



CAPITOL COMMISSION™

CHRIST'S TRIUMPHANT ENTRY INTO JERUSALEM! - MATTHEW 21:1-11

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It's Easter! So let's pause for to look at one day in the life of Christ that began the end of His three years of ministry. This will be Christ's last major public appearance before His crucifixion as He rides triumphantly into Jerusalem; praised, lauded as King and welcomed with such pomp and circumstance! Why was this day we call Palm Sunday so significant and what does this tell us about Jesus Christ our Passover Lamb Who rode into Jerusalem on a donkey?

I. CHRIST'S TRIUMPHANT ENTRY! - MATTHEW 21:1-11

(1) "And when they had approached Jerusalem and had come to Bethphage, to the Mount of Olives, then Jesus sent two disciples, (2) saying to them, "Go into the village opposite you, and immediately you will find a donkey tied there and a colt with her; untie them, and bring them to Me. (3) And if anyone says something to you, you shall say, 'The Lord has need of them,' and immediately he will send them." (4) Now this took place that what was spoken through the prophet might be fulfilled, saying, (5) "Say to the daughter of Zion, 'Behold your King is coming to you, gentle, and mounted on a donkey, even on a colt, the foal of a beast of burden.'" (6) And the disciples went and did just as Jesus directed them, (7) and brought the donkey and the colt, and laid on them their garments, on which He sat. (8) And most of the multitude spread their garments in the road, and others were cutting branches from the trees, and spreading them in the road. (9) And the multitudes going before Him, and those who followed after were crying out, saying, "Hosanna to the Son of David; Blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord; Hosanna in the highest!" (10) And when He had entered Jerusalem, all the city was stirred, saying, "Who is this?" (11) And the multitudes were saying, "This is the prophet Jesus, from Nazareth in Galilee."

Matthew 21:1-11

Jesus had just come from the city of Jericho where he had healed two blind men pleading with Jesus for sight amidst a crowd trying to keep them quiet. But Jesus had compassion on them in spite of others. As Jesus continued on, these multitudes following Him swelled as He pressed on to Jerusalem for what would be the culmination of His ministry at the cross; by His death, burial and triumphant resurrection. This crowd accompanied Jesus to Jerusalem, ascending 3500 feet of elevation over 15 miles and taking six to eight hours. Of course most of the crowd were in great anticipation of what they assumed would be Christ's power displayed in conquering their Roman oppressors and establishing a new kingdom as promised in the Old Testament. But actually Christ was walking to His death. He would offer His life as a ransom and redeeming, reconciling sacrifice; bearing the punishment for the sins of the world. He came to die and then rise from the dead, not only

conquering sin, but the grave as well, for all who would believe in Him as Savior and Lord. (John 11:25) ¹

A. JESUS APPROACHES JERUSALEM- MATTHEW 21:1A

As Jesus approaches Jerusalem, He also approaches the end of His earthly ministry. He was about to reach His final goal. As Hebrews 12:2-3 says, *"fixing our eyes on Jesus, the Author and Perfecter of faith Who for the joy set before Him, endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of God. For consider Him Who endured such hostility by sinners against Himself, so that you will not grow weary and lose heart."* His goal was the cross where He would be sacrificed for our sins and for our salvation! For us Christ endured such hostility by men though He was sinless. Yet, it was His joy to save us! He paid a debt He did not owe, and we owed a debt we could not pay.

Keep in mind, the time in Jerusalem was Passover which was the significant feast for all Jews. There could have been up to 2 million people in Jerusalem for this celebration at that time. It would be at the Temple where the sacrifices would be made as atonement for sin. This was the Feast of Unleavened Bread and the Passover celebrated every year at the Temple in Jerusalem. The people remembered when God passed over the Israelites' homes that were sprinkled with the blood of a spotless lamb on their doorpost when they lived in Egypt in slavery and bondage. This led to their salvation and great exodus from Egypt eventually to the Promised Land.

As a part of the Passover, on the 10th day of Nisan, *on Monday*, the sacrificial lambs were brought into the family households and kept there until sacrificed for that family's sins on the 14th day of Nisan as instructed in Exodus 12:2-6. This was *on Friday, the day Christ was crucified*. And now as Jesus comes into the city, specifically and intentionally, the multitudes (easily a hundred thousand or more) follow with Him to celebrate the Passover in Jerusalem. Little did they realize they were accompanying the Passover Lamb Himself!²

B. A DONKEY WITH A COLT!-MATTHEW 21:1B-7

Here in these verses we find Jesus giving instructions to two disciples to go, untie and bring this donkey and her calf to Him. And by the way, if any asks what you are doing, just tell them that the Lord has need of them. The disciples obeyed and from Mark 11:5-6 and Luke 19:33, we find the owners gave permission immediately just as Jesus said. Wow! Truly that is the omniscience of Christ! Also we learn from Luke and Mark's Gospel that this colt had never been ridden. Here Matthew tells us that this fulfilled the prophecy in Zechariah 9:9. Indeed it does exactly. That prophecy written more than 500

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CHRIST'S TRIUMPHANT ENTRY INTO JERUSALEM! MATTHEW 21:1-11

years prior, was now being fulfilled in Christ Jesus as He rode this colt that had never been ridden!

