

## The King Prepares His Procession, Part 3

Luke 19:31-34

Well, we're back in Luke 19 today, so you can turn there in your Bible. We introduced the triumphal entry, this section of the triumphal entry of Jesus Christ into Jerusalem, the Lord's coronation procession into Jerusalem, and started to see his preparations that he's making to enter the city as its king.

I talked to quite a few of you. We were rejoicing together in God's good providence to give us kind of such a timely illustration for our text in the coronation ceremony of King Charles III; hadn't happened, a coronation celebration like that, for seventy years. The last time was his mother, Queen Elizabeth, and now King Charles; and I just find that the Lord is so kind to do that kind of thing for us as he plans world events to fit our preaching calendar, I'm very grateful, and if you've not yet thanked him for that, be sure you do that because he, he does spin the world around everything that happens here in Greeley, Colorado. He orders all things, all things according to the counsel of his will. I can legitimately say that.

But today we are going to pick up where we left off last time and finish that opening section we were going through, on the preparations that Jesus is making to enter into Jerusalem, planning his own coronation ceremony and procession. So let's start just by reading the text that we're going to cover, starting in Luke 19:28. We'll read through verse 34.

"And when he had said these things," and that points back to the previous section, the parable that he just told, the parable of the minas. "When he had said these things, he went on ahead, going up to Jerusalem. When he drew near to Bethphage and Bethany at the mount that is called Olivet, he sent two of the disciples 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. If anyone asks you why are you untying it, you shall say this: "The Lord has need of it."' So those who were sent went away and found it just as he had told them, and as they were untying the colt, its owner said to them, 'Why are you untying the colt?' And they said, 'The Lord has need of it.'"

Seems like a very simple, straightforward narrative, and seems like the elements that are in that narrative are rather mundane, common, plain; and there is a commonness to that section of Scripture. There is something that seems rather mundane about him making arrangements to get a donkey, a colt of a donkey. And yet I have had to cut a lot out to make sure that I'm clear because there are so many details in that short section. But there is so much here, as I've seen in all of Scripture how much is packed into a short and simple narrative. It's astounding, and it's very clearly not the word of a man, but the Word of God.

We see here that Jesus and his disciples, along with a band of Jewish pilgrims, they were in Jericho at the beginning of this text. And they leave Jericho on Friday, and we could be specific about the date, Friday, March 27, AD 33. They arrived that same day in the little village of Bethany, in what we suppose is a district called Bethphage, a district, kind of a suburb, even, of Jerusalem. And it was either that evening or maybe even the following day, which was the Sabbath day, Jesus was the guest at a dinner or a banquet, you could say, hosted by Simon the Leper. He hosted a dinner for Jesus and his disciples. He's no longer a leper. He's called Simon the Leper because he

was someone known by the disciples, someone who had been healed of his leprosy. But that's the moniker that attached to him because of Jesus' miraculous power displayed in his life.

He hosted a dinner for Jesus and his disciples on that day, and along with other disciples who lived in Bethany who came there, and that would have included Jesus, his good friends, his disciples, but his good friends Lazarus, his sisters Martha and Mary. In fact, we know from parallel accounts in Matthew 26 and Mark 14 and John 12 that the dinner was the scene of a most meaningful gift given by Mary, sister of Lazarus and sister of Martha.

Mary was in that banquet scene, that dinner scene, and she had broken open an alabaster flask. It contained a very expensive ointment of pure nard, and she anointed Jesus' head with it, there in, in the crowded room. And Jesus told everyone there, even against his own disciples' complaints about the waste, he said, "No, no, no. This act has prepared my body for burial." It's very unlikely that Mary herself understood the true significance of her act of worship. She did better than she knew. We can see many times in Scripture of people speaking

better than they knew. But she did and acted in a way, way beyond her understanding and her foresight. For all she knew, she was anointing Jesus' head at that time, so that in her own small way, she acted out the anointing of the Messiah, Israel's next great king.

But like all the other disciples, Mary, she is on this occasion filled with joy of messianic expectation. She's eager, like everyone else is around her, to enter into the city and proceed on the coronation route into Jerusalem. She's really acting out what probably everybody else in the room could have wished they would have thought of to anoint him as king. And here he is being anointed just as King Charles was anointed in his coronation ceremony.

