

The Tragedy of the Triumphal Entry

Mark 11:1-11

Reading: Psalm 118:19-29

(One of the Hallel psalms)

Bethany Baptist Church
April 9, 2017 (p.m. service)
April 13, 2014 (Palm Sunday)
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...pray... (I want to take a detour from Rm to the Gospels for Palm/Res Sundays. This morning we'll visit the Gospel of Mark.)

When we open *Mark's Gospel* at the beginning of ch.11, we join a *growing & exuberant* crowd near the villages of *Bethany & Bethphage*...

It's *Sunday* of Jesus' final *Passover Week*.

From *Jericho*, the home of "*blind*" *Bartimeaus*, Jesus had led His followers **20** miles NW to *Bethany*, about **2** mi. from *Jerusalem*, from *Bethany* past the village of *Bethphage*, & then on towards the *City of David*.

Both *Bethany & Bethphage* were on the slopes of the *Mount of Olives*, & the Mount would have hidden *Jerusalem* from the Lord's sight as He left *Bethany*.

There was a *large & growing crowd* gathered around Jesus:

The *Twelve* followed immediately behind Him, then many *Passover pilgrims* from *Galilee, Perea, & elsewhere*...

That original band swelled with excited townsmen from *Bethany* – many of them friends of *Lazarus* (bro. of *Mary & Martha*).

Then huge crowds *poured out from Jerusalem* to meet them along the road. They wanted to see *Jesus*, and they also wanted to see *Lazarus*, whom the *Galilean Healer* had just raised from the dead.

So no doubt *Lazarus* was in the crowd, with his sisters. Maybe that *Jericho tax-collector Zaccheus* (kids – what do you remember about *Zaccheus*?). And certainly *blind Bartimeaus*, who was no longer *blind*.

The popular *Rabbi from Nazareth* was approaching *Jerusalem* for *Passover*, at the head of a *swelling, celebrating procession*. **Everyone was watching...**

Turn with me as we join a *triumphal celebration* in Mark 11:1-11.

Jesus has just placed Jerusalem on notice: *your Messiah has come at last!*

The *question* is: ***which Messiah is He?***

Our text this morning *confronts* us with...

The Two Messiahs of the Triumphal Entry.

- 1. Jesus presents Himself to Israel as the *humble Servant of God*(1-7).**
- 2. Yet thousands reach for Him as a *conquering Liberator* (8-11).**

Promised Servant or *Anticipated Emancipator*... sometimes we fashion God in the image of our own expectations. It won't work...

Jesus presented Himself as the *humble Servant of God* (rd 1-7).

0. The Lord stopped outside of Bethany, opposite Bethphage, and from there prepared to enter *David's Royal City*.
 - a. The Master sent **two men** (*unnamed* in the NT – *Peter?*) into Bethphage (v. 1). The *men* are on a *mission* for the *Messiah*...
 - b. The *level of detail* in **vv.2-3** is striking & very *intentional*: *which village, where in the village, what (donkey's colt), what kind (tied & unbroken) , the owner's challenge, the right response, & the assurance of the owner's ready agreement.*
 - c. It all **unfolded** *exactly as Jesus directed!*
 1. **How could that be – how could Jesus have known?**
 1. *Prophecy* fulfilled. Messianic prophecy.
 2. **Five centuries** earlier the *Spirit of God* moved the *Prophet Zechariah* to pen a promise of a coming *Deliverer*. Now the *Son of God* is carefully **guiding** the fulfillment of the prophet's prediction, *at just the right time!*
 3. Mark is *reminding* us, even in these details (2-3), that *Jesus is God!* He knew all those *details* in advance! This is *more* than an indication that Jesus was *a careful student* of the Prophets.
 4. Not only did He understand *Zechariah*, He understood *Himself*, He understood His *mission*, He understood His *times*, and He **connected them** all *together* that day by knowing exactly what would await His **2 friends** in the *village*.

