

Introduction

1. What is the biggest event involving a celebrity that you have attended?
 - a. What did people do? How loud was it?
 - b. In 2013, on our way back from teaching in Russia, Deborah and I stopped off for a few days in London and had the chance to see Queen Elizabeth speak in the courtyard of Buckingham Palace as she launched the Commonwealth Games.
 - c. We arrived several hours early and got a place beside the palace gate. By the time the Queen arrived, the crowd was 15 to 20 people deep behind us and pressed us almost through the bars.
 - d. It was quite a scene when the Queen drove through the gate and down the avenue in a mini-parade. People were cheering and waving wildly.
 - e. It brings to mind the joyous scene on the Mount of Olives as Jesus made His Triumphal Entry into Jerusalem on Palm Sunday.
2. The Triumphal Entry is such an important event in the life of Jesus that it is recorded in all four of the Gospels (cf, Mk 11:1-11; Mt 21:1-11; Lk 19:28-44; Jn 12:12-19).
3. Daniel Akin observes that “Mark 11-16 records the final week of our Lord’s earthly life. Mark devotes more than one-third of his Gospel to ‘Passion Week.’ Some have referred to Mark’s Gospel as a passion narrative with an extended introduction (Stein, *Mark*, 33). It will be a busy week culminating in His death on the cross and His glorious resurrection” (Daniel Akin, *Exalting Jesus in Mark*, 242). James Brooks adds, “Approximately 38 percent of the Gospel is devoted to the week of the passion (chaps. 11-16) and 20 percent to the day of Jesus’ death (chaps. 14-15)” (James Brooks, *Mark*, 176).
4. Let’s start the last week of Jesus’ life on earth with His Triumphal Entry: **Read Mk 11:1-11.**

A. Preparations (1-6)

1. Instructions (1-3)
 - a. Jesus had just come up to the vicinity of Jerusalem from Jericho (cf., Mk 10:46) which was a journey of about thirteen miles uphill all the way to the Mount of Olives.
 - 1) Jesus and those travelling with Him came to the small outlying towns, the suburbs of Jerusalem, Bethany and Bethphage.
 - 2) Bethany, which they came to first, was the home of Lazarus, Mary, and Martha.
 - a) Jesus most likely stayed in their home for a few days during the last week of His life (cf, Mk 11:11).
 - b) In John’s gospel Jesus had just raised Lazarus from the dead and been the guest of honor at a celebration dinner before entering Jerusalem (cf, Jn 11:17-44; 12:1-11).
 - 3) Bethphage lay near the top of the Mount of Olives which is a significant place in the final week of Jesus’ life. The Mount of Olives is:
 - a) the launching point of His triumphal entry (cf, Mk 11:1-11),
 - b) where He took His disciples to pray (cf, Mk 14:26),
 - c) where, in the Garden of Gethsemane which lay at its foot, He would pray His great prayer of submission (cf, Mk 14:32-41),
 - d) where He would be arrested by the Jewish authorities (cf, Mk 14:43-51),
 - e) where He would ascend back to heaven (cf, Lk 24:50-51; Ac 1:9-12), and
 - f) where it is prophesied that He will first return (cf, Ac 1:10-11), Zc 14:4-5).
 - b. Jesus gave instructions to “Two of his disciples” who are unnamed.
 - 1) He sent them to the “village ahead” which was most likely Bethphage.
 - 2) He told them they would find a “colt” (Gk., *polon dedemenon ep’ on*).
 - 3) They were to untie the colt and bring it to Jesus.
 - 4) Jesus knew there might be questions about their taking the colt and told the disciples what to say, “The Lord needs it and will send it back here shortly” (3).

- c. Warren Wiersbe notes, “On the road Jesus took, a traveler would arrive first at Bethany and then come to Bethphage, about two miles from Jerusalem. The elevation at this point is about 2,600 feet, and from it you have a breathtaking view of the Holy City. The Lord was about to do something He had never done before, something He had repeatedly cautioned others not to do for Him: He was going to permit His followers to give a public demonstration in His honor” (Warren Wiersbe, *Be Diligent*, (131-32).
 - d. The great Messianic Secret that we encountered earlier in Mark is now openly proclaimed—Jesus is the Messiah.
2. Actions (4-6)
- a. The two disciples went just as Jesus had instructed them and found things just as Jesus had said.
 - b. There were indeed questions from “some people” about why they were taking the colt, but they were satisfied by the answer that the disciples gave which was just as the Lord had instructed them.

