



**Adult Sunday School Lesson Summary for April 1, 2007
Released on Wednesday, March 28, 2007**

"Christ Is Our King"

DEVOTIONAL READING: Psalm 118:21-28.

BACKGROUND SCRIPTURE: Revelation 1:8; Luke 19:28-40.

PRINTED TEXT: Revelation 1:8; Luke 19:28-40.

READ: Revelation 1:1-8; Luke 19:28-40.

TIMES: A.D. 96; A.D. 30

PLACE: from Patmos; Mount of Olives

GOLDEN TEXT: "Blessed be the King that cometh in the name of the Lord: peace in heaven, and glory in the highest" (Luke 19:38).

HOW TO SAY IT

ALPHA. *Al-fa*.

ARC DE TRIOMPHE. *Ark du treh-onf*.

BETHANY. *Beth-uh-nee*.

BETHPHAGE. *Beth-fuh-gee*.

NISAN. *Nye-san*.

OMEGA. *O-may-guh*.

ZACCHEUS. *Zack-key-us*.

PRINTED LESSON TEXT

Revelation 1:8

8I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the ending, saith the Lord, which is, and which was, and which is to come, the Almighty.

Luke 19:28-40

28And when he had thus spoken, he went before, ascending up to Jerusalem.

29And it came to pass, when he was come nigh to Bethphage and Bethany, at the mount called the mount of Olives, he sent two of his disciples,

30Saying, Go ye into the village over against you; in the which at your entering ye shall find a colt tied, whereon yet never man sat: loose him, and bring him hither.

31And if any man ask you, Why do ye loose him? thus shall ye say unto him, Because the Lord hath need of him.

32And they that were sent went their way, and found even as he had said unto them.

33And as they were loosing the colt, the owners thereof said unto them, Why loose ye the colt?

34And they said, The Lord hath need of him.

35And they brought him to Jesus: and they cast their garments upon the colt, and they set Jesus thereon.

36And as he went, they spread their clothes in the way.

37And when he was come nigh, even now at 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 that they had seen;

38Saying, Blessed be the King that cometh in the name of the Lord: peace in heaven, and glory in the highest.

39And some of the Pharisees from among the multitude said unto him, Master, rebuke thy disciples.

40And he answered and said unto them, I tell you that, if these should hold their peace, the stones would immediately cry out.

LESSON AIMS

After participating in this lesson, each student will be able to:

1. Describe the triumphal entry of Jesus into Jerusalem.
2. Realize that people's temporary acceptance of Jesus as a king foreshadowed the time when He will come as eternal King.
3. Find ways to take comfort and hope from identifying ourselves with Christ the King.

LESSON OUTLINE

- I. THE LORD REIGNING (Rev. 1:8)
- II. THE LORD REVEALED (Luke 19:28-35)
- III. THE LORD RECEIVED (Luke 19:36-40)

INTRODUCTION

This week's lesson is the first in a set that begins to focus on Jesus as He is found in the book of Revelation. This lesson and the next come during two important days in the church calendar: Palm Sunday and Resurrection Sunday (Easter). These two Sundays bracket a period in Jesus' life called Passion Week-His final week leading up to the crucifixion.

The events of Passion Week are always worth studying and pondering (considering) anew. Taken together, the rest of the lessons for this quarter will allow students to see Jesus as more than the main character in the events of Passion Week; He is also the reigning Lord of all creation. This is the glorious picture found in the book of Revelation.

LESSON BACKGROUND

Palm Sunday as Triumphal Entry

The title and words of the old spiritual "Ride on, King Jesus" recall the day when Jesus was received into Jerusalem as king. The welcome of Jesus into the holy city on the Sunday before His crucifixion has long been called *the triumphal entry*. This event is found in all four of the Gospels, each having some unique details. Although the Gospels do not make any reference to this event as a "triumph," it does bear some relationship to the ancient custom of welcoming a victorious king or general back to his home city.

The city of Rome had a tradition of staging triumphal processions. This parade would include the Roman legions, enemy prisoners, wagons loaded with booty, and the victorious general in a special chariot. Sometimes a new triumphal arch would be created. This custom was revived by the French emperor Napoleon Bonaparte, whose *Arc de Triomphe* in Paris was commissioned in 1806 for the glory of the French army.

The triumphal entry of Jesus was a way of recognizing Him as king. What did it mean for those present to acclaim Jesus as king, and what does that mean for us today? This week's lesson will examine some of the implications involved in recognizing Jesus as king in our lives.

Additional Lesson Background

Jewish law specified three important pilgrimage festivals for which all able-bodied Israelite men were expected to appear at the temple (see Deuteronomy 16:16). They were Passover (very closely associated with the Feast of Unleavened Bread), Pentecost (or Feast of Weeks), and Tabernacles. Passover came at the middle of the Jewish month of Nisan. This was in the spring, in March or April.

