

People Rejoice As Jesus Enters Jerusalem

During Christ's last week leading to the cross on Calvary, 48 events are recorded in Scripture. Of those 48, the first event to occur was Christ's triumphant entry into Jerusalem, the holy city. There were millions of people gathered there from around the world and from all walks of life: Jews, Greeks and Romans.

Passover was only a few days away and there were many seeking to kill Jesus, but He came anyway. As He said in John 10:17 (RSV), ***“For this reason the Father loves Me, because I lay down My life, that I may take it again.”*** The triumphant entry of Jesus into Jerusalem only fueled the fire of hatred against Him by the authorities who wanted to keep and maintain their power base.

The incident we are about to read occurred on the Sunday of the last week in the life of Jesus Christ prior to His crucifixion that Friday. This was no ordinary day despite the coming of the Passover week, for Jesus was to announce the ultimate challenge to the powers that be. The Son of Man was prepared to proclaim that He was the true Messiah, the King coming to conquer . . . yet a King that would not conquer as was expected, for His was a spiritual Kingdom. As Jesus would later tell Pilate as He stood before him during His mock trial in John 18:36 (RSV), ***“My Kingship is not of this world; if My Kingship were of this world, My servants would fight, that I might not be handed over to the Jews; but My Kingship is not from the world.”***

This is obviously a very important event in the life of Christ for it is recorded in all four of the Gospels. But if the reader is not careful he will miss the great significance and lessons being brought forth in its message. The story of Jesus' triumphant entry into Jerusalem is brimming with treasure to be gleaned from its study. One of the first things that strikes the reader is that we have evidence of the supernatural powers of Jesus put on display. Jesus, as King, sends two emissaries into Bethpage ahead of Him to retrieve the animals, a donkey and its colt, that He would ride as He entered into His city. This is not something that had been planned in advance, for when the owners see these emissaries untying the animals, Jesus instructs them to inform these men, ***“The Lord has need of them.”*** The owners were obviously disciples of the Lord Himself, for when they hear the phrase ***“the Lord,”*** they unquestioningly allow the disciples to take the animals with them.

We also see how Jesus has supernatural power over the animals themselves, for Mark 11:2 tells us that the animal He chooses to ride, the colt, has never been ridden by a man before. It is not without significance that the colt made no resistance to having to carry the Lord on its back, proving once again that Jesus is Divine, having acknowledged power over nature itself, just as God did when He opened the mouth of the donkey to speak in Numbers 22:28 and when He sent the whale to swallow up Jonah in the deep.

Let us now take a few moments to read and ponder the story of Jesus' triumphant entry into Jerusalem as recorded in Mark 11:1-11 (RSV):

1. And when they drew near to Jerusalem, to Bethphage and Bethany, at the Mount of Olives, He sent two of His disciples, 2. and said to them, "Go into the village opposite you, and immediately as you enter it you will find a colt tied, on which no one has ever sat; untie it and bring it. 3. If anyone says to you, 'Why are you doing this?' say, 'The Lord has need of it and will send it back here immediately.'" 4. And they went away, and found a colt tied at the door out in the open street; and they untied it.

5. And those who stood there said to them, "What are you doing, untying the colt?" 6. And they told them what Jesus had said; and they let them go. 7. And they brought the colt to Jesus, and threw their garments on it; and He sat upon it. 8. And many spread their garments on the road, and others spread leafy branches which they had cut from the fields. 9. And those who went before and those who followed cried out, "Hosanna! Blessed is He Who comes in the name of the Lord! 10. Blessed is the Kingdom of our father David that is coming! Hosanna in the highest!" 11. And He entered Jerusalem, and went into the Temple; and when He had looked round at everything, as it was already late, He went out to Bethany with the twelve.

Jesus did not come as the political figure they were anticipating that would relieve them from the Roman oppression the people were under. He came in all humility, being born of a virgin and lying in a manger, a feed bin for animals, in a stable of an inn. And as He was coming into His city, He came riding on the back of a colt. This King's transportation speaks volumes as to the type of King He was.

