

Hope Revolution- right revolution, wrong throne

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Glenn Garvin

BIG IDEA – Jesus rode in as a revolutionary, but for a different kingdom, a different throne. What if your revolution is for the wrong cause?

scripture focus - Luke 19:35-38 NLT “So they brought the colt to Jesus and threw their garments over it for him to ride on. As he rode along, the crowds spread out their garments on the road ahead of him. When he reached the place where the road started down the Mount of Olives, all of his followers began to shout and sing as they walked along, praising God for all the wonderful miracles they had seen. “Blessings on the King who comes in the name of the Lord! Peace in heaven, and glory in highest heaven!”

Historically, Palm Sunday or Passion Sunday has always been a fun, palm-frond, object lesson filled with the shouts of Hosanna and the joyous mental picture of another famous donkey delivering Jesus to his destination. But those childhood scenes we've adopted may cloud the real purpose of the triumphant entry into Jerusalem. Jesus was born, lived, and taught, and would die, **as a revolutionary!** If the dictator of this world kingdom was satan and our own sin, then Jesus, as the conqueror, violently overthrew that system and God established him as THE King, THE Lord over all.

The Jews heralded Jesus as the Messiah, the long-promised deliverer of Israel. The one who would behave like the mighty king David, restoring the rightful throne of God's rule and blessing on His people. They Jewish people, slaves under the thumb of a powerful Roman king, would cheer as Jesus declared his intention and called for a holy war against the massive armies of Rome. It would have been a just cause, a righteous cause, the best reason for a revolution!

However, this is NOT what God had intended to happen. It was the right revolution for the wrong throne!

1. Right revolution, wrong throne

There was tremendous expectation that surrounded Jesus coming into town, let alone riding on a never ridden donkey.

Luke tells us, the crowds responded, and all of his followers began to shout and sing, praising God. Why? Because of all the miracles they had seen Jesus do in Galilee.

Luke 19:35-38 NLT “So they brought the colt to Jesus and threw their garments over it for him to ride on. As he rode along, **the crowds spread out their garments on the road ahead of him.** When he reached the place where the road started down the Mount of Olives, **all of his followers began to shout and sing as they walked along, praising God for all the wonderful miracles they had seen.** “Blessings on the King who comes in the name of the Lord! Peace in heaven, and glory in highest heaven!”

It is Matthew and Mark that give us the details of how and why the donkey became part of the story.

Matthew “Jesus sent two of them on ahead. “Go into the village over there,” he said. “As soon as you enter it, you will see a donkey tied there, with its colt beside it. Untie them and bring them to me. If anyone asks what you are doing, just say, ‘The Lord needs them,’ and he will immediately let you take them.” **This took place to fulfill the prophecy that said, “Tell the people of Jerusalem, ‘Look, your King is coming to you. He is humble, riding on a donkey— riding on a donkey’s colt.’”**

The Gospel of Matthew **states that this happened that the prophecy might be fulfilled of: Zechariah 9:9 "The Coming of Zion's King – See, your king comes to you, righteous and victorious, lowly and riding on a donkey, on a colt, the foal of a donkey"**. It suggests that Jesus was declaring he was the King of Israel. The “crowd” certainly thought so. **But what exactly was Jesus declaring himself to be a king of?**

And Mark gives us an extraordinary amount of detail surround the donkey, especially using the words “tying” and “untying.” One theologian points out, “[Mark] tell us about the colt being untied—five times! Why all the focus on untying?! Because, according to Genesis 49.10–11, this is the sign of the Coming One who is the true ruler of Judah, to whom the nations of the world will submit, and he is the one who ties and unties the donkey.”

However, **notice the subtlety in Genesis.** It wasn't just Judah, bus also **the obedience of ALL nations shall be his.**”

Let's go back to the crowd's response. Matthew tells us that “most of the crowd,” but later writes, **the entire city of Jerusalem was in an uproar as he entered. “Who is this?” they asked. And the crowds replied, “It's Jesus, the prophet from Nazareth in Galilee.”**”

Who is “**most**” and who is “**the entire city of Jerusalem?**”

It's John that tells us that Jesus had recently been from Bethany, where Jesus had raised Lazarus for the dead. **Clearly the crowds familiar with all the miracles Jesus did in Galilee and surrounding areas had made their big trip to Jerusalem for the Passover.**

Remember, this is the first and only time Jesus would be in Jerusalem until he returns in the future! “Six days before the Passover, Jesus came to Bethany, where Lazarus lived, whom Jesus had raised from the dead.” John 12:1

The rest of the crowd didn't know who Jesus was!

