

## Jesus Offered Himself as the King

In our last topic, we saw that we want to show our physical and spiritual children what it means to recognize Jesus as Lord. We saw that two blind men showed their faith in Christ by recognizing Him as Lord. In our topic today, we will see that many other people also had the opportunity to show their faith a few hours later.

Jesus had given sight to two blind men as He went out of Jericho. Then, He and the great multitude that was following Him, began the long climb to the city of Jerusalem. Jericho is more than one thousand feet below sea level and Jerusalem is more than three thousand feet above sea level. That meant that Jesus and the people had to climb more than four thousand feet as they walked from Jericho to Jerusalem. Matthew 21:1-3 says, “Now when they drew near Jerusalem, and came to Bethphage, at the Mount of Olives, then Jesus sent two disciples, saying to them, ‘Go into the village opposite you, and immediately you will find a donkey tied, and a colt with her. Loose *them* and bring *them* to Me. And if anyone says anything to you, you shall say, ‘The Lord has need of them,’ and immediately he will send them.’” Here, we see that Jesus gave instructions to two of His disciples.

Bethphage was near the town of Bethany where Lazarus and his sisters lived. Bethany is about two miles from Jerusalem. The Mount of Olives is a hill or a small mountain that was located just east of the city of Jerusalem and this town was on the southeast edge of the hill. It was called the Mount of Olives because there were groves of olive trees on this hill just across the Kidron Valley from the temple, on the east edge of Jerusalem. As Jesus and the large crowd approached this town, Jesus told two of His disciples to go into the village. Jesus said that as soon as they entered the village, they would find a donkey tied and a young colt standing with the donkey. Mark 11:2 says, “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*.’” Mark tells us that it was the colt that Jesus actually wanted, but Matthew says that they were to bring the donkey along with the colt.

Jesus knew that they would be questioned by the man standing nearby when they started to untie the animals. As a result, Jesus told the disciples exactly what to say when they were questioned. The disciples were just to say, “The Lord has need of them.” Jesus, and the others, had just walked up to Jerusalem from Jericho, so Jesus had not made advance arrangements to use this colt. In fact, this is an example of the fact that Jesus knew all things; He knew where the animals would be located, even though He had not been in the area since He had raised Lazarus from the dead, at least several weeks earlier. He also knew that the disciples would be questioned. Jesus even told the disciples what the man would do when they said that the Lord needed the animals. Jesus said that then the man would immediately send the animals with them to Jesus.

We go on to read why Jesus told the disciples to do this. Matthew 21:4-7 says, “All this was done

that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophet, saying: ‘Tell the daughter of Zion, “Behold, your King is coming to you, Lowly, and sitting on a donkey, A colt, the foal of a donkey.”’” So the disciples went and did as Jesus commanded them. They brought the donkey and the colt, laid their clothes on them, and set Him on them.” In these verses, we see that Jesus was fulfilling another of the many promises that had been made about Him in the Old Testament. This prophecy had been written more than 400 years earlier by Zechariah. In Zechariah 9:9, we read, “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.”

In this verse, we see that Zechariah had predicted that Jesus would come with great humility to offer Himself as the King. A donkey was the work animal of the poor. The word translated “meek or lowly” is only used three times in the New Testament. It means *to have a gentleness of spirit by which we accept the way that God is working in us and through us with a gentle and quiet spirit*. One of the places where this word is used is Matthew 5:5, where we read, “Blessed *are* the meek, for they shall inherit the earth.” The other place is in 1 Peter 3:4, where the word is used to describe a wife whose husband is not a Christian but the wife wants her husband to see Christ in her. That verse says, “Rather *let it be* the hidden person of the heart, with the incorruptible *beauty* of a gentle and quiet spirit, which is very precious in the sight of God.” Here, the word is translated “gentle” and we see that such an attitude is very precious in the sight of God.

The disciples went to get the animals and everything happened just as Jesus had said that it would. In Luke 19:33-34, we read, “But as they were loosing the colt, the owners of it said to them, ‘Why are you loosing the colt?’ And they said, ‘The Lord has need of him.’” Then, the owners let them take the colt. A colt is usually wild when someone first tries to ride the colt. However, we see here that even this colt was going to submit to Jesus and let Jesus ride on it, so that Jesus could demonstrate that attitude of humility as He rode into Jerusalem. A conquering king usually came riding into a city on a powerful white horse to show he was the conqueror. In contrast, Jesus came riding on the colt of a donkey which showed His humble attitude.

