

# Borrowed Mule

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[ 0 : 0 0 ]     Hallelujah. Hallelujah. What a joy. What a foretaste of things to come. What a glimpse of things that once were.

Lord, we give you thanks and praise and glory. And we long for your coming. You are the King of kings. And we praise you as such.

Please be blessed as we gather in song, prayer, and as we open your word. We pray in Jesus' name. Amen.

Thank you very much. Well, folks, in one month's time, on Saturday the 6th of May, 2023, don't know if you know what's happening, but there will be an event in London that will capture the attention and the headlines of the nation, and likely many, many other countries, none other than the coronation of King Charles.

There will be a major procession from Buckingham Palace to Westminster, and this is known as the King's Procession.

[ 1 : 3 1 ]     And then the coronation service will happen, and that will be followed by another even larger procession called the Coronation Procession back to the palace.

Now, even if you have zero interest in this event, I imagine that it will be very difficult to go through that weekend without hearing a thing about it.

Now, although it will be apparently scaled back from when Queen Elizabeth was coronated, apparently it said that the procession will be scaled back from her procession.

But a royal source has insisted that it will be amazing in both scale and splendour. Unquote. Now, most of us will be very familiar with Palm Sunday.

I imagine most of us could explain why Jesus rides into Jerusalem on a donkey. But, isn't it true that sometimes this event can seem at odds with what happens the rest of the week?

[ 2 : 4 4 ]     Certainly it can seem at odds with what happens especially on Friday. What's going on? If this was supposed to be a triumphal entry, then why is he crucified in less than a week later?

If it was supposed to be a triumphal entry? Why are people shouting Hosanna on this day?

And less than a week later, people are shouting, Crucify him. Well, let me ask a question. What if this, Palm Sunday, this moment when he rides on a donkey, what if this wasn't intended as what most people thought it was supposed to be?

For instance, what if by making such an entry into Jerusalem, what if Jesus is actually intending on making an exit rather than an entry?

Now, we're going to be thinking about this. We're going to be thinking about this over the three services today, Good Friday and Easter Sunday. We're going to be thinking about what it means for Jesus to make an exit rather than an entry and how he borrows certain things to do that.

- [ 4 : 16 ]     He borrows a mule. He borrows a cross. And he borrows a tomb, among other things. What if by making such an entry, Jesus is actually intending on making an exit?
- And so we're going to be thinking about this today with the upcoming procession of King Charles in mind. And I want to do that, you know, in true form by looking at six Ps.
- You know, everything will start with a P. And there's only six of them because I want you to know it's imperfect. It's not a perfect illustration or alliteration. But firstly, firstly, when we consider this moment when Jesus rides on a donkey, first thing to notice is that it was public.
- This thing was very public. Now, on Saturday the 6th of May in a month's time, I can guarantee you the procession of King Charles will not be a private event.
- It won't be done in a corner. It won't be hidden. It will be immensely public. Now, what Jesus did on Palm Sunday was not private.
- [ 5 : 28 ]     What Jesus did on Palm Sunday was not hidden. It was out in the open. As my brother Emmanuel said, it wasn't done in a nook or a cranny, to use a Scottish term.
- This was done right out in the open. It wasn't done in secret. But what did he do? What did Jesus do?
- Well, let's look at it. He started going up to Jerusalem. He knew that the Passover festival was at hand.
- It was about to be Passover. And so he made his way to Jerusalem, and he drew near to Bethpage and Bethany, two little twin towns near the Mount of Olives.
- And he sent two disciples into Bethpage. And he said, Go into the village in front of you, where on entering you'll find a colt tied.
- [ 6 : 30 ]     No one ever has sat on it. Untie it and bring it here. If anyone asks you, why are you untying it? Just say this, the Lord has need of it. And so they went and they did that.
- And of course, somebody asked them, what are you doing? And they said, well, the Lord has need of it. And so they took it, and they put their cloaks on it, and they set Jesus on it.
- And Jesus rode along towards Jerusalem. And as he was drawn near, already on the way down of the Mount of Olives, a whole multitude of his disciples began rejoicing and praising God with a loud voice for all the mighty works that they had seen.
- And they were saying, Blessed is the King who comes in the name of the Lord. Peace in heaven and glory in the highest. That's all he did. He just got on a donkey, started making his way into Jerusalem.
- Now, was it an accident? Was he just tired from all his traveling? Did he need a little lift to get in there? Why a donkey? Why does he need to borrow a donkey?
- [ 7 : 38 ]     He could have walked. He could have walked. They walked everywhere. He was strong enough. I'm sure he wasn't tired. Even if he was on the donkey, he could have taken a different path. He could have taken a different entrance into Jerusalem.
- But what he did, what he did, invited a lot of attention, because he did it in public. And whatever he did, invited a huge amount of attention.
- Now, was this attention just accidental? Was Jesus just trying to do a thing, and all these people just jumped on top of it? And he's like, Whoa, whoa, whoa. Hang on, I didn't mean this.
- What is the big problem about Jesus riding on a donkey? You see, it wasn't just public. It was prophetic. Secondly, this was prophetic.
- Some of the Pharisees in the crowd said to him, Teacher, rebuke your disciples. Rebuke them. Now, why are they saying that? Well, because the disciples are saying all sorts of things about who he is.

