

As Jesus rides into Jerusalem on a donkey (Luke 19:28-40), he demonstrates that he is King, leading all the forces of heaven into battle.

1. Jesus is King

Throughout the Old Testament, the donkey is a symbol of Kingship. Jesus riding to Jerusalem on a donkey is a fulfillment of the prophesy in Zechariah 9, and a declaration that he is king.

We see two different reactions to Jesus' bold claim to kingship:

- The **disciples** respond with worship as they shout "Blessed is the King who comes in the name of the Lord! Peace in heaven and glory in the highest!"
- The **pharisees** are offended and demand "Teacher, rebuke your disciples!" They still see Jesus as just a "teacher" rather than King of Heaven and Earth.

2. The Kingdom of Heaven is invading

At the Cross, King Jesus conquered the "spiritual forces of evil" to free our world from the tyranny of sin, death, and Satan.

So why do we still see evidence of darkness all around us? We are living in the era between our D-Day (the Cross) and the day when Jesus returns to put everything right. King Jesus defeated Satan, Sin, and Death in a decisive victory on the cross, but the fighting isn't over. Satan continues to try and "steal, kill, and destroy."

What does this mean for us as Christians?

1. Take heart, Jesus has overcome.

In John 16:33, Jesus says: "I have told you these things, so that in me you may have peace. In this world you will have trouble. But take heart! I have overcome the world." Whatever this world might throw at you, no-one can take away your victory. Jesus won it for you on the cross, and it's yours forever.

- **This should lead us to worship!** Right now, the angels are worshiping Jesus in heaven, and we're invited to join them in an act more eternal, more powerful than any other. That's why Jesus says in Luke 19:40, "If my disciples were silent, the very stones would cry out." Because no-one and nothing can stop his worship. The very foundations of the earth sing His praises.

2. Prepare for battle. A soldier at war can't afford to be passive, which is why we're encouraged in the Bible to "stand firm"; "be strong"; "keep alert"; and "put on the full armour of God".

It's important that we use the "sword of the spirit, which is the word of God" (Ephesians 6:17) in this fight of the Christian faith. Two practical ways you can use this weapon are:

- **In prayer.** Use Scripture as the basis of your prayers.
- **In proclamation.** Speak the truth of Scripture to yourself and others.

Discussion Questions

Read the following passages together and answer the questions.

Matthew 4:1-11

Then Jesus was led by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil. 2 After fasting forty days and forty nights, he was hungry. 3 The tempter came to him and said, "If you are the Son of God, tell these stones to become bread."

4 Jesus answered, "It is written: 'Man shall not live on bread alone, but on every word that comes from the mouth of God.'"

5 Then the devil took him to the holy city and had him stand on the highest point of the temple. 6 "If you are the Son of God," he said, "throw yourself down. For it is written:

"He will command his angels concerning you,
and they will lift you up in their hands,
so that you will not strike your foot against a stone."

7 Jesus answered him, "It is also written: 'Do not put the Lord your God to the test.'"

8 Again, the devil took him to a very high mountain and showed him all the kingdoms of the world and their splendor. 9 "All this I will give you," he said, "if you will bow down and worship me."

10 Jesus said to him, "Away from me, Satan! For it is written: 'Worship the Lord your God, and serve him only.'"

11 Then the devil left him, and angels came and attended him.

1. **In what ways does the devil tempt Jesus in this passage?**
2. **How can Jesus' example in this passage help us resist the devil?**

- 3. The devil uses a verse out of context to try and trick Jesus. How can we guard ourselves against this tactic of the enemy?**

Ephesians 6:10-17

Be strong in the Lord and in his mighty power. 11 Put on the full armor of God, so that you can take your stand against the devil's schemes. 12 For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms. 13 Therefore put on the full armor of God, so that when the day of evil comes, you may be able to stand your ground, and after you have done everything, to stand. 14 Stand firm then, with the belt of truth buckled around your waist, with the breastplate of righteousness in place, 15 and with your feet fitted with the readiness that comes from the gospel of peace. 16 In addition to all this, take up the shield of faith, with which you can extinguish all the flaming arrows of the evil one. 17 Take the helmet of salvation and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God.

- 4. What lies do you commonly have to battle in your mind? (As each person shares, invite others to suggest verses they could use to combat these lies.)**
- 5. In the preach, we looked at some practical ways we could use the "sword of the Spirit". What might be some practical ways we can use the other items of armour listed in this passage?**

Read Zechariah 9:9-12 and use it as the basis of a prayer time together. Let it stir you to pray for His Kingdom to come on earth as it is in heaven.

Zechariah 9:9-12

9 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.
10 I will cut off the chariot from Ephraim
and the war horse from Jerusalem;
and the battle bow shall be cut off,
and he shall speak peace to the nations;
his rule shall be from sea to sea,
and from the River to the ends of the earth.

11 As for you also, because of the blood of my covenant with you,
I will set your prisoners free from the waterless pit.

12 Return to your stronghold, O prisoners of hope;
today I declare that I will restore to you double.