Even with the Galilean crowd, they believed Jesus was the Messiah and was riding into Jerusalem as a precursor to starting a revolution and taking the throne away from Caesar restoring Israel to their rightful place of glory and honor.

That's why this triumphant entry was about the **Right revolution, but the wrong throne.**

Jesus told Pilate in John 18:36-37 NLT “Jesus answered, “**My Kingdom is not an earthly kingdom.** If it were, my followers would fight to keep me from being handed over to the Jewish leaders. **But my Kingdom is not of this world.**” Pilate said, “So you are a king?” Jesus responded, “You say I am a king. **Actually, I was born and came into the world to testify to the truth.** All who love the truth recognize that what I say is true.”

Ian Paul: theologian, author, speaker

“He hasn’t come to conquer the city—he hasn’t come to conquer anything, but to be conquered, to ‘give his life as a ransom for many’.”

2. Right cause, wrong conquerer. Can your conqueror win? Can your conqueror bring justice and make everything right for all and for all eternity?

The people wanted a warrior king. The people wanted a conqueror who would lead a revolution. Humanity still aches for things to be made right! We don’t always know exactly what “right” looks like, but we feel the aches and pains of being under oppression.

For Israel, freedom from tyranny was a good cause, a just cause. But they were only looking for a local, temporary conqueror. They certainly did not want to re-establish God on the throne of their nation or of their heart, they just wanted to be free!

Luke tells us a little bit about this after the shouts of praise and the palm branches being spread out on the road.

Luke 19:41-44 NLT **But as he came closer to Jerusalem and saw the city ahead, he began to weep. “How I wish today that you of all people would understand the way to peace.”** But now it is too late, and peace is hidden from your eyes. Before long your enemies will build ramparts against your walls and encircle you and close in on you from every side. They will crush you into the ground, and your children with you. Your enemies will not leave a single stone in place, because you did not recognize it when God visited you.”

What is Jesus talking about, this “way to peace?” The way to peace is believing, accepting, and living in the ways of Jesus. Seeing and obeying the plan God set up from the beginning of time. The permanent solution to a permanent injustice.

Israel, and all of humanity aches for THE just cause of freedom and peace, but shortsightedly looks for the wrong conqueror, the temporary liberator. Jesus the revolutionary brings a true hope revolution in himself.

3. Right revolution, right conquerer! What is your cause? What is your ache for justice? What freedoms and peace do you seek? **Somewhere deep in our souls, all of us are desiring a freedom, a peace, and a cause bigger than ourselves.** My advice. Make sure you look for the right revolution, the right cause. Don't search for cheap, temporary substitutes – look for the right conqueror, the right liberator.

In Jesus the revolutionary you'll find the one that knows and loves. **Does your cause, your revolution have a leader who knows you, cares about you and is able to not only save you, but save all?**

Luke 21:8 NLT “He replied, “**Don't let anyone mislead you, for many will come in my name**, claiming, ‘I am the Messiah [the promised deliverer],’ and saying, ‘The time has come!’ But don't believe them.”

What conqueror, king, world leader, president, or dictator can say that? And what conqueror has the power to make it happen? What just cause, what protest or riot has you and all in mind? Do not be mistaken. Christ's cause is YOU, Christ's revolution is for all humans and it is NOT of this world nor our personal kingdoms!

Jesus didn't ride in on a donkey to overthrow Rome and take the throne. Jesus rode in on Palm Sunday to save Romans, Greeks, Jews, and Gentiles, free and slaves, men, and women, those who hate and those who love.

The hope revolution means that the just cause is not only true, but also for all people of all colors, race, and culture. The hope revolution is led by Jesus our liberator and it is for the throne of our heart.

NOTES

Scriptures

Luke 19:35-38 NLT "So they brought the colt to Jesus and threw their garments over it for him to ride on. As he rode along, the crowds spread out their garments on the road ahead of him. When he reached the place where the road started down the Mount of Olives, all of his followers began to shout and sing as they walked along, praising God for all the wonderful miracles they had seen. "Blessings on the King who comes in the name of the Lord! Peace in heaven, and glory in highest heaven!"

