
Palm Sunday Message

Various Passages

The King Is Coming

T*he crowds had cheered. They praised the Son of David. They praised God for the coming of the kingdom. Jesus wept over the fall of Jerusalem. And Judas feared He would not take the throne.*

“ ... the thunderous song of the people rushed in again, and Judas heard roarings on every side. He and Jesus once more were riding the great surge of royal power through the city itself! They were at the very gates of the Temple.

Jesus dismounted. The Lord went afoot, now, majestic and wrathful, through the Huldah Gate in the southern wall of the Temple, his golden eyes fixed and flaming. The disciples could scarcely keep up with him.

Then Judas saw where Jesus was going. The booths. The hundred shops in the southern portico. The tables, the selling of animals for sacrifice, the money exchange, commerce in the precincts of the Temple.

As he approached the busy marketplace, Jesus twisted three cords into a whip. Then he cried in a piercing voice, “Away!, Away!” and began to crack his furious whip over the heads of the merchants.

Judas trembled with pleasure. Now it was starting. This was Messiah! Jesus, hurling fire to earth! Jesus, the howl of God, whose voice is a rod of iron: Judgment has come, O you people! For look how the Master flings to the pavement the coins of the money changers! How he tips their tables over! And those who sell sheep and oxen and pigeons—they he drives out of the Temple, crying accusations like a Zealot: “Away with these things! Away! It is written, My house shall be a house of prayer. But you have made it a den of thieves! Away!”

All these things took place on the first day of the week, the Sunday before the Feast of Passover. On that day Judas said in his soul, This is he whose coming is a refiner’s fire—and who shall endure it now? Who shall be standing when this week is done?

All the way back to Bethany, Judas wiped tears from his eyes and sighed with excitement.

But that was the last time he felt such joy. That was the last time Judas Iscariot was glad, for the rest of his life.”¹

I The King Is Coming

Matthew 21:1-17

II The King Is Coming ~ Part 2

Revelation 5:8-14

III Conclusion

***“Behold, the LORD has proclaimed to the end of the earth:
Say to the daughter of Zion,
“Behold, your salvation comes;
behold, his reward is with him, and his recompense before him.””***

(Isaiah 62:11)

***“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”***

(Zechariah 9:9)

¹ Wangerin, Jr., Walter, The Book of God, Zondervan Publishing House, Grand Rapids, MI, 1996, p. 766-767.

Introduction: This morning it's Palm Sunday. We are moving into Holy Week. This necessitates considering the so called "Triumphal Entry." And, as an aside, this week you might want to read and meditate on Matthew 21-27 in preparation for "Good Friday."

Now though, we are going to consider the two "Triumphal Entries." The first one is really misnamed. The second one though is much more correctly identified as such. In these entries we see the distinction between Israel's view of what they wanted from a King and what God considered important.

Israel has a history of picking Kings based, not on God's intent, but on what they want. In one case they wanted a king so they looked like everyone else. And what did they get, Saul because he looked like a king. (see 1 Samuel 8-10).

I The King Is Coming: A. Passover: Jesus' actions fulfilled the prophecies we've noted. He was being presented as messiah. But not the Messiah anyone, including the disciples, wanted. So first, let's spend a moment talking about the context. Wiersbe notes:

*" Since it was Passover, there were probably about 2 million people in and around Jerusalem. This was the only time in His ministry that Jesus actually planned and promoted a public demonstration. Up to this time, He had cautioned people not to tell who He was, and He had deliberately avoided public scenes. "*²

Matthew Henry, expanding on the subject of Passover, notes:

*" The Passover was on the fourteenth day of the month, and this was the tenth; on which day the law appointed that the paschal lamb should be taken up (Ex. 12:3), and set apart for that service; on that day therefore Christ our Passover, who was to be sacrificed for us, was publicly shown. So that this was the prelude to his passion. "*³

B. Preparation: Let's now move on to the events of the entry itself. So, first of all who were the two disciples Jesus sent to get the colt/donkey? Luke tells us.

" Jesus sent Peter and John, saying, "Go and make preparations for us to eat the Passover. "' (Luke 22:8).