1. In opening months of His ministry, the Lord had often attempted to *mute* His Messianic *identity & mission* (e.g. “**go home, don’t tell!**”).
 - a. But now at last, the Galilean rabbi was making a very *clear & very public* declaration: *I am Israel’s Messiah!*
 1. And the **big clue** here was the colt! So, *what’s so special about that donkey?*
 1. Ralph Gower’s *Manners & Customs of Bible Times* notes that the **donkey** was the *basic pack animal* of the ANE (→no frills Ford **Ranger P/U**).
 2. Donkey’s carried *goods & people*. Sometimes a *frame*, or cradle, was mounted on the *animal’s back*, and used to secure *bags or boxes* (boxes sometimes used like a *car-seat* for kids! ☺).
 3. Donkeys *pulled plows & they turned millstones*.
 4. Interestingly, in *earlier* days, donkeys were sometimes used to *carry royalty!* But the little donkey was usually regarded as a symbol of *labor & peace* – the mount of *ordinary* people.
 2. But the Bible has even *more* to say about the significance of *this* little *donkey*. And the **OT** image was **well known to all of these Passover pilgrims (2x)**.
 1. Turn w/ me to **Zechariah 9:9-10** (2nd to last in OT, just ahead of *Malachi*). **wcb – stay** here for a bit...
 2. **Zechariah** had predicted the day when *Jerusalem’s Deliverer* would *ride into the troubled City of David*, seated on a *donkey’s colt*, and all of Zion would **celebrate!**
 3. So, as Jesus mounted that *little donkey*, helped by *his friends & surrounded* by that *noisy crowd*, everyone *understood* His point: “**I am the Messiah!**”

4. But now *here's* the question: **what kind of Messiah?**

1. Look carefully at *Zechariah's prophecy* again.
2. What *kind* of King entered Jerusalem that unforgettable Sunday?
 1. A *just* king...
 2. A *saving* king...
 3. A ***humble*** king!
5. A King who mounted that curiously *mixed* reminder of *humble service & royal procession* – the **donkey's foal**.
6. *Zechariah's little colt* is the *perfect prop* for Jesus' personal *mission statement!* Here's how Messiah *summarized* his mission in **Mk 10:45:**

*For even the Son of Man did not come to **be served, but to serve**, and to give His life a ransom in the place of many.*

5...*Jesus knew **everything** in advance: the village, the location, the colt, the challenge, the answer, the agreement.* Our Lord knows *everything*...

- a. *Beloved*, what does mean for *you* as we prepare our hearts for *Easter*? What did He know about *you* when He suffered & died *in your place*?
- b. Jesus knew *everything* in advance. ***He already knew how sinful you would be.*** Not just *before* you repented, but how much you would struggle even ***after*** you turned to Him.
- c. If He knew your sins (just like He knew *all* the little details of that *Triumphal Entry* morning), and then ***still*** died in your place, surely nothing you've done *surprises* Him or *dampens His mercy*; Christian, He *bought you anyway*...& now He'll *keep you secure!*

***And so the Lord presented Himself to Jerusalem. Israel's Messiah!
The just, humble, serving, Messiah.***

But was that the Deliverer that Israel wanted?

No...

No... Israel's Passover pilgrims greeted Jesus, little donkey & all, not as Jehovah's Servant, but as a conquering Liberator (rd 8-11).

2. The crowds that surrounded Him *seemingly understood* what Jesus meant! Consider this...
 - a. The *Galilean rabbi* had been the object of *Messianic speculation* for many months – remember how the imprisoned *John the Baptist* had sent messengers with **one** question: “*Are You the Expected One, ... or do we look for someone else?*”
Luke 7:19
 - b. Now that Jesus *stood on the road* into Jerusalem, with the *Passover* at hand, and commanded *Zechariah's prophetic colt* to be prepared for His *entrance*, there could be *no more doubt & no more waiting!*
 - c. The **Son of David** had *come!*
3. As Jesus *mounted* the colt, the eager crowd began to *respond!*
 - a. Some took off their *long, thin rectangular tunics* –
 1. The **OT** suggests (2 Kings 9:13) that this was a *familiar ritual* to hail the arrival of a *new king*.
 2. You can picture them *pushing* their way through the crowd to *spread out their cloaks* at just that *strategic spot* where the Messiah's donkey would be sure to *walk on it*.
 3. And do you suppose *once-blind Bartimaeus*, who had *cast aside* his cloak when Jesus called him in Jericho, *threw it down again!?! ☺*

