

Jesus Wept ... Again!

Luke 19:41-48

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As Jesus enters Jerusalem for the final time, He understands the significance of this moment in the context of biblical prophecy. He knows that the prophet Daniel had been pointing to that very day as the moment when the Messiah would arrive. Yet the Jewish religious leaders offered Jesus no fanfare; it seemed like no one was looking for the Messiah at that moment. And so, Jesus wept. And the question for us today is, Will Jesus celebrate or weep over our eternal fate?

In the late 1940s, Charles Templeton was a close friend and preaching associate of Billy Graham. At times, he preached for Billy at large events in major arenas.

However, doubts began to nag at him. Instead of turning to Scripture, he questioned the reliability of Scripture and other core Christian beliefs. He finally abandoned Christianity and even tried to persuade Billy Graham to do the same.

Billy Graham refused, and their close friendship ended.

Templeton resigned from the ministry and became a novelist and news commentator. He wrote an autobiography of sorts, where he critiqued Christianity. The title of the book is *Farewell to God*.

Several decades ago, author Lee Strobel interviewed him for his book, called *The Case for Faith*. Templeton was 83 years of age and suffering from Alzheimer's disease.

Eventually Strobel asked him what he thought about Jesus in these latter years of his life—with not much longer to live. Strobel was surprised at Templeton's response.

Templeton said he didn't believe Jesus was the Son of God, but, said, "Jesus was the greatest human being who ever lived—a moral genius." Templeton added, "Jesus is wisest person I know of; everything good I know, everything decent I know, everything pure I know, I learned from Jesus. I know it may sound strange, but I have to say I *adore* Him! He

is the most important human being who has ever existed. But if I may put it this way, *I miss Him.*”

With that, he began to cry, and he refused to say anything more. A few months later, Charles Templeton died.

Lee Strobel, The Case for Faith (Zondervan, 2000), pp. 7-23

I couldn't help but think that he missed Jesus entirely, and tragically, he missed Him eternally.

I also couldn't help but think how many Charles Templetons there are in the world today—people who live near you, work with you, belong to your family, attend church with you—who would say they adore Jesus, they admire Jesus, they believe Jesus is wise and significant in world history, but, at some point they will reject Him as their Savior, Messiah and King, telling the world that they were wrong and that Jesus is not the Son of God.

And they too will miss Him forever.

If you could caption what's happening in Jerusalem as Jesus literally rides into town, it would be this: they seemed to adore Him, but in the end, they missed Him. Their ultimate rejection of Him will cause them to miss Him entirely and eternally.

In our last study, we watched as Jesus rode an unbroken colt—the foal of a donkey—and it was late Sunday afternoon when he arrived.

Riding a donkey was rich with symbolism: it symbolized Jesus as the King of Israel, in the royal line of his forefather, King David. Riding a donkey on coronation day was the symbolic message of a King arriving with humility and in peace.

The people have lined the road, placing their cloaks on the ground, which was their symbolic way of telling Jesus that He had all authority over their lives. He could “walk all over them” as we would say it today.

Now the Gospel of Matthew, chapter 21, informs us that the people are shouting “Hosanna!” which is the Hebrew word for “Save us now!” This was a patriotic chant as they looked for Jesus now to overthrow Rome and take up His throne.

They were excited about Jesus; they were anticipating a *revolution*, but Jesus was anticipating a *resurrection*.

The Gospel of John tells us that this massive crowd of people also were waving palm branches at the Lord as He rode into town. This was a symbolic activity reserved for the recognition of royalty.

They were declaring Him King.

By the way, we're all going to get our chance at recognizing the royalty of our Savior in this same manner.

The Book of Revelation shows all the redeemed in heaven and **John writes in Revelation 7:9:**

I looked, and behold, a great multitude that no one could number, from every nation, from all tribes and peoples and languages, standing before the throne and before the Lamb ... with palm branches in their hands, and crying out with a loud voice, "Salvation belongs to our God who sits on the throne ..."

Revelation 7:9-10

If you've watched little children in some Easter pageant waving palm branches and you wished you'd had a chance to do that when you were little, well, John says you're going to get your chance—if you belong to Christ.

People of all ages will be recognizing the royalty of our Savior and our King and our true and living God, even the Lamb, who died to redeem us.

So, here's the scene: as Jesus comes riding into town, the crowd is waving palm branches, shouting Hosanna, throwing their garments on the road in front of Him, and one more activity is taking place:

They are singing a popular song; they had memorized the lyrics back when they were children—lyrics taken from Psalm 118, a great Passover Song—but now they are directing it toward Jesus, and they've changed the words from:

"Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord!"

Psalm 118:26

to:

"Blessed is the King who comes in the name of the Lord!"

Luke 19:38

The King is coming! Our deliverer is riding into town! The city is effectively going crazy with excitement.

I can't help but chuckle at the religious leaders; they had assumed that Jesus might try to sneak into town to celebrate Passover with His disciples and then sneak back out.

So back in **John 11:57**, the Sanhedrin had given orders to all the citizens that if anyone knew where Jesus was, they were to report it. "If anyone knows where He is, tell us!"

Does anybody know where Jesus is? The entire city has turned out to celebrate and sing at His arrival.

The Pharisees are left saying to each other, back in **John 12:19**: “**Look, the world has gone after Him.**”

The world has gone after Him! Everybody adores Him; He’s the most significant person in the world; they are all following Him.

Sadly, in a matter of days, most of this crowd will miss Him; they will miss Him entirely and eternally.

Now as we put the Gospel accounts together:

- Jesus makes His royal appearance on this Sunday afternoon and into the evening.
- He accepts from the people the acknowledgment of His royal right to rule.
- He rides into town, dismounts, and briefly goes to the Temple.
- Then He leaves for the night.

Mark’s Gospel account says:

And he entered Jerusalem and went into the temple. And when he had looked around at everything, as it was already late, he went out to Bethany with the twelve.

Mark 11:11

The next day, on Monday, Mark’s Gospel informs us that Jesus now walks with His disciples back to Jerusalem. There’s no colt this time; no crowd—just the Lord and His disciples.

Along the way, Jesus curses a fig tree that is without fruit, this is a symbolic gesture pointing to the spiritual barrenness of the nation Israel.

And then, He descends the Mount of Olives, and comes into a clear view of the city of Jerusalem below.

Now let’s pick up the narrative again in **Luke 19:41**.

And when he drew near and saw the city, he wept over it, saying, “Would that you, even you, had known on this day the things that make for peace! But now they are hidden from your eyes.”

Luke 19:41-42

Jesus is effectively saying, “If only you knew that on this day—on this Monday, this very day—that your Prince of Peace is arriving with the terms of peace that mankind can settle with God, but on this day, you weren’t really interested.

Jesus is weeping—again.

Only recently, Jesus had wept at the tomb of Lazarus, weeping that suffering and death were in the world because of sin.

Now here, Jesus is weeping over the unbelief of the nation Israel, and everyone who rejects Him for that matter, all the Charles Templeton’s of the world.

Jesus is weeping, literally, He burst into tears—not just a tear or two, Jesus is literally sobbing; He’s grieving specifically over Israel’s rejection.

Sure, they wanted to crown Him king, but only if He turned out to be the King they wanted! And He’s not going to turn out to be the kind of King they wanted.

What are you wanting from Jesus? Do you respect Him, adore Him, sing songs to Him, so long as He makes it worth it?

I believe there are thousands, if not more, who say they are following Jesus, but it’s only because they’re hoping Jesus will be their good luck charm. And if good luck turns into a difficult life, then never mind! They’ll stop singing.

Jesus is weeping with compassion for the nation who will reject Him. He’s also weeping for the death and devastation that will arrive on the heels of their unbelief.

And with that, **Jesus now prophesies; He says here in verse 43:**

“For the days will come upon you, when your enemies will set up a barricade around you and surround you and hem you in on every side and tear you down to the ground, you and your children within you. And they will not leave one stone upon another in you, because you did not know the time of your visitation.”

Luke 19:43-44

Jesus doesn’t just see Jerusalem before Him, as He walks down the Mount of Olives weeping, as omniscient God, He sees the future of Jerusalem as the Jewish people revolt against Rome and take up the sword and Jerusalem is eventually destroyed.

The Roman emperor’s son, General Titus, will arrive in A.D. 70 and do everything Jesus predicts here.

Josephus, the first century Jewish historian wrote about the devastation of Jerusalem by Titus and his forces. Josephus writes this:

“While the temple was burning ... neither pity for age nor respect for rank was shown. On the contrary, the [people] were massacred ... the emperor ordered the entire city and the temple to be razed to the ground, leaving only the loftiest of the towers, and the western wall ... the rest of the city was so [destroyed] as to leave future visitors no reason to believe that the city had ever been inhabited.”

William Hendriksen, *New Testament Commentary: Exposition of the Gospel According to Luke* (Baker Book House, 1978), p. 878

Jesus had come to offer peace, but the people wanted war. He was offering redemption, but they wanted a revolution; they wanted a revolutionary warrior, not the Prince of Peace.

And Jesus says here, “*If only you had known what today means.*” Today, Luke writes Jesus saying again here in **verse 42**:

“Would that you ... had known on this day the things that make for peace!”

Luke 19:42b

Jesus’ particular mention of *this day* is not a throwaway line; it’s another prophetic clue to what’s happening here.

Trouble is, by now, the religious leaders really don’t care about prophecy, they care about their own power; they aren’t really looking for a King to take over for them.

You might remember how they had ignored the Magi, the wise men from Persia who had arrived in Jerusalem looking to worship the newly born King of the Jews.

These magi were spiritual descendants of Daniel, their leading Magi, their prophet leader from centuries before back there in Persia.

But the religious leaders didn’t even care to accompany the Magi to Bethlehem to check out what they knew the Scriptures had said, they had even quoted Old Testament prophecy to answer the Magi’s question, they gave the Magi the home address of the Messiah’s birth: it’s 6 miles from Jerusalem over there in Bethlehem.

They knew that. The religious leaders had the right *interpretation*, they just didn’t want to make any kind of personal *application*.

Well, that’s happening again here, in Luke 19. The religious leaders don’t *care* about *another* prophecy of Daniel.

We don’t have a lot of time to spend on the nuances of Daniel’s prophecy, but if you’d like to dig deeper into it, Harold Hoehner, a long-time New Testament professor at Dallas

Seminary, wrote a book called the *Chronological Aspects of the Life of Christ*, including the timing of the Lord's arrival here.

Hoehner breaks down this prophecy in Daniel 9 where Daniel is told by Gabriel that a decree will be given to rebuild Jerusalem. Then centuries later, Daniel is told that the Anointed Prince will arrive, but then be killed.

Then Daniel offers a prophetic math equation for all the math scholars out there to sharpen their pencils and figure out.

Dr. Hoehner, and other Bible scholars, did the math for us; they believe that Daniel's prophecy indicated that the Anointed Prince would arrive in Jerusalem 476 years and 25 days after the decree to rebuild Jerusalem.

Now we know from biblical history that the decree to rebuild Jerusalem was given to Nehemiah on March 5th, 444 B.C.

And that started the countdown.

We have no doubt that Jewish leaders were aware of this prophecy and some of them might have been counting down the years.

And here's where it gets interesting, even though your head might be spinning.

If you add 476 years and 25 days to the decree given to Nehemiah on March 5th, 444 B.C., you land on Monday, March 30th, 33 A.D.

This day—this Monday—when Jesus arrives and stays in Jerusalem, until He, the Prince, is killed.

That's why Jesus is saying here, "Don't you know what day it is?"

Don't you know what day it is? Haven't you been counting down the years?

This is one of the reasons the prophecies of Daniel are discounted by liberal Jewish scholars to this day. In fact, the Jewish world today doesn't place Daniel with the other Old Testament prophets.

Now after Jesus delivers this prophecy, He once again moves into the temple. He had scouted it out the night before, remember, He came and looked around and then left.

Well, He's about to clean it out. The first time He cleansed the temple was at the beginning of His ministry, back in John chapter 2.

But He's going to clean it out again. But more than that, Jesus is declaring that He is the Lord of the Temple; Luke describes what happens here in **verse 45**:

And he entered the temple and began to drive out those who sold, saying to them, "It is written, 'My house shall be a house of prayer,' but you have made it a den of robbers."

Luke 19:45-46

Jesus has entered the outer court, the Court of the Gentiles. It was open to all the nations; it was supposed to be a place of worship, but it had become a flea market.

And Jesus just moves in and starts cleaning it out.

And think about this: you would never barge into your neighbor's home and say, "Get out of the way, I'm going to vacuum everything." If somebody did that to you, you might shout "Hallelujah"; they might become your new best friend!

But if you went to somebody's house who *didn't* know you, they'd probably call for help.

You really don't have the right to clean somebody else's home; in fact, you don't have the right to tell them it needs cleaning.

But Jesus is going into **His** house, and **He** has the right to say it needs to be cleaned out.

Now it might help, if you are new to our study, to know that the Court of the Gentiles was the only place Gentiles could come into the temple precinct who wanted to worship God. They might enter this courtyard because they're simply interested in what's going on.

Warren Wiersbe makes the interesting point that this was the place where faithful Jews could witness to unbelieving Gentiles, telling them about the only true and living God. But instead of being devoted to evangelism where the Jewish people could be a blessing to the nations of the world, it was devoted to turning a profit.

Adapted from Warren W. Wiersbe, *Be Courageous* (Victor Books, 1989), p. 81

And let me tell you, business was booming!

Hendriksen, p. 879

There were four markets on the Mount of Olives that sold everything needed.

Dale Ralph Davis, *Luke: The Year of the Lord's Favor* (Christian Focus, 2021), p. 129

Whenever the worshipper arrived at the Temple, they were ready to offer their sacrifices.

But the priesthood had turned this into a money-making scam. The priests were declining the suitability of animals purchased outside the temple court, forcing worshippers to purchase animals from the temple stock. And they were overcharging.

They were also charging a fee to enter. And all the currencies of the day were conveniently declared unclean, coins made by the Greeks and Romans and Syrians and Egyptians—all of it was unacceptable.

William Barclay, *The Gospel of Luke* (Westminster Press, 1975), p. 241

So, tables were lined up everywhere for people to exchange their coins for ceremonially cleansed currency that had been minted in Israel.

Swindoll, p. 451

And all of this was operated by the High Priest and his family who were skimming off the top and padding their pockets.

Now get this picture in your mind. The Gentile Court was a marble-paved area, as long as three football fields long and almost as wide.

R. Kent Hughes, *Mark: Volume 2* (Crossway Books, 1999), p. 87

It was lined with stalls and shops for selling cattle and sheep and birds and wine and oil and flour and salt, everything needed for sacrifices.

The merchants are shouting for attention and the people are bargaining; thousands of people are waiting in lines; it was almost as bad Costco on a Friday!

The noise alone would have been deafening and unnerving. The Gentile Court had been converted into a county fair, a flea market, a mall, and a cattle Stock yard all rolled up into one.

And behind it all was the religious headquarters of organized corruption, a religious mafia was in full-blown operation extorting, deceiving, and misleading the worshippers.

But Jesus had another expression for it: He calls it here ***a den of thieves***. A cave full of robbers who are counting their stolen goods.

Well, Jesus isn't weeping now. And let me tell you, He feels the same righteous anger today toward those who have turned religion into a scam; instead of leading the flock and feeding the flock, they are fleecing the flock.

No more tears from Jesus now!

Mark's Gospel account is most vivid here – he writes in chapter 11 at verse 15:

And he entered the temple and began to drive out those who sold and those who bought in the temple, and he overturned the tables of the money-changers.

Mark 11:15b

Have you ever seen or heard a table flipped over? I mean violently flipped over? That's what He's doing here.

I actually thought of having a table brought in here and then flipping it over, but I was afraid it would break the table and the elders would make me pay for it.

Imagine the crashing sound as Jesus flips over tables on this marble floor, coins are scattering, clanging everywhere.

Jesus also overturned—**Mark writes here**— "the seats of those who sold pigeons." Now you've got loose pigeons flying everywhere.

Mark adds this phrase here in verse 16:

And he would not allow anyone to carry anything through the temple.

Mark 11:15-16

So, get this: in addition to everything else, the courtyard of the Gentiles had become a shortcut for people wanting to get their merchandise from one side of town to the other; they were cutting through the courtyard.

Adapted from R. Kent Hughes, [Luke: Volume 2](#) (Crossway Books, 1998), p. 247

Never mind the worshippers; never mind this sacred precinct.

This wasn't supposed to be a shortcut; this was supposed to be a sanctuary. A place to pray and meditate on Scripture, a place for Gentiles to learn about the God of Israel, a place to worship the true and living God.

But this courtyard had become a thoroughfare, a barnyard, a circus!

Let me tell you, the Master has just arrived; the Lord of the temple is declaring His ownership; Jesus is cleaning out His house!

And when He's finished, Jesus turns this courtyard into a schoolroom. One author called it: a royal chapel where the courtyard becomes his pulpit.

Hughes, p. 250

Luke writes here in verse 47:

And he was teaching daily in the temple. The chief priests and the scribes and the principal men of the people were seeking to destroy him, but they

did not find anything they could do, for all the people were hanging on his words.

Luke 19:47-48

This is courageous defiance. Jesus knows there's a price on His head.

Barclay, p. 242

The leaders want to kill Him; merchants are upset with Him; the traffic patterns are turned around; people are crowding in to hear Him; the crowd is still hopeful about Him; Roman soldiers will soon arrest Him.

But until they do, right on schedule, Jesus has arrived—*to the day, to the day*—and look at Him here teaching the nations of the world in that Gentile Court, and they are ***hanging on to every word.***

No doubt some will believe; they will never forget this day!

Where do you see yourself in this Jerusalem scene:

- Are you excited about Jesus so long as He meets your expectations?
- Is your satisfaction with Him based on conditions He needs to meet?
- Are you upset that He's messed up your schedule? You're having to walk the long way around that football field of life, everything just slowed down or got difficult?
- Are you following the majority opinion about Jesus? Whatever the crowd thinks of Him, you're not going to disagree?
- Are you interested in His teaching for a period of time, or are you, even now, hanging on to every word?
- Would Jesus be weeping over your unbelief? Would He be weeping for you today?

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