

Palm Sunday
March 28, 2010

Turn to **Matthew 21:1**. "Now when they drew near Jerusalem and came to Bethphage at the Mount of Olives, then Jesus sent two disciples." We don't know who the two disciples were. "Verse 2: "Saying to them, 'Go into the village opposite you, and immediately you will find a donkey tied and a colt with her.'" This was a mother and her baby. "Loose them and bring them to Me."

Verse 3: "And if anyone says anything to you, you shall say, 'The Lord has need of them,' and immediately he will send them." Verse 4: "All this was done that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophet saying." Five hundred years before it happened, this was prophesied in Zechariah 9:9.

Verse 5: "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.'" Verse 6: "So the disciples went and did as Jesus commanded them." Verse 7: "They brought the donkey and the colt, laid their clothes on them, and set Him on them."

Verse 8: "And a very great multitude spread their clothes on the road; others cut down branches from the trees and spread them on the road." Verse 9: "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!'"

Verse 10: "And when He had come into Jerusalem, all the city was moved [stirred] saying, 'Who is this?'" Verse 11: "So the multitudes said, 'This is Jesus, the prophet from Nazareth of Galilee.'" But they were wrong!

Let's look first at **(1) The Colt**. In the church world, we have been given by our Lord a great commission, and He says, "**Go**." Go into all the world and bring people to Christ. The word "go" is a forward word, but in the church world we say "whoa." That's why we need leaders who are not living in the past, who are not always talking about the revival that happened in 1956. They are always talking about and living in the past, but God is on the go, and "go" deals with the future. The future is what God wants you to do right now.

He says, "**Go and find**." If you're going for God, if you're seeking God's will, you will find where God wants you to be. You will find what God wants you to do. He said, "If you will

go, you will find a donkey and a colt." It's a guarantee, because Jesus said it!

He said, "When you get there, **loose** it." Our job is to loose people. We're not here to bind people. We're here to loose people. Now, there has to be order, because God does all things in order. There has to be leadership, and there has to be submission to leadership, but saints of God are called to loose people.

We are called to lead them in the sinner's prayer to Christ, be loosed from their sins, but we are also called to take the grave clothes off them so they can be free to obey God. So, the job of these two men was to go, find, and loose; and our job is to go, find, and loose. Then He said, "Bring them to Me." Today, if you're going to bring people to Jesus, you bring them to church.

A person who claims to be a Christian and doesn't go to church is an orphan, because when you get saved, you are in the family of God. You are tied to the body of Christ. You cannot be separated from the body of Christ.

In **Luke 19:30**, it says this **colt has never been ridden**. This is key. Anything that is to be used for a sacred purpose could not have been used before. That is why this colt had to be **brand-new**, but it wasn't about the colt. It was about who the colt was carrying!

You must realize that God only uses new things. That is why He used a **new womb**. The virgin birth is crucial in the kingdom of God, because the virgin birth is a pillar that tells us that Christ was virgin-born. The birth was miraculous. Mary's womb was a virgin womb, and the Bible tells me that **the tomb** where they buried our Lord and Savior had never been used. Jesus was the first one to go in, and He was the first one that came out!

I personally believe the cross was a **new cross**. I don't think anyone had hung on that cross but Jesus.

In **Mark 11:3**, Jesus said, "And if anyone says to you, 'Why are you doing this?' say, 'The Lord has need of it.'" If you are going to obey God, you are going to have to trust His Word, but there will be some anxiety when you obey God. When you launch out to obey God, there will be some anxiety about the unknown. I guarantee those two disciples who went to get the donkey and the colt were trusting.

Some scholars believe that Jesus made prearrangements regarding the donkey and the

colt, because He prepares everything. It didn't look like He had made any preparation ahead of time because He said, "Just tell them the Lord has need of them." So, if God is leading, He will take care of the questions on the other end, and we are called to obey.

Let's look at **(2) The Crowd**. It says in **Matthew 21:8** that there was a **very great multitude**, thousands of people, and let me tell you why they were there. Turn to **John 12:17**. In John 11, Lazarus was brought forth from the grave, and he had been dead four days. In Judaism, they believed the spirit of a person who had been dead four days had left the body. They believed the spirit had left the body and had gone to Sheol, the place of departed spirits not to return. That is why Christ delayed His coming.

When the message came from Mary and Martha that Lazarus was sick, Jesus waited four days to arrive because then there was no hope. The spirit had gone, but Jesus said, "Lazarus come forth," and he came out. Some of you don't understand that that was a mighty miracle.

