

Jesus Presents Himself as the Messiah

Mark 11:1-11

Halifax: 21 June 2020 AM

Introduction:

Last week in our sermon series from Mark, we took up a new Psalm of Focus: Psalm 2.

- I did that because we came to a new section in Mark which begins in chapter 11.
- Since chapter 8 where the disciples confess that Jesus is the Messiah, we have seen Jesus on the way to Jerusalem with His disciples.
 - He has been instructing them about His coming suffering at Jerusalem and about their own call to take up their crosses and follow Him.
 - They have not understood.

You will remember that Jesus told them not to tell anyone that He was the Messiah.

- He knew that the whole nation of Israel did not understand that as Messiah, He had not come to be served, but to serve and give His life a ransom for many on the cross.
- He knew that if He or His disciples began to spread it around that He was the Messiah, there would be zealous but misguided hordes that would want to make a warrior king of Him to liberate them from the Romans.
 - So again and again, we have seen Him downplay any attempts to elevate Himself or to allow others to do this.

But with chapter 11, this all changes.

- Jesus has arrived at Jerusalem to die on the cross.
- Now we find Him actually drawing attention to Himself as the Messiah and no longer forbidding those who follow Him to praise Him.

Today we come to that great event that is often called “The Triumphal Entry” where Jesus initiates this change.

- Here He rides into Jerusalem on a donkey and receives honours as Israel’s Messiah.
- This occurs on the first day of the week on which He will die.
- Let’s take a look.

Listen as I read our text from Mark 11:1-11:

Mark 11:1-11: Now when they drew near Jerusalem, to Bethphage and Bethany, at the Mount of Olives, He sent two of His disciples; ² 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. ³ 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.” ⁴ So they went their way, and found the colt tied by the door outside on the street, and they loosed it. ⁵ But some of those who stood there said to them, “What are you doing, loosing the colt?” ⁶ And they spoke to them just as Jesus had commanded. So they let them go. ⁷ Then they brought the colt to Jesus and threw their clothes on it, and He

sat on it. ⁸ And many spread their clothes on the road, and others cut down leafy branches from the trees and spread *them* on the road. ⁹ Then those who went before and those who followed cried out, saying: “Hosanna! ‘Blessed *is* He who comes in the name of the LORD!’ ¹⁰ Blessed *is* the kingdom of our father David that comes in

the name of the Lord! Hosanna in the highest!” ¹¹ And Jesus went into Jerusalem and into the temple. So when He had looked around at all things, as the hour was already late, He went out to Bethany with the twelve.

May the Lord add His blessing to the reading of His pure and holy Word.

I want to begin my sermon by showing you how Jesus presents Himself as the Messiah. After I have done that, then we will look at the lessons we can learn when we see how His followers respond to Him here.

I. So first, see how Jesus now presents Himself as the Messiah.

- Perhaps I should remind you that the word *Messiah* has the same meaning as the word *Christ*.
 - It means “anointed one” and refers to how God anointed prophets, priests and kings to serve Him—all pointing to Jesus Christ the anointed One—the anointed Prophet, Priest, and King whom God sent from heaven to save us.
 - Take a look at how Jesus presents Himself as the Messiah.
- A. You can see that He initiates the whole event of His honourable entry to Jerusalem.
 1. The story opens with Him sending two of His disciples to fetch a donkey or a colt for Him as they draw near to Jerusalem.
 - a. It is a very deliberate action on His part to prepare for a triumphal entry.
 - What was called an *ap-an'-tay-sis* where a city welcomes a dignitary or a monarch.
 - He tells these two disciples, with divine insight, that when they go to the village across from them, they will immediately find the colt tied and they are to take it, and He even tells them what to say to those who ask what they are doing (that the Lord needs it) and how the concerned inquirers will respond.
 - b. But understand what is going on here—
 - 1) When people arrived at Jerusalem as pilgrims from all over the world for the feasts (presently it was Passover), it was customary to enter the city on foot.
 - By riding in on a donkey, Jesus would stand out in a big way.
 - And of course He knew that.
 - 2) It was not just that this would be unusual, it was also that there was a well-known prophecy from Zachariah 9:9 about the Messiah.
 - We used it for our call to worship today:

