

**“Jesus’ Grand Entry”**  
*(Palm Sunday 2016)*  
March 20, 2016  
Mark 11:1-11

## **I. Introduction**

Jesus’ Apostles had spent three intense years with Him. They had seen many miracles and signs and wonders but Jesus had told them and the ones He healed not to tell anyone what had happened. For example, turn to Mark 9:2-10. In Matthew 16:15 Jesus asked His disciples, “Who do you say I am?” And Peter answered, “You are the Christ, the Son of the living God.” Later in verse 20, Jesus “warned his disciples not to tell anyone that he was the Christ.” In John 6, after feeding the 5000 plus people, Jesus escaped into the hills to keep the people from making Him their king. As Jesus said in John 2:4, and elsewhere, “My time has not yet come.” God had a plan and a time table and it couldn’t be rushed. During those 3 years, the pressure on the disciples to tell everyone what they knew must have been almost unbearable.

Then came the 3<sup>rd</sup> Passover when Jesus did something He had never done before—something He had repeatedly cautioned others not to do for Him. Now the time had come in the divinely determined plan for Jesus to die—to die as “the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world” (John 1:29). Jesus permitted such a massive display of popular acclaim—some claim that there may have been as many as 100,000 people involved in this grand entry—that the religious leaders had no choice. The threat of a revolt by the estimated 2 million excited people who flooded Jerusalem for Passover could not be ignored. The Pharisees and teachers of the law, the Sadducees, and the Herodians had to act before they lost their privileged positions with the Romans and with the people. Jesus’ entry into Jerusalem brought an end to His secrecy and His avoidance of crowds.

**II. Jesus’ grand entry into Jerusalem.** But before Jesus could enter, there were some preparations that had to be carried out for God’s plan.

## **A. The Preparations**

**1. First, a colt had to be found.** The disciples knew something was up when, as they approached Jerusalem, Jesus sent a couple of them ahead to Bethany to get a donkey and her colt. Jesus always walked to get to where He was going—sometimes even across water. He never ever rode an animal. But as He had done so many other times, Jesus was doing something out of the ordinary—out of character again and the disciples were baffled again.

We aren't told if Jesus had made arrangements with the owner of the mare and colt ahead of time or not. Perhaps He was using His supernatural foreknowledge to predict precisely where the disciples would find an unriden colt tied up. Whether by arrangement or by foreknowledge, Jesus even warned the disciples that they would be challenged when they tried to take the colt and gave them the answer they were to give: **“The Lord needs it and will send it back here shortly.”**

**2. Second, the colt needed to be prepared.** After getting the animals, the colt was prepared to be ridden. Probably filled with tremendous anticipation, Jesus' disciples put their cloaks on the colt as Jesus got ready to ride it. Keep in mind that Jesus rode on a colt which had never been ridden before, but He was God—the Lord of Creation—so neither the weight of Jesus or the flapping cloaks and waving palm leaves or the noise of the crowd was going to bother this colt.

The disciples on the other hand couldn't contain themselves anymore. With this new side of Jesus, they felt that they were released to tell everyone who He was and what He came to do as they became part of the Grand Procession.

## **B. The Grand Procession**

**1. Jesus fulfilled prophecy.** As He entered Jerusalem, Jesus fulfilled prophecy. In particular, He was fulfilling the prophecy written 500 years earlier by Zechariah in **Zechariah 9:9** which says: **“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.” By riding the colt of a donkey instead of a horse, Jesus was portraying Himself as a King of peace and not a king of war. However, He didn’t come to bring peace between peoples—peace between the Romans and the Jews; His peace was peace between God and mankind. He wasn’t coming to slay Israel’s enemies but He came to give Israel and the world the opportunity to be saved—to become part of the Kingdom of Heaven. He was coming in meekness and humility. As Isaiah prophesied in [Isaiah 53](#), Jesus was coming as Israel’s suffering Messiah.

**2. The crowd expected deliverance.** Many of those gathered there knew who Jesus was—they had seen Him or heard of Him or they may have seen someone who had been healed by Him. For that matter, Lazarus, who had been dead 4 days before Jesus brought him back to life ([John 11:39](#)), was probably walking close to Jesus. So, as Jesus rode into Jerusalem, a large crowd spread their cloaks on the road before Him while others cut palm branches and tree branches to lay in the road.

The expectation that the Messiah had finally come to bring deliverance from all foreign oppression was so great that the crowd became totally caught up in a frenzy of mob hysteria. [Hosanna to the Son of David](#)” ([Matthew 21:9](#)). “Blessed is the coming kingdom of our father David!” They didn’t know it, but Jesus had come to bring deliverance—not from Roman rule but from the rule of sin in their lives. The people wanted deliverance from Rome. Jesus came to bring deliverance from sin.