- b. Others moved into the *surrounding fields*, and cut off *leafy branches* to throw down in the road.
1. And others were waving *palm branches* in the air...
 2. *Date palms* were plentiful, and the *palm branch* had an *intriguing symbolic twist*... **150** years earlier, Maccabee family, led revolt against the Greek Seleucid dynasty. The Maccabean guerilla army drove the Seleucids out of Israel. Ever since the Maccabean revolt, the *palm branch* had been a Jewish symbol *of political unrest*.
 3. The scene wasn't some *silent picture news-reel*: all of the *spreading* of cloaks & the *cutting & waving* of branches was accompanied by the *riotous clamor of adulation*.
 1. **Lk 19** indicates that as they all began to *descend from the Mount of Olives*, the crowd that now surrounded Him, front & back, began to *call out*...
 2. Mark's Greek grammar indicates the crowd cried out *over & over & over*.
 4. Every Gospel replays a *slightly different stanza to the refrain*, but one *theme* runs through every Gospel *record*: the powerful words of **Psalm 118:26**: ***Hosanna! Blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord!***
 1. **Psa 118** is from one of the **six Hallel Psalms** (113-118). Jewish *worshipers* sang these *Hallel hymns* during *Passover*.
 2. Did you catch that word *Hosanna*? I know you've *heard* it before, but do you know what *it means*? *Hosanna* is an Aramaic expression, and it's like a fervent *prayer*: *Hosanna! Save us, Lord! Deliver us! Hosanna!*

4. So let's *run the video* on this scene in our heads: a ***feverish mob*** presses its way *down* the Mount of Olives & *towards* Jerusalem. Jesus rides *Zechariah's donkey* in their midst.
- a. They are pulling off their *cloaks* & throwing them down before their *new king*, waving the *palms branches* of nationalistic *feror & freedom*, fard shouting out, over & over – *Hosanna! Save us, Lord! ... Hosanna - Deliver us! **Hosanna - Deliver us!** Hosanna - Deliver us!*
 - b. But the crowds, as *close* as they were, were still *miles off target!*
 1. *Right* man, **wrong** kind of deliverer.
 2. Not a liberating **Super David**. W/ *armies & uprisings & political resurgence*.
 3. Not a *conqueror*, but a *Suffering, Servant-Messiah*, humble & seated on a *donkey's colt*.
 4. How could they crowd *all around Him*, and still *miss what He was saying?* **PAUSE**
5. People still *miss it*, today! Men & women still get *confused* about *who Jesus is & why He came...*
- a. “*Good...but less than God.*” Many refuse to acknowledge that Jesus was both *God & man*. Yet Jesus performed *miracles*, claimed authority to *judge* & accepted His follower's ***worship***.
 - b. “*Option ...but not the only option.*” They ignore that Jesus clearly claimed that ***no one came the Father except by Him***.
 - c. You must get *Jesus right*: He was **no mere man** & there are **no other names given under heaven by which you can be saved**.
 - d. You *can't afford* a case of *mistaken identity!*
- The Passover crowd was looking for a warrior King to fight for liberty from Rome's oppression.***
Jesus came as a servant King to die for liberty from sin's oppression.

Am I exaggerating the crowd's blindness? How serious was this case of mistaken identity?

Turn with me from Mk 11 to **Luke 19:41** (*don't read*).

6. As the clamoring crowds *approached* Jerusalem, something *completely unexpected* happened!
- a. Jesus *stopped the donkey*, and *looked up* at Jerusalem.
 - b. The mob *ground itself to a halt*.
 - c. The Lord **wept**.
 - d. The "*Hosanna's!*"(noise) surely just died out...
 - e. Jesus continued to *mourn*... **read vv. 41-44**
 - f. The *humble Deliverer* had come, w/ *prophetic tokens* of His ID.
 - g. The *blind city* had failed to *recognize* Him.

 - h. ***Who is Jesus, the Messiah?***
 - 1. *Conquering Liberator* who can give you *prosperity & success*...asking *nothing* of you in return?

 - 2. ***Humble Servant*** who *saves from sin* & calls for *repentance & faith?* For *self-denial & cross carrying & a life of following?*

 - i. The NT is *very clear* about which Jesus rode into Jerusalem – but ***which Jesus are you following?***

Pray...

Reflect & respond: How *biblical* is your picture of Jesus? Do you see Him as *Savior* from sin & *Lord* of every aspect of your life?

Or is He just a *fire- insurance* salesman, or some *giant genii* who grants your *prayer-wishes?* ***How do you see Him & how do you need to respond to Him?***

Hymn: ___X