

Nuggets and Gems from the Bible

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JERUSALEM**

**AND CLEANSING
THE TEMPLE**

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Living Stream Ministry
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After the Savior finished His ministry in Luke 19:27, the time came for Him to go up to Jerusalem to present Himself to the death ordained by God for the accomplishment of eternal redemption. The Lord Jesus made the long journey from Galilee to Jerusalem for the purpose of being put to death. He knew that in Jerusalem He would present Himself to God on the altar. In the book of Leviticus the offerings offered on the altar are types of Christ, and in the New Testament fulfillment the altar is the cross.

The Bible reveals that Christ is not only the offerings, but also the offering Priest to offer the sacrifice to God. This means that He is both the Priest and the offerings. As the offering Priest, He presented Himself to the altar, to the cross. The thought that Christ is both the offering and the Priest is revealed clearly in the Epistle of Hebrews. In Hebrews we see that Christ is the High Priest who offered Himself to God as the eternal sacrifice (Heb. 9:11, 14). Now in the Gospel of Luke we see that Christ went down from Galilee,

the place where He was working, to Jerusalem, the place where He would be put to death. In Jerusalem He would be both the offering and the Priest presenting this offering to God on the cross.

ENTERING INTO JERUSALEM TRIUMPHANTLY

The Lord Jesus was not arrested by the Pharisees in Galilee and then brought by them to Jerusalem to be put to death. On the contrary, He went to Jerusalem of His own initiative. Furthermore, He did not sneak into Jerusalem as a thief, but entered the city in a public way. When He drew close to Jerusalem, He prepared Himself to enter the city as a King. However, He did not enter the city as a king in splendor but as a King in humility. Instead of riding on a horse, He rode on a colt that sovereignly was made ready for Him.

How this colt was prepared for the Lord's use is a mystery. The Lord simply told two of His disciples, “Go into the village opposite you, in which, as you are entering, you will find a colt tied, on which no man has ever yet sat. Untie it and bring it” ([Luke 19:30](#)). The Lord went on to tell the disciples that if they were asked why they were untying the colt, they should say, “Because the Lord needs it” ([v. 31](#)). The disciples went

away and found the colt just as the Lord had told them. When they were asked why they were untying the colt, they replied, “Because the Lord needs it” (v. 34). Then they brought the colt to Jesus, “and throwing their garments on the colt, they put Jesus on it” (v. 35).

It may seem that the preparation of the colt was not a great matter. Actually, for the colt to be prepared in such a mysterious way was something great. Only the Creator of the universe could do such a thing. No doubt, the Lord Jesus is the real King. He spoke a brief word to His disciples concerning the colt. When they took His word and acted on it, everything happened exactly as He said it would.

Luke 19:37 and 38 say, “And as He was already drawing near to the descent of the Mount of Olives, all the multitude of the disciples began, as they were rejoicing, to praise God with a loud voice for all the works of power which they had seen, saying, Blessed is the King who comes in the name of the Lord! Peace in heaven and glory in the highest!” The disciples who brought the colt to the Lord Jesus may have taken the lead to be excited, for they believed that the triumphant entry into the capital was for the purpose of taking over the country.

According to John 12, the raising of Lazarus was a great miracle that attracted people to the Lord. That miracle took place shortly before the feast of the Passover, which was the time for the Lord Jesus as the Lamb of God to be put to death. Not long before He was killed, He raised Lazarus from the dead, and that miracle caused many to crowd around Him. Luke, however, does not record this miracle.

There was a great celebration as the Lord traveled from Bethany to Jerusalem. The temple in Jerusalem was built on Mount Moriah (later called Zion), the place where Abraham offered Isaac, and Bethany is located at the foothill of the Mount of Olives. Between these two mountains there is a valley. I believe that as the Lord passed through this valley, He was followed by a long parade of celebration. Those in this celebration were excited and even beside themselves with joy. The Pharisees, who were not able to do anything about the situation, were greatly surprised. They said to one another, “Behold, the world has gone after him” (John 12:19).

LAMENTING OVER JERUSALEM

As the Lord Jesus drew near to Jerusalem, He was not joyful. Instead, He lamented over the city.

Of all those in the crowd, He must have been the only one who lamented. All the others were celebrating, rejoicing, and shouting praises to God. The disciples may have said to one another, “What a celebration this is! Our King will soon take over the country. We are His followers, and we shall participate in His ruling.” This may have been the thought of the Lord’s followers, but it certainly was not His thought. “As He drew near, seeing the city, He wept over it” ([Luke 19:41](#)).

