

A Leader with Humility

General Topic: Liberating Gospels

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Lesson Text: Matthew 21:1-11

Background Scripture: Matthew 21

Mat 21:1-11 And when they drew nigh unto Jerusalem, and were come to Bethphage, unto the mount of Olives, then sent Jesus two disciples, (2) Saying unto them, Go into the village over against you, and straightway ye shall find an ass tied, and a colt with her: loose them, and bring them unto me. (3) And if any man say ought unto you, ye shall say, The Lord hath need of them; and straightway he will send them. (4) All this was done, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophet, saying, (5) Tell ye the daughter of Sion, Behold, thy King cometh unto thee, meek, and sitting upon an ass, and a colt the foal of an ass. (6) And the disciples went, and did as Jesus commanded them, (7) And brought the ass, and the colt, and put on them their clothes, and they set him thereon. (8) And a very great multitude spread their garments in the way; others cut down branches from the trees, and strawed them in the way. (9) 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. (10) And when he was come into Jerusalem, all the city was moved, saying, Who is this? (11) And the multitude said, This is Jesus the prophet of Nazareth of Galilee.

Questions to Ponder:

1. Explain the importance of the Triumphal Entry as it relates to Old Testament prophecy.
2. How have you resolved periods of doubt when you questioned Jesus' authority and power in your own life?

Teaching Tools:

Word puzzles may be developed from the following site: www.puzzlemaker.com. Also, www.dtlk.com has several visual aids that may be beneficial, as well as www.kidssundayschool.com which provide other helps for teaching.

Bible Journaling may be an interesting way to involve older teens in self-expression of the lessons they are

taught. Visit www.lifeway.com/Articles/how-to-start-bible-journaling-in-six-easy-steps to find ways to use this valuable tool to learn and reinforce Scripture.

Movie Clips are a wonderful teaching tool to further explain or create topics of discussion for a variety of age groups; www.wingclips.com provides clips divided by movie title, category, scripture, or theme. Clips may be accessed on any electronic device.

The Lesson:

Matthew, the publican who became a follower of Christ is the writer of this week's text which comes from his self-named Gospel. His goal was to provide infallible proof of Jesus Christ as the long awaiting Messiah. His audience is the Jewish nation who did not realize their desperate need for the Savior. Matthew's emblem for Christ is the man, expressing His kingly and human characteristics.

Matthew's Gospel is the Gospel of the past; the Gospel which sees in Christianity a fulfillment of Judaism; the Gospel of discourses; the didactic Gospel; and ultimately, the Gospel which represents Christ as the Messiah of the Jews-Peloubet's Bible Dictionary.

The setting of the Triumphal Entry is between Bethany and Bethphage @ the base of Mount Olivet, the hill (mount) before Jerusalem (1 Kings 11:7). It is one of the few events of Christ ministry that can be found in all four Gospels:

1. Matthew 21:1-12, 14-17;
2. Mark 11:1-11;
3. Luke 19:29-44;
4. John 12:12-19

If you read each of these texts you will gather a clear understanding of the activities surrounding Jesus' entry into Jerusalem at this point.

Jesus was sure to acknowledge and observe all Jewish holidays and celebrations which brought Him into Jerusalem several times, particularly, during His public ministry, which lasted for 3 years. Being God, He displayed perfect timing as His entrance into the city as King occurred on the very day that the sixty-ninth week of Daniel's prophecy ended (Daniel 9:25)-*The Coming Prince*; Sir Robert Anderson.

Christ meticulously planned His entrance and was sure to include every detail that would tie it to the prophecy of Zechariah that occurred almost 500 years before His

1st advent. The prophet Zechariah prophesied during a time when the Israelites were in deep despair and poverty. A small group returned home to rebuild the Temple which was completed in four years after Haggai inspired them to move forward. The Temple was reconstructed among enemies who did everything they could to discourage the work. Additionally, the Israelites felt that God had forsaken them, leaving them to fend for themselves after the Babylonian Captivity. Nothing was further from the truth; God actively pursues us even when we are in our mess. He wants us to fully trust and rely on Him for everything; His desire is to supply all of our needs; He is our Shepherd.

God was sure to select the perfect time for His Son to receive the acknowledgement that belonged solely to Him. Jesus recreated the return of King David to Jerusalem in peace and humility (2 Samuel 19:20)-The Expository Notes of Dr. Constable. The entry was conducted during the Passover when the streets of Jerusalem swelled with observers. Every Jewish male 20 and older, living within 25 miles of the city was required, by law, to participate in the celebration. Additionally, there were many Jews in the diaspora who journeyed home to participate in the Passover celebration, as well. Jerusalem, which typically housed approximately 200,000 to 250,000, was occupied by no less than 3 million people, at this time. The houses, rooms, stables, and streets were full to the brim. The multitude of those present was extremely important as a great number would be permitted to witness Jesus' entrance. If you want to make a great impact, it must be done when a number of people may, collectively, see the same thing.

