it. Nevertheless, those with highest religious qualifications missed it. They wanted to quiet the crowd.

Jesus spoke to these leaders. The Lord's counsel to them was succinct and profound. ***"If the people keep quiet, the stones will cry out."***

Do you know why Jesus said that? He was telling those men that this parade was God's. God was orchestrating what was happening. God had planned and organized this affair. God had planned a great celebration.

The purpose of the parade was to celebrate. Something great was unfolding in heaven and on earth. When Jesus entered Jerusalem, heaven was clapping. King Jesus had arrived in Jerusalem to begin his dominion of deliverance. Like American tanks arriving in Kuwait a decade ago when the people poured out on the streets and welcomed their deliverers, Jesus arrived in Jerusalem to begin our deliverance. Heaven celebrated that, and God purposed that the earth would celebrate it too.

The purpose of the parade was also to signal. All that happened before Jesus came to earth and all that happened before Jesus arrived in Jerusalem were preparation. Up to that time the kingdom of God was near. This parade signaled that our deliverance, our restoration had now begun. The king of the Jews, indeed, the king of kings, had arrived. His dominion began, and our deliverance was unfolding.

When King David entered Jerusalem, a thousand years earlier, he was recognized as king; yet many enemies surrounded and occupied so much of the Promised Land. David's rule would bring the freedom. When Jesus entered Jerusalem, God gave him his inaugural parade. It would be his subsequent rule, however, including his death, that would bring us our freedom.

Is Jesus more than a religious figure to you? Do you truly embrace him as your delivering king? Do you see the purpose of God unfolding in your life? Or, are you as clueless as the people who opposed Jesus? God is orchestrating something with you. There is a plan unfolding for you, and Jesus is at the center. He is your king. Embrace him. Celebrate him. Trust him.