Zechariah 9:9 "The Coming of Zion's King – See, your king comes to you, righteous and victorious, lowly and riding on a donkey, on a colt, the foal of a donkey"

Psalms 118: 25–26 – Blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord. We bless you from the house of the Lord.

Luke 19:41-42 NLT **But as he came closer to Jerusalem and saw the city ahead, he began to weep. "How I wish today that you of all people would understand the way to peace."**

John 18:36-37 NLT "Jesus answered, "**My Kingdom is not an earthly kingdom.** If it were, my followers would fight to keep me from being handed over to the Jewish leaders. **But my Kingdom is not of this world.**" Pilate said, "So you are a king?" Jesus responded, "You say I am a king. **Actually, I was born and came into the world to testify to the truth.** All who love the truth recognize that what I say is true."

Palm Sunday

Palm Sunday is a Christian moveable feast that falls on the Sunday before Easter. The feast commemorates Christ's triumphal entry into Jerusalem, an event mentioned in each of the four canonical Gospels.

In the accounts of the four canonical Gospels, Christ's triumphal entry into Jerusalem takes place a week before his resurrection. Only the Gospel of John shows a timeline of the event, dated six days before the Passover.

The Gospel of Matthew states that this happened that the prophecy might be fulfilled of: **Zechariah 9:9** "The Coming of Zion's King – See, your king comes to you, righteous and victorious, lowly and riding on a donkey, on a colt, the foal of a donkey". It suggests that **Jesus was declaring he was the King of Israel**. [Glenn: But was he?]

According to the Gospels, Jesus Christ rode on a donkey into Jerusalem, and the celebrating people there laid down their cloaks and small branches of trees in front of him, singing part of **Psalms 118: 25–26** – Blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord. We bless you from the house of the Lord.

Matthew's Account: Matthew 21:1-11 NLT

"As Jesus and the disciples approached Jerusalem, they came to the town of Bethphage on the Mount of Olives. Jesus sent two of them on ahead. "Go into the village over there," he said. "As soon as you enter it, you will see a donkey tied there, with its colt beside it. Untie them and bring them to me. If anyone asks what you are doing, just say, 'The Lord needs them,' and he will immediately let you take them." **This took place to fulfill the prophecy that said, "Tell the people of Jerusalem, 'Look, your King is coming to you. He is humble, riding on a donkey— riding on a donkey's colt.'" The two disciples did as Jesus commanded. They brought the donkey and the colt to him and threw their garments over the colt, and he sat on it. Most of the crowd spread their garments on the road ahead of him, and others cut branches from the trees and spread them on the road. Jesus was in the center of the procession, and the people all around him were shouting, "Praise God for the Son of David! Blessings on the one who comes in the name of the Lord! Praise God in highest heaven!" The entire city of Jerusalem was in an uproar as he entered. "Who is this?" they asked. And the crowds replied, "It's Jesus, the prophet from Nazareth in Galilee."**

Mark's Account: Mark 11:1-11 NLT

"As Jesus and his disciples approached Jerusalem, they came to the towns of Bethphage and Bethany on the Mount of Olives. Jesus sent two of them on ahead. "Go into that village over there," he told them. "As soon as you enter it, you will see a young donkey tied there that no one has ever ridden. Untie it and bring it here. If anyone asks, 'What are you doing?' just say, 'The Lord needs it and will return it soon.'" The two disciples left and found the colt standing in the

street, tied outside the front door. As they were untying it, some bystanders demanded, "What are you doing, untying that colt?" They said what Jesus had told them to say, and they were permitted to take it. Then they brought the colt to Jesus and threw their garments over it, and he sat on it. Many in the crowd spread their garments on the road ahead of him, and others spread leafy branches they had cut in the fields. Jesus was in the center of the procession, and **the people all around him were shouting, "Praise God! Blessings on the one who comes in the name of the Lord! Blessings on the coming Kingdom of our ancestor David! Praise God in highest heaven!"** So Jesus came to Jerusalem and went into the Temple. After looking around carefully at everything, he left because it was late in the afternoon. Then he returned to Bethany with the twelve disciples."

