

Three Roads
Road to Jerusalem
Matthew 21:1-11

March 17, 2024

HDBC

Roads played a key part in the life and ministry of Jesus.

The most important roads Jesus traveled were the roads directly connected with His work of redemption. Certainly from a big-picture perspective those would include the road from Heaven to earth at His incarnation. It would include the road from earth to Heaven at His ascension. It will one day include the road back to earth for His second coming. Those are massively important. But let's narrow the focus to only those roads He walked while on this earth. **Think about the roads He traveled.**

Road to Bethlehem for His birth.

Road to Egypt for His safety.

Road to the Temple at the age of 12.

Road to the river to be baptized by John.

Roads throughout Galilee and Judea during His ministry.

Road through Samaria to meet the woman at the well.

Think about the things that happened along those roads.

He taught along those roads. *They were on the road going up to Jerusalem, and Jesus was walking on ahead of them; and they were amazed, and those who followed were fearful. And again He took the twelve aside and began to tell them what was going to happen to Him, (Mark 10:32)*

He healed along those roads. *Then they came to Jericho. And as He was leaving Jericho with His disciples and a large crowd, a blind beggar named Bartimaeus, the son of Timaeus, was sitting by the road. (Mark 10:46)*

He gained followers along the roads. *As they were going along the road, someone said to Him, I will follow You wherever You go. (Luke 9:57)*

From the very beginning of His human life Jesus followed a road that would fulfil God's great plan of salvation for sinful people. Along the way He would walk many roads. The most important of those were the ones associated with his death, burial and resurrection. Those events are the foundation of our salvation. In two weeks we will celebrate resurrection day, commonly referred to as Easter. It may be the most important day of the year for churches. In order to soak up as much as we can, I want us to celebrate Easter for three Sundays, not just one.

To do so, I want us to consider three specific roads that Jesus walked that are intimately related His resurrection and the events just before and after it.

These roads would take Him to . . .

Jerusalem – It was a road of betrayal and arrest,

Calvary – It was a road of suffering and death,

Emmaus – It was a road of revelation and discovery

Each week we'll consider one of the roads Jesus walked. Today let's begin by consider the ***Road to Jerusalem***. It led Him to betrayal and arrest.

Jerusalem was the eye of the storm raging around Jesus. It housed the most ardent enemies of Jesus and they were thirsty for His blood. When Jesus road into Jerusalem on a young donkey to the praise and worship of the crowds He knew He was riding into the lion's den. And the lions were ready to strike. Let's consider Matthews account.

Read the Text: Matthew 21:1-11

It is the last week of Jesus' earthly ministry and it began with a parade. We call it the Triumphal Entry. Palm Sunday marks the event. That's next week. It was the beginning of the most important week in the life of Christ. The Bible recognizes the importance of that last week. Most biographies give little attention to the death of the person. Not so with Jesus.

Matthew devotes eight of his twenty-eight chapters to the last week of Jesus' life.

Mark, six of sixteen chapters;

Luke, six of twenty-four.

John uses almost half of his gospel to tell the story of Passion Week.

It was the time Passover, feast which brought Jews from all over the country with their sacrificial lambs. Thousands were on the move. **Josephus, the Jewish historian estimated 2-3 million in Jerusalem.** It was a city filled with emotion, excitement and enthusiasm. Jesus came also. **Not bringing** a lamb, but **being the lamb of God.** Within days of this spectacular entrance He would be nailed to a cross dying for the sins of the world.

Coaches often speak of the turning point during a ball game. Time when the outcome was settled. One coach whose team was slaughtered was asked about the turning point and he responded, "just after the coin toss."

From human perspective historians will point to this date as a turning point for Jesus. It was the beginning of the end, at least from a human perspective. This entrance into Jerusalem provided the Pharisees with the opening that they needed in order to finally rid themselves of Jesus.

But from God's perspective, and ours, this was just another step in the direction of a certain course of events which could not be altered. Nothing could keep Jesus from going to the cross and finishing His mission.

