

A BIG DAY

LUKE 19:29-44

Luke 19:29 And it came to pass, when He came near to Bethphage and Bethany, at the mountain called Olivet, that He sent two of His disciples, ^{19:30} saying, "Go into the village opposite you, where as you enter you will find a colt tied, on which no one has ever sat. Loose him and bring him here. ^{19:31} And if anyone asks you, 'Why are you loosing it?' thus you shall say to him, 'Because the Lord has need of it.'" ^{19:32} So those who were sent went their way and found it just as He had said to them. ^{19:33} But as they were loosing the colt, the owners of it said to them, "Why are you loosing the colt?" ^{19:34} And they said, "The Lord has need of him."

^{19:35} Then they brought him to Jesus. And they threw their own clothes on the colt, and they set Jesus on him. ^{19:36} And as He went, many spread their clothes on the road. ^{19:37} Then, as He was now drawing near the descent of the Mount of Olives, the whole multitude of the disciples began to rejoice and praise God with a loud voice for all the mighty works they had seen, ^{19:38} saying: "Blessed is the King who comes in the name of the LORD! Peace in heaven and glory in the highest!"

^{19:39} And some of the Pharisees called to Him from the crowd, "Teacher, rebuke Your disciples." ^{19:40} But He answered and said to them, "I tell you that if these should keep silent, the stones would immediately cry out." ^{19:41} Now as He drew near, He saw the city and wept over it, ^{19:42} saying, "If you had known, even you, especially in this your day, the things that make for your peace! But now they are hidden from your eyes. ^{19:43} For days will come upon you when your enemies will build an embankment around you, surround you and close you in on every side, ^{19:44} and level you, and your children within you, to the ground; and they will not leave in you one stone upon another, because you did not know the time of your visitation."

When a woman discovers the news she's expecting a baby her next thought is to calculate *the due date*. With her doctor's help she's suppose to be able to pinpoint her baby's day of arrival... *well, maybe!*

Kathy and I have had four kids, and if my memory is correct, none of them arrived on their due date.

In fact, statistics say only 4% of kids are born on the day the doctor says they're due. *Due date setting is not an exact science*. Actually, doctors give themselves a two week margin of error - the baby can come two weeks before or after a due date. *In reality, that baby is going to come whenever that baby decides to come...*

But if God were setting the due date He could pinpoint a child's arrival to the very day – *to the hour, the minute, the second*. God dwells outside of time. He knows the end from the beginning. He has *20/20 foresight*, not just *hindsight!* And that is exactly what God did for the nation Israel. In the OT book of Daniel He forecasted Messiah's due date to the precise day.

In the OT, God promised Israel a king, but not just any king - a king who would rule the world forever. At the coronation of a Hebrew monarch a ram's horn of olive oil was poured over the new king's head. This anointing accompanied his appointment. That's why the promised deliverer was referred to as "[the Anointed One](#)," or in the Hebrew language, "[the Messiah](#)."

God impregnated the nation Israel with the promise of a future deliverer, a Messiah. *To Jacob, David, Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel* - the promise was repeated.

But to Daniel, God pinpointed the exact due date. Over 500 years in advance God predicted the day Messiah would present Himself to Israel. *After God's prophecy to Daniel, Jews could count off the days on a calendar*. Modern science can't predict the day of a baby's arrival nine months from delivery, but God set a date for Messiah's appearance centuries in advance.

Let me summarize for you the amazing and miraculous prediction in Daniel 9... It was the mid-sixth century BC, around the year 540. Daniel and the Hebrews were serving a *divine timeout* in a far-away city called, "*Babylon*." Israel had disobeyed God, and as punishment God incited the Babylonian army to sack the capitol of Jerusalem. The conquering army took Daniel and his fellow Jews captive to Babylon.

The situation was bleak - the future seemed uncertain. Yet into the darkest day in the nation's history, God interjected a startling hope... The angel Gabriel came to the prophet Daniel, and told him that God had blocked out on His divine calendar a period of 70 weeks - literally, 70 sets of 7 years... or 490 years were determined to bring grace and glory to Israel.