Luke's Account: Luke 19:28-44 NLT

"After telling this story, Jesus went on toward Jerusalem, walking ahead of his disciples. As he came to the towns of Bethphage and Bethany on the Mount of Olives, he sent two disciples ahead. "Go into that village over there," he told them. "As you enter it, you will see a young donkey tied there that no one has ever ridden. Untie it and bring it here. If anyone asks, 'Why are you untying that colt?' just say, 'The Lord needs it.'" So they went and found the colt, just as Jesus had said. And sure enough, as they were untying it, the owners asked them, "Why are you untying that colt?" And the disciples simply replied, "The Lord needs it." So they brought the colt to Jesus and threw their garments over it for him to ride on. As he rode along, the crowds spread out their garments on the road ahead of him. **When he reached the place where the road started down the Mount of Olives, all of his followers began to shout and sing as they walked along, praising God for all the wonderful miracles they had seen. "Blessings on the King who comes in the name of the Lord! Peace in heaven, and glory in highest heaven!"** But some of the Pharisees among the crowd said, "Teacher, rebuke your followers for saying things like that!" He replied, "If they kept quiet, the stones along the road would burst into cheers!" But as he came closer to Jerusalem and saw the city ahead, he began to weep. **How I wish today that you of all people would understand the way to peace.** But now it is too late, and peace is hidden from your eyes. Before long your enemies will build ramparts against your walls and encircle you and close in on you from every side. They will crush you into the ground, and your children with you. Your enemies will not leave a single stone in place, because you did not recognize it when God visited you.""

John's Account: John 12:12-19 NLT

"The next day, the news that Jesus was on the way to Jerusalem swept through the city. **A large crowd of Passover visitors took palm branches and went down the road to meet him. They shouted, "Praise God! Blessings on the one who comes in the name of the Lord! Hail to the King of Israel!"** Jesus found a young donkey and rode on it, fulfilling the prophecy that said: **"Don't be afraid, people**

of Jerusalem. Look, your King is coming, riding on a donkey's colt." His disciples didn't understand at the time that this was a fulfillment of prophecy. But after Jesus entered into his glory, they remembered what had happened and realized that these things had been written about him. Many in the crowd had seen Jesus call Lazarus from the tomb, raising him from the dead, and they were telling others about it. That was the reason so many went out to meet him—because they had heard about this miraculous sign. Then **the Pharisees said to each other, "There's nothing we can do. Look, everyone has gone after him!"**"

John adds more detail to the story after the parade is over.

John 12:20-36 NLT

"Some Greeks who had come to Jerusalem for the Passover celebration paid a visit to Philip, who was from Bethsaida in Galilee. They said, "Sir, we want to meet Jesus." Philip told Andrew about it, and they went together to ask Jesus. Jesus replied, "**Now the time has come for the Son of Man to enter into his glory. I tell you the truth, unless a kernel of wheat is planted in the soil and dies, it remains alone. But its death will produce many new kernels—a plentiful harvest of new lives. Those who love their life in this world will lose it. Those who care nothing for their life in this world will keep it for eternity. Anyone who wants to serve me must follow me, because my servants must be where I am.** And the Father will honor anyone who serves me.

"Now my soul is deeply troubled. Should I pray, 'Father, save me from this hour'? But this is the very reason I came! Father, bring glory to your name." Then a voice spoke from heaven, saying, "I have already brought glory to my name, and I will do so again." When the crowd heard the voice, some thought it was thunder, while others declared an angel had spoken to him. Then Jesus told them, "The voice was for your benefit, not mine. **The time for judging this world has come, when Satan, the ruler of this world, will be cast out. And when I am lifted up from the earth, I will draw everyone to myself.**" He said this to indicate how he was going to die. **The crowd responded, "We understood from Scripture that the Messiah would live forever. How can you say the Son of Man will die? Just who is this Son of Man, anyway?"** Jesus replied, "My light will shine for you just a little longer. Walk in the light while you can, so the darkness will not overtake you. Those who walk in the darkness cannot see where they are going. **Put your trust in the light while there is still time; then you will become children of the light.**" After saying these things, Jesus went away and was hidden from them."

Questions

Q: What are the essentials, the absolute necessities of being a follower of Jesus?