In looking at Jesus' triumphant entry into Jerusalem, we can learn specifics about God that are very relevant to us in our day as well. One of these is that God fulfills everything that His word declares, even down to the tiniest minutia. As the mobs filled the famous tourist trap of the city of Jerusalem there was a prophecy in the horizon ready to be fulfilled.

"Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion; shout, O daughter of Jerusalem: behold, your King comes unto you: He is just, and having salvation; lowly, and riding upon an ass, and upon a colt the foal of an ass." (Zechariah 9:9 [RSV])

God's word is truth. Jesus Christ is truth, and no one comes to the Father except through Him (John 14:6). Everything that is in God's word will be fulfilled. You can count on it. If God says it, it will come to pass. In this scene we see Jesus fulfilling God's word even down to the minutest of details. He rides the donkey into Jerusalem because God's word declared that He would do so. In doing so,

Jesus declares what kind of King He is. He will be one that brings grace and peace to a lost and dying world.

We should all lean upon God's word. Everything around you is subject to change and will change at some point. However, this is not so with God's Word, for it is eternal and it will never change. Everything around you will fail you, but God's word will never fail you. Be a person of the word. Read it. Study it. Memorize it. Believe it. Live it. As you do, you will come to be blessed greatly!

So other than the fulfillment of prophecy, just what was so important about Jesus coming into Jerusalem on the back of a colt? Why not any other animal? In the Old Testament days a colt was considered a noble animal. It was used for service and to carry the burdens of men, but even more significantly and importantly, it was used to carry Kings. When they entered a city in peace, they rode on the back of a colt to symbolize their peaceful intentions. When a King entered a city as a conqueror, he rode in on the back of a stallion. So by choosing to enter His city on the back of a colt, Jesus was proclaiming to the people that their King had arrived. Yes, their King had arrived, the Promised Messiah was within their midst, but He was to be a King of peace. Jerusalem, the ancient city whose very name itself meant "city of peace," was to have a reigning and ruling King Who would bring peace to the holy city. **1. For this Melchizedek, King of Salem, priest of the Most High God, met Abraham returning from the slaughter of the Kings and blessed him; 2. and to him Abraham apportioned a tenth part of everything. He is first, by translation of his name, King of righteousness, and then he is also King of Salem, that is, King of peace.** (Hebrews 7:1-2 [RSV]) Salem of old in which Melchizedek was both High Priest and King during the time of Abraham was none other than Jerusalem during the time of Christ, and once again it was going to have both a King and a High Priest at the same time and in the same Person, none other than Jesus Christ.

There is also very likely another reason why Jesus had chosen to enter His city riding on the back of a colt. As has been stated, the colt was a sign of royalty during Old Testament times. Through the ensuing years as the throne in Israel had sat empty, the scribes, priests and Pharisees had slowly began to take upon themselves honors that had belonged to the King, and by the time of Jesus these individuals were seen to be carried from place to place riding on the back of colts. By riding on the back of a colt Himself, Jesus was issuing a challenge to these men and their perceived authority. Jesus was proclaiming that their time was over, and the old system of Temple sacrifices would soon come to an end, replaced by the New Covenant instituted by the blood of Christ. As the Hebrews writer puts it in chapter 8 of his epistle (RSV),

