

From the Pulpit of the Japanese Baptist Church of North Texas
April 9, 2017

Stones Cry Out

Luke 19:28-40

19:28 And when he had said these things, he went on ahead, going up to Jerusalem.

19:29 When he drew near to Bethphage and Bethany, at the mount that is called Olivet, he sent two of the disciples,

19:30 saying, "Go into the village in front of you, where on entering you will find a colt tied, on which no one has ever yet sat. Untie it and bring it here.

19:31 If anyone asks you, 'Why are you untying it?' you shall say this: 'The Lord has need of it.'"

19:32 So those who were sent went away and found it just as he had told them.

19:33 And as they were untying the colt, its owners said to them, "Why are you untying the colt?"

19:34 And they said, "The Lord has need of it."

19:35 And they brought it to Jesus, and throwing their cloaks on the colt, they set Jesus on it.

19:36 And as he rode along, they spread their cloaks on the road.

19:37 As he was drawing near--already on the way down the Mount of Olives--the whole multitude of his disciples began to rejoice and praise God with a loud voice for all the mighty works that 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 in the crowd said to him, "Teacher, rebuke your disciples."

19:40 He answered, "I tell you, if these were silent, the very stones would cry out."

1. The Passover Supper

Today's gospel tells us about Lord Jesus' entry to Jerusalem. He came to Jerusalem with three purposes. First purpose was to observe the Passover there. The Passover should be observed in Jerusalem. Then, Lord Jesus also came to Jerusalem to do so. Jewish people lost their land and became exiles and diaspora all over the world for many years, but they have been observing the Passover in various countries they lived. They have recited together "Next year, In Jerusalem" at the end of Passover Supper wishing to return the promised land. Today, Jewish people have their own country and can have the Passover in Jerusalem. It is great joy for the people to celebrate the Passover in Jerusalem.

We can find the verses singing this joy in "the songs of ascents" of the Book of Psalms. Psalm 122:1-2 reads, "I was glad when they said to me, 'Let us go to the house of the LORD!' Our feet have been standing within your gates, O Jerusalem!" This Psalm sing the joy of pilgrims who have arrived in Jerusalem after several days journey. Let's be filled with the joy to celebrate our Passover; the salvation brought by the Cross and Resurrection of Jesus Christ.

The second purpose of Jesus' entry to Jerusalem was to fulfill the Passover as well as to observe it. Lord Jesus came to Jerusalem to become the Lamb of the Passover and to be killed for the sin of men. He gave His life as the sacrifice on the cross.

The Passover is a ceremony for remembrance of the exodus of Israel from Egypt where they were slaves. But at Jesus' time, the people of Israel became slaves of the Roman empire. They were not free people. The people hoped the second or third exodus.

However, men cannot have true freedom though they win the political independence or released from the bondage of poverty or sickness. Lord Jesus knew the reality of Israel, the God's people, and recognized that true freedom should be the freedom from sin. Lord Jesus gave bread to thousands of people at once, and healed many people. He had the power to turn over even the Roman empire. But the Lord knew the salvation of the people would be realized not by His power but by His life, and He actually gave up His life. Those who believe in Him shall be forgiven their sins and receive the eternal life because the Lord bore sins of men and died on the cross.

This salvation through Lord Jesus is not only for the Jewish people but for the all of the people of the world. The last two verses of today's reading says, "And some of the Pharisees in the crowd said to him, 'Teacher, rebuke your disciples.' He answered, 'I tell you, if these were silent, the very stones would cry out.'" This means no one can stop the praise to the Lord. But there is another interpretation that the word, "stones" shows the gentile, none Jewish people. According the history, the believers of Lord Jesus were persecuted and expelled from Judea. Because of it the faith in Jesus Christ were spread among the gentiles. Jesus Christ brought His salvation for everyone of the world, and His salvation was accepted by the people of the world. "Stones would cry out." As these words tell, Jesus Christ now are praised and glorified in the world.

2. Joy of Obeying

Thirdly, Lord Jesus entered Jerusalem to show people that He was the King. Jerusalem was a city which David, the King of Israel, had built

and it was called “The capital of Kings”. Lord Jesus entered his own capital as a successor of King David, or even higher than David, as the King of the Kingdom of God.

The first teaching of Lord Jesus was “The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand; repent and believe in the gospel.” (Mark 1:15) Lord Jesus taught about the kingdom of God, who can enter there, with many parables. Then, He revealed Himself as the King of the Kingdom of God.