Q: How often do you think about us having more than just a physical existence?

Q: What do you think about this odd phrase Jesus used: humans birth human life, but only the Spirit births a spiritual life?

Q: How do you feel when someone challenges your credentials, like with Nicodemus? Jesus, "You call yourself an expert yet don't know these things?"

Q: Can you imagine what it must have been like when Jesus breathed on his followers? What do you think about that?

Q: Have you ever "groaned" before God in prayer? Talk about what happened?

Q: Do you practice "praying in the Spirit?" When and under what circumstances?

COMMENTARY REFERENCES

CSB Bible Study

John 12:12–19 Jesus's triumphal entry, with people waving palm branches to greet him, is celebrated in Christian tradition as Palm Sunday. Jesus's riding into Jerusalem on a donkey fulfilled OT Scripture (Zch 9:9; see Ps 118:25–26). The waving of palm branches, a symbolic act celebrating victory over one's enemy and/or reception of a king, **may indicate that the people thought Jesus would take Israel's vacant throne and deliver the nation from Roman occupation and suppression.** Yet Jesus's popular acclaim would not last; some people who now hailed him as victor called for his crucifixion only a few days later.

12:12 The next day probably refers to Sunday of Passion Week, now known as Palm Sunday. The festival was the Passover celebration.

12:13 Palm branches were a Jewish national symbol. The people hailed Jesus as the Davidic king of Ps 118:26 (cp. Mt 21:4–9). Psalm 118 was part of the Hallel (Ps 113–118), sung by the temple choir at major Jewish festivals.

12:15 Jesus is depicted as the humble Shepherd-King of Zch 9:9 who came to the Holy City to take his rightful place. An early messianic prophecy spoke of a ruler from Judah who would command the obedience of nations and would ride on a donkey (Gn 49:10–11). Do not be afraid may be taken from Is 40:9, which refers to one who brings good tidings to Zion (Is 44:2).

12:19 The world was an obvious exaggeration, highlighting the Pharisees' frustration (Ac 17:6).

New Bible Commentary

Matthew 21:1–22 Arrival in Jerusalem

This is Jesus' first, and last, visit to Jerusalem in Matthew's story. Ever since 16:21 this has been the goal in view, and now the story reaches its climax, as the

Galilean prophet approaches the capital city of Israel, whose temple was the focus of the earthly worship of the one true God. His arrival was marked by three symbolic actions in vs 1–22 which set the scene for the conflicts to follow.

Matthew 21:1–11 The coming of the King.

Among the crowds of Galilean pilgrims arriving on foot in Jerusalem for the Passover festival, **Jesus chose to make a conspicuous entry on a donkey**. Since we have no other record of Jesus riding, this must have been a deliberate act, meant to be noticed. The instructions in vs 1–3 suggest that it had been carefully prepared. It was, as Matthew makes clear, an acted allusion to Zechariah's prophecy (Zc. 9:9–10) of the coming of the Messianic King.

The disciples and the Galilean crowd recognized the allusion, and turned the arrival into a triumphal procession. Their shouts in v 9 made no secret of their belief that Jesus was the long-awaited Messiah, now coming to set up his reign in Israel's capital.

The people of Jerusalem were, however, taken aback, and the whole city was stirred, not with enthusiasm but with concern: 'Who is this?' Jesus was to them an unknown countryman, little better than a foreigner, from the remote northern province. But the Galilean crowds responded by asserting the claim of 'their' prophet, from Nazareth in Galilee. So we see set up the polarization of attitudes to Jesus which during the next week would have some supporting Jesus (21:46) while others shouted for his crucifixion (27:20ff.)

The Bible Knowledge Commentary

The official presentation of the King (Matthew 21:1–22)

1. the triumphal entry (21:1–11) (Mark 11:1–11; Luke 19:28–42; John 12:12–14)

21:1–5. Jesus and the disciples were approaching Jerusalem from the east as they came up the road from Jericho. When they reached the town of Bethphage on the eastern slopes of the Mount of Olives, Jesus sent two disciples ahead to find a donkey and its colt. Though all four Gospel accounts include the Triumphal Entry, only Matthew mentioned a donkey along with the colt. A simple explanation of what some call a contradiction is that when Jesus rode the colt, the mother donkey naturally went along. Perhaps He rode each animal part of the distance (v. 7).

