

## **Palm Sunday: It Feels Like Jesus Showed Up**

### **Mark 11:1-11**

During Passover the city of Jerusalem would have been filled with Jews from all over the country. Thousands upon thousands of people all in one city, all ready to celebrate their history and their God.

It was a time when the Jews in the city would have vastly outnumbered the Romans. And because of this, Pilate had to keep order and show the people who was in charge. So, about the same time Jesus disciples are retrieving a donkey, Pilate would have been parading through the streets of Jerusalem on either a stallion or in a giant chariot rolling through the city in a parade escorted by soldiers donning swords and shields, all designed to show force.

In another part of the city, another parade was taking place. Mark 11:1-11

Do you feel the excitement? Can you visualize the euphoria in this crowd of Jews? The disciples and all who were a part of Christ's Triumphal Entry into Jerusalem were feeling excited about what they had just experienced. It felt like Jesus showed up with the expectations of a long-awaited Messiah by a people who were ready for something to change.

Jesus also made an unforgettable statement when he rode into Jerusalem on the back of a donkey: he was claiming to be the Messiah! Up to this point Jesus consistently wanted his identity to remain quiet. He would tell both disciples and demons not to utter a word about who he was because his time had not yet come. But on this day, Jesus the Messiah made his grand entrance for all to see.

ii vs. 1-6, Jesus prepares for his entrance by instructing two disciples to retrieve a colt (and it's mother) upon which Jesus will ride into Jerusalem. He instructs them on what they should say if someone questions them as to why they are taking the donkey.

In vs 7-8, the disciples put coats on the colt for Jesus to sit on them, while the crowd spread palm benches and their coats on the ground ahead to the processing Jesus.

So, why did Jesus choose a donkey and not a horse as His mode of transportation?

This entrance is how the prophets foretold how their king would rescue them from all that oppressed them. Jesus fully was aware that such an entrance would be the fulfillment of Zachariah's prophecy that so quickly would be identified with by the people along the parade route. Zechariah 9:9-13

The people were aware of Jesus' introduction on the donkey. They were thinking, "Rescue is coming! The King is here! Our Messiah is arriving just as the prophet of old said he would. All was about to be made right. Freedom from the oppressors was about to be more than a promise they longed for to come true." In their eyes it was about to be the start of a new life because Jesus had shown up in this symbolic manner.

So, what was the reason for the Messiah, Jesus Christ, to come riding on a donkey and not a stallion or war horse? Wasn't he coming as a conquering king? This is a little confusing?

Go back to 1 Kings 1:33. Solomon, on his way to Jerusalem to be crowned the new king of Israel rode on his father, David's, mule. Why? A king riding a mule or donkey was a sign of meekness, humility, and peace. It was the sign of a servant-king.

The people, especially the religious leaders, should have known through this example, plus the Zechariah prophesy that the Messiah would not be a political king, but a spiritual king who would serve by bringing peace between people, both Jew and Gentile and God. If peace between God and mankind exists, then there would be peace between peoples. The Messiah would accomplish this by serving the people and God by being a sacrifice of sin, appeasing God's wrath against sin, satisfying His justice that He demanded from humanity because their sin violated His holy character and law.

Had Jesus come riding in on a stallion it would have sent a different message to the Jews that He was a political Messiah. Not only that, but the Roman authorities would have shut down this parade. A war horse would have sent a totally different message. The donkey represented not only a fulfillment of prophecy, but also announced peaceful intentions to the Romans.

In vs. 9-10, the people not only waved the palms and shouted with hopeful joy, but they also were quoting Psalm 118:25-26 as they cried out,

Those who went ahead and those who followed shouted, “Hosanna!” “Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord!”

“Blessed is the coming kingdom of our father David!” “Hosanna in the highest heaven!”

The word “Hosanna” means “save us!” It was a cry for help by a people who were oppressed. The words from this Psalm were said and sung each year at this time. They were words from a group of Psalms known as Hallel Psalms. Psalm 113-118 are Hallel Psalms that are preeminently psalms of praise associated with the Passover celebrations and sacrifices of the Passover lambs in the Temple.

These Messianic overtones were stirring the dreams of a new Davidic dynasty, but these same chants would turn to “crucify him” within the week’s end. The chanting crowd soon would realize that Jesus did not fit into the form of preconceived expectations of a conquering King. It was hard for the people and even the disciples to figure out what was happening as the time elapsed. It would not be until after Jesus had walked through the week and eventually been crucified, buried, and resurrected that all would begin to make sense.

Mark shows us in v 11 that Jesus went to survey the Temple. What He experienced was the Temple complex chaotic and overflowing with people. It was crawling not only with animals for sale to be sacrificed, but also with greedy religiosity and a stench of something gone awry from the original intent of the Temple. Jesus returned the next day to cleanse the Temple. This cleansing of the Temple was Jesus announcement that He was not only the servant-king, but He was also the warrior-king who came to bring not only salvation, but also judgement! He brings judgement!

The apostle John sees Christ in his vision in imagery of one riding the war horse as the conquering king—the one who conquered sin, Satan, death, and hell. Revelation 19:11-21

Jesus was on the move. Things happen when Jesus shows up.

### **Application**

1. Has Jesus showed up in your life? When was the last time He showed up?
2. How is Jesus on the move in your life? Where is he challenging you to rethink who He is and what He is doing in your life? You know, sometimes our thinking and believing need changing. (The Jews and their concept of Messiah) Perhaps you need a fresh understanding of who Jesus is and what He is doing in our life.. Humble yourself! Don’t be stuck in the arrogance and pride of the Jews, especially the religious leaders.