

Woodland Baptist Church
April 13, 2014 - Morning Worship
Matthew 21:1-11, Palm Sunday
The Passion Week Begins

1) INTRODUCTION

- a) **John 18:36 - 36 Jesus answered, "My kingdom is not of this world. If my kingdom were of this world, my servants would have been fighting, that I might not be delivered over to the Jews. But my kingdom is not from the world."**
- b) I don't know if you have ever seen the coronation of a King or Queen before - as Americans our nation was born in an anti-monarchy movement, so we cannot completely appreciate what that really looks like, but it is an incredible sight to see. Incredibly beautiful pomp and dress, jewel studded crowns and scepters, many times there are parades with soldiers and servants with thousands of spectators.
 - i) Today we will experience the coronation of God's Son and the experience will be quite different because his kingdom is not of this world.

2) READ MATTHEW 21:1-11

3) VERSES 1-5 - Jesus INITIATES his CORONATION

- a) **Now when they drew near to Jerusalem and came to Bethphage, to the Mount of Olives, then Jesus sent two disciples, 2 saying to them, "Go into the village in front of you, and immediately you will find a donkey tied, and a colt with her. Untie them and bring them to me. 3 If anyone says anything to you, you shall say, 'The Lord needs them,' and he will send them at once."**
 - i) This is the end of Christ's earthly life. Jerusalem was the end, he will never leave Jerusalem again. Christ will die in just a few days and his entry into Jerusalem will be the only time he allows himself to publicly recognized as the Messiah.
 - ii) As Christ leaves the areas of Jericho and Bethany, where he had raised Lazarus from the dead, he and his disciples now travel toward Jerusalem for the Passover week. As you can imagine, Christ's popularity and notoriety were in full surge as he had just raised Lazarus from the dead and now the Jewish opposition and desire to kill him would be raging in their hearts more than ever.

iii) As Jesus and his followers and the crowds following him neared Bethphage (a small village about two miles east of Jerusalem) Christ instructs two disciples to go into Bethphage and bring the donkey and colt they find tied together to him.

(1) Christ also instructs them on what to say if someone questions them as they are untying the animals, "if anyone says anything to you, you shall say, 'The Lord needs them,' and he will send them at once.

iv) **It happens exactly how Jesus predicts** - they go to Bethphage, they find the donkey and foal tied together, they untie them to bring them back to Jesus, they are asked "why they are untying them," they tell them what Jesus had told them, the owners of the beasts, most likely followers of Christ, comply with the request immediately.

b) **Fulfilled prophecy - Zechariah 9:9 - 4 This took place to fulfill what was spoken by the prophet, saying, 5 "Say to the daughter of Zion, 'Behold, your king is coming to you, humble, and mounted on a donkey, on a colt, the foal of a beast of burden.'"** This is very important to understand - if Jesus was not the Son of God, he could not fulfill prophecy, but here, Matthew under the the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, shows us that this act by Christ was initiated specifically to fulfill prophecy penned over 500 years earlier by Zechariah.

i) Zechariah was a post-exilic prophet, which means he spoke God's word to the Jewish people after they were exiled in Babylon for 70 years. The specific passage that is quoted is in chapter 9. The chapter has three sections:

(1) 1-8 - is widely agreed up by historians to have been fulfilled by Alexander the Great in his conquests.

(2) 14-17 - is understood to be victory language related to the time period of the Maccabean rebellion that ousted the Syrians.

(3) 9-13 - however has always been interpreted as messianic, fulfilled by Christ Jesus, during his final entry into Jerusalem.

(a) *Notice the striking language* - Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion! Shout aloud, O daughter of Jerusalem! Behold, your king is coming to you; righteous and having salvation is he, **humble and mounted on a donkey, on a colt, the foal of a donkey.** 10 I will cut off the chariot from Ephraim and the war horse from Jerusalem; and the battle bow shall be cut off, and he shall speak peace to the nations; his rule shall be from sea to sea, and from the River to the ends of the earth.

ii) A donkey? Did we read that correctly? The Messiah of Israel, the Alpha and the Omega, the beginning and the end, the one that has dominion, the one that everything was created through, for and by....comes into the holy city riding a donkey...at the time of his coronation as King,

(1) He not slaying, he's saving! He's a king unlike any other and has a coronation unlike any other. He did not come to make war with Rome, but to make peace with God on behalf of man. We have to take him for who he is, not who we want him to be.