Jesus told the disciples to bring the animals to Him. If anyone questioned their actions, they were to say the Lord needed them. As Messiah He had the right to request whatever He needed. Matthew mentioned (vv. 4–5) that this act fulfilled a prophecy, namely, Zechariah 9:9 (cf. Isa. 62:11), which spoke to the nation of the coming of her King in a gentle manner riding on ... a colt, the foal (lit., son) of a donkey. This was not the normal manner in which kings arrived, for they usually came as conquerors riding on horses. A colt was a symbol of peace.

Matthew 21:6–8. The disciples got the animals, threw their garments on them to make saddles, and people in the large crowd spread their cloaks (cf. 2 Kings 9:13) and tree branches on the road. **Most of these people were pilgrims from Galilee on their way to Jerusalem to celebrate the Passover. They were familiar with Jesus and the many miracles He had performed in Galilee.**

Matthew 21:9. As the people walked along, some before Jesus and some behind Him, they were probably singing some of the pilgrim psalms. Matthew noted that they (including children, v. 15) shouted the words of Psalm 118:26, Blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord. To Him they shouted, Hosanna to the Son of David. “Hosanna” is from the Hebrew hôšî‘âh nā’, “Save (us), we pray,” taken from Psalm 118:25. It came to be a note of praise as well as petition.

While the crowd did not fully understand the significance of this event, **they seemed to be acknowledging that this One is the promised Seed of David who had come to grant them salvation. Both their actions and words bestowed honor on this One coming into the city, at last presenting Himself publicly as their King.**

Matthew 21:10–11. As Jesus entered Jerusalem, the entire city was moved and asked, Who is this? Since Jesus had usually avoided the city, its inhabitants did not know Him. Those accompanying Jesus from out of town kept answering, This is Jesus, the Prophet from Nazareth in Galilee (cf. v. 46). As the Prophet, He is the One promised by Moses (Deut. 18:15). Luke recorded that Jesus wept over the city (Luke 19:41) and told the religious leaders that the day was a significant time for the nation: “If you, even you, had only known on this day what would bring you peace—but now it is hidden from your eyes” (Luke 19:42). **Jesus may well have had in mind the significant prophecy of Daniel concerning the time of Messiah's coming and that He had arrived in Jerusalem at the very time predicted by Daniel over 500 years previously (Dan. 9:25–26). This event marked the official presentation of Jesus Christ to the nation of Israel as the rightful Son of David.**

Luke 19:35–44: Jesus' advance into the city (19:35–40).

19:35–40. Jesus advanced down the west side of the Mount of Olives (v. 37) toward the city and was praised by the crowd as their Messiah. The act of spreading their cloaks on the road (v. 36) in front of Jesus was a sign of respect. The whole crowd of disciples (matheōn) began joyfully to praise God ... for all the miracles (dynamēōn, “evidences of spiritual power”) they had seen. These believers quoted (v. 38a) from Psalm 118:26, a messianic psalm of praise. The Pharisees understood the meaning of what was going on, for they told Jesus to rebuke His followers, so they would stop calling him Messiah or King. Jesus responded that there must be some proclamation that He is the Messiah. If not, even inanimate objects (stones) would be called on to testify for Him. All

history had pointed toward this single, spectacular event when the Messiah publicly presented Himself to the nation, and God desired that this fact be acknowledged.

Jesus' prophecy about Jerusalem (Luke 19:41–44).

19:41–44. Jesus showed compassion on Jerusalem but He also foretold that days would come when it would lie in ruins. **Jesus rejected Jerusalem because Jerusalem rejected Him. He wept over the city because its people did not understand the significance of what was going on that day—that national acceptance of Him on that day would bring them peace.** Because the people did not recognize the time of God's coming to them (v. 44), the city would be totally destroyed. Roman soldiers did this starting in a.d. 70

The triumphal entry

John 12:9–19: 12:9–11. Jesus was such a controversial Person that it was impossible for Him to be near Jerusalem and remain unnoticed. From all over the country, people came to the Passover feast. Many sought out Jesus (cf. 11:56) and also ... **Lazarus. Because Lazarus had been restored, many ... Jews believed in Jesus. So the chief priests planned to kill two men—Jesus and Lazarus!**