1. Now the point in what we are saying is this: we have such a High Priest, One Who is seated at the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in Heaven, 2. a Minister in the sanctuary and the true Tent which is set up not by man

but by the Lord. 3. For every High Priest is appointed to offer gifts and sacrifices; hence it is necessary for this priest also to have something to offer. 4. Now if he were on Earth, he would not be a priest at all, since there are priests who offer gifts according to the Law. 5. They serve a copy and shadow of the Heavenly sanctuary; for when Moses was about to erect the tent, he was instructed by God, saying, "See that you make everything according to the pattern which was shown you on the mountain." 6. But as it is, Christ has obtained a ministry which is as much more excellent than the old as the covenant He mediates is better, since it is enacted on better promises. 7. For if that first covenant had been faultless, there would have been no occasion for a second. 8. For He finds fault with them when He says: "The days will come," says the Lord, "when I will establish a New Covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah; 9. not like the covenant that I made with their fathers on the day when I took them by the hand to lead them out of the land of Egypt; for they did not continue in My covenant, and so I paid no heed to them," says the Lord.

10. "This is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days," says the Lord: "I will put My laws into their minds, and write them on their hearts, and I will be their God, and they shall be My people. 11. And they shall not teach everyone his fellow or everyone his brother, saying, 'Know the Lord,' for all shall know Me, from the least of them to the greatest. 12. For I will be merciful toward their iniquities, and I will remember their sins no more."

13. In speaking of a New Covenant He treats the first as obsolete. And what is becoming obsolete and growing old is ready to vanish away.

Indeed, the Old Covenant with its sacrificial system surely was ready to vanish away, for shortly after this epistle was written Jerusalem and its Temple were destroyed in AD 70 at the hands of the Roman Empire. This was just as Jesus had said would come to pass when He told His disciples later on that very same week in reference to the Temple complex in Matthew 24:2; 15-22 (RSV), **2. "You see all these, do you not? Truly, I say to you, there will not be left here one stone upon another, that will not be thrown down. 15. So when you see the desolating sacrilege spoken of by the prophet Daniel, standing in the holy place (let the reader understand), 16. then let those who are in Judea flee to the mountains; 17. let him who is on the housetop not go down to take what is in his house; 18. and let him who is in the field not turn back to take his mantle.**

19. "And alas for those who are with child and for those who give suck in those days! 20. Pray that your flight may not be in winter or on a Sabbath. 21. For then there will be great tribulation, such as has not been from the beginning of the world until now, no, and never will be. 22. And if those

days had not been shortened, no human being would be saved; but for the sake of the elect those days will be shortened."

The colt also represented sacredness, according to the laws of purification given by Moses. The animal had to be perfect and unused, never having a yoke upon his neck. Jesus was making sure everything He did was representing Him as a King, and He did so in the form of a challenge. He also made sure that He complied fully in every way with the Law of Moses, the Law He said He came to fulfill, and not to destroy (Matthew 5:17). The Lord needed the colt, just as the Lord needs us. Some of us have been tied up in one fashion or another, and we have never been loosed to do the work of the Lord. But now Jesus is saying, "Loosen that colt or loosen our ministry because God needs you!" It is crucial for us to understand that God needs our worship and He needs our service to help His Kingdom to grow and to prosper.

What is your meaning in life? This question was asked and answered thousands of years ago by Solomon, who said in Ecclesiastes 12:13, ***"The end of the matter; all has been heard. Fear God, and keep His commandments; for this is the whole duty of man."*** This is as it has always been, and always will be. Our purpose for being here and living this life is to be used in the ministry of the Lord. God needs you! He needs all of us!

Another lesson we can learn from the triumphant entry of Jesus that applies to us today is that Jesus will be praised despite man's best efforts to stifle it. As Jesus entered in Jerusalem on the back of a colt that had never been ridden before, He was now strongly proclaiming to be a King. Even more so, He was proclaiming to be the true Messiah, the Savior of His people and the Redeemer of the whole world. Before this time Christ would not accept praise, and neither would He wish for it to be proclaimed that He was the King. But now the time was right, as we can learn from Luke 19:37-40 (RSV).

37. As He was now drawing near, at the descent of the Mount of Olives, the whole multitude of the disciples began to rejoice and praise God with a loud voice for all the mighty works that they had seen, 38. saying, "Blessed is the King Who comes in the name of the Lord! Peace in Heaven and glory in the highest!"