- **Zech 9:9: Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion! Shout, O daughter of Jerusalem! 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.**
- This was all carefully planned by Jesus to show everyone that He was the Messiah. It was deliberate and intentional.
2. He planned this ride when He had a great multitude of followers all around Him.
- Remember when He came to Jericho and healed blind Bartimaeus, verse 10:46 said that He came with His disciples and a great multitude.
 - So there were people that were travelling along with Him from Galilee and from points along the way—now Bartimaeus is also among them.
 - They had all seen this blind man call Him the Son of David and they had seen how Jesus opened his eyes.
 - They were enthusiastic followers who had come to Jerusalem with Jesus.
 - And we know from John’s gospel that Jesus had many enthusiastic followers at Jerusalem as well.
 - When He first arrived at Bethany, which was about two miles from Jerusalem, He had raised His friend Lazarus from the dead.
 - John tells us that there was a whole crowd from Jerusalem that joined the procession (the ap-on’-tay-sis) when Jesus came riding in on the donkey.
- What Mark tells us in verses 8-10 was no surprise to Jesus. It was what He planned.
3. As soon as these crowds of His followers saw Jesus riding on the donkey into the city, they began to honour Him as the Messiah.
- Look at what they did: Mark 11:8: **And many spread their clothes on the road, and others cut down leafy branches from the trees and spread *them* on the road.**
 - This was the way you would treat a king in a royal procession into his city. That is what these people were doing with great enthusiasm.
 - And look at what they said (Mark 10:9-10):
 - **⁹ Then those who went before and those who followed cried out, saying: “Hosanna! ‘Blessed is He who comes in the name of the LORD!’ ¹⁰ Blessed is the kingdom of our father David that comes in the name of the Lord! Hosanna in the highest!”**
 - That is clearly Messiah talk—talk that recognises that Jesus has come in the name of the LORD and that He has come to fulfil the promise to David by restoring the kingdom forever.
 - The word “hosanna” means “O save us.”
 - They were acknowledging that Jesus was the king that God had sent to save them.
 - And you will notice that Jesus does nothing to silence them.

- He is the one who precipitated all this by riding into Jerusalem on a donkey.

B. This is all unprecedented behaviour on His part!

1. He had done signs and wonders among the people to be sure.
 - He had cast out demons and healed people and had preached the gospel and fed the multitude. Those were signs that He was the Messiah.
 - But this was the first time that He openly set Himself forth as the Messiah.
2. As I mentioned in the introduction, He had good reason for hiding it before.
 - He had two good reasons.
 - a. First, because they had deeply ingrained in them the wrong understanding about what the Messiah was going to do.
 - They thought He would liberate them from the dominion of Rome.
 - They did not think He would die on the cross—they did not even think He would die at all.
 - They were expecting Him to form an army and lead them to victory against their political enemies.
 - That is the first reason He did not want them to acclaim Him as the Messiah.
 - b. The second reason He did not broadcast that He was the Messiah was because His time had not yet come...
 - that is, the time for Him to be crucified.
 - If He had gone around declaring Himself to be the Messiah, His enemies would have greatly interfered with His ministry.

C. So what has changed? Why does He now make it known that He is the Christ?

1. Now His time has come.
 - It is the very week that He is appointed to be betrayed and crucified.
 - He is, in a sense, egging His enemies on in that He, rather than staying quiet, is now thrusting Himself into the limelight.
 - We might say that He is throwing down the gauntlet.
2. Furthermore, there is now no danger of His followers trying to make Him king in the wrong way—
 - There will be little opportunity for that.
 - In a matter of a few days, they will see Him willingly submitting to those who arrest Him—going as a sheep to the slaughter in silence.
3. It is likely that He also makes Himself known as the Messiah to prepare them for the cross.
 - He wanted to leave them with a clear testimony that the One they would see on the cross before the week ended was none other than the Messiah, the One who came in the name of the Lord to save His people.

TRANS> So now, having seen how Jesus publicly presents Himself as the Messiah, let's turn to our second subject.

II. Let's look at the lessons we can learn as we look at how His followers responded to Him.

- We will look at three lessons.

A. First, there is a lesson in obeying our Lord Jesus without question.

1. Look at the example of the two disciples:

a. He sends them off on this errand to get the colt for Him.

- They might wonder why He wants it—but even more, how is this supposed to work?
 - They are just to wander into this village and find this colt tied in front of someone's house and just walk up and take it?
 - How does Jesus know that they won't get in trouble for horse-stealing?
 - Jesus tells them to simply say, "The Lord has need of it," and that the owner will accept that?
 - How likely is that to happen?
- But they simply trust Him.
 - They obey without question because He has said it.
 - Of course everything happens just as He said.
 - Their trust is beautiful.

b. Jesus' disciples were not always like that.

