

2026-03-29

The Presentation of Our Savior

Mark 11:1-11 Palm Sunday

Jesus has been on His final journey to Jerusalem. As He and His disciples traveled from Galilee along the Jordan River to Jericho, Jesus kept informing His disciple about His coming crucifixion and resurrection (Mark 10:32-34). He was trying to prepare them for what was coming during His final week in Jerusalem. I suspect that Jesus reflected a lot about His life during that 80-mile walk to Jerusalem to celebrate the Passover and His plan to institute what we call The Lord's Supper. He may have even thought about the first time He taught in the temple. He was only 12 years old. Jesus was listening to **the teachers and asking challenging** questions and giving amazing answers for three whole days (Luke 2:46-47). He had forgotten all about returning to Nazareth with His parents. They came looking for Him. When they found Him teaching in the Temple, His mother Mary said, "*Your father and I have sought You anxiously*" (2:48). Jesus responded, "*Why did you seek me? Did you not know that I must be about My Father's business?*" (2:49). His parents did not understand what He was talking about (2:50). Jesus had continued His whole life being about His heavenly Father's business. Soon Jesus will enter Jerusalem again for a last three days of teaching, fulfilling His Father's business.

From Jericho, Jesus and His disciples arrived in Bethany on Friday. That evening they had dinner at the home of Lazarus, the man Jesus raised from the dead (John 12:1). Of course, Martha served. That is what she always did (Luke 19:40). Lazarus sat with Jesus at the table along with the disciples. Mary, she came into the room with a pound of very costly oil and anointed the feet of Jesus. The fragrance of the oil filled the room. She interrupted the whole mealtime. Mary lovingly, gently wiped Jesus' feet with her hair. Jesus did not stop her. He allowed her, in front of everyone there, to express her devotion and love to the Man who taught her the truth and changed her life.

But there was one disciple who was offended by this interruption, Judas Iscariot. He confronted Jesus in front of everyone. Judas asked Jesus, "*Why was this fragrant oil not sold for three hundred denarii and given to the poor?*" (John 12:5). You must understand that Judas did not say this because he cared for the poor. He said it because he was a thief. He kept the money box of the disciples and he took from that box freely (12:6). What Judas saw was money being wasted that could have been his. Jesus told Judas, "*Let her alone; she has kept this for the day of My burial. For the poor you have with you always, but Me you do not have always*" (12:7-8). What a contrast between these two people at this meal who were impacted by Jesus' life.

A woman, Mary, selfless, sympathetic, loyal, insightful. She gave her greatest gift she had to give. Then there was the man, Judas. Selfish, greedy, a traitor, bitter for his loss. He, a disciple lost the greatest gift that he could have had. Which person are you more like? Who should we be like? Hopefully, one of the disciples asked Jesus about the statement He made about the day of His burial. If so, I am sure Jesus took the opportunity to share with His disciples one more time about His coming crucifixion and resurrection. The following day was Saturday, the Sabbath. It would be a day of worship at the synagogue and rest before the day Jesus would present Himself to the Jews as their King of peace.

Mark 11:1-3 *“Now when they drew near Jerusalem, to Bethphage and Bethany, at the Mount of Olives, He sent two of His disciples; 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. And if anyone says to you, ‘Why are you doing this?’ say, ‘The Lord has need of it,’ and immediately he will send it here.”* It was early Sunday morning. Jesus and His disciples are about two miles from Jerusalem. Jesus sent two of His disciples to get a colt for Him to ride into Jerusalem. In the gospel of Matthew these two disciples get the colt and its mother (21:2). That would be smart so that the young colt did not cry for its mother. If you have never heard the bray of a donkey, that continuous noise would have been disturbing. The colt with its mother would have been much more cooperative. It does not surprise me that whoever owned these animals, when they know Jesus needs them, they let the disciples take them. Since Jesus recently raised Lazarus from the dead, everyone knew Jesus. Lots of people wanted to be associated with a person with that power.