Nothing could have been more appropriate than for Jesus to ride a lowly beast of burdens, as the prophet Zechariah says, *"the foal of a beast of burdens."* For it would be Christ Who would bear the burden of the world's sins upon the cross in four days.³

Another point to remember about our Lord's triumphant entry riding on a donkey is this. In ancient times, when a king was coming into a city, if he came to make peace, he would ride on a donkey. The first time Jesus Christ the King came, He came to make peace! He came for salvation, making peace between God and man through the cross by paying for our sin. Jesus Christ came the first time to make peace. Romans 5:1 says, *"Therefore having been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ."*

We must understand that sin is universal and separates us from God who is holy. We have all sinned. (Romans 3:23) And the penalty for our sin is death. (Romans 6:23) Sin is also incurable. There is nothing we can do to remove or pay for our sin. Isaiah 1:4-6 speaks of the total sickness of sin from the sole of the foot to the head. There is nothing we can do. Jeremiah 13:23 asks if a leopard can change his spots. Of course not and there is nothing we can do to remove our sin. Sin brings the worst in life. It is eternally fatal for all of us. We are lost. But the good news was spoken by the angel at Jesus' birth, *"And she will bear a Son, and you shall call His name Jesus, for it is He Who will save His people from their sins."* (Matthew 1:21) There is no other way. If you don't know Christ, will you come to Him Who came to save you? Acknowledge your sin, repent, believe in Jesus Christ and embrace the One and only Savior of the world. If you don't know Christ, you should do that now!

In ancient times if a king came to a city to make war, he would come on a white horse. Scripture teaches that Christ will come again and He will be riding a white horse! His first coming was for salvation but the second coming will be for judgment. Revelation 19:11-21 reveals that Christ will return, *"And I saw heaven opened; and behold, a white horse and He who sat upon it is called Faithful and True; and in righteousness He judges and wages war."* Indeed Christ will return again and display His sovereignty as the *"King of Kings and Lord of Lords."* (Revelation 19:16) In that day Christ will come to judge.

C. GARMENTS, BRANCHES AND PRAISE- MATTHEW 21:8-9

An ancient custom was for citizens to throw garments on the road for their king to ride over as a symbol of respect and submission to his authority. 2 Kings 9:13 gives reference to that. Here this is exactly what they do for Jesus. They cut palm branches and placed them on the road, symbolic of salvation and joy. This sea of humanity, was so

expectant that Jesus would bring deliverance from their oppression. And by their actions, they fulfilled prophecy given years ago.⁴

"Hosanna" Hebrew means to save now, an exclamatory plea.

This whole multitude was *"crying out"* for Jesus to save them now! Christ came to save their souls, yet they thought He was coming to save them from the Romans. They did not understand the eternal tyranny of their souls. They celebrated the Passover, remembering the miraculous salvation of Israel as a nation from bondage in Egypt. Now, Jesus was about to do an even greater work providing for the ultimate and final deliverance of His people from the tyranny of sin. Sadly, the multitude didn't really understand why Christ came. They didn't understand the significance of His deliverance. They wanted Christ on their own terms and they would soon reject Him. As John MacArthur writes, *"The words of the multitude were right, but their hearts were not. In any case, He had not come at that time to be crowned but to be crucified."*⁵

One day in the future, as Paul proclaimed in Philippians 2:10-11, *"every knee will bow, of those who are in heaven, and on the earth, and... every tongue will confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father."*

D. JUST A PROPHET? - MATTHEW 21:10-11

Jesus' triumphant entry into Jerusalem ends with a sad note from these verses in Matthew. The crowd celebrated Christ as Savior in words then merely said He was a great prophet. They followed Jesus for three years. They saw the miracles He performed, they were excited about the power He possessed and possible deliverance He could bring from the bondage of the Romans. But in the end, most of them rejected Jesus Christ when He was lifted up on the cross. They didn't understand and rejected the salvation He provided, yet so needed. MacArthur writes, *"They would have accepted Jesus as an earthly king, but they would not have Him as their heavenly King."*⁶

And what about you? Do you see Jesus as a great person? Or will you acknowledge Him as the only Savior, Lord and true King. Will you submit your life to Him? Don't wait.

¹MacArthur, John, *MacArthur Commentary on Luke 18-24*. Moody Press: Chicago, 2014. Pg.90.

²MacArthur, John, *MacArthur Commentary on Matthew*. Moody Press: Chicago, 1998. Pg.256.

³MacArthur, John, *MacArthur Commentary on Matthew*. Moody Press: Chicago, 1998. Pg.259.

⁴MacArthur, John, *MacArthur Commentary on Matthew*. Moody Press: Chicago, 1998. Pg.260.

⁵MacArthur, John, *MacArthur Commentary on Matthew*. Moody Press: Chicago, 1998. Pg.262.

⁶MacArthur, John, *MacArthur Commentary on Matthew*. Moody Press: Chicago, 1998. Pg.264.