

# **The Triumphal Entry**

## **“Jesus Entered Jerusalem”**

### **Matthew 21:1-17**

NOTE: I will change the word used in the King James Version of the Bible for donkey as I read this so that children don't hear me use a word they are taught as a bad word.

This is the telling of the episode that took place in the life of Christ that is known worldwide as “Palm Sunday.” Although I have not made it a practice in the 35 years that I’ve been preaching to always address this “holy day,” as it is called by many, I felt it was necessary to do so this year. We have been facing, and will continue to face, the consequences of the pandemic that is sweeping around the world. Everyone is affected by it in one way or another, and to give a sense of normalcy and comfort, I felt impressed by the Holy Spirit to bring a message concerning this event. If we can set aside the stress related to what’s happening around us, and open our Bibles and read the beginning of the last days of Jesus on earth and what that means to us in these trying times should be a help to us in the days ahead.

Next Sunday is what the world knows as “Easter Sunday.” Oddly enough, until this year, it has been quite a number of years that major retailers were closed on Easter – life was pretty much the same on Easter as any other Sunday. But this year, because of the virus pandemic, many major retailers that are allowed to be open will be closed. Make of that what you will – but I feel it shows God is still in control, and He will be honored (which is what this text shows).

We, as believers in Christ, consider Easter Sunday to be "Resurrection Sunday." If it weren't for the resurrection, we would have no hope. But the crucifixion and the resurrection could not have happened if it weren't for "The Triumphal Entry" into Jerusalem, for it was the series of events that followed, begun with His entry, that led to the crucifixion. This had to happen EXACTLY as it did to fulfill prophecy so that the most important event the world's ever known could take place – the resurrection of Christ.

This event in the life of Christ is given by all four of the Gospel writers, not just the synoptic writers. Even John, more concerned with the teachings of Jesus than the actions of Jesus, records this event. It is of some significance that all four record this – it shows, to some extent, the importance of the event to both the teachings and actions of our Lord.

This seems like a strange way for Jesus to make a "triumphal entry" into Jerusalem. The point of the first part of the story is that Jesus wanted to once again emphasize that He wasn't coming to set up His kingdom at that time, and riding in on a donkey (and a young one at that) was done to illustrate this truth. When Jesus actually does come to set up His kingdom at the end of the Tribulation, He will be riding a white horse and all the world will see Him (**Revelation 19 describes this**), and it won't be done in the side streets of Jerusalem (Mark 11:4).

#### Mark 11:4

<sup>4</sup> And they went their way, and found the colt tied by the door without in a place where two ways met; and they loose him.

[Preacher's Homiletical: A very circumstantial account, such as none but an eyewitness would have thought of giving—a strong indication that Peter was one of the two

disciples. They found the colt tied beside the door, outside (the yard or court), on the roundabout road (i.e. the road that went round the house)].

Jesus entry into Jerusalem was done for a number of reasons, three of which we will describe in this message.

Something to consider – although Jesus didn't come the first time to establish His earthly kingdom, this triumphal entry is a clear indication, a clear type, if you would, that He will one day return to do just that.

## **I. THE FULFILLMENT OF PROPHECY – MATT. 21:1-7**

This point teaches us that the Bible is true, and if the prophecies of old have come true then the future ones will as well.

### ***A. It had to happen***

#### *Zechariah 9:9*

<sup>9</sup> Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion; shout, O daughter of Jerusalem: behold, thy King cometh unto thee: he is just, and having salvation; lowly, and riding upon a [donkey], and upon a colt the foal of a [donkey].

1. If this one event didn't happen in order to fulfill prophecy, then the rest of what Jesus did wouldn't have mattered.
2. When Jesus and the disciples came to the outskirts of Jerusalem, they didn't have any animals – they were walking.
3. The only way to fulfill that prophecy was if they bought one, for which they apparently had no money, or Jesus

performed another miracle to procure one  
– which is exactly what He did.

