

Our Lord's Triumphal Entry into Jerusalem

Mark 11:1-11

Mark 11:1-11 – *“Now when they drew near Jerusalem, to Bethphage and Bethany, at the Mount of Olives, He sent two of His disciples; ² and He said to them, “Go into the village opposite you; and as soon as you have entered it you will find a colt tied, on which no one has sat. Loose it and bring it. ³ And if anyone says to you, ‘Why are you doing this?’ say, ‘The Lord has need of it,’ and immediately he will send it here.” ⁴ So they went their way, and found the colt tied by the door outside on the street, and they loosed it. ⁵ But some of those who stood there said to them, “What are you doing, loosing the colt?” ⁶ And they spoke to them just as Jesus had commanded. So they let them go.*

⁷ Then they brought the colt to Jesus and threw their clothes on it, and He sat on it. ⁸ And many spread their clothes on the road, and others cut down leafy branches from the trees and spread them on the road. ⁹ Then those who went before and those who followed cried out, saying:

“Hosanna!

‘Blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord!’

¹⁰ Blessed is the kingdom of our father David

That comes in the name of the Lord!

Hosanna in the highest!”

¹¹ Jesus went into Jerusalem and into the temple. So when He had looked around at all things, as the hour was already late, He went out to Bethany with the twelve.”

Background Notes

In Mark 11 we have the beginning of the last week of our Lord's earthly ministry, sometimes called the Passion Week. The triumphal entry of our Lord into Jerusalem is what we celebrate on Palm Sunday, the Sunday before Easter. The Triumphal Entry was the fulfillment of the Messianic prophecy found in Zechariah 9:9, written 500 years before: *“Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion! Shout, O daughter of Jerusalem! Behold, your King is coming to you; He is just and having salvation, lowly and riding on a donkey, a colt, the foal of a donkey.”* Zechariah's prophesied that Israel's Messiah would not come as a proud, conquering hero riding on a white horse, in shining armor, and all that kind of thing. No, He would come in a much less dramatic way—humble, and mounted on a young donkey.

Verse 1 says that the Lord started from Bethany, a little village about two miles east of Jerusalem where our Lord stayed for the first few nights of His last week of ministry. He may have stayed at the home of Mary and Martha and Lazarus. And as the Lord began His walk toward Jerusalem on that Sunday afternoon, He sent two of His disciples ahead to the little village of Bethphage, between Bethany and Jerusalem. The Lord knew everything that was going to take place – He

knew that they would find an unbroken colt tied at the entrance of the village, and He told them exactly how the owners would respond to their reason, “The Lord has need of it.”

How did the Lord know all these details? Well, as a man, it’s possible that Jesus may have known the owner and where he lived, and so forth, but I think we have evidence of the Lord’s deity here. His omniscience is clearly displayed. He knows *everything* - because He is *God*.

The crowd welcomed the Lord into Jerusalem. They spread palms fronds, leafy branches and some of their clothing on the road as a carpet. It was like “rolling out the red carpet” for a dignitary today. When the people cried out, “Hosanna!” which literally means “Save now” or *Save, we pray!* they were quoting a Messianic Psalm, Psalm 118:25-26: “*Save now, I pray, O Lord; O Lord, I pray, send now prosperity. Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord! We have blessed you from the house of the Lord.*”

Psalm 118 was one of the “Psalms of Ascent” that was typically sung or chanted during the Passover Week. So when the people sang “Hosanna!” “Save us!” don’t get the idea that the crowd was saying, “Save us, because we repent of our sins and we want to be saved.” No. They were simply singing a psalm. Many of the people who were joining in here meant “save” in the sense of “God save the King” or “Hail to the King” – something like that. And probably many of the people meant “Save us from our Roman oppressors.” Remember, the Jews were not a sovereign nation at this time. Judea (present-day Israel) was a province in the Roman Empire, and the Jewish people had to live with all the hardships of a conquered people.

Even though most of the crowd had the wrong concept of how the Messiah would come, and what was involved in His coming, at least they recognized that Psalm 118 was a Messianic psalm. They realized that God had promised an everlasting Kingdom to David through the Messiah, and they knew that Jesus claimed to be the Messiah. So they welcomed Him into Jerusalem.

Doctrinal Points

1. God made a legitimate offer of the Davidic Kingdom to the Jewish People

Verse 10: “*Blessed is the coming of the Kingdom of our father David.*” What did the people mean by this statement? Way back in 2 Samuel, God had promised David a kingdom that would last forever. 2 Samuel 7:16: “*And your house and your kingdom shall be established forever before you; your throne shall be established forever.*” So the people properly understood that Jesus, as a son of David, was a fulfillment of this prophecy, as well as a fulfillment of the predictions of Psalm 118. So the King and the kingdom were offered and presented to the people—a legitimate offer of the Davidic Kingdom, just as God had promised.