Little did she know, though, that before the next Sabbath would arrive, the body that she anointed would die on a cross and be buried in a tomb. She could not have foreseen that. She didn't understand that. That did not make sense to her or any of the other disciples. All those who loved Jesus dearly could not foresee or understand how it could be that this great one, this

king, this Messiah, that he should be killed, that he would be rejected by his people. But so it was to be.

And Jesus knew here, he knew then, and seeing what no one else could see, he knew, in fact, that the widespread revelation of his messianic right and claim to the throne, the announcement of his arrival into Jerusalem to take the throne, even this coronation procession that he's here planning in our text, this act of his would be the catalyst that leads to and pushes his final rejection and death and burial. And so he's intent on making it happen.

Jesus presses forward, and he makes preparations for his coronation procession, which he knows will result in his own demise, in his death on the cross. He's counting on it, so he knows that, he seeks that so that Scripture may be fulfilled, so that redemption may be accomplished in order that his death would do what God designed it to do, which is to save his people from their sins.

So as Jesus prepares for his coronation procession, all this is in his mind, a grand narrative, and all the little

details along the way matter. And as we observe him in action here in this text, where we have already made several observations, we're going to make several more observations about the kind of person that he is, the kind of king that he is, the kind of Savior that he is.

First, we observed number one, number one, the Lord is regal. The Lord is regal. He is royal. That is to say, Jesus is sovereign, and he is the highest sovereign. He has the noblest character. He comes from the noblest lineage on earth in all of human history. You can read the genealogies in Matthew 1 and Luke 3. There's no disputing those genealogies. They are a matter of historical, established historical fact.

But he is the promised king. He was born into the only chosen nation on the earth, the nation of Israel. He's born into the only tribe that was chosen from that chosen nation to reign over that nation, which is the tribe of Judah. And he was born into the only family of that nation from that tribe to be the royal family, and that's the royal family of David.

In Luke 1, but prior to being conceived in the womb of the Virgin Mary, the angel Gabriel came, announcing and introducing him, and Gabriel said, "His name is to be Jesus," and "Jesus" means "salvation." "He will be great," Gabriel said, "and he will be called Son of the Most High." And then this in, in Luke 1:32, "The Lord will give to him the throne of his father David. He will reign over the House of Jacob forever, and of his kingdom there will be no end."

There's no one on earth, not one person on earth at any time in history, past, present or future, not one person on earth except him, possesses the real right to reign as king over the earth. Only Jesus Christ fits this description, though the undeniable fact of his regality, which was a knowable fact, a verifiable fact since before his birth, could be known, the royalty and the regality of Jesus is confirmed here in our text and has been confirmed ever since, and for most of his ministry. We know this as we've been tracking him ever since the Galilee; he's been keeping his Messianic identity a secret.

When his disciples, by the revelation of God, by the gift of the Father, when his disciples tell him, "You are the Christ.



You're not just some prophet. You're not John the Baptist resurrected. You are the Christ, the Christ of God," he told them, "Don't say anything about that. Keep that quiet for now."

But now it's time. Now it's time for his true identity to become known. Now it's time for his regality to be revealed, his royalty to be made manifest. And the big reveal, here, to Israel comes in and through this procession. And they, as we see in the text, just a few verses after what we read, they recognize that as such, they recognize him to be the true king. He is going to ride from Bethany to Jerusalem on a colt, on the foal of a donkey.

And his procession, unlike any coronation procession we've seen by any other king, and particularly King Charles' most recently, he makes himself accessible to his people. He's not riding in a multimillion-dollar coach, shielded by bulletproof glass. He makes himself accessible to his people. He wants his people to come, get close access to him so that they can see him and observe their king up close and personal. There's no hindrance in their way, there's no barrier, no obstruction. Basically says, "Let everyone come, let everyone see." We're to

see who he is; we're to see what he's like. And that's what we're doing in this study.