***B. This, among other things, shows the authority of Christ – the miracle here is in that Jesus’ authority was exercised even over an animal that had never been ridden – a feat that was not easy to do. In fact, the word used in verse two (and others) – “colt” - πῶλος (masculine in gender, as is the word from the quote in Zech. 9:9) – is one that indicates the animal had never felt a burden until Jesus sat on him. The first burden it felt was that of our Redeemer, the King of kings, and Lord of lords. The owner may have understood it all at that time, but at some point, he would have realized what that meant.***

***C. This event with the donkey and her foal shows the deity, omniscience, and omnipotence of Christ.***

1. Jesus knew where the donkey and its colt would be – Luke 19:30.

Luke 19:30

<sup>30</sup> Saying, Go ye into the village over against you; in the which at your entering ye shall find a colt tied, whereon yet never man sat: loose him, and bring him hither.

2. He also knew there would be someone with them, and He knew what they would say – only God could know all that ahead of time.
3. It would seem that the one who tended the

donkeys relinquished them without argument once he heard it was needed by Jesus.

## **II. THE FASCINATION WITH THE MESSIAH – MATT. 21:8-11**

**Note:** “Fascination” is not meant in an entirely good way, especially on the part of the scribes and Pharisees. They were “fascinated” in that their attention was “fastened” on the Messiah and their anger was directed toward Him.

This point teaches us that “not every one that sayeth unto me Lord, Lord shall enter into the kingdom of heaven.” Just because someone has a view of Jesus that seems right doesn’t make it so.

### ***A. On the part of the apostles – they were fascinated by the issue of the colt and the events that followed***

[John 12:12-19](#)

<sup>12</sup> On the next day [this would have been Sunday] much people that were come to the feast, when they heard that Jesus was coming to Jerusalem,

<sup>13</sup> Took branches of palm trees, and went forth to meet him, and cried, Hosanna: Blessed is the King of Israel that cometh in the name of the Lord.

<sup>14</sup> And Jesus, when he had found a young [donkey], sat thereon; as it is written,

<sup>15</sup> Fear not, daughter of Sion: behold, thy King cometh, sitting on a [donkey’s] colt.

<sup>16</sup> These things understood not his disciples at the first: but when Jesus was glorified, then remembered they that these things were written

of him, and that they had done these things unto him.

<sup>17</sup> The people therefore that was with him when he called Lazarus out of his grave, and raised him from the dead, bare record.

<sup>18</sup> For this cause the people also met him, for that they heard that he had done this miracle.

<sup>19</sup> The Pharisees therefore said among themselves, Perceive ye how ye prevail nothing? behold, the world is gone after him.

1. Again, it is recorded that they didn't understand what was happening – they were under the impression that Jesus wouldn't become King at this point but now they were confused because it looked like He would.
2. It wasn't until Jesus ascended back to heaven (Acts 1) that they finally understood it all.

#### Acts 1:9-11

<sup>9</sup> And when he had spoken these things, while they beheld, he was taken up; and a cloud received him out of their sight.

<sup>10</sup> And while they looked stedfastly toward heaven as he went up, behold, two men stood by them in white apparel;

<sup>11</sup> Which also said, Ye men of Galilee, why stand ye gazing up into heaven? this same Jesus, which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen him go into heaven.

### ***B. On the part of the Jews in bringing Jesus into the city***

1. Matthew, Mark, and Luke record the Jews laying palm leaves and branches in front of Jesus as He entered Jerusalem, crying out with joy that the King had returned to set up His kingdom. Of course, we know that's not what He was doing, and it was only a few days before the joy of the Jews turned to hatred for Jesus because they realized He didn't come to take Israel back from Rome.
2. All four of the Gospel writers give a version of what the people cried out when Jesus entered the city. It's not that there is a discrepancy – each wrote either what they heard themselves, or were told by those that were there what they heard (all the writers were not eyewitnesses to the things Jesus did and said) – Matt. 21:9; Mark 11:9-10; Luke 19:38; John 12:13.

#### Matthew 21:9

<sup>9</sup> And the multitudes that went before, and that followed, cried, saying, Hosanna to the Son of David: Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord; Hosanna in the highest.