John 12:12–13. A wild enthusiasm over Jesus broke out. Thousands of Galilean pilgrims had come to the Passover, and they had seen many of His mighty works. **Previously He had rejected the role of a political Messiah (6:15) but, they thought, perhaps now was the right moment. Jerusalem was the city of the great King and He was coming to it.** Waving their palm branches, symbols of victory, the people were shouting (ekraugazon; cf. comments on 11:43) Hosanna! "Hosanna" in Hebrew means "Please save" or "Save now" (cf. Ps. 118:25). It came to be a shout of praise. Quoting Psalm 118:26, they ascribed messianic titles to Him: He who comes (lit., "the Coming One"; cf. John 11:27) and the King of Israel.

John 12:14–15. Jesus' **riding into the city on a young donkey was a sign of peace** (cf. comments on Matt. 21:2, which speaks of Jesus riding on a donkey and a colt). **He did not ride a war horse or carry a sword or wear a crown. Nor did He ride in a wheeled vehicle, as did many kings.** His manner of entry fulfilled Zechariah's prophecy which contrasted Jesus' coming (Zech. 9:9) with the coming of Alexander the Great (Zech. 9:1–8). Daughter of Zion is a poetic way of referring to the people of Jerusalem, the city built on Mount Zion. Here, in quoting Zechariah 9:9, John called Jesus Israel's King.

John 12:16. The disciples, though close to Jesus and participants in these events, did not understand them. They lacked the perspective of the Cross and the Resurrection (when He was glorified). They were unaware that Zechariah's

prophecy had been written about Him. Their faith was weak and they needed the ministry of the Holy Spirit (16:12–14).

John 12:17–18. The size of the crowd kept increasing. The news of the great miraculous sign—Lazarus raised from the dead—spread through the city, and other groups surged out to meet Him. It was a day of great popular acclaim, but sadly the people had little spiritual perception.

John 12:19. The mass reception of Jesus made the plans of the Pharisees impossible. They “were looking for some sly way to arrest Jesus and kill Him. ‘But not during the Feast,’ they said, ‘or the people may riot’ ” (Mark 14:1–2). Pessimistically they acknowledged, The whole world has gone after Him. Irony is again evident, for most of those people did not really believe in Jesus.

Internet Links

[Christianity Today](#)

Each of the four Gospels tells the story, and each of them is slightly different.

It is a very rich story, but here are three things we should note.

First, by riding in on a donkey Jesus was showing what kind of claims he was making. He was not entering the city as a conqueror who would compel people to do his will; he was a different kind of king altogether, who came in peace.

Second, the people recognized something different about him, even though he was surrounded by a ragged troop of disciples and riding a nondescript animal. They spread cloaks and branches before him in an echo of the Roman practice of welcoming a god.

Third, he entered willingly, knowing he was going to his death and knowing that some of those who were cheering him on Palm Sunday would be calling for his execution on Good Friday. Yet he accepted their praises, in a sign of his grace towards sinners.

[Details from Mark's Gospel about the triumphant entry](#)

Ian Paul: theologian, author, speaker, academic consultant. Adjunct Professor, Fuller Theological Seminary.

Although Mark doesn't tell us some things we would like to know—like which disciples go ahead to find the colt, exactly which village the colt comes from, who the owners are, or what they felt when the colt was taken—he does tell us

about the colt being untied—five times! The disciples will find a colt that is tied up; they are to untie the colt; they might be questioned about the untying; they did untie it; they were asked about untying. And, in characteristic style, he includes some precise detail (it is tied at a door outside on the street) which the other gospels omit, much as he has told us about the green grass at the feeding of the 5,000 (Mark 6.39) and the cushion on which Jesus lays his head in the boat (Mark 4.38). Why all the focus on untying?! Because, according to Gen 49.10–11, this is the sign of the Coming One who is the true ruler of Judah, to whom the nations of the world will submit, and he is the one who ties and unties the donkey. As Joel Green comments on the parallel account in Luke, ‘the whole process is wrapped in the interpretive cloth of eschatological expectation and scriptural allusion.’