Passover was more than just a religious holiday. Since it marked the liberation of the Jews from Egyptian bondage, it was seen as a remembrance of the birth of their nation. Thus, it had strong patriotic and nationalistic overtones. It was ironic, then,

to celebrate a national day of freedom when all Jews knew that their nation had again been subjugated, this time by the Romans. This surely made it a bittersweet holiday! As observant and loyal Jews, Jesus and His disciples were expected to celebrate Passover, and they did so willingly.

In Luke 9:51 we see that Jesus “steadfastly set his face to go to Jerusalem.” For the next 10 chapters of that Gospel, Jesus and the disciples were on the pilgrim’s journey to the temple city for the spring celebration of Passover. This was not a quick trip, and they were in no hurry. Traveling south from Galilee they passed through Jericho, a small city just north of the Dead Sea. This was a common route for travelers to Jerusalem from the north, and Jesus’ band was doubtlessly a small part of thousands making the journey.

While in Jericho, Jesus was confronted by a blind man who understood Jesus’ true identity. The man called out to Jesus as the “Son of David” (essentially the same as saying Messiah) and begged to be healed. This healing took place in the presence of the crowd, and they praised God (Luke 18:35–43). In Jericho Jesus also had a dramatic encounter with a height-challenged tax collector named Zaccheus. Jesus used this occasion to clearly state what He was about: “For the Son of man is come to seek and to save that which was lost” (Luke 19:10).

When His business in Jericho was finished, Jesus and His followers began the ascent to Jerusalem. Although Jericho is only about 15 miles from Jerusalem, there is a change in altitude of some 3,300 feet. It was a hot, dusty climb, but we can imagine the growing excitement of the pilgrim throng as it approached the beloved Jerusalem. This is the setting for the primary passage of today’s lesson, Luke 19:28–38.

QUESTIONS

I. THE LORD REIGNING (Rev. 1:8)

1. Why should we be cautious when interpreting Revelation?

Since there has been widespread disagreement even among those who share a common viewpoint on Revelation, we should be cautious in our interpretation of this book and not become too dogmatic (or rigid) about some of the details. Those who have studied Revelation in depth know that much of the imagery of the book comes from the Old Testament—the division of the Bible that contains many visual metaphors.

2. What does “Alpha and Omega” mean? Where else is this concept found (Revelation 1:8)?

When the Lord declared, “I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the ending” (vs. 8), it was a familiar concept. Isaiah 44:6 says, “Thus saith the Lord the King of Israel, ... I am the first, and I am the last.” Of course, alpha is the first letter in the Greek alphabet and omega the last.

The title “Alpha and Omega” clearly refers to Christ (Rev. 1:11; 21:6; 22:13). The concept of being first and last, that is, independent of time, calls to mind the appearance of the Lord to Moses at the burning bush, where the Almighty identified Himself as “I AM THAT I AM” (Exod. 3:14). That Christ identified Himself with the

God who appeared to Moses is clear in John's Gospel, where Jesus declared, "Before Abraham was, I am" (8:58).

II. THE LORD REVEALED (Luke 19:28-35)

3. Why does the Bible frequently speak of going *up* to Jerusalem (Luke 19:28)?

That Luke tells us they were "ascending up to Jerusalem" reminds us that the ancient capital of Israel was situated on a hill. From whatever direction one came, it was always *up* to Jerusalem.

4. Where were Bethphage and Bethany and the Mount of Olives (v. 29)?

As the procession came close to the city, it passed near two small villages, Bethphage and Bethany. The latter village was the home of Mary and Martha. Just east of Jerusalem was the Mount of Olives, the location of Christ's revealing discourse concerning Jerusalem's destruction and the end times (Matt. 24; Mark 13; Luke 21).

5. Why was a young donkey selected for Christ to ride on (v. 30)?

Christ's ultimate ride on a young donkey fulfilled the Old Testament prophecy: "Behold, thy King cometh unto thee: he is just, and having salvation; lowly, and riding upon an ass, and upon a colt the foal of an ass" (Zech. 9:9).

6. How did Jesus know that the disciples would be questioned in their attempt to take the colt (vs. 31-35)?

Knowing that people might question the disciples concerning their actions, Jesus anticipated the situation and told them how they should reply. Whether this was a prearranged signal to those who had agreed to loan the donkey to Jesus or simply a way to allay (or calm) the fears of the owners concerning the loss of their donkey, we do not know. Either way, Christ knew that if the disciples answered, "Because the Lord hath need of him" (Luke 19:31), the young colt would be released to them.