4) **Verses 6-11 - The PEOPLE make a RUNWAY for Christ**

a) **6 The disciples went and did as Jesus had directed them. 7 They brought the donkey and the colt and put on them their cloaks, and he sat on them. 8 Most of the crowd spread their cloaks on the road, and others cut branches from the trees and spread them on the road.**

i) **The disciples being unsure of what beast Christ would sit on**, put their cloaks, as saddles, on the back of both the adult and baby donkeys. Once they returned to Christ, he sat on the cloaks on the foal while the older donkey remained tied to the younger, most likely to keep the younger one calm since this would be it's first time to be ridden.

ii) **THE CROWDS** - Notice how the crowd grows and converges on Christ - as we have two primary flows - one coming into Jerusalem, one coming out of Jerusalem:

(1) Bethany - we have a mass that has witnessed the raising of Lazarus from the dead approaching from East of Jerusalem following Christ as he travels from Jericho and Bethany.

(2) Bethphage - we have a mass that was triggered when the disciples went into Bethphage to get the donkey and foal - they are following the disciples back with the animals.

(3) Jerusalem - as they get closer to Jerusalem, the pilgrims from the Galilee are will come out from Jerusalem to celebrate Christ's entrance.

iii) **THE CROWD'S ACTIONS** - Some of them take off their **cloaks** and place them on the path in front of Christ as he rides the foal...and others **cut off palm branches** and do the same.

(1) What is the purpose of this? We have a runway being made for the Lord's coronation...NOT of gold or silver, or the finest fabrics available...we

have old, worn, sweaty, **cloaks**...off the people's backs...and **palm branches** cut off near by trees being laid across the ground before him.

iv) **CELEBRATION** - The people are celebrating the entrance of whom they believe to be their Messiah King, the one who would deliver them from the hand of the pagan, Roman oppressor...they are willing to give the "shirt off their back" to honor the coming King? I am under your feet - I submit to you.

(1) They are providing Jesus with a **ceremonial carpet** over which the king should ride - much like rolling out the red carpet, but in this case it was the **cloaks** off the people's backs and **palm branches** cut from the sides of the roads.

(2) Why palm branches?

(a) Palm branches are instructed to be used during the Festival of Tabernacles, **Leviticus 23:40 - 40 And you shall take on the first day the fruit of splendid trees, branches of palm trees and boughs of leafy trees and willows of the brook, and you shall rejoice before the Lord your God seven days.**

(b) Through this historical use, Palm branches became a national symbol of Israel, much like the bald eagle is our national bird in America or our national flag, the "stars and stripes." So, as their hopeful King came riding on a foal in accordance with a Messianic prophecy of Scripture....they ran toward him with cloaks and palm branches in anticipation of emancipation from Rome as they believed Israel would be restored to being a national power.

b) Now, we can visualize the scene - After three years of controversial ministry, specifically, raising Lazarus from the dead, Christ is coming into Jerusalem on Passover week (the week that commemorates Israel's deliverance from Egypt)... he comes from the east from Jericho and Bethany, through Bethphage and calculates this perfectly to the Father's will, making sure that the timing fulfills prophecy perfectly. For the first time in his life allows himself to be given the title of Messiah by the crowds.

i) We have pilgrims from Galilee and many other places...we have residents from Jerusalem, Bethany, Bethphage, Pharisees, Sadducees....all of Judea is represented - so we have 1,000,000 + people in Jerusalem for Passover witnessing this event.

5) THE CROWD'S REACTION

- a) **HALLEL PSALM - 9** **And the crowds that went before him and that followed him were shouting, "Hosanna to the Son of David! Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord! Hosanna in the highest!"**
- i) All the way from Bethany, through Bethphage to city gate of Jerusalem, the crowds (the common people) were shouting - Hosanna to the Son of David! Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord! Hosanna in the highest! [Glory to God - our deliver...deliver us!]
- (1) Save us Now! Son of David! Blessed is he that comes in the name of the Lord! Our new Moses is here that will deliver us from the Roman oppressor!! Our time is here! Praise God! Jesus save us!
- ii) There is one major problem with this celebration - Jesus was very much the Messiah and he was the fulfillment of the Davidic Covenant and every other prophecy we could name in the Old Testament...but this coronation was not about military deliverance and Israel return to glory - this trip to Jerusalem was about soul salvation.
- b) By the crowds use of the Hallel Psalm it was very evident that their expectations of this entry into Jerusalem was completely different than what the Father and the Son had planned.
- i) What's amazing is that in all of this excitement, in this frenzied crowd, it never occurred to them why Jesus was riding a baby donkey. Oh, they probably jumped to the conclusion that it was fulfillment of Zechariah 9, and that this sign meant that Jesus was their Messiah...but exactly precisely what that meant could not be in their minds, based on what would happen in just a few days.
- (1) They were thinking - earthly dominance and control; they were thinking much like the disciples thought just before Christ ascended - "So when they had come together, they asked him, "Lord, will you at this time restore the kingdom to Israel?" Is that limit to their vision and understanding of the promise of Abraham? It's all about them and their nationalism? Their prestige in this life and time? It's all about their comfort and security in Israel?
- (2) The **cloaks** and **palm branches** and the **baby donkey** spoke more loudly than they realized - Jesus was not bouncing on the back of gigantic and

powerful war horse holding a sword, wearing armor, with a legion of soldiers...there was no purple train of carpet or flowers thrown in his pathway...there were no shining chariots flanking him to his left and right! This was a humble king, coming to die in accordance with the Scriptures at the hands of wicked men...and those that follow him must also die to themselves first, before coming to Him.