Jesus emphasizes that this ‘colt’ has not been ridden before, and this is confirmed by the need of the disciples to put their cloaks on it, since otherwise it has no saddle. **This might suggest Jesus’ identity as king, since the king’s steed cannot be ridden by others.** It might hint at an animal set apart for holy use, which cannot be used by others, or for other purposes. But the primary allusion is to be found in Zech 9.9–10, an allusion that Matthew makes explicit. (It is curious to note that Matthew, likely written for a more Jewish audience, needs to make explicit that which in Mark is implicit). **In Zech 9.9, the king who comes to Jerusalem to declare the victory of God over Israel’s enemies, and bring liberation and peace to the city, rides on a ‘new colt’,** *polos neos*, which is understood by Mark (and Jesus) to refer to a colt (Mark uses exactly the same term) which has not been ridden before.

Jesus’ act of sitting on the donkey is striking in two ways. First, he has previously walked everywhere; this is the first time the gospel records him as riding. Secondly, he would be conspicuous amongst the pilgrim crowd, since pilgrims are expected to walk to Jerusalem if they are able. (Indeed, walking would be the normal method of travel for ordinary people; the image of Mary riding on a donkey to Bethlehem at the nativity is the fantastic creation of children’s Christmas plays.) Secrecy is left behind, and Jesus approaches the city in open messianic splendour.

The account here is worth comparing with an earlier account of a previous ‘triumphal entry’, that of Alexander the Great entering Babylon, the old capital of the ancient Near East, in October 331 BC. The longest description is that of the Roman author Quintus Curtius Rufus, who based his account on earlier, Greek sources.

A large number of the Babylonians had taken up a position on the walls, eager to have a view of their new king, but most went out to meet him, including the man in charge of the citadel and royal treasury, Bagophanes. Not to be outdone by Mazaeus in paying his respects to Alexander, Bagophanes had

carpeted the whole road with flowers and garlands and set up at intervals on both sides silver altars heaped not just with frankincense but with all manner of perfumes.note

Following him were his gifts – herds of cattle and horses, and lions, too, and leopards, carried along in cages. Next came the Magians chanting a song in their native fashion, and behind them were the Chaldaeans, note then the Babylonians, represented not only by priests but also by musicians equipped with their national instrument. (The role of the latter was to sing the praises of the Persian kings, that of the Chaldaeans to reveal astronomical movements and regular seasonal changes.)

At the rear came the Babylonian cavalry, their equipment and that of the horses suggesting extravagance rather than majesty. Surrounded by an armed guard, the king instructed the townspeople to follow at the rear of his infantry; then he entered the city on a chariot and went into the palace.

The next day he made an inspection of Darius' furniture and all his treasure, but it was the city itself, with its beauty and antiquity, that commanded the attention not only of the king, but of all the Macedonians. And with justification. Founded by Semiramisnote (not, as most have believed, Belus, whose palace is still to be seen there), its wall is constructed of small baked bricks and is cemented together with bitumen. The wall is ten meters wide and it is said that two chariots meeting on it can safely pass each other.

Not for Jesus flowers and garlands, but ordinary cloaks and branches. Not for him the splendour of a conquered army and his own troops, but peasant crowds and even children. He rides not on a war chariot, but on a young donkey. **He hasn't come to conquer the city—he hasn't come to conquer anything, but to be conquered, to 'give his life as a ransom for many'. This is not a ride to victory and glory, but a ride to service and death. And yet, in this way Jesus will win a victory and draw a people to himself.**

Pray.com [Donkeys get another shout out!](#)

The use of a donkey wasn't incidental, as donkeys were symbolic of peace and humility, as opposed to the large horses that kings and soldiers would ride into town on.

Palm Sunday is a day marked to celebrate these events and Jesus' Passion.

Christian denominations, including the Orthodox, Catholic, Anglican, Methodist, Lutheran, and Reformed traditions, typically offer palm branches to attending Churchgoers before delivering their Palm Sunday liturgies.

[Why would a king ride a donkey instead of a warhorse?](#)

In the ancient Middle Eastern world, leaders rode horses if they rode to war, but donkeys if they came in peace. First Kings 1:33 mentions Solomon **riding a donkey on** the day he was recognized as the new king of Israel.

[The Messiah's Donkey](#)

Summary of Messages – Hope Revolution:

- Part One: **Right revolution, wrong throne.** What if your revolution is for the wrong cause?
- Part Two:
- Part Three:
- Part Four: