

Text: Matthew 21:1-11

Title: Your King is Here

Truth: Some in Jerusalem recognized Jesus as their coming King. Others were clueless.

Date/Location: July 13, 2022 at FBC

Introduction

For parallel accounts of these events, please see also Mark 11:1-11, Luke 19:28-44, and John 12:12-16.

I. Preparing to Enter the City, v. 1-4, 6-7

- A. Location: Near Jerusalem, Bethphage, and the Mount of Olives. The city of Jerusalem is bordered on the east by the Kidron Valley. Just beyond that valley further east is the Mount of Olives. Jesus would be heading roughly west from the Mount of Olives into the city of Jerusalem. The Mount of Olives at its highest is 2,641 feet above sea level; the temple was at an elevation of about 2,300 feet. The Kidron Valley through its course descends 4,000 feet to an elevation of over 1,400 feet *below* sea level!
- B. Jesus did not merely need “a ride” to traverse the territory we have just mentioned, although that would be helpful. Instead, He needed to fulfill Scripture. So, He sent His disciples into the nearby village (perhaps Bethphage itself) to get a donkey’s colt on which he would ride. He told them to bring both the donkey and the colt. Perhaps Jesus brought along the older donkey (likely the colt’s mother, the *mare*) in order to calm the colt on its first ride.
- C. The disciples did as they were instructed and brought the donkey. According to John 12:16, they did not initially

know that they were fulfilling Scripture by doing this, but they understood later. What a special feeling that would have been—to know that you were directly involved in fulfilling one of the Scriptures of the Old Testament!

D. They covered the colt and put Jesus on it (the text says “on them”). Then He began his journey.

II. The Quotation of v. 5: Zechariah 9:9

A. Verse 5 quotes Zechariah 9:9. The apostle Matthew treats Zechariah 9:9 as recording a prediction of the future, and that makes good contextual sense in Zechariah. The triumphal entry is the fulfillment of the prediction. It is an event in history that precisely matches the earlier prediction of a future event.

B. Zechariah records the prophet speaking this as an encouragement to the people of Israel who were expecting to face great enemies in the end time. They would have an even greater deliverance and should be very happy about this. “Rejoice” and “Shout” are triumphant words.

C. The character of the king to come was marked by one key factor: humility. This characteristic is pictured in his “ride” into the city. He did not ride in on a huge white steed as a regal and conquering hero, but instead came on a donkey, a much more lowly and less majestic creature. He was lowly in character.

There will come a time when Jesus returns on a white horse, probably very imposing in its appearance with the King of kings (Revelation 19:11). But that is not *this* time. In the first coming, Jesus entered with humility,

symbolizing how He would be the humble servant of all by dying for sinners.

- D. Matthew does not quote the entire verse of Zechariah. But notice in the middle of the verse that he says that this coming King is just and possesses salvation. That's the point: He will save Jerusalem from not only her enemies (verse 10), but also her sins.

II. The Response of the Crowds, v. 8-11

- A. What we spoke about above was not lost on the crowds. Somehow, they knew that Jesus made a credible claim to be king. They might not have understood all the prophecies of Scripture and Zechariah 9:9 and all that, but they responded as one would respond in that culture to a King riding into town.
- B. First, there was a great crowd. Just like there should be for royalty.
- C. Second, they spread their clothes on the road. This was a symbol of worship. The king was worthy to “trample upon” your clothes because He was so much more worthy than you. Plus, He did not deserve to ride on a dusty road.
- D. Third, they cut down branches. Clothing could only stretch so far down the road, so they cut down branches as well to “roll out the red carpet” for this king.
- E. Fourth, they verbalized their worship and respect for the king. They used well-known-to-them words from Psalm 118:25-26. They said:
“Blessed is he who comes in the name of the LORD”
(Psalm 118:26).

This phrase is generally true and applicable to anyone at any time who comes in the name of the Lord. It is especially true of Jesus Himself! The Psalmist is *not* predicting this statement will be said to Jesus. It is a statement used by Jews for their worship and that a well-educated Bible student would use naturally when a wonderful event is happening such as the coming of the Lord. We ought to be ready to say it at any time when the Lord raptures the church or when He returns in Revelation 19 to rule the earth.

This statement they bracketed with two “Hosannas”—one to the Son of David, and one “in the highest.” The word *Hosanna* comes from the combination of two Hebrew words: *Hoshiyah Na*, which translates as “Save now please” or “Save now, we pray.” It is an entreaty to the Lord to deliver the people and, from the rest of Psalm 118:25, to give success or prosperity to the people.

They recognized Jesus as the Son of David, just like the blind men in Matthew 20:30-31. Too bad the authorities did not get this. The elites did not want that to be true; the working people and lower classes were *happy* if it were true because it meant that their deliverance was coming. And they were far more well-informed than the leaders.

They needed a bit of tuning up to recognize that Jesus was coming in humility to answer their request—to save them, not from the Romans but from their sins.

F. Finally, verses 10-11 records that the city was stirred up when Jesus got to the city. They had heard about the cries on his way into the city. Many asked there “Who is this?” Even though there was a large crowd of people

who greeted Jesus, there were other large crowds of people. Some were clueless. Others were haters. So those in the city were inquiring as to who it was that they were talking about.

G. The welcoming committee explained that it was Jesus, the prophet from Nazareth of Galilee. At least they acknowledged that Jesus was a prophet. Join that to their descriptors that He is the Son of David, and a blessed one coming in the name of the Lord. They did not fully understand who Jesus was, but they had a very high view of Him.

So should we.

Conclusion

All this took place on “Palm Sunday,” and it could even be as specifically pinpointed as Nisan 9 in A.D. 30. See the prophecy of Daniel 9:24-26 which gives us warrant to speak with such precision. Given this, the people and the leaders should have been expecting him. If only they had known... (Luke 19:42).

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