Okay, why not a white horse? Why a colt/donkey? Well for one thing, God had already said this is the way Jesus, the Messiah would be presented.

" The LORD has made proclamation to the ends of the earth: "Say to the Daughter of Zion, 'See, your Savior comes! See, his reward is with him, and his recompense accompanies him. "' (Isaiah 62:11).

" 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" (Zechariah 9:9).

² Wiersbe, Warren, W., The Bible Exposition Commentary, "New Testament, Vol. 1," Victor, Colorado Springs, CO, 2001.

³ Henry, Matthew, Matthew Henry's Commentary on the New Testament, public domain.

Notice there are some differences between how Matthew quotes these passages and the originals. The difference is because the prophecies really include both comings merged into one statement. Soon the city wouldn't be rejoicing, instead it would be calling for Jesus' blood. And He wasn't coming to establish His earthly kingdom but to bring salvation.

The people would have certainly understood the implications of Christ coming into Jerusalem on the colt. Matthew makes it clear that what Jesus was doing was foretold by the Prophet Zechariah. But they had other sources of history that reinforced their understanding. Consider David and Solomon.

“ (David) said to them: “Take your lord’s servants with you and set Solomon my son on my own mule and take him down to Zion” (1 Kings 1:33).

In analyzing this passage The Life Application Study Bible notes:

“ We might expect King David to send a great war horse to bring his son Solomon to the ceremony; instead, Solomon rode David’s mule. In David’s time, mules were prized animals, ridden by the wealthy and powerful. When Jesus entered Jerusalem, he came in not on a horse, but on a donkey”⁴

I think Stern gives enough insight to all three passages, Isaiah, Zechariah, and Matthew to quote him at length here.

“ The former includes the lines, “Say to the daughter of Zion, ‘See your salvation comes! See, His reward is with Him, but His work lies ahead of Him.’”

The word for “salvation” here is “yesha’,” identical with the name of the Messiah, Yeshua, except for the optional letter vav. Moreover, Isaiah describes this “yesha’ ” as a person, and not just any person, but God — since a person who is salvation must be God. English translations, including Jewish ones, which capitalize pronouns referring to God recognize this fact by capitalizing “His” and “Him” in this passage, as is done above. One may even say that in this verse Isaiah, writing 700 years before Yeshua was born, refers to him in his divine aspect by name.

Zechariah 9:9 has these lines in it: “Rejoice greatly, daughter of Zion!... See, your king comes to you. He is triumphant and victorious, humbly riding on a donkey, yes, on a colt, the offspring of a beast of burden.”

By combining the two verses Mattityahu gives a hint (remez; see 2:15N) that God, the Salvation of Israel, the Messianic King and Yeshua of Natzeret are one. Also he hints at the two comings of the Messiah and the difference between them: at his first coming Yeshua is our final atoning sacrifice, bringing salvation by his death; therefore he rides into Jerusalem humbly on a beast of burden, ready to perform the work which lies ahead of him. But he will return, triumphant and victorious, as ruling king, rewarding the faithful — although for those who are faithful now, he has already begun to share the reward which he brings with him.”⁵

C. Procession: Clearly Jesus was finally doing what the disciples thought they he should, a public appearance presenting Himself as Messiah. This is the Triumphal Entry, but it is only the appearance of triumph. This is a perfect example of mob psychology because one minute they are super pro-Jesus, the next they become super anti-Jesus. (Okay, the hostile bunch may have come from rent a mob, hired by His enemies.)

⁴ Barton, Bruce B., Mark Fackler, Linda K. Taylor, and David R. Veerman, Life Application Study Bible, Tyndale House Publishers, Inc., Wheaton, IL, 1996.

⁵ Stern, David H., Jewish New Testament Commentary, Jewish New Testament Publications, Inc., Clarksville, MD, 1996.

The disciples put their cloak on the animal for Jesus to sit on as they lead Him before the crowds. And keeping in mind Wiersbe's numbers, these really were huge crowds. Some probably came down with Him towards Jerusalem, but John tells us even more.