#### Mark 11:9-10

<sup>9</sup> And they that went before, and they that followed, cried, saying, Hosanna; Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord:

<sup>10</sup> Blessed be the kingdom of our father David, that cometh in the name of the Lord: Hosanna in the highest.

#### Luke 19:38

<sup>38</sup> Saying, Blessed be the King that cometh in the name of the Lord: peace in heaven, and glory in the highest.

## John 12:13

<sup>13</sup> Took branches of palm trees, and went forth to meet him, and cried, Hosanna: Blessed is the King of Israel that cometh in the name of the Lord.

- a) Matthew, Mark, and John record the shout they heard as "Hosanna."

"Hosanna!" is compounded of two words meaning "save" and "now," or, "I pray," and is written in full Hoshia-na, translated by the Septuagint, Σῶσον δὴ. The expressions uttered by the people are mostly derived from Psa\_118:1-29., which formed part of the great Hallel sung at the Feast of Tabernacles. "Hosanna!" was originally a formula of prayer and supplication, but later became a term of joy and congratulation. So here the cry signifies "Blessings on [or, 'Jehovah bless'] the Son of David!" i.e. the Messiah, acknowledging Jesus to be he, the promised Prince of David's line. Thus we say, "God save the king!" This, which Ewald calls the first Christian hymn, gave to Palm Sunday, in some parts of the Church, the name of the "day of Hosannas," and was incorporated into the liturgical service both in East and West. (Pulpit Commentary)

- b) Luke only uses the term "blessed," also found in John's record, although John records the "Hosanna," as well – again, indicating that there were several things being shouted. This would most likely be accountable by the myriad of Jews that were there for the upcoming Passover and each would have brought a unique style from their respective cities, or even countries.

### **C. On the part of the Pharisees**

1. Luke records what the Pharisees' reaction to this event was – 19:39-40.

Luke 19:39–40

<sup>39</sup> And some of the Pharisees from among the multitude said unto him, Master, rebuke thy disciples.

<sup>40</sup> And he answered and said unto them, **I tell you that, if these should hold their peace, the stones would immediately cry out.**

2. They wanted Jesus to rebuke the disciples that were there shouting for joy and claiming Him to be King – they remembered what Jesus had said about coming to die and they actually understood that part so they wanted Him to rebuke them and set the record straight. This was not the time for that.
3. Jesus reply was actually a reference to the Old Testament that the Pharisees, the teachers of the Law, would have been well aware of – it was further claim by Jesus to be the Promised Messiah, and further cause for them to want Him dead.

Isaiah 55:12

<sup>12</sup> For ye shall go out with joy, and be led forth with peace: the mountains and the hills shall break forth before you into singing, and all the trees of the field shall clap their hands.

Psalms 98:7–9

<sup>7</sup> Let the sea roar, and the fulness thereof; the world, and they that dwell therein.

<sup>8</sup> Let the floods clap their hands: let the hills

be joyful together

<sup>9</sup> Before the LORD; for he cometh to judge the earth: with righteousness shall he judge the world, and the people with equity.

***D. On the part of the chief priests and the scribes***

1. Matthew records for us what they had to say – 21:14-17.

Matthew 21:14-17

<sup>14</sup> And the blind and the lame came to him in the temple; and he healed them.

<sup>15</sup> And when the chief priests and scribes saw the wonderful things that he did, and the children crying in the temple, and saying, Hosanna to the Son of David; they were sore displeased,

<sup>16</sup> And said unto him, Hearest thou what these say? And Jesus saith unto them, **Yea; have ye never read, Out of the mouth of babes and sucklings thou hast perfected praise?**

<sup>17</sup> And he left them, and went out of the city into Bethany; and he lodged there.

2. A very brief comment was made about Jesus continuing to heal in the temple and how He continued to do many “wonderful things” – even at the end of His life, Jesus was continuing to make a difference in people’s lives.
3. The chief priests and scribes were “sore displeased” – they were to the point of almost physical pain they were so upset with Jesus.