[ 8 : 47 ] Disciples are saying, Blessed is the King who comes in the name of the Lord. I mean, that's a highly controversial thing to say.

Now, are the Pharisees right? Is Jesus just mistaken in what he's doing? And it's the disciples who are saying this. So the Pharisees are saying to Jesus, Come on, you're misleading them by doing this.

Tell them to shut up. Tell them they're wrong. Look at what they're doing. They're calling you king, for goodness sake. Now, is Jesus just like, Oops, my bad.

Let me jump off the donkey. Let me calm the crowd down. Let me tell them they're mistaken. Jesus actually says, Listen, if I tell them to be quiet, the stones will cry out.

Now, why is he saying this? What's the big deal? Well, as most of you probably know, this comes from Zechariah. Zechariah chapter 9. Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion.

[ 9 : 53 ] Shout aloud, O daughter of Jerusalem. Behold, your king is coming to you, righteous and having salvation as he, humble and mounted on a donkey, on a colt, the foal of a donkey.

Prophetic. What Jesus is doing, is he is equating himself with whoever Zechariah is talking about. Jesus is doing the donkey thing.

All the people running out, You've got to see this. It's Jesus. Ah, yeah, we've seen him before. Aye. That's the guy that does the miracles, isn't it? Ah, but he's doing the donkey thing. What? What are you talking about?

Zechariah 9. He's doing the donkey thing. Oh, wait a minute. He's coming in on a donkey like the king. Yeah, come on. That's the problem.

That what Jesus was doing was not only public, it was prophetic. He's setting himself up as the very one in Zechariah 9. And that's why they're saying, Blessed is the king who comes in the name of the Lord.

[ 10 : 55 ] Because they recognize, Well, he's saying he's the king. This is the donkey thing in Zechariah. Now, the Pharisees, are they right to say, Jesus, do you understand what you're doing here?

These people are crying out. They're putting two and two together and getting five. Going to rebuke them. Fair point if Jesus wasn't the king in Zechariah 9.

Fair point. Imagine, just imagine, ahead of King Charles' coronation. Imagine if you were down in London and you hired a taxi, but you ended up hiring like one of those carts in the carriage by mistake.

And suddenly you got loads of your pals and they were all shouting and stuff like that. And you were like, wait a minute, it's getting out of hand. And you were accused. Imagine if you were accused of trying to impersonate the king in procession.

You're like, Oh my, I'm sorry. I didn't mean to do that. Like, we were just doing a wee thing. We were getting a taxi. And, you know, I'm not trying to say I'm the king here. Come on, let's back down a second. But instead of complying with this thing that the Pharisees are saying, rebuke your disciples, instead of complying, Jesus said, Listen, if my disciples don't cry out, if the people don't cry out, the rocks will cry out.

[ 12 : 16 ] Now, why would he say something like that? Why on earth would the rocks cry out unless he, in fact, is the king? Unless the prophecy says that there will be a crying out aloud for this king.

And so Jesus is saying, Listen, you can stop any mouths you want, but there will be a crying out because this is happening. Zechariah 9, this is happening and there's nothing that you can do about it.