The disciples brought the colt to Jesus and placed their clothes on the back of the colt. Then, the disciples placed Jesus on the colt. We see how the large crowd following Jesus responded when they saw what the disciples had done. Matthew 21:8-11 says, “And a very great multitude spread their clothes on the road; others cut down branches from the trees and spread *them* on the road. Then the multitudes who went before and those who followed cried out, saying: ‘Hosanna to the Son of David! “Blessed is He who comes in the name of the LORD!” Hosanna in the highest!’ And when He had come into Jerusalem, all the city was moved, saying, ‘Who is this?’ So the multitudes said, ‘This is Jesus, the prophet from Nazareth of Galilee.’” Here, we see that this large multitude, most of whom would have been from Galilee, quickly recognized that Jesus was offering Himself as the King of Israel.

We see that the people immediately did two things. Many of the people spread their clothes along the road. Others cut down branches from the trees and spread them on the road. The reason that they spread their clothes was to show that they recognized Jesus as the King of Israel. This had

been the way that the people had recognized a new king many years earlier in Israel. 2 Kings 9:12b-13 says, "...So he said, 'Thus and thus he spoke to me, saying, "Thus says the LORD: 'I have anointed you king over Israel.'" Then each man hastened to take his garment and put it under him on the top of the steps; and they blew trumpets, saying, 'Jehu is king!'" Here, we see that the people had spread their clothes under Jehu when he was presented as the new king of Israel.

However, the people did more than just spread their clothes and the branches of trees along the road. Then, some went in front of Jesus and others followed Him. This great crowd shouted as they moved slowly toward the gate where they would enter the city of Jerusalem. The words that they spoke were, "Hosanna to the Son of David! 'Blessed is He who comes in the name of the LORD!' Hosanna in the highest!" These phrases came from Psalm 118:25-26, where we read, "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." The word translated "Hosanna" is taken from the Hebrew word which means *Save now!* The large group of people also called Jesus the Son of David. By this statement, they were recognizing Jesus as the One who fulfilled the prophecy that a descendent of David would come as the Messiah.

The Jews who knew the Old Testament had a good reason to shout these words and recognize Jesus as the Messiah. In Nehemiah 2:1, we read, "And it came to pass in the month of Nisan, in the twentieth year of King Artaxerxes, *when wine was before him*, that I took the wine and gave it to the king. Now I had never been sad in his presence before." In the following verses, Nehemiah asked for permission allowing him to return and rebuild the wall of Jerusalem. The king wrote a decree granting that request. Nehemiah 2:8b says, "And the king granted *them* to me according to the good hand of my God upon me." Daniel gave a prophecy, in Daniel 9:25, that says, "Know therefore and understand, *that* from the going forth of the command to restore and build Jerusalem until Messiah the Prince, *there shall be seven weeks and sixty-two weeks*; the street shall be built again, and the wall, even in troublesome times." Seven weeks plus sixty-two weeks of years makes four hundred and eighty-three years. Then, Daniel 9:26a says, "And after the sixty-two weeks Messiah shall be cut off, but not for Himself." At the end of the sixty-two weeks, we read that the Messiah would be cut off.

According to the Jewish calendar and the way that the Jews counted years, that very day was exactly four hundred and eighty-three years after King Artaxerxes signed the decree allowing Nehemiah to return to Jerusalem and rebuild the wall of Jerusalem. Many of the Jews were looking for the coming of the Messiah, especially among those who were coming to Jerusalem for this feast. This is why it caused such a great reaction when Jesus rode into the city on the colt of a donkey. We see that the entire city was moved. Many people asked the question, "Who is this?" The large crowd surrounding Jesus said, "This is Jesus, the prophet from Nazareth of Galilee." This was a clear statement by Jesus that He was the promised Messiah. We want to help our physical and spiritual children learn to clearly explain why Jesus truly was the Messiah that fulfilled this prophecy made by Daniel. The people of Jerusalem were now forced to make a choice. They either had to accept Jesus as the Messiah, or reject Him. May the Lord richly bless

you as you help your children learn to clearly explain that Jesus is the Messiah who must either be accepted or rejected.