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A Not-So Triumphant Triumphant Entry; Matt 21:1-11

GPBC

6.13.21

Introduction – Let me explain what I mean by the title “A Not-so Triumphant Triumphant Entry.” The Triumphant Entry is the summary we attach to this passage, but it’s not how the passage itself speaks of it. In my Bible, right above ch 21, in bold italics are the words “The Triumphant Entry.” Those words are not Scripture. Those headings have been added by our English translators to provide a summary of the passage. They are not intended in any way to provide interpretation of the passage, just the basic gist of what happens in the passage.

We know why this is known as the Triumphant Entry. It’s due to the words and actions of the crowds as Jesus entered Jerusalem. They lay down their coats and palm branches as a symbol of honor and respect. They shout over and over again in celebratory fashion true declarations about Jesus. It all does seem and look and sound triumphant.

What’s interesting though is that Matthew doesn’t place much emphasis on the crowds’ reaction to Jesus. He simply tells what happened. He does, however, place great emphasis on how Jesus arrives in Jerusalem. Textually and actually that is where the triumph of Jesus’ entry is to be found – exactly where you would not expect it.

- I. The Prophecy of a Colt
 - a. First notice with me that Jesus is aware of His surroundings even from a distance away. But not only His surroundings but how everything will unfold – right down to the smallest of detail.
 - i. He knows where to find the colt. He knows the conversation that will take place. He knows exactly what the disciples need to say, and He knows how the owner will respond. He knows it all because He is God and this is His plan. In fact, it’s been His plan for thousands of years.
 - ii. Jesus is directing events in order to fulfill prophecy – only God can do that. Only God can open blind eyes – we saw that last week, and only God can orchestrate events to fulfill His sovereign plan.

- iii. You have to be God to do the things that Jesus does – that’s Matthew’s point. That’s why Matthew has written a gospel account. That’s why Matthew keeps pointing back to OT prophecy. This is now the 10th time Matthew has written, “This took place to fulfill what was spoken”
- b. So first we see that Jesus’ actions in this narrative declare that he is God and second we see that in fulfilling this yet another prophecy, the Scriptures themselves are declaring that Jesus is the Messiah, the coming King.
 - i. Zech 9:9
 - ii. On Wed night we studied the book of Micah where the prophetic word of the Messiah was that He would come from Bethlehem, and that’s precisely where Jesus was born.
 - iii. In today’s passage we read the prophetic fulfillment that the coming King will arrive in Jerusalem riding on a colt, and that’s precisely how Jesus arrives in Jerusalem.
 - iv. God speaks and history unfolds according to His divine directive. God promises and keeps His promises. And it’s never any clearer than when we look to Jesus.
 - v. The words and actions of Jesus prove that He is the Savior. The Scriptures testify that He is the Savior. Now it comes down to us, will we see Jesus and hear the Word of God and embrace Christ as Lord and Savior?
- c. The third item to note is the colt itself. It was God’s plan all along for His Son, the Savior of the world, the King of kings to enter Jerusalem on a colt.
 - i. He didn’t blaze into Jerusalem riding a mighty, white stallion. That will come with His second coming. He wasn’t arriving into Jerusalem to conquer the armies or kingdoms of men – that will come with His second coming. He didn’t arrive with a show of might and power – that will come with His second coming.
 - ii. He rode into town on a lowly, humble, beast of burden. This King is meek and mild and gentle. He is great, He is King, but He is humble. He is exalted, He is the Son of God, but He is lowly.
 - iii. He wasn’t there to tear down Rome; He was there to tear down sin. He wasn’t coming to challenge Pilate; He was coming

to defeat Satan. He wasn't coming to save by slaughtering the enemy; He was coming to save by sacrificing His life.

- d. The prophecy of the colt was to visualize the coming King of Zech 9 was none other than the suffering servant of Isaiah 53. He's not bringing a temporary salvation in an earthly kingdom; He's bringing an eternal salvation for an everlasting kingdom.
- e. That is the triumphant part of His entry!!

II. The Problem with the Crowds

a. Their actions were right (v8).

- i. The problem with the crowds wasn't their actions. Last week the crowd was doing the wrong thing – trying to silence to the two blind men. But here their actions are entirely appropriate.
- ii. Spreading their cloaks on the road and cutting branches and placing them on the road were indications of respect and honor. I would rather have my cloak trampled upon than for the colt's feet of this man to touch the ground. They were in essence paving the road with cloaks and branches. Signifying greatness. They were rolling out the red carpet.
- iii. 2 Kings 9:13 when Jehu was anointed to be king of Israel, the Bible says every man took his garment and put it under him on the bare steps, and they blew the trumpet and proclaimed, "Jehu is king."
- iv. So there was great history and significance to this kind of welcome that Jesus received. So the problem wasn't with their actions.

b. Their words were true (v9).

- i. The problem wasn't with their words either. Every single thing they declared about Jesus was absolutely true.
- ii. "Hosanna" – which means "save us" Well that's exactly what He was coming to do – save – which means that's exactly who He is – the Savior.
- iii. "to the Son of David" – as we learned last week, by attributing the title Son of David to Jesus, the crowd was declaring that Jesus was none other than the promised Messiah, here to deliver the people of God.

1. Could it possibly be that the crowds are now convinced that Jesus is the Son of David due to the testimony of the two blind men. The blind men were calling Jesus Son of David in the previous text. They believed He was the Messiah and could open their eyes, and lo and behold He actually did open their eyes, which happened because the blind men would not allow the crowd to silence them. Maybe having witnesses this extraordinary miracle, the crowd became convinced as well.
- iv. “Blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord” – they acknowledge that God is at work in this man Jesus – but even more so, they cry, “Hosanna in the highest” meaning they believe that Jesus is here from heaven. God has come to save them.
- v. Their words of adulation could not ring truer. This is precisely who Jesus is and why He has come. Their actions were right. Their words were true. The problem was their intention and reason behind their actions and words.
- c. Their reason was wrong.
 - i. Now we don’t find this out until later in the week. Jesus, however, and the gospel writers are already aware that the fanfare of the crowd is horribly mislead. Jesus rides into town on Sunday, the first day of His week of Passion. Next Sunday, He will rise from the dead. Many in this crowd who now cry “Hosanna” will be crying “Crucify Him” by Friday.
 - ii. You see they thought Jesus was there to deliver them from Rome, to conquer their political enemy. They had no idea He was there to conquer their greatest enemy. So when Jesus turns out to not be the Jesus they want Him to be, they turn against Him.
- d. Crowds are fickle. Crowds are swayed. Crowds yield to public opinion. Crowds redefine what is true. That’s why we don’t follow the crowds in our faith. We follow the Scripture.
- e. That’s why this is a not-so triumphant triumphal entry.

Conclusion – But there is a stunning vivid lesson here for us isn’t there? We can do the right thing, like come to church. We can say what is true, like confess that

Jesus is Lord. But if our heart does not believe, our actions and words have little meaning. What is Jesus to you? Is He nothing more than fire insurance? Nothing more than a ticket to heaven? Have you said the right words by praying a sinner's prayer and gone through the right motions being baptized, but for the wrong reasons? Do you believe in your heart that Jesus is your only hope of eternal life and therefore you have given your life to Him? Have you been swayed by crowds or have you surrendered to Christ? Are you banking your eternity on a decision or are you trusting your eternity in Christ? Because it's in Christ and Christ alone that we are triumphant!