So the Lord is regal, number one. Secondly, we said the Lord is humble. Though he's regal and though he's Lord, he is a humble king. He's a humble, humble and meek in his person. In the way that Jesus is identified, the verbs that portray the actions that he takes, he's very clearly lordly, kingly in his actions. He is the Lord. He's called the *kyrios*, here. In fact, that's the way he's identified, not by his name, "Jesus," but by his title, by his person. He is Lord, *ho kyrios*. He acts like the Lord. He makes decisions like a lord would make and does. He takes charge as a lord should take charge.

And it is so clear here in this text, and we're going to see this, we've been seeing this already, but particularly here, it's very poignant. And, but we're going to continue seeing this, how he is directing everything. He's directing everything. He's, he's like moving all the pieces as if they're on a chess board before him. He's directing everything into their final, predetermined and inevitable outcome. This is the will of his Father. He is sovereign in every way.

In this, though, recognizing who he is and in his person, that he is Lord, we also find a remarkable humility about him, that this king, as Lord, here he takes up the role of a servant. Though he is a sovereign, he takes up the role of a slave. And we say, "How so?" Many ways we can see that, many ways we have been seeing that.

But in this text we see that he's arranging his own transportation. We thought about how ridiculous it would have been for King Charles to make a bunch of phone calls and say, "Okay, get the chariot ready, some horses and want," you know. It'd be ludicrous to think of King Charles at his level, arranging his own transportation. Other people do that for him. Servants many tiers down away from him make those kind of arrangements.

It may seem to some to be a small and insignificant detail, and what is clearly overlooked by everyone else in this text, but our Lord, here, is attentive in his service. He's faithful even in the seemingly little things. He's humbled to do a servant's job, to take up the role of a servant. Here we see

that he's the only one, really, who could make these arrangements because he's the only one that really knows what's going on, and so he has to do it all himself.

And here we see that as the king, he is the chief administrator of God's kingdom. He's the one who makes sure everything gets done. He exercises oversight and makes arrangements for things both big and small, grand and seemingly mundane. Which is why we read in Philippians 2:8 that his humility is such that it takes him not just to the point of being a servant, but takes him to the point of even to death, even the death on a cross. He has died to secure the citizenship of his people, that his Father's kingdom would be filled with citizens. And so a task so great as that, he also takes care of all the little things as well. No task seems to be beneath him while he prepares us to share in his work with him.

And so in the meantime, while we're still growing and understanding, while we're, we're maturing to set aside the stupid things that we can be so distracted by and all the, all the little things and in our lives and we make so prominent, unnecessarily distracted, while we're growing, while we're

maturing, while we're shedding all the things of this life, while we're putting our emphasis where it should be, on the kingdom and his righteousness, he is happy to humbly make his own arrangements to get his own donkey for himself.

So the Lord is regal, he's humble. And thirdly, just one more by way of reminder, the Lord is intentional. Number three, the Lord is intentional. And we said that he's intentional, verse 28, by taking the lead and going up to Jerusalem. It, he's, verse 28, he is way out front, in front of his disciples, he's charging up that hill. He is eager to finish his task. Verse 29, we can see he's intentional by setting the priority, before he would rest in Bethany, eager to see his friends and be in their company, but first he secured the colt. First, he wanted to make sure that he had the foal of the donkey in his possession before, so that he could make that royal procession the following day, which would take place on the first day of the week.

He's also intentional, verse 30, by selecting the appropriate symbol, by selecting the symbol, the sign that would best identify him to the people as the rightful heir of David's

throne. He selects the appropriate symbol, this colt, the foal of a donkey, as the fulfillment, to show the fulfillment of all his prophecy that he is going to reign as Israel's true king.

Jesus has come to fulfill the prophecy that Jacob made about the royal tribe of Judah, Genesis 49:10, where the donkey's colt is going to symbolize to the people this: "The scepter shall not depart from Judah, nor the ruler's staff from between his feet until tribute comes to him, and to him shall be the obedience of the peoples of the nations. Binding his foal to the vine, his donkey's colt to the choice vine, he has washed his garments in wine, and his vesture in the blood of grapes."

Ever since Genesis, ever since the very beginning of the Bible, he's the one. He's come to fulfill the prophecy of Zechariah, Zechariah 9:9, that identifies to Israel their true king. "Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion. Shout aloud, O daughter of Jerusalem. Behold, your king is coming to you." How do I know who he is? "He's righteous, he has salvation, and he's humble and mounted on a donkey, on a colt, the foal of a donkey."

