

Jesus' Triumphant Entry

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[0 : 00] Well, good morning to you all. It's nice to be here with you. Let me just get set up here. Now, I want to read this morning from Mark's account.

As you can see, the triumphal entry. So Mark's account says this. It says, As they approached Jerusalem and came to Bethpage and Bethany at the Mount of Olives, Jesus sent two of his disciples, saying to them, Go ahead to the village ahead of you, and just as you enter it, you will find a colt tied there, which no one has ever ridden.

Untie it and bring it here. If anyone asks you, Why are you doing this? Tell them the Lord needs it and will send it back shortly. They went and found a colt outside in the street, tied at a doorway.

As they untied it, some people standing there asked, What are you doing untying that colt? They answered, As Jesus had told them to, and the people let them go.

When they brought the colt to Jesus and threw their cloaks over it, he sat on it. Many people spread their cloaks on the road, while others spread branches they had cut in the fields.

[1 : 18] Those who went ahead and those who followed shouted, Hosanna, blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord. Blessed is the coming of our father David.

Hosanna in the highest. Jesus entered Jerusalem and went to the temple. He looked around at everything, but since it was already late, he went out to Bethany with the twelve.

We thank God for his word. Amen. And that, I should have said, is from Mark chapter 11, verses 1 to 11. I wonder, do you remember a time when you arrived home into an airport and you were all excited for the people that were going to be there to welcome you or the people, or you were excited to go home?

Maybe you were excited for your own bed. But I remember a time when I was with this church group, a mission group out in West Africa.

And there was about 30 of us or so, and you know that feeling when you're excited to get home, and you know that there's people at the airport that are excited to see you.

[2 : 34] And the seatbelt sign goes off, and you kind of get a bit jitter, you get a bit excited, a bit of anticipation. You go to the baggage reclaim, you wait there for whoever knows how long.

You wonder, will your bag ever come out? And all of the time you're thinking, I just want to get through to the gates. Do you know the shutter doors where you come through?

And you get through the gates, and your eyes are scanning the crowd. You're looking for your loved ones, or who's there to welcome you. My parents and my other family were there at the time.

I think secretly I hoped that the guy, the chauffeur guy with the sign, was going to have my name on it, and I'd get a lift home with them. But no, they were there, and they were all, it was a joyous time.

It was a great time to see them, and we'd been there for six weeks, so it was an exciting time, and they want to make sure you're safe, and you haven't withered away.

[3 : 35] But today, this morning, we're going to be looking at a different arrival, a more important arrival. Today is Palm Sunday, and as you can see on the slide there, Jesus' triumphant entry into Jerusalem.

And this account that I read from Mark, but it's in all other Gospels. It's in all four Gospels, and it speaks of this arrival, of a preparation, and of a purpose.

Now, this wasn't Jesus' first return to Jerusalem. He made it a priority to go to the festivals, and this was Passover, the Passover feast, and it's happening this weekend in the calendar.

It was the biggest, if not the biggest, and Passover was about substitution, and you had to follow certain instructions from God. It was something that the Israelites did before the exodus from Egypt, and I'll come back to this, but the text says in Mark's account in chapter 11, it says, as they approached Jerusalem, Jesus sent on two disciples to go on ahead to find a colt.

So they did. They found a colt. They untied it. They told what they were going to do with it, and it was one that was never, never been ridden, and they laid their cloaks on the colt.

[5 : 12] But why a colt, and why not a horse? After all, it's a triumphant entry. A big procession would deserve an animal that is fit for a big procession.

But in Zechariah chapter 9, verse 9, it says this. It says, Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion. Shout, daughter of Jerusalem. See, your king comes to you, righteous and having salvation, gentle and riding on a donkey, a colt, the foal of a donkey.

So it was prophesied that the king would come to you on a colt, that he would be righteous, that he would be gentle, and that he would be having salvation.

Now, in Zechariah's time, the great leaders would have ridden in procession on big, powerful war horses with decorated chariots behind them.

[6 : 19] They might have had their spoils or their captives with them. Something that you might see on a royal coronation. But there's something significant about a colt.

And there's something different about his arrival. You see, a colt is small. A horse is tall. If he's on a horse, he'd be high and above the crowd.

But on a colt, he is almost at eye level. And Jesus specifically chose a colt, although it was fulfilling prophecy, but he chose a colt also.

But the nature of his arrival is intentional. And it's full of symbolism and meaning. He's preparing for people, he's showing people how his kingship, what sort of rule he wants to establish in Jerusalem beyond.

Just after in Zechariah verse 10, it says, in fact, he wants it to go to the nations. So to go further afield in Jerusalem. And by riding on a colt, what he's really saying is, I have come here to bring peace.

[7 : 36] But the people weren't expecting, they were expecting a different type of Messiah to come. One that would liberate them from Roman rule. They're expecting someone to come and overthrow their rulers with strength and power.

But Jesus had different plans. And I believe what he is saying by this arrival is, I'm the one you need, but I'm not who you think I am.

I'm the one you've been waiting for, but I have come for a different reason. The kingdom I am ushering in is one of peace and sacrifice and servanthood, not of release from oppressive rule. And I think he's saying, see, I'm on a colt. I'm not on a war horse. You see, by arriving on a colt, he's showing the character, his character as a person and his character of his rule that he wishes to establish.