c) **Words from Christ** - As the city of Jerusalem finally comes into view, Christ fully realizes that the majority of the people cheering him on had no idea the true nature of his mission and what would happen in just a few days....as many of these now cheering him on to victory would be chanting "crucify him! crucify him!" in a just a few short days...

i) **Luke 19:41-44** - 41 And when he drew near and saw the city, he wept over it, 42 saying, "Would that you, even you, had known on this day the things that make for peace! But now they are hidden from your eyes. 43 For the days will come upon you, when your enemies will set up a barricade around you and surround you and hem you in on every side 44 and tear you down to the ground, you and your children within you. And they will not leave one stone upon another in you, because you did not know the time of your visitation."

(1) Jesus' heart is torn apart as the Son of God cries, because he knows that nearly all of Jerusalem will turn on him, reject him and kill him...and in about 40 years, the city will be completely destroyed by the Romans and thousands upon thousands of Jews will be massacred - many of those within his shadow as he rides into the city.

d) **10 And when he entered Jerusalem, the whole city was stirred up, saying, "Who is this?" 11 And the crowds said, "This is the prophet Jesus, from Nazareth of Galilee."**

i) No, he is not just a "prophet" he is the Son of God the Messiah.

6) CLOSE

- a) Truthfully, we miss the majority of what Jesus tries to tell us - the cloaks, the palm branches the baby donkey - all of these symbols screamed - humble, gentle, prince of peace, not warrior king...oh, he was a warrior king, make no mistake about it, but he did it in a way that defies our understanding. He did it through "loving his enemies," and "praying for those that persecuted him," our weapons are not of this world....we do not fight against flesh and blood....but the rulers and powers in the heavenly places.
- b) We think like Peter did right after he declared Jesus as the "Son of the living God."
 - i) 21 From that time Jesus began to show his disciples that he must go to Jerusalem and suffer many things from the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and on the third day be raised. 22 And Peter took him aside and began to rebuke him, saying, "Far be it from you, Lord! This shall never happen to you." 23 But he turned and said to Peter, "Get behind me, Satan! You are a hindrance to me. For you are not setting your mind on the things of God, but on the things of man."
- c) This time around brothers and sister - let us think like God!

7) CLOSE

- a) What do we learn from this event in the life of Christ?
 - i) We see a savior who died voluntarily - he deliberately planned this entry into Jerusalem in the most controversial way that he could - in perfect conformity to the Scriptures - he knew this would enrage the Jewish Leadership even more than they already were...and he knew that it would be one of several final acts that would earn him the cross at Golgatha.
 - ii) We see savior who forced the hand of the leadership in Jerusalem - Christ made his timing become theirs.
 - iii) Through his purposeful conformity to Zechariah 9, Christ proclaims his Messiahship to the Jews.
 - iv) He shows what type of Savior he is....a humble one - riding on a baby donkey through the gates of the Holy City.

- b) We are supposed to be obedient to the Scriptures no matter the consequence.
 - i) Christ fully submitted to the will of the Father - and he was to enter into Jerusalem exactly in this fashion and he knew it set off an already agitated and angry Jewish leadership. Christ fulfilled Zechariah 9:9 which he knew was going to enrage the Jewish leadership - this was a Messianic prophecy and Christ purposely put himself right in the middle of it.

- c) Most of our lives as committed and faithful Christians, some of those closest to us will have a difficult time understanding why we do the things we do.
 - i) Why did Jesus do it that way? Why do we insist on preaching and teaching the Bible? Why do we insist on Fathers and Mothers conforming to the Scriptures? Why do we insist on marriage being between one man and one woman? Why do we insist on being against abortion? Why do we insist on being against racism? Why do we insist that children obey their parents in the Lord?

- d) It is interesting and telling to know that many that day had no idea the message that Christ was giving them by entering Jerusalem the way he did. Are we sure that we are following the Christ of the Scriptures...or are we following one we have made in our imagination?

- e) Revelation 5:8-14 - From suffering servant...to conquering King - unless you come to know him as suffering servant, you can't know him as conquering King.