4. They also wanted Jesus, as did the Pharisees, to stop all the worship and praise being offered toward himself – He did the same thing with them as He did with the Pharisees – He quoted an Old Testament passage that they would have been very familiar with – vs. 16.

Psalm 8:1-2

<sup>1</sup> O LORD our Lord, how excellent is thy name in all the earth! who hast set thy glory above the heavens.

<sup>2</sup> Out of the mouth of babes and sucklings hast thou ordained strength because of thine enemies, that thou mightest still the enemy and the avenger.

### **III. THE FUTURE OF JERUSALEM – LUKE 19:41-44**

This point teaches that “today is the day of salvation.” There may not be a “tomorrow.” Even though this is called, “The Triumphal Entry,” and there is a lot of excitement and joy, Jesus knew what was coming and He knew that Jerusalem was going to fall, and He knew the horror and sorrow that awaited those honoring Him right then. He laments that here, wanting all that would receive Him as Savior to do so before it was too late.

Luke 19:41-44

<sup>41</sup> And when he was come near, he beheld the city, and wept over it,

<sup>42</sup> Saying, **If thou hadst known, even thou, at least in this thy day, the things which belong unto thy peace! but now they are hid from thine eyes.**

<sup>43</sup> **For the days shall come upon thee, that thine enemies shall cast a trench about thee, and**

compass thee round, and keep thee in on every side,  
44 And shall lay thee even with the ground, and thy children within thee; and they shall not leave in thee one stone upon another; because thou knewest not the time of thy visitation.

**A. Only Luke records this portion – this is the second time Luke records an episode where Jesus weeps over Jerusalem – He knew what was coming.**

Luke 13:34–35

34 O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, which killest the prophets, and stonest them that are sent unto thee; how often would I have gathered thy children together, as a hen doth gather her brood under her wings, and ye would not!

35 Behold, your house is left unto you desolate: and verily I say unto you, Ye shall not see me, until the time come when ye shall say, Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord.

**B. This isn't the last time Jesus laments over Jerusalem – He does again right before He gives the Olivet discourse.**

Matthew 23:37–39

37 O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, thou that killest the prophets, and stonest them which are sent unto thee, how often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not!

38 Behold, your house is left unto you desolate.

39 For I say unto you, Ye shall not see me henceforth, till ye shall say, Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord.

1. Matthew's account and Luke's account from earlier in the ministry of Jesus, are

almost identical. This shows how prevalent this was on the mind of Jesus, and perhaps a prayer he prayed often.

2. "The tears of our Lord over the perverseness of Jerusalem are witnesses of *the freedom of man's will to resist the grace of God.*" (Alford)

***C. Jesus is referring to the upcoming physical destruction of Jerusalem when Titus, the general of the Roman army comes against it and destroys it in 70 A.D.***

[1.] The Romans besieged the city, cast a trench about it, compassed it round, and kept their inhabitants in on every side. Josephus relates that Titus ran up a wall in a very short time, which surrounded the city, and cut off all hopes of escaping. [2.] They laid it even with the ground. Titus commanded his soldiers to dig up the city, and the whole compass of it was levelled, except three towers; see Josephus's history of the wars of the Jews, 5.356-360; 7.1. Not only the city, but the citizens were laid even with the ground (thy children within thee), by the cruel slaughters that were made of them: and there was scarcely one stone left upon another. This was for their crucifying Christ; this was because they knew not the day of their visitation. Let other cities and nations take warning. (Matthew Henry)

Conclusion: The simple question is, "Do we believe the Bible?" We may answer a quick "yes," but our actions and speech may not support that statement.

Are you like the Jews that praised Jesus with their lips and later crucified Him? Do your actions show you to be a true believer, or if we were to ask your neighbors would they say something different?

Long before the triumphal entry of Christ into Jerusalem, Julius Caesar enjoyed a triumphal entry into Rome. He had defeated Gaul, Africa, Egypt, and Asia. In less than two years, he was dead. Christ had a far more modest triumphal entry into Jerusalem, but he is alive forevermore. --Robert C. Shannon, *1000 Windows*, (Cincinnati, Ohio: Standard Publishing Company, 1997).