You know, because it's not just public and it's not just prophetic. It is absolutely praiseworthy. This thing that Jesus is doing is praiseworthy. You see, the people are shouting out and what they're shouting out comes from Psalm 118.

Psalm 118 says, Save us. Save us, we pray, O Lord. That's what Hosanna means. Save us. Hosanna. Save us, we pray, O Lord.

O Lord, we pray, give us success. Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord. We bless you from the house of the Lord. That's what it says in Psalm 118.

[ 13 : 30 ] And that's what they're shouting out. They're like, Zechariah 9, yes. Psalm 118, yes. This is the king coming into the city.

of Zion. Jerusalem, the city of peace. The city of peace. The king coming on a donkey symbolizes peace.

Kings, it's not just that he's humble. That's not the only thing. It's not like, no, I don't want a horse. I'll have a donkey because I'm just meek and mild. No, kings did this. They went in on a donkey if it was for peace.

They would come in on a horse if it was for war. Jesus is coming in peace at this present moment. Even more so, this would be expected of the Messiah.

The Messiah is the one who's going to bring peace. Peace on earth. The Messiah brings global peace. peace. More than that, this is demonstrated in the fact that he rides in on a young baby donkey that has never been sat on.

[ 14 : 39 ] Now, if you ever get an opportunity, just try that and see if it's peaceful. Just try sitting on a wee donkey that's never been sat on before and see if it lets you, see if it lets you just ride in.

It's interesting. This baby donkey that's never been sat on before is more obliging to Jesus, to the king, than his own people.

Isn't that interesting? You know, the donkey is obeying him. The donkey is allowing him. The donkey's receiving him. The donkey's probably thinking, what on earth is going on here?

A young donkey that's never been sat on before. But it's the king of peace. That's why it's not kicking and screaming. Because it's the king of peace who is sitting on it.

It's the Messiah, the one prophesied. Finally, notice this. Right? If you remember, Luke chapter 2.

[ 15 : 46 ] Do you remember what the angels sang? When the angels appeared to the shepherds to say, hey, by the way, the son of David has been born.

The Christ, the Messiah, he has come. He has arrived. A baby wrapped in swaddling cloths, lying in a manger. And suddenly, a whole multitude of the heavenly host came praising God and saying, glory to God in the highest and on earth peace among those whom he is well pleased.

Isn't that interesting? It only takes humans 33 years to catch up with what the angels are already singing about Jesus. And so finally, finally after 33 years, some of the humans begin to see what the angels have been saying all along.

Blessed is the king who comes in the name of the Lord. Peace in heaven and glory in the highest. And the angels are like, yeah, finally, finally, someone has recognized who Jesus is.

finally, it is praiseworthy. Why? Why is this praiseworthy? Well, it's not only public, it's not only prophetic, it's not only praiseworthy, it is planned.

[ 17 : 08 ] This moment is planned. If you were ever in any doubts whether it was a mistake or whether Jesus was caught up in something that he didn't mean, notice this. Jesus is actually the one who orchestrated the whole thing.

Jesus is the one who said, guys, there's a donkey. Go fetch it. Bring it. And we're going to proceed into Jerusalem on this thing.

Jesus knew what he was doing. If you have a Bible, if you want to flip over, you don't need to, I'll read it out, but if you want to flip over to 1 Kings, long way back, and 1 Kings, chapter 1, there is this situation.

King David, King David is quite old now. King David, this is the very start of the book of 1 Kings.

Now, King David was old and advanced in years. old and advanced in years, left lying in bed. Now, Adonijah, the son of Haggith, exalted himself, saying, I will be king.

[ 18 : 36 ] And he prepared for himself chariots and horsemen, 50 men to run before him, Zadok, the priests, and all sorts of people. Adonijah, set himself up as king.

And then Nathan, the prophet, went to Bathsheba, the mother of Solomon, and said, have you not heard? You know, I heard what's going on. Adonijah has set himself up as king.

And David doesn't even know about it. And he says, basically, this is what to do. Go in. Go in to David and remind him that he promised before the Lord that Solomon would be king after him.