John 12:17 talks about that miracle, and **Verse 18** says that the crowd had gathered because of the report of the miracle of Lazarus. "**For this reason the people also met Him, because they heard that He had done this sign.**" This crowd didn't see the miracle. Only a few saw it, but they heard of the miracle and a crowd gathered.

If you will look at **Matthew 21:9**, it says **the crowd was large and loud**. It says that those that went before and those that followed **shouted**, and they didn't even know what they were shouting about. They were only shouting because they had heard the report, but **joy is contagious**. When you get around the anointing, it lifts burdens and destroys yokes.

This celebration was full of **excitement and enthusiasm**. They were honoring the Lord whether they knew what was happening or not. When they began to worship Him, they worshipped Him with **their possessions**. They spread their clothes on the road. They freely threw their garments down. Others **cut palm branches** and threw them down.

The coats they threw down was **an act of submission**, because when a dignitary or king would come by they would throw their garments down. It was **a symbol of submission**. The palm branches were **a sign of victory, liberty, and joy**. They were praising Jesus because of what they had heard.

Luke 19:37 says they began to praise Him. "The whole multitude began to rejoice and praise God with a loud voice for all the miracles they had seen." They not only offered up **praise** in honor of the Lord, they offered up **prayers**.

The word "hosanna" is not a praise word. It's a prayer. When they cried out "hosanna" to Jesus, they were praying to Him; because the word "hosanna" means "**Lord, save us now.**" Not from sin, not from Satan, but from the Romans. They thought a king was coming in to save them from the Romans, but Jesus didn't come to deliver them from the Romans. He came to deliver them from sin and Satan.

I sense this today. It isn't everybody, but today there are people in churches that are sick and tired of **refrigerated religion**. Not all of you came in here as lost as could be. Many of you came from other churches. You're not church-hopping. You're just tired of **predictable services** and **dead doctrines** that give no life. People are tired of it. We should be still and know that He is God, but people are tired of **silent services**.

Erma Bombek said that she was sitting in church one day, and there was a little child in front of her smiling from ear to ear. She was a little fidgety, and the mom reached over and smacked the little girl and said, "Get that smile off your face. Don't you know you're in church?" Whoa!

I preached in a service one time, and after it was over I was told that I was too funny. Well, the joy of the Lord is my strength; but it doesn't shock me when churches don't have Wednesday night and Sunday night services. I'm not shocked that people don't come out, but we have around 900 that come, and that's exciting. It's because something is going on. Do you know that parked cars are a witness? If you drive by a church parking lot and there are no cars in the parking lot, it's a witness that there is nothing going on in there.

The excitement and the joy began to spread, and it hit **(3) The City**. Look at what it says in **Matthew 21:10**. "And when Jesus had come into Jerusalem, all the city was moved [shaken, stirred, excited] saying, 'Who is this?'" They didn't know why they were excited.

In **Joshua 6:16**, Joshua commanded the people to, "**Shout, for the Lord has given you the city!**" Wouldn't it be something if the Lord would take over Saint Albans? Wouldn't it be something if all of Charleston was stirred by the Holy Ghost? Wouldn't it be something if you walked into Wal-Mart and all they were doing was talking about Jesus? Wouldn't it be something if such a stir would hit, and all people were doing was

talking about Jesus?

You may think it's an exaggeration, but in Matthew 21:10 it says, "all the city was moved." There were probably 2,000,000 people in that city, but not all were stirred in a good way. Some were complimentary. Some were critical. That's just life.

Let's look at **(4) Christ**. Some didn't even know what they were shouting about, and the city wanted to know, "Who is this?" The response to that question was, "This is Jesus, the prophet from Nazareth of Galilee." No, no, no. **Jesus is MORE than a prophet!**

Do you know that the Muslims believe that Jesus is a prophet? They rank Him the same as Abraham and Moses; but in John's Gospel, Jesus said, "Before Abraham was, I AM." Jesus is eternal.

This is a great revelation. We call the Sunday before Easter Palm Sunday, but to the Jews in Jesus' day this Sunday was not the last day of the week but the first day of the week. The Sabbath Day was Saturday, and Sunday was the first day of the week. This is the week of the beginning of Passover. So, on the day that Jesus rode the donkey into the city of Jerusalem, to the Jews it was called "**The Lamb Selection Day.**"

On that day, each Jewish family had to select a lamb for Passover. Passover was when the death angel passed over Egypt. Hundreds of thousands of lambs were killed that night.

On the day Christ entered Jerusalem on a donkey, the Jews were selecting their lamb, and it had to be without spot and perfect in every sense before it could be sacrificed. So, here comes Christ down from the Mount of Olives, going into the city, people are shouting, throwing down their clothes, waving palm branches, and the whole city is stirred up.