Okay, so why a donkey? Why the colt, the foal of a donkey? Why the offspring of a donkey? Is that an arbitrary choice without any significance at all? I mean, if a sturdy camel or a strong horse were available, would one of those animals be okay to bear the king into the city? Perhaps donkeys are simply more readily available than other animals, and so it's a good choice.

But we can see something more is going on here because in all three synoptic Gospels, this focus, same focus, same real estate given in to the pages of Scripture on securing a donkey's colt, it's in all three synoptic gospels, Matthew, Mark and Luke. So the attention on this fact shows us that this is no arbitrary decision to choose this animal to bear the king into Jerusalem. This is intentional.

And this brings us to the reason for the symbol. What is the significance of riding on a donkey's colt? Well, the Lord is regal, he's humble, he's intentional. And then fourthly, the Lord is peaceful. The Lord is peaceful. That is what the symbol of a donkey's colt is meant to communicate to everyone: that the Lord is peaceful. It basically sends the message, "I come in peace."

Again, in verse 30, "The Lord told two of his disciples, '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.'" Donkeys were not like, not thought of like they are today, like the butt of jokes and foolish and stupid and things like that. In the ancient Near East they were very well regarded. Merrill Unger, we, we quoted him at length last time, but he said that "donkeys are beautiful animals, very easy in gait and perfectly sure-footed."

And those things are true, a comfortable ride, and especially in, when you're riding not on improved roads like we drive on all the time, even barring the occasional pothole and that kind of thing that we drive on. The donkeys were sure-footed on rocky and uneven ground, where it's very easy if you're walking to turn an ankle. And these donkeys were so sure-footed that their riders could be assured and think nothing of their donkey being able to bear the weight and have sure footing. A very comfortable ride.



So while that's true, it's not really the point, because camels also have a sure-footedness about them. Horses, same quality, which is why horses are taken into battle. Think about camels, the transportation choice of international traders. They were used to carry goods and wares, merchandise that they would sell and trade. But camels were for traveling over vast distances. Nothing wrong with merchants per se, and a camel representing a merchant.

But knowing what happens at the end of this chapter, where Jesus enters into the temple and casts out the buyers and the sellers, maybe an animal symbolizing merchants and traders isn't the right optic here, right? Besides, a camel is a long-distance animal. Jesus is not coming from far away. He's no stranger. He's no foreigner. He's a local. He's one of their own. These people are his people. So no animal that represents great distance, foreigners, strangers. An animal that's more familiar, so no camels.

What about a horse? Horses, too, they are magnificent creatures. But a horse would send the wrong message. A king who arrives in procession on a horse is signaling power, military

might, projecting force and strength. The message doesn't say, "I come in peace"; it says, "Don't mess with me." Alexander the Great entered into the cities that he conquered riding his war horse Bucephalus or Bukephalus. *Kephalos* is the word for "head," and literally Bucephalus means "oxhead." That was the name of his horse. Some say it referred to the horse's stubborn nature, and certainly if Alexander wasn't getting what he wanted out of the horse, that's what it reminded him of. But more likely the, the name "Oxhead" referred to the brand that was located on the horse's haunch.

But Bucephalus was one of the famous Thessalonian horses, which was a famous breed. It was bred for war, and the Thessalonian horses supplied the Greek and Roman cavalries. Bucephalus was jet black, had a prominent white star on his brow. It was the symbol of Alexander's power, the victor in battle, conqueror of nations. Other emperors, too, Julius Caesar, Caligula, Hadrian, they all rode famous horses. They all portrayed images of mighty empire, conquerors of nations, all symbolized by riding powerful war horses.

It's not unlike the transportation choices that we see among the rich and the famous and the powerful today. They don't drive a Hyundai or a Honda. They drive expensive vehicles, projecting wealth, projecting power, projecting whatever they feel insignificant in, right? And they're, like, overcompensating for something, and finally got that, they got all the money. Now they can show their wealth. The kind of vehicle someone drives or flies from and to, from country to country, it's meant to communicate something to the rest of us, right? We understand that.

