

# Who Wants to Be the Donkey?

December 24, 2017

## I Advent Wreat

## II The Nativity

### A) God does nothing by accident

- 1) Everything in the Bible is written for us
- 2) Everything God has done, does, and will do has significance for us
- 3) Every aspect of Jesus' life is important
- 4) He is the Word made flesh

### B) **SLIDE** Traditional Nativity

- 1) We all grew up with this scene
- 2) Mary, Joseph, and the baby in a wooden manger
- 3) The three wise men
- 4) Ox and Lamb (they are missing a camel as well)
- 5) The shepherds
- 6) We combine all of these into one tableau even though they do not all belong together at one time
- 7) But we are not going to talk about them

## III **SLIDE** Donkey

A) **Luke 2:4-6 (NIV)** <sup>4</sup> So Joseph also went up from the town of Nazareth in Galilee to Judea, to Bethlehem the town of David, because he belonged to the house and line of David. <sup>5</sup> He went there to register with Mary, who was pledged to be married to him and was expecting a child. <sup>6</sup> While they were there, the time came for the baby to be born,

- 1) Wait. No mention that Mary rode a donkey to Bethlehem
- 2) Yet, for my entire life, I have heard that Mary rode a donkey
- 3) I think she did because a donkey is extremely significant
- 4) The donkey gives us great insight into the birth and reign of Jesus Christ

#### IV **SLIDE** Why is the donkey significant for us?

##### A) Common

- 1) **I Corinthians 1:27-28 (NIV)** <sup>27</sup> But God chose the foolish things of the world to shame the wise; God chose the weak things of the world to shame the strong. <sup>28</sup> God chose the lowly things of this world and the despised things--and the things that are not--to nullify the things that are,
- 2) I do not know about you, but I qualify
- 3) We will nullify the things that are by believing in the things that are not yet.
- 4) Nullify: to make to cease, to render inactive, to put an end to
- 5) We are never to serve in arrogance or self-righteousness
- 6) Neither are we to remove ourselves from service because we do not feel qualified

##### B) **SLIDE** Sure-footed and steady

- 1) We are to make a way in the wilderness
- 2) It will not be easy; it will take effort and sacrifice
- 3) Things will not change overnight
- 4) We are to make room in the inn, and we are to remain sure-footed as we enter this new year
- 5) We are not to stray to the left or the right
- 6) We carry Jesus to our world just as that donkey carried the unborn Jesus to Bethlehem: steady, slow, sure - one step at a time
- 7) **Hebrews 10:36 (NIV)** You need to persevere so that when you have done the will of God, you will receive what he has promised.
- 8) **Romans 12:12 (NIV)** Be joyful in hope, patient in affliction, faithful in prayer.

##### C) **SLIDE** Donkey is a beast of burden

- 1) Jesus tells us in **Matthew 11:29 (NIV)** *Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls.*
- 2) Jesus has entrusted us with much

- 3) He has poured into our lives that we might pour into others
- 4) Yet, the yoke He places on us does not beat us down
- 5) Jesus gives us the strength to carry His word everywhere and always with peace and gentleness

D) **SLIDE** Donkey often goes unnoticed

- 1) This is going to be a year to serve and comfort the people
- 2) We will make progress, but it may be one small step at a time
- 3) The service we do will often go unnoticed by those around us but not by Jesus
- 4) The service we do is to bring glory to Christ and not to us
- 5) John the Baptist had quite a following as he began his ministry
- 6) People showed up in huge crowds to be baptized by him
- 7) But, when Jesus came, the crowds and disciples began to leave John
- 8) His response: **John 3:30-31 (NASB)** "[Jesus] must increase, but I must decrease. He who comes from above is above all, he who is of the earth is from the earth and speaks of the earth. He who comes from heaven is above all."