39. And some of the Pharisees in the multitude said to Him, "Teacher, rebuke Your disciples."

40. He answered, "I tell you, if these were silent, the very stones would cry out."

The Pharisees were extremely mad at what was taking place, for they saw their whole world crumbling down among them. They were even angry with each other at their impotence in having no power to stop Jesus and the growing

number of people following after Him. The reputation of Jesus had already spread. You see, the day before He rode that colt into Jerusalem, Jesus Christ had produced the mightiest miracle He had ever performed. Jesus raised His good friend, Lazarus, from the dead. And then as He was coming into town, Jesus healed two more men, blind men, and they were now able to see. The masses of people had heard about these miracles, and everyone wanted to see if He could pull off yet another trick like that. The crowd wanted to see more miracles. They wanted to see another deaf person hear. They wanted to see a blind man be given sight. They wanted to see the skin of a leper made pure. They wanted to see the Healer in action, this mighty miracle worker. And if they saw a miracle, let me tell you, if they saw a man actually raised from the dead, then they would believe. If they actually saw a blind man be given sight, they would then be true believers. If the Houdini of the Holy Land could pull another trick out of His bag, then they would believe. With them it was always just one more miracle, Lord, one more miracle!

17. The crowd that had been with Him when He called Lazarus out of the tomb and raised him from the dead bore witness. 18. The reason why the crowd went to meet Him was that they heard He had done this sign. 19. The Pharisees then said to one another, "You see that you can do nothing; look, the world has gone after Him." (John 12:17-19 [RSV])

The Pharisees and the religious leaders were jealous. Their reign or authority would come to an abrupt end if this was the true Messiah, and when He came with the wonders and miracles that only the true Messiah could perform they knew their time was finished. They would be just like the common people they disdained with no special privileges.

As Jesus entered Jerusalem that day, all around Him from every side you heard different proclamations shouted out. Some were saying, "**Hosanna to the Son of David: Blessed is He that comes in the name of the Lord; Hosanna in the highest**" and, "**Blessed be the Kingdom of our father David, that comes in the name of the Lord: Hosanna in the highest**" and, "**Blessed be the King that comes in the name of the Lord: peace in Heaven, and glory in the highest.**" The multitudes received Him as King and they paid homage and reverence to the coming King. In the eyes of the screaming worshipers they thought their King was coming to start to conquer the Roman Empire.

Little did they catch the significance of Jesus not coming on a white stallion but on a humble colt. He came to bring peace, not to destroy the government. His Kingdom was not of this world, and His purpose was not to conquer men through fear, but to save men as He pleads with them to come to Him of their own free will. The actions of this crowd in just a few short days would change, and instead of praising, lauding and magnifying His name and shouting "**Hosanna in the highest,**" they later on proclaimed that He should be crucified.

Jesus is worthy of all praise, honor and glory! His creation cries out to Him in praise. As David had written some 1000 years earlier in Psalm 19:1 (RSV), **“The heavens are telling the glory of God; and the firmament proclaims His handiwork.”** Angels, humans and nature itself exalt Him! God queried Job in Job 38:4-7 (RSV), asking, **4. “Where were you when I laid the foundation of the Earth? Tell Me, if you have understanding. 5. Who determined its measurements – surely you know! Or Who stretched the line upon it? 6. On what were its bases sunk, or Who laid its cornerstone, 7. when the morning stars sang together, and all the sons of God shouted for joy?”** Jesus, God with us, was there at the creation (John 1:1-3 [RSV]). **1. In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. 2. He was in the beginning with God; 3. all things were made through Him, and without Him was not anything made that was made.** Absolutely nothing will ever be able to muffle praise to Jesus for He is worthy (Revelation 4:9-11 [RSV])! **9. And whenever the living creatures give glory and honor and thanks to Him Who is seated on the throne, Who lives forever and ever, 10. the twenty-four elders fall down before Him Who is seated on the throne and worship Him Who lives forever and ever; they cast their crowns before the throne, singing, 11. “Worthy are You, our Lord and God, to receive glory and honor and power, for You created all things, and by Your will they existed and were created.”** Jesus Christ is high and lifted up and worthy of all praise! Hosanna! Keep praise in your heart and on your lips for the Lord your God. Praise Him in the morning! Praise Him at noontime! Praise Him in the evening! Praise Him continually for He is worthy. He is our Passover Lamb that saves us from death, Hell and the grave!