For the incoming king, Jesus, the image of the conqueror riding astride his war stallion, that is not the appropriate image for this particular procession into Jerusalem. When he comes again, he will ride a white horse, according to Revelation 19:14, because he comes to make war then. He comes to conquer then. So that is the appropriate image at that time for that coming, the second coming of Christ. But for now, in his first advent, the Lord comes offering peace. He comes as the Prince of Peace, we call him. So the most fitting symbol is the donkey, the colt or the foal of a donkey.

For the Jews who are here on this occasion and witness the procession of Jesus into Jerusalem, there is going to be a scene, historical scene that comes to mind for them from Israel's monarchy that's going to be reminiscent to them. Turn back, if you will, to 1 Kings chapter 1, 1 Kings chapter 1. This is a scene that records the closing days of David's life, handing over the power to the incoming king. It's a particularly vulnerable time for the nation of Israel, as David's power, his authority, is waning, and the nation is wondering who will ascend the throne.

It's always one of the most vulnerable of times for any nation during a transfer of power. It's a tenuous situation for any incoming government. Everything from internal strife and tension to political ambitions, external pressures from regional adversaries, international adversaries. Things like these lead to attempts on the throne, coup attempts to gain power. Assassinations abound. These things are the stuff of history. We're pretty familiar with it. You could see it also in Israel's history, more common than it should be.

But this is one of those times in 1 Kings 1:5, when David is older, he's weaker, he's, he's no longer able to pay close attention to matters of state because he's just trying to, we can see it in the first four verses, just trying to keep his body warm. He's diminished in his strength. It's not that he's inattentive in his heart to the needs of the nation, for a need for a peaceful transfer of power. In fact, he had a good reason to believe that matter had already been settled. God had chosen his son Solomon to be his successor.

But here we see in 1 Kings 1:5 there's a rival to the throne. It's David's oldest living son, Adonijah. It says in verse 5, "Now Adonijah the son of Haggith exalted himself, saying, 'I will be king.' He prepared for himself chariots and horsemen, and fifty men to run before him. His father had never at any time displeased him by asking, 'Why have you done thus and so?' He was also a very handsome man, and he was born next after Absalom."

That note, there, reminds us that Ad, Adonijah was the next in line as the suc, successor to the throne in, in terms of birth order, anyway. He was actually David's fourth son,

according to 2 Samuel 3:4. But David's first three sons, Amnon, who is killed by Absalom's men; and Chileab, who probably died earlier, maybe in childhood; and then Absalom, who died because of the coup attempt, all of them dead, and this meant the fourth son, Adonijah, is next in the birth order.

So he fancies himself to be the incoming king, and his father's decline, he's increasingly in a diminished state, and so as David's strength is weakened, Adonijah's ambitions are awakened and strengthened, and they come into fruition here. Look at verse 7: "He conferred, Adonijah conferred with Jo, Joab the son of Zeruah and with Abiathar the priest, and they followed Adonijah and helped him. But Zadok the priest and Benaiah son of Jehoiada and Nathan the prophet and Shimei and Rei, David's mighty men, were not with Adonijah. Adonijah sacrificed sheep, oxen, fat and cattle by the Serpent's Stone, which is beside En-rogel, and he invited his brothers, the king's sons, and the royal officials of Judah. But he didn't invite Nathan the prophet, or Benaiah, or the mighty men, or Solomon his brother."

Like most kings of the earth, like most who try to take the throne, put themselves forward, Adonijah, here, is portraying himself as a powerful man. He's flanked by chariots and horsemen. He has fifty men to run before him. He has the support of Joab, the commander of David's army. He's got the support of Abiathar, the priest, who'd been with David from the beginning and from before David was actually king, when he was still on the run from Saul. So Joab and Abiathar, they symbolize David's power and David's authority, and they are with Adonijah. Very powerful signal that, that he's sending. Charioteers, the cavalry, the platoon strength force of fifty troops, double-timing before the horses: all these are the symbols of an incoming king who wants to project strength and security, power, authority.

The very next scene we see Nathan the prophet visiting Bathsheba, Solomon's mother. He knows that Solomon has been appointed king, chosen to be king by God and by David. And so they come together and converse, confer, devise a plan to bring this troubling situation to David's attention. They, they're very wise in how they approach David. Bathsheba goes in first. Nathan follows to corroborate her facts. And they succeed. David hears them, heeds their appeal.