“The next day the great crowd that had come for the Feast heard that Jesus was on his way to Jerusalem” (John 12:12).

This is a familiar scene, found in the Old Testament as well.

“They hurried and took their cloaks and spread them under him on the bare steps. Then they blew the trumpet and shouted, “Jehu is king!” (2 Kings 9:13).

The crowds threw down their cloaks before Jesus. Palm branches were also thrown down. This was to keep the dust down. And the huge crowds praised Him, quoting from Psalm 118.

“O LORD, save us; O LORD, grant us success. Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord. From the house of the Lord we bless you” (Psalm 118:25-26).

Though this might have felt heady to the disciples, it was no more meaningful than young women freaking out at Sinatra or the Beatles. Just let me remind you how this journey ends by reading the Luke verses again.

“As he approached Jerusalem and saw the city, he wept over it and said, “If you, even you, had only known on this day what would bring you peace—but now it is hidden from your eyes. The days will come upon you when your enemies will build an embankment against you and encircle you and hem you in on every side. They will dash you to the ground, you and the children within your walls. They will not leave one stone on another, because you did not recognize the time of God’s coming to you.”” (Luke 19:41-44).

D. Praise: Not surprisingly, Jesus actions appealed to the people who felt they were being ripped off by the “powers that be.” So the crowds continued to grow, people continued to get healed. To make matters worse, for the religious powers, much of this was taking place in the Temple courtyard. This was a real problem because ...

“Most Jewish authorities forbade any person lame, blind, deaf, or mute from offering a sacrifice, from “appearing before Yahweh in his temple.” The Qumran covenanters wanted to go further and exclude all cripples from the congregation, the messianic battle, and the messianic banquet.”⁶

But once again Jesus showed He was greater than the Temple by healing the ill right there and thereby bringing these people into a position of being able to enter the congregation of Israel. And God continued this work after Jesus had gone to be with Him.

“Now a man crippled from birth was being carried to the temple gate called Beautiful, where he was put every day to beg from those going into the temple courts” (Acts 3:2).

⁶ Carson, D. A., *The Expositor's Bible Commentary*, “Matthew,” Zondervan Publishing, Grand Rapids, MI, 1990.

So everything Jesus did made the “powers that be” more angry. The children came around and praised Him. Like their parents, they praised Jesus as the son of David. This must have been a especially touching to His heart as often the words of children are more genuine than those of adults.

“ He called a little child and had him stand among them. And he said: “I tell you the truth, unless you change and become like little children, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven. Therefore, whoever humbles himself like this child is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven.

And whoever welcomes a little child like this in my name welcomes me. But if anyone causes one of these little ones who believe in me to sin, it would be better for him to have a large millstone hung around his neck and to be drowned in the depths of the sea” (Matthew 18:2-6).

So what did these chief priests and teachers do? Told the disciples to have Jesus tell the children to “shut up.” And what was Jesus response?—First, He added “insult to injury” by quoting the psalmist, again applying Scripture to Himself.

“ From the lips of children and infants you have ordained praise because of your enemies, to silence the foe and the avenger” (Psalm 8:2).

And in applying it to Himself, the men could also think Jesus, while not quoting the rest of the passage, was applying the scripture about God’s foes to themselves. Which, by the way, was correct wasn’t it?

Having completed His work for the day, Jesus did what many pilgrims had to do, left Jerusalem for the night. The city was simply too overcrowded to accommodate all of the people coming up for the Passover. And the scene faded out, as Jesus and the disciples returned to Bethany, never spending a night in Jerusalem.

II The King Is Coming ~ Part 2: From Israel’s perspective things were certainly not looking up.—And still aren’t. But one day there will be a second coming and an umpteenth chance, one which the people will actually accept. They will be restored as a nation and will see Jesus is their Messiah.

“ And I will pour out on the house of David and the inhabitants of Jerusalem a spirit of grace and supplication. They will look on me, the one they have pierced, and they will mourn for him as one mourns for an only child, and grieve bitterly for him as one grieves for a firstborn son” (Zechariah 12:10).

