

Unified Triumphant Entry

Finding Transportation (Matthew 21:1-6; Mark 11:1-6; Luke 19:28-34)

It is now the first day of the week, five days before the Passover (John 12:1, 12), and Jesus begins walking toward Jerusalem. As he approached the village of Bethphage on Mount Olivet, Jesus sends two of his disciples ahead with instructions to enter the village. There they would find an untried donkey's colt next to a donkey which they were to untie and bring to Jesus. If someone asks why they were taking the colt, they were to say that the Lord had need of the colt.

The disciples found the colt and donkey just as Jesus described. They were asked why they were taking the colt, just as Jesus said they would be, and they answered as instructed. They were then allowed to take the colt.

The use of a donkey for a ruler has a long history (Judges 10:4; 12:14; 1 Kings 1:33, 38). The emphasis on the fact that the colt was never ridden before is to indicate that it was set aside for a special use, that is a holy use (Numbers 19:2; Deuteronomy 21:3; 1 Samuel 6:7). Jesus needed this colt to fulfill the prophecy in Zechariah 9:9. In entering in this manner he declared his gentle intentions and that he wasn't coming for war. John tells us that the disciples did not understand how Jesus was fulfilling prophecy until much later (John 12: 16).

Entrance (Matthew 21:7-9; Mark 11:7-10; Luke 19:35-40; John 12:12-19)

Having no saddle the disciples put their own cloaks on top of the colt. Doing so was a sign of respect to Jesus (2 Kings 9: 13). Others also showed their respect by spreading their cloaks or placing palm branches on the road. This is the way heroes or conquerors were honored. The honor is echoed again in Revelation 7:9. The number assembled was not small. Josephus once estimated that a Passover celebration drew about 3 million people.

As the disciples began descending the Mount Olivet, they began loudly proclaiming the mighty deeds they had seen Jesus do. In particular, people were excited over the resurrection of Lazarus (John 12: 17-18). John tells us they are met by a large crowd coming out of Jerusalem who had heard that Jesus was coming. The people cried out, "Hosanna to the Son of David!" "Hosanna" is a Hebrew word which means "Oh, save!" It is used as an exclamation of praise and adoration. The statement is taken from Psalm 118:25-26. Coming in the name of the Lord means coming by the authority of God. Mark notes that people were also proclaiming blessings on the kingdom promised to David (1 Kings 2:4; 8:25). Luke notes they were calling Jesus the King.

The Pharisees were upset with the things the crowd was calling out and they told Jesus to rebuke his followers. But Jesus told them that even if they became quiet, the very rocks would call out the same praises (Habakkuk 2: 11). By this Jesus meant that the praises could not be suppressed. Even among themselves, the Pharisees felt powerless to stop events (John 12:19). To them it appeared that the whole world was thronging after Jesus.

Sadness over Jerusalem's Fate (Luke 19:41-44)

The Mount of Olives stands higher than Jerusalem and gives a good view of entire city. Despite the excitement and praise of the people, Jesus looked forward to the upcoming destruction of Jerusalem and wept at the loss. The people cried out for peace, but they don't see how peace could be obtained. They lived in a city named for peace (Hebrews 7:2), but they would not have it. In the future the city will be under siege and eventually leveled. Not a stone will be left standing on top of another. And it will happen because they did not realize that God had been In their midst. They missed their opportunity for mercy.

Brief Visit to the Temple (Matthew 21: 10-11; Mark 11: 11)

As Jesus entered Jerusalem, everyone wanted to know who this was that caused such a commotion. They were told that it was the prophet Jesus from Galilee.

Jesus goes to the temple, but the hour is late being near sunset. He then returns to Bethany for the night. It would be at this time that Jesus observes the abuses taking place at the temple, which he then rectifies on the following day.