So the disciples put the cloak on the colt for Jesus to sit on. And people spread their cloaks, their coats on the ground, their cloaks.

[8 : 52] If you think of your favorite coat that you have, putting it on the ground. And by doing this, it would have been giving high praise and high honor.

People also spread branches on the ground, as the text says. And these would have been palm leaves. They were preparing the way for Jesus.

And the palm leaf is a national symbol, like ours is the shamrock. So by laying these palm leaves down, what the crowd were really saying was, what they were implying was, is that they thought Jesus was coming as a political savior.

It was a symbol of nationalism, this palm leaf. And they were hoping that he'd come and give them independence.

And they were shouting, Hosanna, Hosanna, which means save now, save now. Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord. And this was a messianic psalm about the Messiah.

[10 : 04] And it's from Psalm chapter 118. And it says, This is the day that the Lord has made. Let us rejoice and be glad in it.

O Lord, save us. O Lord, grant us success. Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord. And they were giving this high honor and high praise to Jesus.

And the crowd was ecstatic and jubilant. And in Luke's account, the Pharisees were standing beside and they asked Jesus to rebuke these people.

But Jesus said an amazing thing. He said, If they keep quiet, the stones will cry out. And you just get that sense of the whole of creation seems to know what's going on here.

This king who's coming into this city. And you know, Jesus taught in parables. He explained things only to a few people.

[11 : 08] He performed many miracles. But after that, he told people not to tell anyone. He kept a lot of his things in his inner circle. But this was different.

There was something different about this event. There was a purpose behind it. There was a purpose about it. Jesus really wanted people to know he was coming.

And as I mentioned, it was Passover. And Passover is found in Exodus chapter 12. And God instructs Moses and Aaron before he would deliver them out of Egypt that they would have to do something first.

Moses was to tell the Israelites to take a one-year-old male lamb without defect, unblemished, slaughter it, and mark the doorposts and above the door of your home with the blood of that lamb. And they were told to do this from generations to generations. And it says in Exodus 12, and it says, when your children ask you, what does this ceremony mean to you?

[12 : 21] Tell them, it is the Passover sacrifice to the Lord who passed over the houses of the Israelites in Egypt and spared our homes when he struck down the Egyptians.

And the Israelites obeyed and the ones that had painted the doorposts and above their door weren't struck down. The lamb died instead of them.

So for this feast, people would have used, they would have slaughtered a lamb and it would have usually been one lamb per family. And they enjoyed this meal together and the whole city would have taken part in this.

And you know, there must have been a lot of lambs. Jerusalem at the time was a big place. It was a big city. And they would have used, had this sacrificial act, it would have happened in temple worship whereby the people would have offered an unblemished lamb as a sacrifice to cover their sin.

And in John's Gospel, chapter 1, John says, Jesus, he sees Jesus coming and he says, look, the lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world.

[13 : 46] It's Jesus who offers his life to cover our payment for you and for me, for our sin. It's Jesus who is the lamb of God.

So here we have this amazing scene, multitudes and multitudes of lambs. And we have the lamb of God coming up the center.

Multitudes of lambs for the sacrifice, but the lamb of God to end all sacrifices. what an amazing scene to witness.

This is the purpose of his arrival. And today the crowd is celebrating, but in a week or under a week, they will be calling for Jesus' death.

We go from Palm Sunday to the cross and then to the resurrection. In a week's time, we'll celebrate his death and his resurrection. He will take up his cross and he will walk that hill to Calvary.

[14 : 55] He will be obedient to death and even to death on a cross for you and for me. And on the third day, he'll rise again so we can have eternal life.

And he is saying and he's saying to them there and he's saying to us now, I've come to save. Hosanna, I have come to save. And he offers this salvation to you and to me for those who repent and say sorry and follow him.

But perhaps like the crowd, we want to Jesus, we want Jesus to be someone else. You know, I think about sometimes, I think I'd like him to fit into my little well-prepared box that I have, my little world.

I know I do sometimes. Like if only he would fit into my schedule, if only he would answer my prayers in a more timelier fashion. There was a boxer by the name of Steve Collins.

he was a man from Dublin. Now, as you can tell, I'm not much of a boxer. I'm not really into boxing.

[16 : 19] He was a man, a boxer from the mid-90s. And I always remember for some reason a classmate back in school kept saying his phrase.

And he said it in Steve Collins' raspy Dublin accent. And his phrase was, don't believe in the hype, believe in the man. Now, Steve said this about himself, but for some reason it stuck with me, that phrase.

And every so often it would sort of pop into my head. And I really feel that when it does pop into my head it's Jesus reminding me of to believe in him.

You know, sometimes we get caught up in the fanfare. Sometimes we lose focus. We lose track. We lose focus of what's important.

And I have to say to myself, don't believe the hype, believe the man. And I want to encourage us this morning as we go into a new week, and I'll end with this, to look to the man, to look to Jesus, to in some way block out the fanfare or the things that people might tell us to pay attention to.

[17 : 47] But to look to Jesus who rode in on a colt, not a horse, and his purpose was to conquer sin and death through the cross and through his resurrection so that you and I would be made right before God and to have eternal life.

May God bless us through his word. amen. Amen. Amen.