But the King and His Kingdom were rejected! The nation of Israel at that time refused to accept Jesus as the Messiah, and they crucified Him. As a result of their rejection of the King, the kingdom promised to David was not set up at that time. Does that mean, then, that the kingdom that God promised David will *never* be set up? Or does it mean that we're supposed to *spiritualize* that prophecy and say it applies to the Church today? No, I don't think so. The earthly kingdom **will** be set up when Jesus Christ comes back again. You might say that the kingdom has been *postponed* until the nation of Israel returns to the Lord in the future.

Now it's true that anyone who accepts Christ as Savior *now* does enter the spiritual kingdom of God, but this passage refers to an *earthly kingdom*—the Davidic Kingdom that was promised to David and the Jewish people. So although there a definite offer of the Davidic Kingdom was made to the Jewish people when our Lord came, the King and His Kingdom were rejected, and therefore, the fulfillment of those prophecies has been postponed. The fulfillment of those promises awaits the Lord's Second Coming.

Listen to what the rejected King said to the people who rejected Him: *"See! Your house is left to you desolate; and assuredly, I say to you, you shall not see Me until the time comes when you say, 'Blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord!'"* (Luke 13:35).

2. Profession is not the same as salvation.

Where were the people who welcomed the Lord Jesus when He was arrested just a few days later? On Sunday they all professed Christ as the Messiah – but in a few days they had all deserted Him. This is a pretty good indication that, for most of them, their praise was only "lip service." The Lord Jesus always drew a distinction between the "true possessors" (those who truly believe) and "false professors" (those who only profess to believe). Remember the parable of the wheat and the tares (weeds), in Matthew 13? The tares looked like wheat, but they were not wheat. They represented the "false professors" who were, in the parable, burned at the end of harvest time.

Are you more than a "professor"? Have you not only professed to believe in the Lord Jesus, but truly trusted Him for salvation with your heart? Listen to the words of Romans 10:9: *that if you confess with your mouth the Lord Jesus and believe in your heart that God has raised Him from the dead, you will be saved.* Notice – true belief involves *confessing* (or professing), but true belief also involves *possessing*. Profession is not the same as salvation. There must be more than profession. There must be true belief!

Practical Applications

Are you willing to let the Lord borrow your stuff?

The Lord wanted to borrow the young, unbroken donkey. In Luke 19:33, the parallel passage, we read that the owners of

the donkey asked the disciples why they were untying the donkey. When the disciples replied that the Lord needed to use their donkey, the owners immediately gave permission.

Would we have done the same thing? Suppose we owned that young donkey. Would we have said, “Yes, the Lord may borrow it”? We might think “Yes – I would have done that for sure!” Maybe - but what about **now**? Are we willing to loan our car to the Lord? Are we willing to loan our homes to the Lord? Or are we afraid that our things might take too much wear and tear if they’re used in the Lord’s service? Praise God for Christians who are willing to suffer all kinds of wear and tear on their “stuff” for the sake of the Lord’s work!

A few years ago a Christian couple opened up their vacation home for our church youth group to use for the weekend. It was a great retreat, and the whole group grew together in Christ - but the vacation home did suffer wear and tear (maybe a little bit above average wear and tear). But guess what? The Christian couple didn’t complain, and they refused to take any kind of remuneration. **And** they offered their home again!! Now, that’s really letting the Lord borrow your stuff! Are you willing to let the Lord borrow your stuff?

2. Be careful how you use the phrase, “*The Lord has need of it.*”

Notice that the disciples, at the Lord’s command, untied the donkey and said, “*The Lord has need of it.*” (Remember, in this unique situation, and the Lord knew exactly how the owners would respond.) But we’ve got to watch that we don’t jump to the conclusion that just because the Lord directed the disciples to untie the donkey and say “the Lord has need of it,” we can do the same! We shouldn’t assume that we can simply demand of a fellow believer, “Hey, listen brother...you know that beautiful van you own? Well, I’m going to borrow it this weekend for the Lord’s work because the Lord needs it!” We need to be very careful how we use that phrase.

It’s not wrong to make a need known: “The Sunday School needs a van this weekend. Can anyone volunteer?” “The youth group would like to have a place to hold a retreat. Is there anyone that can help us?” Let the need be known, but be careful about demanding things—even for the Lord’s work.

I’m sure if the donkey’s owners had told the disciples, “No, He can’t borrow it,” the Lord would not have taken that donkey. In the same way, the Lord doesn’t demand to use the things we own. But just think of the joy we can bring to His heart when we respond willingly to His request! And think of the joy we’ll have when we share our things with the Lord!

So let’s remember these two practical applications: let’s be willing to let the Lord borrow our stuff, but let’s be careful how we use that phrase, “*The Lord has need of it.*”