You might say Gabriel went way out on a limb! In Daniel 9:25 he tells Daniel, [Daniel 9:25](#) "[Know therefore and understand, that from the going forth of the command to restore and build Jerusalem until Messiah the Prince, there shall be seven weeks and sixty-two weeks...](#)" That's a total of 69 weeks, or 483 years.

Realize God's precision... 483 years, to the day, will elapse, from the **proclamation** to rebuild and restore the city of Jerusalem until the **presentation** of the Messiah to the nation. *From the proclamation to the presentation* 483 Babylonian years of 360 days each - or more specifically 173,880 days - will transpire.

History confirms a decree to rebuild and restore Jerusalem was issued by the Persian king, Artaxerxes, on March 14, 445 BC. When you calculate the days, taking account of *116 leap years, a partial month* from March to April, and the fact there's *no year zero on the Julian calendar* - you arrive at the date: **April 6, 32 AD.**

Realize, this is not an *estimation* or *approximation*. The God in heaven is being very, very specific. He picks an exact date on the timeline - **April 6, 32 AD!**

Which brings us to Luke 19:29. It could read, **Luke 19:29 "And it came to pass on April 6, 32 AD, when He came near to Bethphage and Bethany, at the mountain called Olivet."**

On **the first Palm Sunday** Jesus rode the donkey down the Mount to the *cheers* and *jeers* of the crowd. It was the exact day Daniel foresaw 540 years earlier!

God showed His servant, Daniel, a glimpse of the future, and blessed him with a prediction that stands as one of the irrefutable, undeniable testimonies to the Deity of Jesus, and His Messianic claims. God wanted there to be no confusion as to the identity of His Son and our Savior - so He pinpointed ahead of time - *over 500 years ahead of time* - the arrival of the King of kings, Jesus of Nazareth! It was **God's save the date.**

On a sunny spring day, much like this one - the Messianic procession climbed up the Mount of Olives, and down its western slope, moving at donkey-speed.

The masses rolled out the Hebrew version of the red carpet, laying clothes and palm branches across the road. The donkey Jesus rode strolled by the Garden of Gethsemane; cross the Kidron Valley; then it climbed the Temple Mount, and entered into the holy city through the eastern gate. **The big day had arrived!**

After a 483 year pregnancy Israel's promise came to term! On the exact day predicted, Messiah arrived in the holy city, and presented Himself to Israel. And Jesus knew exactly what He was doing that day.

He'd left Galilee nine months earlier, and timed His arrival for this exact day. He knew its prophetic significance, and plotted His movements in advance. *His time-of-arrival would've made any airline proud!*

This was a big day! It was a day anticipated in heaven and prophesied on earth. This was the biggest day in the life of a nation whose history was chalked full of big days! **April 6, 32 AD** was the biggest of all!

This morning I want to make five points about this special day... First, it was **a day of preparation**. Second, it was **a day of celebration**. Third, this was **a day of evaluation**. Fourth, it was **a day of visitation**. And fifth, April 6, 32 AD was **a day of destination**.

This was such a special day it has ramifications for all our days. *Prior to this day time marched on. After this day time will point backwards.* But I believe if you'd been there on this momentous day you would've had the sense *that you were frozen in time*. For one day, all of time stood still. Everyone's life, for all time, was in a sense compressed into this single day.

Think of it, your life is full of days. We all experience *days of preparation* and *days of celebration*. There are *days of evaluation*, and some very special *days of divine visitation* - and it's in those special moments with God that ultimately turn into *days of destination*!

Today, let's walk with Jesus... we'll start near Bethphage on the eastern slope of the Mount of Olives where Jesus hitches a ride on a borrowed donkey. Then we'll follow Him over the crest of the hill, and down the western slope into the city... And we'll look closely at what this day held *for Him* and holds *for us*...