And look at verse 28: "King David answered, 'Call Bathsheba to me.' So she came into the king's presence, and stood before the king. And the king swore, saying, 'As the Lord lives, who has redeemed my soul out of every adversity, as I swore to you by the Lord, the God of Israel, saying, "Solomon your son shall reign after me, and he shall sit on my throne in my place," even so I, will I do this day.' Bathsheba bowed with her face to the ground, and paid homage to the king, and said, 'May my lord King David live forever!'

"King David said, 'Call to me Zadok the priest, Nathan the prophet, and Benaiah the son of Jehoiada.' They came before the king, and the king said to them, 'Take with you the servants of your lord and have Solomon, my son, ride on my own mule,' " mule being a cross between a donkey and a horse. "'Have him ride on my own mule and bring him down to Gihon. Let Zadok the priest and Nathan the prophet there anoint him king over Israel, and then blow the trumpet and say, "Long live King Solomon!"

"'You shall then come up after him, and he shall come and sit on my throne, for he shall be king in my place, and I've



appointed him to be ruler over Israel and over Judah.' And Benaiah the son of Jehoiada answered the king, 'Amen! May the Lord, the God of my lord the king, say so. As the Lord has been with my lord the king, even so may he be with Solomon, and make his throne greater than the throne of my lord King David.'

"So Zadok the priest, Nathan the prophet, Benaiah the son of Jehoiada, and the Cherethites and the Pelethites went down and had Solomon ride on King David's mule and brought him to Gihon. There Zadok the priest took the horn of oil from the tent and anointed Solomon, and then they blew the trumpet, and all the people said, 'Long live King Solomon!' And all the people went up after him, playing on pipes, and rejoicing with great joy, so that the earth was split by their noise."

Coronation, coronation, procession, all of it wrapped up into this text. David's last great act of public service is doing what he could to ensure a peaceful transfer of power in Israel, keeping Judah and Israel united together. He orders Zadok the priest, Nathan the prophet, Benaiah the chief of David's bodyguard. David ordered Solomon to be placed on his own

mule for this coronation procession that historically followed, really, the same route that Jesus is about to take himself.

Solomon's procession went down from Zion, the city of David in Jerusalem, to Gihon, which is a spring in the Kidron Valley down below the city, to the east of the city. It's a valley that divides Jerusalem to the west from Mount Olivet to the east. And after this procession, Solomon returned back up the way he came, back up the road from the Gihon spring, up to Jerusalem into Zion, the city of David. And there he was to take his seat in the enthronement ceremony to be enthroned on the, on the throne of David.

We get the sense, as David responds to Adonijah the usurper, that there's no real hurry or worry on his part. He does say, "I'm going to take care of this, this day," like, "Let's not let another day of this rival, this pretender, to assume he's going to take the throne or let anybody else." But there's no sense of anxiety here, no sense of worry. In fact, as Solomon comes, there's no indication, we know that he didn't put himself forward. He was God's choice.

As he comes, he doesn't have any anxiety. He's the passive participant in this. He's being ushered along. He's placed on the donkey, or the mule. He's brought down in the procession. He's anointed, he's brought back up, he's placed on the throne. No indication he's put himself forward, no indication he's worried, anxious. He is the picture, the very picture of a man of peace. He's a man, here, at rest. He has a settled confidence that the Lord's will and his father's choice will prevail.

And the symbols are very fitting. Adonijah symbolized power and strength. Solomon symbolizes peace, settled confidence, royal dignity. He rode on David's mule, not his war horse. He was surrounded by some important allies: Nathan the Prophet, Zadok the priest, Benaiah, who's leader of David's personal bodyguard.

Unlike Adonijah, Solomon didn't put himself forward. He's chosen by God. He's appointed by David. Solomon knew, which you can read in 1 Chronicles 22:6; in fact, if you'd like to go there, I'm going to go there now. But in 1 Chronicles 22:6-10, Solomon knew his father David had chosen him because God had already chosen him. This is the word of the living God. Who's

going to controvert his word? Who's going to contradict him?  
Who's going to push back against the will of the Lord?