And then I'll come in and I'll confirm your words. And so they do so. And they tell him and the king, David says, as the Lord lives, who has redeemed my soul out of every adversity, I swore to you by the Lord, the God of Israel, saying, Solomon, your son, shall reign after me and he shall sit in my throne in my place.

And even so will I do this day. And so David said, call to me Zadok, the priest, Nathan, the prophet, Benaiah, the son, of Jehoiada.

[ 20 : 03 ] So they came before the king and the king said, take with you the servants of your Lord and have Solomon, my son, ride on my own mule, my donkey, and bring him down to Gihon and let Zadok, the priest, and Nathan, the prophet, anoint him king over Israel and blow the trumpet and say, long live King Solomon.

And so David basically says, yeah, okay, thanks for telling me about Adonijah, he's setting himself up as king, this is a problem, he doesn't, he has no right to the throne and so what to do is get Solomon, sit him on my donkey, send him out, make a ruckus noise, anoint him as king, blow the trumpets and it even says, make a noise that will split the earth.

Make a noise that will split the earth. Make a joyous sound so that everyone knows that he is the king. You can go and read further about that but just to let you know, this whole business of riding in on a donkey in procession with a noise like that is a huge claim to be king and Jesus, when he sent for a donkey, planned the whole thing, he knew.

Think about this, you know the story of Jesus, you know that he wasn't accustomed to making a name for himself, you know he wasn't accustomed to garnering attention for himself, everything he did wasn't with the intention of making himself famous.

Although he's due it, although he is the rightful king, most of the time throughout his entire life and ministry on earth, he would not accept this kind of public attention and yet right here when he has the very opportunity to dispel it, he says, no, let it happen.

[ 22 : 07 ] Let it happen and see if you try and shut them up, the stones will cry out. I'll even welcome stones praising my name right now. He initiates the whole thing.

If you're in any doubt of whether Jesus knows what's happening, he orchestrates the whole thing. Now why does he do this? What is it going to achieve?

He borrows a mule. This mule was not intended for him. Think about that as we go through the week. The things that he borrows not intended for him.

The owner had no idea. The owner probably had plans for this little donkey. And Jesus' disciples come along and start untying it. Hey, hey, hey, hey.

What are you doing? Listen, the Lord has need of this. Okay. Take it. The Lord takes it. Rides on it.

[ 23 : 04 ] A little donkey. Wasn't even meant for him. But he borrows it for this specific purpose. What other, I mean, imagine the donkey going back to his pals.

Have you had the king sit on you? You know. Oh, were you the donkey chosen for the Zechariah 9 thing?

No, I think not. No other donkey got this privilege. And yet the owner had no idea what was destined for this little mule. He borrowed it for this momentous occasion where the king would ride into Jerusalem with shouts of praise.

It was not only planned, it was incredibly provocative. This was incredibly provocative. Now, if you imagine back to the procession of King Charles, this is how to view this because it is not at all at odds with the cross.

This moment's not at odds with the cross. If you imagine that people expected King Charles on the 6th of May to have a procession, but someone, perhaps on the 6th of April or something like that, imagine someone came into London and did arrange for a royal carriage and loads and loads of people to start shouting, here comes the king!

[ 24 : 45 ] Imagine someone did that right now in London. You could easily see how it would be less than a week before they were taken care of, if you know what I mean.

This is very provocative. It wasn't for an entry. Think about it. If this was supposed to be a triumphal entry, how did it end up at the cross?

It wasn't to initiate his kingdom, though he is the king. It wasn't to bring about the beginning of his rule here, though he is the king in Zechariah 9.

It wasn't to secure a place in the palace. It was actually to secure his exit. It was to leave no doubts as to who he was saying he was and what he was accepting about who he was.

And we can see this back in Luke chapter 19. If you go to Luke chapter 19 to the place that is often called the triumphal entry and you go a step before, you will see a parable that Jesus tells right before he does this.

[ 26 : 00 ] And this is the parable. Luke 19, Luke chapter 19 verse 11. Just before he does this thing on the mule.

They heard these things and he proceeded to tell them a parable. Jesus proceeded to tell them a parable because he was near to Jerusalem and because they supposed that the kingdom of God was to appear immediately.

And so Jesus said, okay, if you think the kingdom is going to appear immediately, let me tell you something. He said, a nobleman went into a far country to receive for himself a kingdom and then return.

