
Narrative Lectionary

Year 3 | The Year of Luke

Scripture Readings

March 28, 2021

Palm Sunday

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About the text

BEAUTIFUL CHILDREN'S FACES, SMILING. The green of long palm branches waving in the air. Voices of celebration, singing and shouting, "Hosannah! Hosannah in the highest!"

That's a short list of the details you *won't* find in Luke's account of "Palm Sunday." They may all have happened, but Luke had a story to tell that was a bit more chilling, more foreboding.

The voices yelling about a "new king" arriving in the city sounded like insurrection from inside Jerusalem's walls. The leaders charged with balancing religious practice and Roman occupation could not allow beggars and cripples and outcasts to topple the city. Their shouts and their acclamation introduced unacceptable instability into the capital's charged climate.

The wistful, mournful reflection Jesus offers is an early epitaph for that city, as they knew it.



Luke 19:29-44

29 When he had come near Bethphage and Bethany, at the place called the Mount of Olives, he sent two of the disciples, ³⁰ saying, "Go into the village ahead of you, and as you enter it you will find tied there a colt that has never been ridden. Untie it and bring it here. ³¹ If anyone asks you, 'Why are you untying it?' just say this, 'The Lord needs it.'" ³² So those who were sent departed and found it as he had told them. ³³ As they were untying the colt, its owners asked them, "Why are you untying the colt?" ³⁴ They said, "The Lord needs it." ³⁵ Then they brought it to Jesus; and after throwing their cloaks on the colt, they set Jesus on it. ³⁶ As he rode along, people kept spreading their cloaks on the road. ³⁷ As he was now approaching the path down from the Mount of Olives, the whole multitude of the disciples began to praise God joyfully with a loud voice for all the deeds of power that they had seen, ³⁸ saying, "Blessed is the king who comes in the name of the Lord! · Peace in heaven, and glory in the highest heaven!"

39 Some of the Pharisees in the crowd said to him, "Teacher, order your disciples to stop." ⁴⁰ He answered, "I tell you, if these were silent, the stones would shout out."

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41 As he came near and saw the city, he wept over it, ⁴² saying, "If you, even

29 When he got near Bethphage and Bethany at the mountain called Olives, he sent off two of the disciples with instructions: ³⁰ "Go to the village across from you. As soon as you enter, you'll find a colt tethered, one that has never been ridden. Untie it and bring it. ³¹ If anyone says anything, asks, 'What are you doing?' say, 'His Master needs him.'"

32 The two left and found it just as he said. ³³ As they were untying the colt, its owners said, "What are you doing untying the colt?"

34 They said, "His Master needs him."

35 They brought the colt to Jesus. Then, throwing their coats on its back, they helped Jesus get on. ³⁶ As he rode, the people gave him a grand welcome, throwing their coats on the street.

3 Right at the crest, where Mount Olives begins its descent, the whole crowd of disciples burst into enthusiastic praise over all the mighty works they had witnessed:

38 Blessed is he who comes, the king in God's name! · All's well in heaven! Glory in the high places!

39 Some Pharisees from the crowd told him, "Teacher, get your disciples under control!"

40 But he said, "If they kept quiet, the stones would do it for them, shouting praise."

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New Revised Standard

you, had only recognized on this day the things that make for peace! But now they are hidden from your eyes.

⁴³ Indeed, the days will come upon you, when your enemies will set up ramparts around you and surround you, and hem you in on every side. ⁴⁴ They will crush you to the ground, you and your children within you, and they will not leave within you one stone upon another; because you did not recognize the time of your visitation from God."

The Message

41 When the city came into view, he wept over it. ⁴² "If you had only recognized this day, and everything that was good for you! But now it's too late. ⁴³ In the days ahead your enemies are going to bring up their heavy artillery and surround you, pressing in from every side. ⁴⁴ They'll smash you and your babies on the pavement. Not one stone will be left intact. All this because you didn't recognize and welcome God's personal visit."

Psalm 118:19-23

19 Open to me the gates of righteousness, that I may enter through them and give thanks to the LORD.

20 This is the gate of the LORD; the righteous shall enter through it.

21 I thank you that you have answered me and have become my salvation. · ²² The stone that the builders rejected has become the chief cornerstone. · ²³ This is the LORD'S doing; it is marvelous in our eyes.

19 Swing wide the city gates—the righteous gates! I'll walk right through and thank GOD! · ²⁰ This Temple Gate belongs to GOD, so the victors can enter and praise.

21 Thank you for responding to me; you've truly become my salvation! · ²² The stone the masons discarded as flawed is now the capstone! · ²³ This is GOD'S work. We rub our eyes—we can hardly believe it!

The Narrative Lectionary presents the story of God's work in humanity through a single Gospel each year. This is Year 3: The Year of Luke.