Jesus sent two of the disciples into the city to find an ass with a colt (her young offspring) tied to her. They were commanded to loose (unbind) the beasts and bring them to Him. He also told them should anyone make inquiry as to their intentions, simply state "The Lord has need of them" and immediately (straightway) they would be permitted to remove the animals from their location. The phrase, the Lord..., was an indication they were sent by Christ.

Matthew makes a point to write that all this was done to fulfill the prophecy spoken by the prophet (vs. 5) that identified the "King coming unto the people, meek, and sitting upon as ass, and a colt the foal of an ass. (Also see Zechariah (9:9))" There would be no speculation about the identity of the person riding into Jerusalem fitting this description. The beasts upon which Christ sat indicated His desire to appear in the peaceful, humble manner of His personality. In oriental areas, the donkey (ass) was highly valued. The horse was considered a beast of war; however, the ass (donkey) was considered

the beast of peace; Abraham, along with several wealthy biblical characters owned several donkeys; it was not an animal primarily found among the impoverished, as we are apt to find in our culture. It was fitting that the Prince of Peace be ushered into the city on an animal that represented the peacefulness of His person.

It is believed that Christ entered the city thru the sheep gate, used primarily by those bringing animals for sacrifice. It was closely located to the Temple. Prior to the Cross, animal sacrifices were a foreshadowing of the debt Christ would pay; it follows that the Sacrificial Lamb would enter the city thru the same area.

The disciples and other followers placed their garments upon the backs of the beasts; they had never worn a saddle or been used in labor, which was a requirement for them to be used for this sacred purpose (Numbers 19:2, Deuteronomy 21:3, 1 Samuel 6:7). Garments representing the outer clothing of their tunics, were placed on the animals; Christ would ride both. This is the only occasion in Scripture that we see Him riding. Christ usually journeyed by foot to His various destinations.

Again, attention to detail was important, for the Jews, based on their prior training, would surely recognize what was taking place. Babylonian captivity ended the reign of kings for the Israelites. The next incidence of any king would be their true King and Keeper of Salvation riding into Sion (Isaiah 62:11; Zechariah 9:9).

The multitude had palm branches in their possession signifying triumph and victory. They threw them in the path as Christ rode in. This ritualistic behavior was often used to welcome the king. Poor people used palm branches while the wealthy threw roses.

As He rode into the city, the multitude following Him shouted "Hosanna to the Son of David: Blessed is He that cometh in the name of the Lord; Hosanna in the highest." Hosanna means *save us now!* The political climate at the time was one of much unrest. The Roman government overtaxed the citizenry and treated them like strangers in their own land. It was a very difficult time for the Jews and the milieu was ripe for Christ to appear as their Deliver; hence, their cries for salvation.

Unfortunately, they failed to recognize Christ as their Messiah. His plan was for eternity and theirs was for the moment. They wanted Him to prevail against the Romans; He had a much higher calling. He would prevail over their greatest enemy. They did not realize the seriousness of their condition. Sin was the diagnosis that would keep them from reconciliation with God.

The title “Son of David” was His messianic title. The phrase “blessed is He that cometh in the name of the Lord” is taken from Psalm 118:25-26-the Messianic Psalm. The people were calling upon heaven to join them in glorifying and ratifying (agree with) their shouts of salvation.

Matthew notes that the city was moved with curiosity and excitement; they began to ask questions about His identity. His miraculous works were discussed in every synagogue and chance meeting. I’m sure everyone wanted to know the identity of the Man who performed acts of healing and spoke/taught with authority.

The multitude responded that He was Jesus, the Prophet of Nazareth of Galilee. Their response illustrated their lack of understanding in regarding Him as the Messiah even though He provided proof that could not be argued against.

The Triumphal Entry is important for several reasons:

1. It is inarguable proof of Jesus was the Messiah for He fulfilled Old Testament prophecies regarding His presentation in Jerusalem;
2. The people initially recognized Him as such in their statements; however, they failed to understand His purpose. Even His disciples were not cognizant of prophecies being fulfilled before their very eyes. They did not understand that His coronation was of a heavenly nature. He was there to do more than wreak havoc on the Roman government.
3. The parables that Jesus taught after the Triumphal Entry provided important illustrations about Himself and future events-Matthew 21:28-30 and 21:33-40.
4. Timing is everything-Daniel 9:25;

The Israelites refused to accept the King when He was presented. Their cries of deliverance were hollow and insincere which is evidenced by their demand for His crucifixion. As long as He was feeding and healing them from diseases and evil spirits, He was fine; but when He began to challenge their thinking, He was condemned and considered an intruder on their religious piety.

The Triumphal Entry was a time for celebration as the Savior of the World was ushered into Jerusalem in the prophetic manner predicted years before His advent. We can continue to honor this time as Christ revealed Himself to the Jews and the world in His rightful position of authority, glory, and honor. At the end of this lesson, each of us should begin to consider the image we have of Christ and the place He holds in our lives. We must also consider the revelation of prophecies and what they permit us to know and understand about Christ.

Zechariah’s prophecy indicates that the King will come in humility and peace; for this reason, Israel should have rejoiced. They did, for a time, but quickly forgot the significance of the symbols Christ provided upon entering Jerusalem.

Be Salt! Be Light! Be Blessed!