Why does Jesus choose to ride a young donkey that no one has ever ridden into the city of Jerusalem? Jesus is making a loud statement. He is **declaring officially** and publicly that **He is the long-awaited Messiah**. A young animal that had not been ridden or worked was available to be used for holy purposes (Deuteronomy 21:3-4). We are not sure how many people believed Jesus was the Messiah. We do know that almost everyone believed that Jesus was **a prophet**, and maybe **the prophet** who would announce the coming of the Messiah. If people were paying attention, when they saw Jesus on this young donkey, they should be thinking that **Jesus Himself is claiming to be the Messiah**. There was an important Messianic prophecy by the prophet Zechariah about the coming Jewish King. *“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. I will cut off the chariot from Ephraim and the horse from Jerusalem; the battle bow shall be cut off. He shall speak peace to the nations; His dominion shall be from sea to sea, and from the river to the ends of the earth”* (9:9-10). The Jewish King would arrive into Jerusalem on a holy mission riding on a colt. Jesus

intentionally was fulfilling this prophecy. He wants everyone to know and believe that He is their Messiah! **One big problem.** The Jews expected the Messiah to be a military leader to overthrow the Roman rulers in Israel. This prophecy announced that the Jewish King would cut off or end the fighting and bring peace. That is why Jesus is riding a young donkey. He is announcing His victory for His kingdom of peace. The true peace Jesus brings to each person who believes is our individual peace with God. *“Having been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ”* (Romans 5:1). If Jesus came into Jerusalem riding a white horse, He would be announcing that He is coming to wage war and rule the nations. On this occasion, by **Jesus riding on a colt of a donkey**, He is announcing His victory and His kingdom of peace. When Jesus returns again, how will He come? The prophecy says that Jesus will be riding a white horse. This tells us that when Jesus returns to this planet again, He will come to wage war and rule the nations (Revelation 19:11).

Verses 4-7 *“So they went their way, and found the colt tied by the door outside on the street, and they loosed it. But some of those who stood there said to them, ‘What are you doing, loosing the colt?’ And they spoke to them just as Jesus had commanded. So they let **them** go. Then they brought the colt to Jesus and threw their clothes on it, and He sat on it.”* The phrase, *“they let **them** go”* indicates that both the mother donkey and the colt were taken together to Jesus. In Matthew’s gospel, he said that Jesus rode both of them (Matthew 21:7). I doubt that Jesus rode both of the animals at the same time. It would have been a heavy burden for a young colt to carry a full-grown man 2 miles. My guess is that Jesus rode the donkey most of the way. Then that last quarter mile, Jesus changed mounts. He rode the colt through the crowd and into Jerusalem, presenting Himself as their Messiah King.

Verse 8 *“And many spread their clothes on the road, and others cut down leafy branches from the trees and spread them on the road.”* This verse is where we get the idea of Palm Sunday. In the gospel of John, he records that the people used branches from palm trees (John 12:13). The spreading of palm branches was a symbol of joy. The spreading of their clothes on the road was an ancient practice of welcoming a new King (2 Kings 9:13). These people on the road on Sunday morning were calling on Jesus to represent them as their new King. They were so excited for their own Jewish king that they shouted prophetic Psalms calling on the new king to save them. It was customary as people walked up the path into Jerusalem during the Passover season to sing the Messianic psalms 113-118, praying and hoping that this would be the year their Messiah would appear and save them. The words recorded in the next two verses are from the end of Psalm 118. God had saved His people from Egyptian oppression. He could save them again.

Verses 9-10 *“The those who went before and those who followed cried out, saying: ‘Hosanna! Blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord! Blessed is the kingdom of our father David that comes in the name of the Lord! Hosanna in the highest!’”* Hosanna means “Save Now!” Their call was for the Messiah to save them from their Roman oppression. The people were calling on Jesus to save them from their Roman oppressors. Jesus did not do what they were hoping for. He did save everyone who would believe in Him and His work, from their coming judgment and punishment of their sins. Jesus does not force anyone to believe. He did not come to condemn anyone. He came in this way, as our King of peace, that through Him people might believe and be saved from their sins (John 3:17-18). Jesus did come and provide salvation, though it was not from what everyone expected, but it was from what everyone needs the most, forgiveness.

God gives everyone a choice. He has done all the work for our salvation because He loves us and knows that it is impossible for us to save ourselves. In order to receive God’s salvation, we must believe in who He is and what He has done for us. The evidence is recorded for us. We can believe Him or reject Him. I did not realize how important this decision is until I learned there is life after this existence on earth. What we believe concerning Jesus determines our eternal destiny. Jesus has been presented in the gospel as our Messiah, King and Lord. Believe Him. Let your belief in Him be seen in the way you live, following His teachings.

Questions to ask yourself: Do you believe who Jesus claims to be? Are you studying the scriptures to make your belief in Jesus more real and accurate? Do you have questions about who Jesus is? Are you searching for answers? Are you reading and searching the New Testament for those answers?

Actions to take: Make your choice to believe Jesus. Follow up that choice by speaking with others about what it means to follow Jesus. Read the New Testament with an open mind that it is revealing God’s truth. Make choices that show you are believing God’s word. Pray. Ask God to guide you into all truth.

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