See six things:

1. The Preparation (1-3)

Bethphage was a small village east of Jerusalem, but very close. Disciples sent for the colt and donkey. Question about whether this was prearranged by Jesus. OK to take it that way. If so it is a clear indication that Jesus intends to fulfill OT prophecy concerning this event.

I prefer to see this as an exercise of his omniscience. He knows everything about everything. **When he told Peter to catch a fish, take coin out of fish's mouth, that was certainly not prearranged.**

Also a message about the authority of Christ. If someone asks, tell them the Lord needs it. Implication is that this would be sufficient. No more explanation needed. Jesus Christ has the authority to requisition anything that belongs to you anytime He has need of it. No explanation needed.

2. The Prophecy (4-5)

Matthew quickly points out that this was in fulfillment of Zechariah's prophecy in Zech. 9:9. This is one of the reasons Jesus allowed this to become a public celebration. One of the few times. Normally, he tried to keep things quiet, often telling men not to tell others. Here, He makes no attempt to keep things quiet.

In quoting Zechariah, Matthew gives commentary on the purpose of the donkey. **Not a general on a war horse, but a gentle savior.** This is also the way Jesus enters a person's heart. Not as a soldier who has conquered the person's will and will now take him captive, but as a gentle savior. Lifting the burden of sin and bringing peace and joy.

3. The Parade (6-9)

The disciples brought the donkey. Luke says the owners did object, but the answer of the disciples satisfied them. Jesus entered the city on this unbroken colt. Another reminder that Jesus is Lord over all creation. Notice the people.

Who were these people. Few may have been inhabitants of Jerusalem, but many were Galilean pilgrims entering Jerusalem for Passover.

Spreading Garments and Branches

Following the example of the disciples who placed their garments on the donkey for Christ to sit upon. Way to pay respect or homage to the one coming. Entire scene reminiscent of victory parade of the returning general. Great festivity.

Singing Hosanna

Hosanna means save, we pray Thee. The reference to Him being the son of David was clear reference to Messiah.

They were a worship celebration in transit. Traveling while worshipping. The grammar may indicate that they placed garments and branches before Him, then retrieved them to place them again. Picture of great joyfulness. Anytime some Christians get happy, others get angry. Joy-killers. Modern day Pharisees. **At this point we need to take a look at Luke's account. He adds a couple of very important things that happen.**

4. The Pharisees (Luke 19:39-40) (Turn to it)

As the level of joy was rising in the crowd the level of bitterness was rising in the Pharisees. Some people just can't stand for others to have a good time.

Don't you just hate it when you excitedly share some new thing the Lord is doing in your life or some new truth and the other person just shrugs it off, or worse tells you the cool it? What a bummer! Just because God is not working in your life does not mean He is not working! Don't be a spiritual Ebenezer Scrooge whose job it is to stamp out joyful worship wherever it may be found.

And let me remind you this was a context of worship. We need to loosen up a little bit around here. If you get happy in the Lord and want say "amen" or "praise the Lord" just do it. Let the Pharisees scowl, you just praise the Lord.

Note Jesus' Response: You can't stop it Pharisees!! This is more powerful than you. Jesus will be praised.

5. The Passion (Luke 19:41-43)

Following Luke's account. As the city came into full view, Jesus stopped and began to weep over it. In a situation where most would be tempted to be filled with pride and arrogance, tears coursed down His cheeks. He was realizing the lost condition and the blinded eyes of hurting humanity.

No coincidence that this happened right after the encounter with the joy-killers. They were partly responsible for keeping this city in spiritual darkness. What they wanted to do, they would succeed at later that week.

Jesus is not an uncaring, thoughtless Lord. He feels and cares for you. He has not ceased to be able to care for you. Knows how you feel. What you feel. Hebrews says we have high priest who can sympathize with us.

6. The Presence (Mt. 21:10-11)

Jesus came to town and oh, what a difference. The word for "stirred" literally means "shaken, as by an earthquake."

When the procession reached the city the excitement was contagious. Others in town caught on. Revival is contagious.