They were crying out, “[Hosanna! Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord! Hosanna in the highest!](#)” The word “*Hosanna*” means “*save now*”. The crowd was crying out for the Messiah’s deliverance, pleading, in effect, “*Save us now, great Messiah! Save us now!*” Since [the Son of David](#) was the most common title for the Messiah, the crowd was proclaiming that Jesus was the Christ. Jesus was the promised Coming One; the Son of David, He was the Messiah. But the crowd on that day wasn’t interested in Jesus saving their souls but in His saving their nation. Now, at last, they thought, He has come to be the Conqueror—to be their Liberator. What better occasion or time could

there possibly be for God's Anointed, the Messiah—the Christ, to make the ultimate and final deliverance of His people from the tyranny of the Romans than at Passover—just like Moses had done thousands of years earlier in Egypt at the first Passover. The crowd expected deliverance from Rome.

### **C. The Anticlimactic Ending**

Mark raises the reader's expectations that something grand will happen, but nothing does on that day. The excitement generated by Jesus' arrival ended with somewhat of an anticlimactic ending as Jesus entered the Temple, only to look around and leave. Mark tells us that **"it is already late."** Late for what? Did time run out on Jesus before He could do anything? I doubt it! Perhaps time was running out for the temple and all that happened there. This rather insignificant ending sets the stage for what will happen on the next day and the rest of the week.

Jesus didn't come to tour the temple as a tourist, dazzled by all the glittering gold, glistening white marble, and gigantic stones. He didn't visit out of a pious reverence—He didn't offer a prayer or a sacrifice. He entered His temple as prophesied by Malachi. **Turn to Malachi 3:1-2.** Jesus entered the temple to inspect it, and the next day's clearing out of the temple revealed that He came not to restore it but to pronounce God's judgment on it—to purify it; to refine it; to cleanse it.

### **III. The Beginning of Passion Week**

Palm Sunday is the celebration of Jesus' grand entry into Jerusalem but that isn't the end. It is the beginning of Passion Week. But what started out with a grand procession didn't turn out as the people or the disciples expected. A week that began with jubilation ended in suffering and death. Passionate joy was turned into bitter weeping; triumphant jubilation turned into cowardly panic. When Jesus allowed the people to call Him their Messiah, He deliberately challenged the religious leaders. This set in motion the official plot that led quickly to His arrest, trial, and crucifixion. The Jewish leaders had decided not to arrest Him during the feast, but God had determined otherwise. The Lamb of God must die at Passover.

Actually, what appeared as a triumphal entry was really a funeral procession. This day marked the beginning of the end. Jesus didn't come as a king to restore the power and glory of David's lost throne. As Jesus had told the disciples several times, He came to die; e.g. [turn to Mark 10:32-34](#). Jesus was arrested after being betrayed by one of the 12. He was crowned with a crown of thorns; He was lifted up--enthroned on a cross, and hailed as the chief of fools. Sadly, many who on Palm Sunday hailed Him as the Messiah and shouted praises to God—on Friday screamed for His execution. Turn to Peter's sermon on the Day of Pentecost—[turn to Acts 2:22-23](#). Jesus' entrance into Jerusalem points to a different kind of triumph than the one anticipated by the crowd. His triumph would lead to a kingdom more powerful than any kingdom of David and be more far-reaching than the narrow borders of Israel or even the Roman Empire.

#### **IV. Conclusion**

Many people jump from the celebration of the parade to the empty tomb without giving the cross much attention. Looking at the brutal torture and the inhuman killing of the One who loved us is difficult, but we must not forget it. The things leading up to the cross tell a story, but by themselves they don't really show the extent of love Jesus has for us. The things that occurred after the cross tell a story of what love caused. But the things that happened in between—the things that happened during Passion Week—Holy Week tell us what happened out of love. It also tells us that prophecy has been fulfilled so that the events after the cross could take place for you and for me.

The bottom line is this, what does Jesus' coming to Jerusalem, His arrest and death and resurrection mean to you? Listen to these words from [John 3:16-18](#): “For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life. For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but to save the world through him. Whoever believes in him is not condemned, but whoever does not believe stands condemned already because he has not believed in the name of God's one and only Son.”

Hebrews 9:22 says that “without the shedding of blood there is no forgiveness.” This is why Jesus came to earth, this is why He entered Jerusalem, this is why He died on the cross—to pay the penalty for your sins and my sins. But, as John 3 says, a person will have eternal life, i.e. be saved from an eternity in hell, only if he or she believes in Jesus Christ. Romans 10:9 says, “That if you confess with your mouth, ‘Jesus is Lord,’ and believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead, you will be saved.” This is what it means to believe in Jesus—He must be your Lord and your Savior. The Bible doesn’t give any wiggle room—as Jesus said in John 14:6, “I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me.”

So what have you done with Jesus Christ? If He is your Lord and Savior, then this is a time to celebrate as you remember what His grand entry into Jerusalem set into motion: His death on the cross, His resurrection from the dead, and His ascension into heaven where He is preparing a place for you. If you refuse to believe and make Him your Lord and Savior, God says, “Whoever does not believe stands condemned already.” If you refuse to believe, then Palm Sunday is not a celebration parade, it is a funeral procession. John 3:36 says, “Whoever believes in the Son has eternal life, but whoever rejects the Son will not see life, for God's wrath remains on him.” Why not give your life to God today, before it is too late; before God honors your request and leaves you alone—alone without forgiveness of your sins and without eternal life?