When John the Baptist saw Jesus coming toward him in the Jordan River at the beginning of His ministry, this is what John said. "Behold, the Lamb of God who comes to take away the sins of the world." When Jesus entered into the gate of the city of Jerusalem and they all shouted out, "Who is this," somebody should have said, "He is the Lamb of God!"

Jesus asked His disciples, "Who do you say that I am?" Peter jumps up and says, "Thou art the Christ [the anointed One, the Messiah]." So, **Jesus is the sacrificial Lamb** that

came to Jerusalem to die. Jesus is **my substitute**. He gave His life for me. He suffered my hell so I won't have to go through hell. He is MY sacrificial Lamb. I choose Him! I choose Jesus as MY sacrificial Lamb.

He is the **Wonder-Worker**. I don't know about you, but He is the **Way-Maker** for me. He has made a way for me time and time again. He is the **Storm-Stopper**. He is the **Soul-Saver**. He is the **King of kings and the Lord of lords**.

Let's look lastly at **(5) The Cleansing of the Temple**. When Jesus gets into the city, He starts **purging and purifying the temple, God's house**. There were certain sections to the temple. The first gate was called the *Gentile area*, and anybody could go in there. The next level was where Jewish women and men could enter, but no *Gentiles* were allowed in that section. Into the next level only Jewish men were allowed to enter.

You have to remember, the Jews were coming from all over the world to see the temple of God, and they had to have an animal sacrifice. The cheapest one they could get was a dove, and let me tell you what they were doing in the temple. As an example in today's terms, a dove could be sold in the streets of Jerusalem for \$1; but in the temple, a dove sold for \$25.

Also, they had temple money. If you were going to buy anything in the temple, you had to have temple money. So they had money changers, and the money changers charged people a 10-12% surcharge to exchange their money, and the high priests were paid a percentage of the surcharges. The high priests were also getting a cut from all the vendors who were selling the animals.

They were also using the temple as a short-cut to enter into the city. They treated the temple like it was just another place to walk through. It saved them time. It was convenient. The money exchanging was convenient. Not having to bring an animal many miles to the temple was convenient. They could just buy one there.

When Jesus stepped into the outer area of the temple and saw the money changers cheating poor people, saw doves being sold at exorbitant prices, saw people just walking through the temple with no concern about its sanctity and holiness, He began to overturn the tables; and the word "overturn" in the Greek means "to cast out with violence."

His countenance changed. It will be the countenance you will see if you are lost on the Day of Judgment. You will see the wrath of God. He said, "You have made My Father's

house a den of thieves. You no longer observe the sanctity of My Father's house," and He purged it. He got rid of what didn't belong there. He removed all which defiled and desecrated. He wanted it to become a **house of prayer and a house of purity**.

Let me say something right here. Don't dress like a harlot and call yourself a child of God. Don't exhibit to the world something that is worldly and call yourself a man or a woman of God.

The moment He purged the house, the power of God was released. It's the only time in the Scriptures [**Matthew 21:14**] where recorded miracles of healing took place in the temple. It says, "Then the blind and the lame came to Him in the temple, and He healed them." Then in **Verse 15** it says, "**and the children cried out in the temple.**" Children were shouting.

The Pharisees said, "Hush them up, quiet them down," because they wanted the celebration to stop and the shouting to cease. In **Luke 19:39** Jesus said, "**If I tell them to be quiet, the rocks will cry out.**" If you have been to Jerusalem, you know there are rocks everywhere. The words "cry out" meant that the rocks would explode.

When Jesus was dying on the cross, if you will read the Word carefully, it tells us that the rocks were exploding. Why? It's because no one was praising God.

There is one more thing I have to tell you. It's found in **Luke 19:41-44**. When Jesus sees the city, He begins to weep. He was not weeping over buildings. He was weeping because of the people. He was weeping because **the people had missed their day of visitation**. They missed it. **They missed their divine appointment**.

When someone endured a Roman whipping, hardly anyone survived that whipping; but when Jesus was whipped, He didn't cry. He didn't cry when they plucked His beard from His face. When His hands and feet were nailed to the cross, He didn't cry. He was suffering, but He didn't cry. None of that made Him cry. Do you know what made Him cry? Lost people!

I know one thing. Everyone here has been cried over. He has wept over all of us. Don't miss your day of divine visitation. On the Day of Judgment, you will have no excuse because you have heard the gospel preached. The Holy Spirit has knocked at your heart's door, and you have been wept over. **Don't miss your day of visitation**.