Now calling ten of his servants, he gave them ten minas and said to them, engage in business until I come. But his citizens hated him and sent a delegation after him saying, we don't want this man to reign over us.

when he returned having received the kingdom, he ordered the servants to whom he had given the money to be called that it might be known what they had gained by doing business.

[ 27 : 21 ] And it goes on and you can read that for yourself. But Jesus, in light of people thinking that he's just about to set up the kingdom, he says, no, no, no, no, this is not what's happening.

Now, isn't it strange that he would say that and then do something that looks exactly like he is trying to set up the kingdom? But this is why I think it's helpful not to see it as a triumphal entry, but to see all these things working together as an exit.

Because in this parable Jesus says, I'm actually going to be going away somewhere. Because my kingdom, as Anne read out earlier, my kingdom is not of this world.

And look, the citizens already hate me. isn't that obvious? There's citizens and there's servants, and they are each left behind as the king leaves to go and receive his kingdom.

Now, this happened in Jesus' lifetime. This actually happened with the son of Herod the Great. The son of Herod the Great was to inherit the kingdom, but he had to go to Rome, to a far-off country, in order to receive this kingdom.

[ 28 : 36 ] And the Jews sent a delegation against them, saying, we do not want this man to reign after us. We don't want this man to reign over us. This happened, and so they would have had this in mind when Jesus was telling this parable, but Jesus in effect is saying, I'm not coming to set up the kingdom here right now.

I am going somewhere else in order to receive the kingdom, but I am leaving behind servants to do my business. And there are citizens that already hate me, and that don't want me to reign over them.

That is apparent when the Pharisees say, stop this. You have the servants who are shouting, Hosanna, blessed is the king who comes in the name of the Lord, and then you have the citizens, like the Pharisees, who say, stop this nonsense at once.

We do not want this king. And so, it's public, it's prophetic, it's praiseworthy, it's planned, and it's provocative. Jesus is still away receiving that kingdom.

And if you love him, then you and I are his servants to do his business. But there are citizens on this earth who hate him. And so, the final P is prepare.

[ 30 : 03 ] This Palm Sunday event was public, it was prophetic, it was praiseworthy, it was planned, it was provocative, and it secured his exit from this world so that he can indeed receive a kingdom.

And you and I, just like many other servants, have been left behind to prepare. Prepare our own hearts for his coming and prepare others for his coming.

For he is coming again and it will be apparent that he is king when he comes again. So prepare your hearts.

The king is coming. It is happening. He, where he is currently, is receiving a kingdom. kingdom. The kingdom of God that will overtake the entire earth.

The kingdom of God that will have no end when every other kingdom fades out of existence. Folks, for us who love him, when he appears, it will be shouts of great joy.

[ 31 : 16 ] But for many others it will not. It will be terrifying. because, as Revelation says, he is coming on a horse this time. And he is coming to bring his kingdom in full force.

For he is the king of kings and the lord of lords. And so prepare your own hearts to be ready for his coming. What a joy it was to sing, and we will continue to sing today in joyous praise of our king of kings.

but let us prepare the world for what is ahead, that they can sing with joy also, and not be terrified.

He will come, and he will finally bring peace on earth. And finally, all evil will be destroyed. All his enemies put away.

and there will be a universal sound, a universal cry of praise like nothing we have ever experienced before.

[ 32 : 24 ] Let's pray. Oh, Lord, we thank you for this moment in history when you came, when you came in such a way that we are left with no doubts as to who you are, that through the faithful business, the faithful proclamation of your people throughout the ages, we have heard about who you are, and it has enabled us, it has enabled us to receive you, by your grace and mercy, to receive you as our king, so that we can have that same joy and not be terrified.

Oh, Lord, we thank you for the salvation that has come into our own lives through you, and we thank you that we can have every confidence, though you are not here with us right now in person, you are receiving your kingdom, and you have filled us with your spirit, that we might tell the entire earth that you are coming again.

Help us to praise you continually as long as we live on this earth, and help us to prepare the world for your coming. We pray in Jesus' name, and we give you praise in Jesus' name.

Amen. Amen. Let us sing a final song together in the name of Christ.