Just as in the days of Jesus Christ, today people still want power and authority. Seldom do you find people that are humble and full of peace. The triumphant entry of Jesus was just the very beginning of His last ministry in Jerusalem. Let us learn from this day and remember that today, Jesus our true Messiah entered Jerusalem to save all men. Why? **“For God so loved the world that He gave His only Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have eternal life.”** (John 3:16 [RSV])

Although this very same crowd that sang **“Hosanna to the Son of David!”** in just a few short days will turn on the Lord and cry out, **“Crucify Him! Crucify Him!”** (Mark 15:13), they nevertheless at this point acknowledge Him as the true King of Israel. May we never forget to acknowledge the Lord as our Savior and King! At one point everyone will proclaim Jesus as Lord, but for most, it will be too late. Paul writes in Philippians 2:10-11 (RSV), saying, **10. that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in Heaven and on Earth and under the Earth, 11. and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.** For most, however, this will be a time of retribution, but for those of us in Christ it will be a time of celebration: **16. For the Lord Himself will descend from Heaven with a cry of command, with the archangel's call, and with the sound of the trumpet of God. And the dead in Christ will rise**

first; 17. then we who are alive, who are left, shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air; and so we shall always be with the Lord. 18. Therefore comfort one another with these words.

There is one other lesson we can learn from Jesus entering Jerusalem that still applies to this day, and it occurred right before He made His way into the holy city. The lesson is that Jesus' heart cries out to the people. Luke 19:41-44 tells us, ***41. And when He drew near and saw the city He wept over it, 42. saying, "Would that even today you knew the things that make for peace! But now they are hid from your eyes. 43. For the days shall come upon you, when your enemies will cast up a bank about you and surround you, and hem you in on every side, 44. and dash you to the ground, you and your children within you, and they will not leave one stone upon another in you; because you did not know the time of your visitation."***

This is a glorious and sad picture. Jesus the Passover Lamb is heading to an old rugged cross weeping over the city that is ready to murder Him. He was not weeping because of the loss and destruction of the buildings, organizations or the establishments. Jesus was not weeping due to the mistreatment He has received from the religious establishment of His day. Jesus was weeping for the people. His heart was crying out for the people. All that moves Jesus is people. He chose to be the Passover Lamb so that people can be saved from death, Hell and the grave!

Jesus has a heart that breaks for you. He loves you so much that He gave His life for you as the Passover Lamb. As you apply His blood to the doorposts of your heart, He saves you from this present world and He saves you from the wrath of God that is to come. He takes you out of the bondage of Egypt and takes you into the liberty of His Promised Land! He takes you out of the bondage of sin and into the freedom of His Kingdom!

Live your life for Jesus! Stay full of His word! Shout praises to His name! He is worthy of all praise, honor and glory! ***"Blessed is the King Who comes in the name of the Lord!"*** May all praise be given to Jesus! Hosanna!

The Bible tells us that one day every knee will bow and confess that Jesus Christ is King of Kings and Lord of Lords (Philippians 2:9-11). The question is, "Why wait until then?" Why not give your heart and life to Jesus and receive the forgiveness that He offers by having your sins washed away in that watery grave of baptism (Romans 6:3-4)? Why not today?

Jesus wants to be the ruler and Lord of your life. He does not desire or want to be your "King for a Day," He wants to be your "Forever King" beginning now!