The Gospel of Luke wrote that Lord Jesus talked about a parable of mina right before He came to Jerusalem (Luke 19:11-27). The parable of mina is almost the same as the parable of talents in Matthew 25:14-30, but in the former parable, it clearly states that Lord Jesus is the King of the Kingdom of God. In the parable, “master” is described as follows in Luke 19:12 “A nobleman went into a far country to receive for himself a kingdom and then return.” A master refers to Lord Jesus. “A nobleman” means Lord Jesus is the Son of God, “went into a far country” means Jesus left the world and returned to God the Father, “receive for himself a kingdom and then return” means Jesus will come to the world again and reign the world. Lord Jesus showed in this parable that He was the King.

Lord Jesus not only taught that He was the king by words, but also he did so through his action. Lord Jesus entered Jerusalem, riding on a donkey but this is a fulfillment of the Prophecy in Zechariah 9:9, which is “Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion! Shout aloud, O daughter of Jerusalem! Behold, your king is coming to you; righteous and having salvation is he, humble and mounted on a donkey, on a colt, the foal of a donkey.” Lord Jesus showed that He was indeed the

king of the kingdom of God so clearly that everyone could see.

Until this time, Lord Jesus kept it secret from people other than his disciples that He was Christ. He escaped from those who tried to make him a king, and he hid himself. That is because Lord Jesus was afraid that His mission would be misunderstood and that he could not accomplish his mission as originally planned. But Lord Jesus entered Jerusalem surrounded by overjoy and scream, even though it was the first step toward the cross.

Because it was His joy to take the path that the Father God had shown to Jesus. When Lord Jesus was about to be baptized from John the Baptist, John hesitated to baptize Jesus. Then, the Lord said, "Let it be so now, for thus it is fitting for us to fulfill all righteousness." (Matthew 3:15) For Lord Jesus, the important thing was only one, the will of the Father God and to obey it. To enter Jerusalem as the King, receive praises from people, to be sent to the cross and humiliated, all are His Father's Will and for salvation of humans. That is why Lord Jesus accepted both of them with joy.

Before we believed Jesus Christ, we thought we could do anything we want with our life, because it was ours and belonged to us. However, after we knew Jesus Christ, we learned that it was Jesus Christ, but not we, to lead our life. We gave our life to Jesus Christ and welcomed Him as the Lord of our life. Therefore, for those who believe in Jesus Christ, to obey Lord Jesus, who also obeyed the Father God, is our joy. Lord Jesus who is our King, does not reign over us and bind us. He offered Himself so that we can receive eternal happiness. As the Lord found it joy to obey the Father God, we would like to make it our joy to obey Lord Jesus.

3. Praise to the King

So, people had the palm leaves when they welcomed Lord Jesus coming in Jerusalem. The Bible has four descriptions of people's singing at the time; in Matthew 21:9, "Hosanna to the Son of David! Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord! Hosanna in the highest!" Next Mark 11:9-10, "Hosanna! Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord! Blessed is the coming kingdom of our father David! Hosanna in the highest!" The third Luke 19:38, "Blessed is the King who comes in the name of the Lord! Peace in heaven and glory in the highest!" and finally, John 12:13, "Hosanna! Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord, even the King of Israel!" They are not identical, but the same phrases appeared, "Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord" and "Son of David," and people also called Jesus "the King" and praise Him as their one and only King.

In fact, this praising phrase, "Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord," comes from the Psalm 118 for Pass Over mealtime. In Psalm 118:25-26, it sings, "Save us, we pray, O LORD! O LORD, we pray, give us success! Blessed is he who comes in the name of the LORD! We bless you from the house of the LORD." The words, "Save us" became "Hosanna," and the people sang "Hosanna! Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord!"

Not only as the pilgrim celebrating the Passover in Jerusalem, but also Lord Jesus "came in" the capital of God's city as the King of the Kingdom. The multitudes of pilgrims immediately became the multitudes of praising to welcome the King.

In the early churches, the phrase, "Hosanna in the highest! Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord!" was the hymn song marked

on the order of worship service every Sunday. According to Revelation 7:9, it describes, “After this 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, clothed in white robes, with palm branches in their hands.” This is the Heaven’s worship, but I would love to praise Him like this with you. “White robes” are the God’s righteousness accomplished by Jesus Christ and given to us through faith. “Branches of palms” are the true confession to Lord Jesus and also the true praise from the bottom of heart. In Palm Sunday, we welcome Lord Jesus as the King, but it’s not only for this day. Every week, and every day, we shall welcome the King, Jesus Christ our Lord.

(Prayer)

Dear Father God, Jesus followed Your will and came in Jerusalem, and accomplished all of Your wills. You gave us this Lord Jesus as our King. There is no greater grace than this; Our King is the merciful Redeemer. We truly thank You, and let us be the ones who welcome Lord Jesus as the King in every worship service, and daily devotions. In Jesus’ name we pray, Amen.