

Holy Textures

Understanding the Bible in its own time and in ours

Luke 19:28-40

"what the authors of the Bible take for granted and fail to mention is that while Jesus is parading in on a colt through one of the back gates, on the other side of the city Pilate is parading in on a war horse accompanied by a squadron or two of battle hardened Roman soldiers."

Year C, Season of Lent

Sixth Sunday in Lent

Palm Sunday Lesson

Read the passage: [The Message](#) or [The New Revised Standard Version \(NRSV\)](#).

Click [here](#) for an easy to print or email Adobe PDF version of this note.

This post refers only to the text for Palm Sunday - Jesus enters Jerusalem.

Click [Luke 22:14 -- 23:56](#) for commentary on the Passion text.

The comments below are drawn from my earlier notes on the parallel text found at [Mark 11:1-11](#).

On this day in the life of Jesus, it is the beginning of the week in which Passover will be celebrated in Jerusalem.

Passover is still celebrated by Jews to this day.

Celebrated in synagogues, and most particularly in homes, where their salvation from slavery in Egypt is remembered and re-told: The hardship of our oppression. The calling of Moses to lead us to freedom and to a promised land, a land flowing with milk and honey. The repeated agreement - and then reneging - of the Pharaoh, until the tenth and final and most deadly of the plagues - the angel of death that killed all first born males - except for the homes where we had used the blood of a lamb to mark our door posts - those homes were passed over. The hurried preparations to be ready to flee - no time for leavened bread. The flight from Egypt pursued by the Egyptian soldiers. The miraculous parting of the Red Sea to allow us to pass through, but drowning the pursuing soldiers. The hardship of the 40 years wandering in the wilderness. The giving of the 10 Commandments - now that we are free, how shall live? What does the Lord require of us?

And then as now, remembering that the journey from oppression to freedom, from corruption to purity, from unjust violence to non-violent justice, has not been completed. Leave the door ajar and an empty chair at the table for Elijah! When Elijah comes the Messiah is on his way. And when the Messiah comes, finally the will of God will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Next year in Jerusalem!

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But on this day in Jesus' life, this is the year, and this is Jerusalem. At least that is what the crowd thinks. Listen to their shouts:

Blessed is the King
 who comes in the name of the Lord!
Peace in heaven,
 and glory in the highest heaven!

Now Jerusalem is not a large city. And what the authors of the Bible take for granted and fail to mention is that while Jesus is parading in on a colt through one of the back gates, on the other side of the city Pilate is parading in on a war horse accompanied by a squadron or two of battle hardened Roman soldiers. You can bet that he too is being acclaimed by a crowd. There'd be hell to pay if he wasn't. (See Borg & Crossan, *The Last Week*, pages 1-30. Click [here](#) to check it out on Amazon.)

The Bible doesn't tell us about that parade or what they shouted, but you can bet it wasn't, "Blessed is the King who comes in the name of the Lord!" That would be treason. And treason was punishable by? You guessed it, by torture followed by execution on a cross.

Do you think anyone at Pilate's parade heard about Jesus' parade? Heard what the crowd had shouted? Let's see what unfolds in the week ahead.

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* [Link to Amazon.com Bibliography for Bruce Malina, et. al.](#), Social Science Commentary on ... The Synoptic Gospels; The Gospel of John; The Book of Acts; The Letters of Paul; The Book of Revelation; and others.