B. Entering Jerusalem (7-11)

1. The Actions of the Crowd (7-8)
- a. The disciples brought the colt to Jesus and threw their cloaks on it as a makeshift saddle.
 - b. Jesus sat on the previously unriden colt and began His triumphal entry into Jerusalem.
 - c. Wiersbe notes, “Most people today think of a donkey as nothing but a humble beast of burden, but in that day, it was looked on as an animal fit for a king to use (1 Kings 1:33). Our Lord needed this beast so that He might fulfill the messianic prophecy found in Zechariah 9:9. Mark does not quote this verse or refer to it because he was writing primarily for Gentile readers. In fulfilling this prophecy, Jesus accomplished two purposes: (1) He declared Himself to be Israel’s King and Messiah; and (2) He deliberately challenged the religious leaders. This set in motion the official plot that led 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” (Wiersbe, 132).
 - d. The people greeted Jesus as the conquering King of Israel, Son of David, and Messiah that He proclaimed Himself to be by His actions.
 - 1) They “. . . spread their cloaks on the road, while others spread branches they had cut in the field” (8)
 - 2) Putting clothing and branches before a king was customary (cf, 2 Ki 9:13).
 - 3) The branches were from palm trees nearby. Hence, the origin of our Palm Sunday celebration on the Sunday before Easter.
2. The Words of the Crowd (9-10)
- a. The crowd ahead and behind Jesus shouted, “Hosanna! Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord! Blessed is the coming kingdom of our father David! Hosanna in the highest heaven!”
 - b. “Hosanna!” in Hebrew literally means “Save us , we pray.” It is found in Ps 118:25-26 which is a messianic psalm and includes this shout for God’s salvation.
 - c. “Lord” (Gk., *kurios*) is this Greek title reserved for Caesar as the Roman Emperor. Later Christians would die for confessing Jesus as *kurios* over the Roman Emperor.
 - d. Notice that the people acknowledged “the coming kingdom” which had been Jesus’ primary message from the beginning of His preaching in Mk 1:15.
 - e. The crowd said the kingdom is “of our father David” which implies that Jesus is the Messiah, just as this phrase was interpreted when blind Bartimaeus used it in the last lesson (cf, Mk 10:47).
 - f. “Hosanna in the highest heaven (Gk., *en tois uphistoi*) is the same phrase that the angels used to announce Jesus’ birth when they said, “Glory to God in the highest heaven, and on earth peace to those on whom his favor rests” (Lk 2:14).
 - g. Daniel Akin notes, “Passover celebrated the Hebrew people’s deliverance out of Egypt. Now the nation of Israel anticipates a messianic liberation and deliverance from Rome” (Akin, 246).

3. The Meaning of Their Actions and Words

- a. Matthew says, “This took place to fulfill what was spoken through the prophet: ‘Say to daughter Zion, ‘See, your king comes to you gentle and riding on a donkey, and on a colt, the foal of a donkey’” (Mk 21:4-5).
- b. This type of entry was exactly what the disciples had been waiting for as they followed Jesus. He was on His way into Jerusalem to be coronated king by the crowd, take vengeance on the Romans, and sit on David’s throne.
 - 1) Peter might have thought to himself, “Now you’re talking Jesus. No more of this death and dying talk. You will soon be King of Israel.”
 - 2) The other disciples were giddy with joy at the prospect of the great positions that soon would be theirs as Jesus’ closest followers.
 - 3) James and John waited expectantly for the announcement that they would sit in the seats of honor at Jesus’ left and right in His kingdom.
- c. How quickly the praised of these friendly people would turn to curses (cf, Mk 15:6-15) and how quickly His joyous disciples would disown Jesus (cf, Mk 14:66-72) and go into hiding (cf, Mk 15:40-41). During this last week of Jesus’ life, the welcome He received as conquering king on Sunday with shouts from the crowd of blessing and praise would become shouts of “Crucify him! Crucify him!” (cf, Mk 15:13-14) as He went to the cross on Good Friday.
- d. We call this event Jesus’ Triumphal Entry. Wiersbe notes, “. . . His conquest would be spiritual and not military. A Roman general had to kill at least five thousand enemy soldiers to merit a Triumph, but in a few weeks, the gospel would ‘conquer’ some five thousand Jews and transform their lives (Acts 4:4). Christ’s ‘triumph’ would be the victory of love over hatred, truth over error, and life over death” (Wiersbe, 133).

4. Jesus in the Temple (11)

- a. Upon entering Jerusalem, Jesus went first to the temple as would any pilgrim coming up for Passover. However, Jesus was not just any pilgrim. He had been here before. He knew what lay ahead.
- b. In Matthew’s and Luke’s accounts (cf, Mt 21:12-17; Lk 19:45-48) Jesus also cleared the temple of money changers, but Mark records these events (cf, Mk 11:15-17) as having occurred on the next day when Jesus returned to the temple. The exact chronology is unclear but the fact that he cleared the temple of those who were there with wrong motives is central to all three synoptic accounts.
- c. According to Mark he “looked around at everything, but since it was already late, he went out to Bethany with the Twelve” (11).
 - 1) The hour was late after the long journey up from Jericho.
 - 2) The crowds were gone and the day was waning.
 - 3) This quiet, reflective moment in the temple was the calm before the storm.

C. Questions/Thoughts for Reflection

1. Are you excited enough about who Jesus is and what He has done that you break out in shouts of joy and praise to God?
2. When the Lord gives you instructions do you follow them faithfully or cut corners by doing your way?
3. When you face questions about your kingdom service are you ready to answer those who question you with a clear word from the Lord about what you are doing and why you are doing it?
4. How do we joyously prepare the way of the Lord today? What “cloaks” or “palm branches” will you sacrifice in service and honor of King Jesus?
5. Do we praise God only when He blesses us or also when it seems His blessing is withheld or missing?
 - a. Remember that God’s blessing is not always withheld or missing.
 - b. Perhaps the “blessing” that we hoped for is not what we need, and God is at work for even better things as we continue to trust and walk with Him.
6. Does knowing the meaning of “Hosanna!” cause you to say it with more energy, urgency, and joy?
7. Akin asks, “What kind of Messiah did the people expect and want? What kind of savior do people want today—what do they want relief from? How does Jesus exceed those expectations?” (Akin, 249)
8. As Jesus found rest in the home of his friends in Bethany, may we find friendly places to go where we know that we have friends who will truly care for us and support us no matter what the fickle world may say or do. Let’s make Abingdon Baptist Church that kind of place!