*All hail King Jesus!
All hail Emmanuel,
King of Kings,
Lord of Lords,
Bright Morning Star.
And throughout eternity,
I’ll sing Your praises;*

*and I'll reign with You
throughout eternity.”⁷*

Now notice the contrasts of Jesus first and second comings. There He came as the king riding to His Cross. But, as for His second coming —

“ At that time the sign of the Son of Man will appear in the sky, and all the nations of the earth will mourn. They will see the Son of Man coming on the clouds of the sky, with power and great glory” (Matthew 24:30).

“ 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 makes war” (Revelation 19:11).

So while the Triumphal Entry really wasn't, it looked towards both the grief of the Cross and the blessing of the empty tomb.

At the Second Coming there will be a real Triumphal Entry, one which will be a blessing and joy to all who look forward to it with hope. It will lead to the promised kingdom. But even this kingdom is temporary and will end with the eternal one. What the people and the disciples were looking for on the Sunday before Passover is coming one day.

“ And when he had taken it, the four living creatures and the twenty-four elders fell down before the Lamb. Each one had a harp and they were holding golden bowls full of incense, which are the prayers of the saints.

And they sang a new song: “You are worthy to take the scroll and to open its seals, because you were slain, and with your blood you purchased men for God from every tribe and language and people and nation.

You have made them to be a kingdom and priests to serve our God, and they will reign on the earth.”

Then I looked and heard the voice of many angels, numbering thousands upon thousands, and ten thousand times ten thousand. They encircled the throne and the living creatures and the elders. In a loud voice they sang: “Worthy is the Lamb, who was slain, to receive power and wealth and wisdom and strength and honor and glory and praise!”

Then I heard every creature in heaven and on earth and under the earth and on the sea, and all that is in them, singing: “To him who sits on the throne and to the Lamb be praise and honor and glory and power, for ever and ever!”

The four living creatures said, “Amen,” and the elders fell down and worshiped” (Revelation 5:8-14).

III Conclusion: There are two truths we can take from this passage. The first is, we need to let God set His agenda, and not try to set it for Him. One major problem around the First Coming was, Jesus' followers and the crowds were looking for the Second.

⁷ Moody, Dave, Maranatha! Music! Chorus Book, “All Hail King Jesus,” Maranatha Music, USA, 1990, #71

I think we too often fall into the same trap, deciding how we think God should work life out. And of course this means doing it our way. This is understandable, but here is the verse we need to remember our frustration levels get high.

“ Oh, the depth of the riches and wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are his judgments and how inscrutable his ways!

“For who has known the mind of the Lord, or who has been his counselor?”

“Or who has given a gift to him that he might be repaid?”

For from him and through him and to him are all things. To him be glory forever. Amen”(Romans 11:33–36).

This flows into the second point. While Israel didn't get it at the First Coming, though the church was originally filled with Jewish believers, she will at the Second. And with Jesus' Second Coming the people will understand the First, finding personal and national salvation.

We should be comforted by two pieces of this truth. First, that God is in control and sets the agenda for the world and for us. The God who holds the universe in His hand also loves us enough to hold us as well. And these truths also comfort us because we know that we are looking towards that day when the Lord will be coming for us, to take us to His home.

“ Let not your hearts be troubled. Believe in God; believe also in me. In my Father's house are many rooms. If it were not so, would I have told you that I go to prepare a place for you? And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and will take you to myself, that where I am you may be also. And you know the way to where I am going” (John 14:1–5)

“ But we do not want you to be uninformed, brothers, about those who are asleep, that you may not grieve as others do who have no hope. For since we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so, through Jesus, God will bring with him those who have fallen asleep. For this we declare to you by a word from the Lord, that we who are alive, who are left until the coming of the Lord, will not precede those who have fallen asleep. For the Lord himself will descend from heaven with a cry of command, with the voice of an archangel, and with the sound of the trumpet of God. And the dead in Christ will rise first. Then we who are alive, who are left, will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air, and so we will always be with the Lord. Therefore encourage one another with these words” (1 Thessalonians 4:13–18)