V **SLIDE** Most importantly: Donkey was a symbol of peace

A) Scriptures about the Christ

- 1) **Zechariah 9:9 (NIV)** <sup>9</sup> Rejoice greatly, O Daughter of Zion! Shout, Daughter of Jerusalem! See, your king comes to you, righteous and having salvation, gentle and riding on a donkey, on a colt, the foal of a donkey.
- 2) **SLIDE Isaiah 9:6 (NIV)** <sup>6</sup> For to us a child is born, to us a son is given, and the government will be on his shoulders. And he will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.
- 3) **SLIDE Luke 2:13-14 (NIV)** <sup>13</sup> Suddenly a great company of the heavenly host appeared with the angel, praising God and saying, <sup>14</sup> "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace to men on whom his favor rests."

- 4) The Christ Child is the Prince of Peace, and that is important!
- 5) He has come to bring peace to all people who accept Him
- 6) During this time, kings rode donkeys if they came in peace
- 7) They rode a horse if they came to war
- 8) Zechariah tells us that our king will come gentle and riding on a donkey
- 9) **SLIDE John 12:14-15 (NIV)** <sup>14</sup> Jesus found a young donkey and sat on it, as it is written: <sup>15</sup> "Do not be afraid, Daughter Zion; see, your king is coming, seated on a donkey's colt."
- 10) Jesus rode into Jerusalem on a donkey because He was and is the Prince of Peace
- 11) What does this have to do with Christmas and the nativity?
- 12) I believe a donkey carried the unborn Prince of Peace to Bethlehem because God was and is telling the world that He has sent us His Son in peace
- 13) God did not send His Son into the world to condemn the world but to save each one of us through Jesus Christ
- 14) That donkey sent a message that the Christ, the Son of the Living God, comes in peace to reconcile us to God
- B) **SLIDE** We often reject that peace
  - 1) Although He comes in peace, we reject that peace
  - 2) The world, as did we all at one time, ridicule, mock, and reject the peace that Jesus offers
  - 3) A homeowners' association told a family they had to remove a "Jesus" sign from their yard because another neighbor was offended
  - 4) Officials at the University of Minnesota have outlawed all religious symbols: stars, angels, red and green, Santa, dreidels, Christmas trees, and wrapped gifts
  - 5) Jesus comes in peace, yet the world makes war with Him
  - 6) We all were His enemies
  - 7) **Colossians 1:21 (NIV)** Once you were alienated from God and were enemies in your minds because of your evil behavior.

C) **SLIDE** However, there is another side to the Prince of Peace

1) **Revelation 19:11-16 (NIV)** <sup>11</sup> I saw heaven standing open and there before me was a white horse, whose rider is called Faithful and True. With justice he judges and wages war. <sup>12</sup> His eyes are like blazing fire, and on his head are many crowns. He has a name written on him that no one knows but he himself. <sup>13</sup> He is dressed in a robe dipped in blood, and his name is the Word of God. <sup>14</sup> The armies of heaven were following him, riding on white horses and dressed in fine linen, white and clean. <sup>15</sup> Coming out of his mouth is a sharp sword with which to strike down the nations. "He will rule them with an iron scepter."<sup>[a]</sup> He treads the winepress of the fury of the wrath of God Almighty. <sup>16</sup> On his robe and on his thigh, he has this name written:

2) **SLIDE** When Jesus comes again, He will not be riding a donkey

3) **SLIDE** He will be riding a white horse, ready for battle!

D) **SLIDE** As this year ends and the next begins

1) Have you ever bought someone you love a great gift and found it difficult to wait to present that gift?

2) Did you anticipate how that gift of love would affect him or her?

3) Were you driven by the joy it would bring to him or her?

4) We are blessed to be the "donkeys" who carry the greatest gift God has given us to a world that has rejected the Prince of Peace

5) We need to make room for Christ and the donkey

6) The Lord is going to put pieces together

7) He will bring in new pieces, but not to replace pieces who are already here

8) But, we are living stones so He will not force us to serve

9) He will give us creative ways to carry the message of peace into a hostile world

10) We also carry the message that the Christ Child will return on a white horse!

11) We cannot separate the two because the Christ Child is the Prince of Peace and the King of kings