First, this was **a day of preparation**. Verse 29, **Luke 19:29 "And it came to pass, when He came near to Bethphage and Bethany, at the mountain called Olivet, that He sent two of His disciples, ^{19:30} saying, 'Go into the village opposite you, where as you enter you will find a colt tied, on which no one has ever sat. Loose it and bring it here. ^{19:31} And if anyone asks you, 'Why are you loosing it?' thus you shall say to him, 'Because the Lord has need of it.' ^{19:32} So those who were sent went their way and found it just as He had said to them. ^{19:33} But as they were loosing the colt, the owners of it said to them, "Why are you loosing the colt?" ^{19:34} And they said, "The Lord has need of him." ^{19:35} Then they brought him to Jesus."** Hey, every big event calls for a certain amount of preparation.

My wife's late Uncle Bob worked in Hollywood for a company that threw parties for movie stars. *Uncle Bob was buddies with John Wayne... that's why I liked him the moment I met him!* Go to his house and it always looked like he was throwing a party... Tiki torches and wicker chairs. Colorful streamers and decorative lighting flew from the trees. It was a party atmosphere.

Bob specialized in preparations for big events. And here the disciples are preparing for Israel's big day.

First, they supplied the proper transportation... And you might question, "Why a donkey? And why an unbroken donkey? One that had never been ridden? Hey, if Jesus is king, why not ride a chariot pulled by white stallions (*the ancient equivalent of a limo*)?" But again these preparations were no accident. Every move Jesus made that day was laced with purpose.

Not only was Jesus' *timing* this day in sync with prophecy, so was His *transportation*. Zechariah 9:9 had predicted, *Zechariah 9:9 "Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion! Shout, O daughter of Jerusalem! Behold, your King is coming to you; he is just and having salvation, lowly and riding on a donkey, a colt, the foal of a donkey."*

Understand, prior to King Solomon the Hebrews considered donkeys as royal animals. In Deuteronomy 17 God prohibited the king from accumulating horses, lest he trust in *his cavalry*, more than *his* God. That's why David rode on a donkey. And in choosing a donkey Jesus was drawing a connection with the promise of the king God made to David. Jesus' donkey ride bolstered His claim to the throne, and right to rule.

And certainly His right to rule is significant to us today. *Jesus died to be our Savior, came to be our shepherd, chooses to be our friend, was born our elder brother.* He's our Savior, our shepherd, our friend, and our big brother - but first and foremost, *He comes to each one of us riding on a donkey... for He is our king!*

For years I wanted Jesus to save me, but I wasn't willing to lay aside my own agenda and follow Him. In looking back, those were the most miserable years of my life. You can't follow Jesus until you see *Him on a donkey* - surrender to Him as King and Lord and boss.

Vance Havner put it this way, *"I came to Christ as a country boy. I didn't understand all the plan of salvation, but one thing I did understand, even as a lad: I understood that I was under new management. I belonged to Christ, and He was Lord."* No one truly knows Jesus without bowing to His authority and surrendering to His will. A king expects our allegiance.

It's been said, *"Jesus will never save what He cannot rule."* Jesus is not just our Savior - He is also our Lord and our King... *He comes to us riding on a donkey.*

Several years ago a luxury car manufacturer came out with a slogan, *"You are what you drive."* The first time I heard that slogan was on the very day my mechanic gave me the depressing news that the old jalopy I was driving had finally died. I thought, *"If I am what I drive, I am in big trouble."* But in choosing to ride a donkey Jesus made a statement about Himself.

In addition to transporting kings, a donkey in Israel was a beast of burden - a pack animal - a servant - and in riding on a donkey Jesus was depicting His mission on earth. Jesus had come to *humanity* in *humility*... in His own words, [Mark 10:45](#) "not to be served, but to serve."

Jesus was King alright, but a different type of King. His kingdom is not one of earthly *pomp and power*. It's spiritual. He rules not with a rod of iron, but with cords of love. He doesn't govern *institutions*, but *individuals*. He establishes His throne not in *halls*, but in *hearts*.

For Jesus it's true: **He is what He drives!** Though He's the boss, He's not bossy. He's a benevolent dictator. He's a king, but He's kind. He demands exclusive rights to our lives, but once He gets it, His goal is to make us better. Most kings like to keep their people down. Jesus lifts His people up. Jesus uses His power to *bless*, not *suppress*. Jesus is the *ultimate public servant*, and it's a mistake not to follow Him...

Genesis 49:11 had predicted Messiah would [Genesis 49:11](#) "Bind His donkey to the vine and His donkey's colt to the choice vine." This is why Jesus told His disciples, [Luke 19:30](#) "You will find a donkey tied, and a colt with her."

It was a miracle they found the donkey just as Jesus told them - *but also notice the miracle when Jesus climbed on the donkey's back*. This was an untamed animal. Donkeys are notorious for their stubbornness.

Yet, immediately this animal grew docile under the weight of Jesus. It was struck with complete compliance. Apparently, there was something about Jesus that caused the donkey *to relax, and give in, and willingly submit* to the direction the Master had in mind.

And this is what walking with Jesus is about for us. These days are **days of preparation**. Jesus is training us that He loves us, and He can be trusted. He wants to take the reins of your life, and gently lead you. *Will you relax, and give in, and rely on Jesus, and submit to whatever and wherever the Master has in mind?* For disciples then and now this was **a day of preparation**.

And this was also **a day of celebration**. Read verse 35, [Luke 19:35](#) "And they threw their own clothes on the colt, and they set Jesus on him. [19:36](#) And as He went, many spread their clothes on the road. [19:37](#) Then, as He was now drawing near the descent of the Mount of Olives, the whole multitude of the disciples began to rejoice and praise God with a loud voice for all the mighty works they had seen, [19:38](#) saying: "'Blessed is the King who comes in the name of the LORD!' Peace in heaven and glory in the

highest!" The crowd quotes Psalm 118 - a Messianic psalm that addressed the Messiah Himself.

The other day, at my grandson's baseball game the moms were discussing their child's choice of walk-up music. Each kid has a song played as they come to bat. My daughter-in-law asked me if I had walk up music when I played baseball... *the national anthem maybe... but no walk-up music, are you kidding!* But notice on this special day, Jesus had His own walk up music. The crowd sang out this holy Psalm, **Luke 19:38** **"Blessed is the King who comes in the name of the LORD! Peace in heaven and glory in the highest!"**

Realize, this was the only time in Jesus' earthly ministry He orchestrated a public demonstration. In the Gospels you'll never find Jesus organizing a rally, or renting a stadium, or promoting an evangelistic rally. Usually He shunned crowds. He told the recipients of His miracles not to tell anyone. He low-keyed His wonders to avoid mass hysteria. He kept a low profile.

But this day was different. Rather than recoil from public attention here Jesus invites it and welcomes the worship of the crowd. It was **a day of celebration!**

On my first trip to Jerusalem - just before we arrived on the Mount of Olives - the bus driver had us close our eyes until he gave us the word. He wheeled the bus into position so our first look at the city would be the shot you see on postcards. *When our eyes opened, our jaws dropped* – the view was breathtaking.

Likewise, as Jesus' burro crested the hill the disciples were treated to the same view - the holy city stretched out before them in all its glory - the sun glistening off the gold-plated Temple. From the Kidron Valley all the way up the slope of the mountain there were people gathered next to the narrow, windy path.

The people were there to praise their coming King. This was *a madi gras of grace*. Not a *Fat Tuesday*, but a *Fat Sunday*. The atmosphere that day was electric!

The path was rock and dirt, but on this day people paved it with extravagance - they laid down palm branches, lined the street with their coats and robes, and shrouded the whole event with thunderous praise!

No expense of emotion or effort was spared. This was fanfare fit for a King!... And in the midst of our countless entertainments, let's not forget a foundational truth... **we were created to praise God.**

Yes, the reason we exist and our purpose for eternity, is to stir up a little fanfare for Jesus!

Whenever we get distracted by lesser pursuits we need to recall Revelation 4:11. It takes us back to the heart of our existence. The heavenly host is singing praise, *Revelation 4:11* "Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory and honor and power: for thou hast created all things, and for Thy pleasure they are and were created." We were created, and we exist today... to bring God pleasure!

After thousands of failures, one night Thomas Edison discovered the secret for his invention... *His light bulb illuminated!* He raced from his lab to the bedroom to tell his wife the news. But she didn't even let him finish his sentence. She said what every sleepy wife says, "Alright Thomas, turn the light off and come to bed."

Mrs. Edison let a colossal truth with profound implications sail right over her head. Thomas' invention changed the world - *but she told him to turn off the light and come to bed!* And this can happen to us! We can completely miss the big idea - *the reason we were invented!* You and I were created to glorify God, so why do we pursue fulfillment through every other means?

We're like the fish that's been caught. Sin hooks us and takes us out of the environment for which we were created. But when we praise Jesus we're like that fish getting thrown back into the lake. We're alive again!

On that special Sunday the crowd threw a party of praise. We should do the same every Sunday? In fact, every day with Jesus should be **a day of celebration!**

But this day was also **a day of evaluation.** You've heard, "Everybody loves a parade". I hate to burst your bubble, *but that's not true.* Verse 39, *Luke 19:39* "Some of the Pharisees called to Him from the crowd, "Teacher, rebuke Your disciples." The Pharisees had an attitude.

It reminds me of the New York City candy bar I once saw advertised. All our former New Yorkers will like this... It's called, "Da Bronx Bar." The label reads, "*It's Just Milk Chocolate. You Got A Problem With That!*"

Well, the Pharisees had a problem with Jesus. They knew Psalm 118 was intended for Messiah only. That's why they scolded Jesus for letting the crowd ascribe the Psalm to Himself. It was a sin in the first degree to steal glory from God - and on this day the jealous Pharisees made up their mind that Jesus wasn't God. From this day onward they'll plot His assassination.

And every person has to decide for themselves what they think of Jesus. It's not a question you can skirt. No pleading the fifth. It's an issue everyone faces. "Have you pledged your life to Jesus?" God will one day demand an answer from you! Whenever anyone encounters Jesus it becomes **a day of evaluation.**

Realize, this day was the climax of Jesus' 3½ years of ministry. Miracles, healings, changed lives filled the wake Jesus had left behind. The thousands of folk who lined the streets and sang His praise were evidence of His mighty power. *Imagine, who was in the crowd...*

There was a man born blind who now points out Jesus as He walks by Him... A girl who was dead before Jesus spoke life into her limp body now waits for the procession to turn the corner... There's a former demoniac who roamed the caves of Gadara naked. He's now in his right mind, sitting by the road, with a palm in his hand. Here to say thanks... And even Lazarus, dead just a week ago, he's in the crowd...

But the Jewish leaders refuse to join the common people and embrace Jesus as their Messiah. They remained stubborn. They cop an attitude. They reject Jesus for *fear, and jealousy, and politics, and prejudice, and bitterness* - first and foremost, there was *pride* - yet regardless of their reasons, the fact is, they failed in their evaluation. They made a wrong decision.

CS Lewis once wrote, "Jesus was never regarded as a mere moral teacher. He didn't produce that effect on any of the people who actually met Him. He produced mainly three effects: hatred, terror, or adoration. There was no trace of people expressing mild approval." Jesus forces each of us to make a decision...

On that day in Jerusalem common people reacted to Jesus with *adoration!*... While, the Pharisees showed *condemnation*... But nobody shrugged their shoulders, and walked off without making an *evaluation*.

Listen to how Jesus answers the Pharisees' skepticism in verse 40, *Luke 19:40 "I tell you that if these should keep silent, the stones would immediately cry out."*

The Pharisees want Jesus to stop the celebration, but He says *there's no stopping what's been started. The cat is out of the bag! The evidence is now in. His identity can't be refuted. If the people go silent; then nature would burst forth in praise - even the rocks.*

I brought today a rock I took from the Mount of Olives on a visit to Jerusalem. This is a rock Jesus said would sing His praise if the people went silent. *Talk about rock music... here's the true Rolling Stones.*

I suppose we could cease our praise and test this rock, but why join the Pharisees in the wrong evaluation? Why miss any opportunity to glorify our great King? *Why let this stone have all the fun?*

Let's humble ourselves and acknowledge *Jesus, our rock*, as Lord. Today is now **a day of evaluation**.

And finally today is **a day of visitation and destination**. Verse 41 tells us, *Luke 19:41* "Now as He drew near, He saw the city and wept over it, *19:42* saying, "If you had known, even you, especially in this your day, the things that make for your peace! But now they are hidden from your eyes. *19:43* For days will come upon you when your enemies will build an embankment around you, surround you and close you in on every side, *19:44* and level you, and your children within you, to the ground; and they will not leave in you one stone upon another, because you did not know the time of your visitation."

Because Israel's leaders missed God's *visitation* it sealed the nation's *destination*. Jesus predicts that destruction is just around the corner... *and it was!* In 70 AD the Roman army sacked the city of Jerusalem.

It reminds me of the Army private who happened upon the general standing by the paper shredder. The general asked him, "*Young man, my secretary left early and I can't seem to figure out how to operate this machine. Can you help me?*" The private snapped to attention, "*Yes Sir!*" As the general handed him the paper, the private turned on the machine, and thought this was his opportunity to impress his superior... But just as he released the paper into the shredder, the general said, "*By the way son, I need two copies.*"

Because the private misunderstood his *visitation* it sealed his *destination*. Rather than promotion he was headed the opposite direction. And this is what happened to the Jewish leaders on their special day.

Once, a man named Job shouted at heaven and challenged God to take the form of a man and show Himself. Over the centuries angry people have called out and demanded that God reveal Himself... *but God sat back and required us to listen to the prophets and examine His handiwork in history and in nature.*

Yet on this day in Jerusalem God finally visited His people on a donkey! *Can you imagine a more significant day in the history of the nation and world?*

Timed strategically, prepared specifically - *Israel received a divine visitation*. But how tragic, the nation missed God! Jesus says, verse 42, *Luke 19:42* "**If you had known, even you, especially in this your day**" It was *their* big day and they missed it. Imagine, a bride sleeping through her wedding, or a prisoner missing his parole hearing, or a college student forgetting his final exam...

This was Israel's vital opportunity. Here was the moment the nation had been waiting on for centuries, but they blew it, and for the last 2000 years the Jews have tasted the horrible, tragic, brutal consequences.

It's ironic, but at the spot on the Mount of Olives where most tourists stand and gawk, and smile at the spectacular vista... *Jesus wept*. He could already see the future, and with His mind's eye He watched the horrors of the coming invasion. In just a few years Rome would shred and sack the prideful city, and God would judge the nation for its rejection of her Messiah.

But it was so unnecessary! *If they'd just been willing*.

I think it's suggestive that when Jesus concluded His own people had rejected Him, He didn't grind His teeth, or spit in anger, or seethe in hatred... *Jesus wept!*

O, how Jesus loved these people! He desired to show them Luke 19:42 "the things that would make for their peace!" And how they could've used that peace over the long span of their painful history... Peace continues to elude Israel to this very day. On **April 6, 32 AD** God visited Israel, and He came with blessing and peace!

It reminds me of the man standing by the road when a rider on horseback flew by. There was an evil look in the rider's eye and blood on his hands. Minutes later a crowd of riders came by in hot pursuit. The bystander shouted to the leader, "Who was that man?" He responded, "An evil criminal." He was asked again, "And do you seek him to bring him to justice?" The answer came back, "No, we seek him to tell him he's been pardoned!" This is why God visited His people!

And this is God's intention toward you today... He comes to us not to vent His anger. God doesn't want to bring down His hammer of judgment. Jesus comes to us today to show us the way to peace and pardon. His *visitation* is meant to insure a wonderful *destination*!

But when we harden our hearts, and refuse to follow Him, and buck against His will... *Jesus weeps again*.

How many times has He reached out to you, *but you were not willing*? Sadly, Jesus' tears still flow down His cheeks when a person misses His visitation...

April 6, 32 AD... what a day it was! Israel's due date! As Jesus said to Israel of old, Luke 19:42 "This your day!"

It was a day of preparation, a day of celebration, a day of evaluation, a day of visitation, and ultimately a day of destination. It was a day like today, for Jesus still

comes riding on a donkey. He wants to be our king. And He forces a choice, *will we join in His praise?* He comes with peace and pardon to those who follow Him.

Today, I want to give you an opportunity to choose Jesus. You've been coming to church for weeks now, and God is speaking to your heart. Today is your big day! God is visiting you... ***how will you choose?***