In [19:42-44](#) we see what the Lord said as He wept over the city: “If you knew in this day, even you, the things that are for your peace! But now it has been hidden from your eyes. For days will come upon you when your enemies will throw up a rampart before you, and will encircle you, and will press you in on every side, and will level you to the ground, and your children within you, and they will not leave a stone upon a stone in you, because you did not know the time of your visitation.” The peace in [verse 42](#) will be in the restoration of Israel ([Acts 1:6](#)) after the Savior’s return. The Greek word rendered “level” in [Luke 19:44](#) may also be translated “dash.” Jerusalem was leveled, dashed, to the ground in A.D. 70 by Titus with the Roman army. The word “visitation” in [verse 44](#) refers to the Savior’s first

coming to visit them in grace in the acceptable year of the Lord ([Luke 2:10-14; 4:18-22](#)).

In His lamentation the Lord seemed to be saying, “O Jerusalem, poor Jerusalem! I wish that you knew your days. This is the day of your visitation, but you do not recognize it. You are not grateful for the visitation I am rendering you. You need to realize that not long after I die and am resurrected and ascend to the heavens, a different day will come upon you. In that day you will be leveled to the ground.” Later, the Roman army destroyed the city of Jerusalem. The narration of Josephus shows in detail what a terrible destruction that was.

In the midst of the celebration the Man-Savior had sorrow instead of joy. He was about to make a triumphant entry into Jerusalem, but He was moved with compassion for the city.

CLEANSING THE TEMPLE AND TEACHING IN IT

[Luke 19:45](#) and [46](#) say, “And entering into the temple, He began to cast out those who were selling, saying to them, It is written, And My house shall be a house of prayer, but you have made it a robbers’ cave.” The Lord entered into the temple for the purpose of cleansing it. Do

you know what was in the temple? The temple was filled with mammon and material things, filled with the matters of buying and selling. This was the reason the Lord cleansed the temple.

On His journey from Galilee to Jerusalem, the Lord emphasized the need to overcome mammon and material possessions. He even said that in order to follow Him we need to renounce our possessions and stay away from the stupefying effects of material things ([Luke 14:33; 18:22-25](#)). Because what He required His disciples to renounce was prevailing in the temple, He went into the temple to cleanse it.

The Lord's cleansing of the temple indicates that His presenting of Himself on the cross to God was for the producing of a cleansed temple. This means that His death has the effect of producing a church that is a purified, cleansed temple. Our basis for saying this is the clear revelation in the New Testament. The New Testament reveals that the Lord Jesus died to produce many grains that would be formed into one loaf, which is the Body ([John 12:24](#); [1 Cor. 10:17](#)). This Body is the church ([Eph. 1:22-23](#)), and the church is the temple of God ([Eph. 2:21](#); [1 Cor. 3:16](#)). This temple, in contrast to the robbers' cave, is a purified and cleansed house for God's dwelling place.

The Man-Savior's triumphant entry into Jerusalem was not for the purpose of taking over the country. The Lord entered into Jerusalem to present Himself to an all-inclusive death, to the death ordained by God. This death would not merely bring in the jubilee; it would also produce a cleansed and purified dwelling place for God.

When I was young, I knew only that the Lord entered into Jerusalem and cleansed the temple. I did not know the significance of these things. Now I can declare strongly that the Lord's real concern was to take care of the temple. When He was twelve, He was found in the temple ([Luke 2:46](#)), and when He came forth to minister at the age of thirty, He cleansed the temple ([John 2:14-16](#)). Because He was concerned with His Father's interests, He said to His parents, "Did you not know that I must be in the things of My Father?" ([Luke 2:49](#)). This indicates that He cared for the temple, God's dwelling place, composed of His chosen ones according to His eternal economy. Therefore, the temple is the central point, the focal point, of God's economy. The Lord was concerned for this when He was twelve, when He began to minister at the age of thirty, and when He reached the end of His earthly ministry. The Man-Savior entered into Jerusalem to present

Himself to God as the all-inclusive offering. But before presenting Himself in this way, He once again expressed His concern for the interests of His Father, for the Father's dwelling place.

In contrast to the disciples, the Lord Jesus was not concerned with gaining a kingdom for Himself. His only concern was that God's people become God's dwelling place. According to the full revelation of the New Testament, the Lord's concern in entering into Jerusalem was to produce a purified temple for God's dwelling place.

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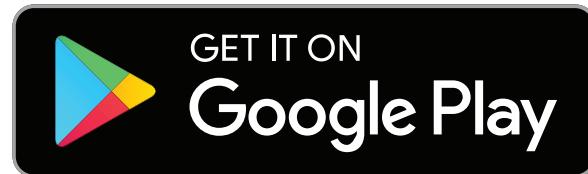
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