III. THE LORD RECEIVED (Luke 19:36-40)

7. Why are the events of that day referred to as Palm Sunday?

John's Gospel alone tells us that the people "took branches of palm trees, and went forth to meet him" (12:13)-hence the familiar designation "Palm Sunday."

8. How do we know that most in the multitude were sympathetic toward Jesus (vs. 36,37)?

As the road from Jericho to Jerusalem wound its way down the Mount of Olives toward the eastern gate of the city, "the whole multitude of the disciples began to rejoice and praise God with a loud voice" (Luke 19:37). The reason they rejoiced was "for all the mighty works that they had seen." This indicates that the majority of those traveling with Christ were in sympathy with His ministry and work.

9. What word of praise by the crowd was similar to words that were proclaimed at Christ's birth (v. 38)?

That the people shouted, "Peace in heaven, and glory in the highest" (Luke 19:38) is certainly reminiscent of the angels' message at Christ's birth. Luke alone records that the angels were "praising God, and saying, Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men" (2:13-14).

10. Why did the Pharisees criticize Christ's followers (vs. 39, 40)?

Since they did not believe that Jesus was the promised Messiah, the Pharisees thought it blasphemy for the multitude to praise Him as they did. In fact, they called upon the Lord to rebuke (or scold) His disciples for giving Him such accolades. "Whether men praise Christ or no, he will, and shall, and must be praised" (*Matthew Henry's Commentary*).

CONCLUSION

Jesus the King: Past, Present, and Future

A central theme in the Bible is the kingship of Jesus. Jesus does not inherit a kingdom from an earthly father or win it through His accomplishments. His kingship is not bestowed upon Him by adoring citizens of the realm. He *is* king, has *always been* king, and will *always be* king. There will be challengers to His throne, but He will reign supreme (1 Corinthians 15:24, 25). Many rejected Him as king (see John 19:15), but in the end He will receive their acknowledgment (see Philippians 2:10, 11).

What are the personal implications of Jesus' kingship? Does He reign in your life? Consider the question this way: When you willingly disobey King Jesus, do you fear His wrath (see Revelation 6:16)? The New Testament teaches that those who reject the reign of the Lord will be crushed in "the winepress of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God" (Revelation 19:15). Those who love Him, those who serve Him, will be those who obey Him. When Christ reigns in our lives, we can be free from the fear of God's mighty wrath (see 1 Thessalonians 1:10).

If you claim citizenship in the kingdom of God and of His Christ, is your allegiance absolute and consistent? Is your loyalty to Jesus unwavering, even in the face of opposition? Are you able to let go of your own selfish desires to serve the King of kings without reservation?

Urge your students to be reminded that they are to be loyal subjects of their heavenly King. The faith that saved them is to be maintained in order to serve Christ well. They should walk in confidence, for if they suffer with Him, they "shall also reign with him" (2 Timothy 2:12).

May God bless us as we each strive toward perfect and unreserved service, so that one day we will hear the words, "Well done, thou good and faithful servant: ... enter thou into the joy of thy lord" (Matthew 25:21) [Charles R. Boatman, International Sunday School Lessons 2006-2007, Standard Publishing, Cincinnati, OH].

PRACTICAL POINTS

1. We need fear nothing the future might bring if we personally know the almighty One, who controls all things (Rev. 1:8).
2. The Lord can use anyone and anything for His glory (Luke 19:28-31).
3. Greatness and humility are not mutually exclusive; in fact, those who are truly great are humble (Luke 19:32-35; cf. Zech. 9:9).
4. We should be quick to praise the Lord for who He is and for what He has done (Luke 19:36-38).
5. Heartfelt praise can never be muted (vs. 39-40).

THOUGHT TO REMEMBER

Celebrate the King!

PRAYER

God in Heaven, we repeat the refrain: Blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord! We thank You for sending Your Son, Jesus, to bring us salvation. May He reign supreme in our lives, now and forever. In His blessed name we pray, amen.

ANTICIPATING NEXT WEEK'S LESSON

In preparation for next week's lesson (April 8, 2007), study Revelation 1:12a, 17-18; and John 20:11-16. Considering that the texts are short next week, also read as a background the following passages: Revelation 1:9-20; and John 20:1-18, 30-31).

Again, the times are about A.D. 96; A.D. 30, and the places are from Patmos; Jerusalem. The Golden Text is Revelation 1:17-18, and the subject is "Christ is Risen!" Note that this is Easter Sunday-a pivotal event for Christians' spiritual foundation and beliefs. Think about the connections between these Bible passages as you prepare for next week's lesson. *Good studying!*

LESSON SUMMARIZED BY

Kimbley Y. Baker-Richardson
Jesus Is All Ministries
www.jesusisall.com