1) Remember when He first told them to cast their net on the other side when they had been fishing and had caught nothing?

- They challenged Him—what did He know about fishing?
- But then they caught so many fish that their net was breaking and their ship was about to sink and they worshipped Him.

2) They had the same hesitation much later when He told them to feed the multitude with five loaves and two fishes: "What are these among so many?"

- But then they went ahead and obeyed Him and all five thousand men besides women and children were fed.

➤ But now with this donkey errand, they obey without question.

- How they have grown from being with Jesus. He had taught them by grace.

2. You need to cultivate this unquestioning trust also—He is the Lord and He knows what is best.

a. This is true with your doctrine.

- As a new believer, I remember that the doctrine of eternal punishment did not seem fair.

- I read some stuff that denied that teaching, but I could not deny that it was definitely what the Bible taught.
 - I am glad that I did not reject that doctrine because it became foundational to a proper understanding of my sin, of God's holiness, of the cross, and lots of other things.
 - So with the doctrine of Trinity, with God's sovereignty and human responsibility both being true... we have to trust what He says.
- b. This is true in our obedience as well.
- Does it not make sense for Him to tell women to submit to their husbands?
 - Should we rely on the wisdom of our own day about that?
 - To do so will prevent us from understanding the true harmony that we are meant to have in marriage—and from understanding the unity we are to have with Christ.
 - Husbands are the ones that have the hardest time with this because they don't want to bear the responsibility that God has given them to lead their homes in a godly way.
 - What about the Bible's teaching on chastening children?
 - Should we judge it to be in error because it seems harsh to us?
 - What about the command to worship God only as He has appointed when we know that more people would come to our church if we changed that?
 - Can we obey without questioning God?
- c. Have you learned to trust God without questioning in your trials?
- Are you able to believe Him when He says that all things work together for good to those who love Him?
 - Perhaps in a prolonged sickness? or loneliness? or a bad relationship that you must bear?
 - Maybe a tough work situation? or persecution?
 - Can you trust that your Lord knows what He is doing—that He has sent it for your good?
- d. What about in your calling?
- Do you need to stretch yourself in pursuing a calling of service to others?
 - Perhaps you are a young man who needs to prepare yourself for caring for a family—but it seems too hard?
 - Israel had to trust God when He told them to go into the promised land and overthrow the Canaanites. They didn't, and spent forty years in the wilderness—the next generation obeyed and saw God's strength.
 - Or maybe there is some outreach God has put before you—calling people to encourage them—giving to someone who is in need—rebuking someone who has sinned—asking someone to forgive you.

- Remember how Moses first responded when God called him to go to Egypt: “I can’t speak! Better ask someone else to do this!”
 - That was my testimony too—I am too fearful to speak in public.
- Learn to trust your Lord without question. He is utterly reliable.
3. Perhaps, like the disciples, you *have* learned to trust Him.
- a. Don’t be afraid to say it—if you look back, God has taught you and you should give Him the glory.
 - It is all of His grace.
 - b. But at the same time be sure to recognise that you still have much more to learn.
 - Jesus’ disciples trust Him about the donkey, but before the week is out they will see Him arrested and taken to be crucified—
 - And that trust they have now will nearly vanish because what He is doing will not make sense to them.
 - c. You will be put into such times—it is part of your growth.
 - But I tell you, Jesus’ disciples came forth from the cross—once they understood what the cross was for—with more confidence than ever!
 - We all have the benefit of the testimony of the cross to remind us that we must always trust God, even when it doesn’t make sense.
 - But even with that testimony, there will be times when that trust is stretched to the breaking point... and those will be the times when we grow the most.
 - That’s why James tells you to count it all joy when your faith is tested. Job was right when he said (Job 23:10) **When He has tested me, I shall come forth as gold.**
 - Isn’t that encouraging?

TRANS> Now let’s move on to the second lesson from Jesus’ followers in our text.

B. Second, we are taught by these followers about honouring Jesus as our King.

1. See here how eager His followers are to honour Him as soon as they are given the opportunity!
 - a. It is as if they have been waiting to show how much they think of Him.
 - As soon as they see Him on the colt, verse 8 tells us that **many spread their clothes on the road, and others cut down leafy branches from the trees and spread them on the road.**
 - There was an extravagance here—a desire to show Him how much they respected Him as their king.
 - b. Real honour and respect is never invisible—it finds ways to express itself.
 - These followers of Christ that joined Him from Galilee and along the road to Jerusalem and these followers from Jerusalem...

- as soon as they see Jesus's immediate followers making a saddle with their clothes, they make a pathway with theirs.
2. Do you show your honour to Christ?
 - a. He is a high king who rules over all things and who will judge the secrets of every heart.
 - Do you fear Him? or do you curse Him?
 - Do you admire Him and praise Him, or do you take His name in vain?
 - Do you call down curses on others in your anger? That is to act as if it is yours to judge who is to be cursed and who is to be blessed.
 - b. What about your worship?
 - Are you sloppy? Are you indifferent about preparing your heart for worship? Do you check your phone when God's word is being preached?
 - Do you take His promises to heart? And His warnings?
 - Do you sing praise in a way that honours Him?
 - c. What about among unbelievers? Do you honour Him?
 - Do they know that you belong to Him and that you will not run with them in their revelry, their drunkenness, and their immorality?
 - or do you melt before them as if you have no King in heaven?
 - Do you lay down your life for Him?
 - Do you bear His shame with joy?
- Of course you come short. But there is good news...
3. Thank the Lord that if you are humble and contrite, He will work with you.
 - If you belong to Christ, He is at work in you.
 - Soon these praising followers will deny Him.
 - I don't think they are the same ones that yelled crucify Him, as many preachers like to say—that was a different crowd.
 - But they get quiet and do not stand for Him—like Peter and the others who flee from Him and then deny Him.
 - But once again, because He is so gracious, He restored Peter and the others so that they all came forth with more boldness and more respect than ever before.
 - If you are indifferent about it, you never honour Him...
 - But if you weep for your failings and turn back to Him, you will learn to cast your clothes under the feet of His donkey before the eyes of all.

TRANS> And now we are ready to look at the third lesson that emerges from this text...

- C. Learn to praise Him with joy as your Saviour—as the One God sent to save us.
 1. His followers that came with Him as pilgrims to Jerusalem, as well as those who were from Jerusalem, join their praises here.

- As He went down that path that was strewn with those clothes and those branches, we are told that (v. 9-10):
 - **Mark 11:9-10: those who went before and those who followed cried out, saying: “Hosanna! ‘Blessed is He who comes in the name of the LORD!’¹⁰ Blessed is the kingdom of our father David that comes in the name of the Lord! Hosanna in the highest!”**
 - With these words they acknowledge that He is the One God sent to save them.
 - Hosanna means “O save,” and is both a prayer and a praise for salvation at the same time.
 - It is the cry of those who know that they cannot save themselves but who hope in the mercy of God.
 - They testify that Jesus has come in the name of the Lord.
 - He is the one who is blessed of God—who comes with God’s favour to establish the kingdom of righteousness that God promised David.
 - The emphasis is that salvation is God’s work.
 - Without His saving work, they would be helpless.
 - They are right on in what they say.
2. We may learn to praise Him from their example here.
- It is the great work of Jesus (yeshua—Yahweh saves) to save us so we say, “Hosanna! Hosanna in the highest.”
 - It may not be those words—we may say, “have mercy on me,” or “forgive me,” but we call on the name of the Lord and He saves us.
 - These disciples are right that He is sent to save even though they don’t yet clearly understand the salvation that they need.
 - They think they need liberation from the oppression of Rome, but what they need even more is salvation from their own sin.
 - But they will learn of this soon enough. It is not the perfection of their understanding, but His mercy that saves them.
 - But we have a benefit. We are on the other side of the cross.
 - We know that the Messiah came to give His life a ransom for sinners.
 - They did not yet understand that.
 - We can take these praises and these Hosannas of these followers of Christ and make them our own in a fuller and richer way because we understand that Jesus died for our sins. That He is our righteousness.
3. But alas, do we *really* understand?
- Certainly we do if we are in Christ...
 - But at the same time, when you boil it down, you don’t nearly understand all that you need to be saved from either or even the hundredth part of what your Saviour had to bear for you.

- But thanks be to God that our salvation does not depend on the depth of our understanding.
- It depends on Christ, the Messiah, who came in the name of the Lord to save us.
- **“Hosanna! ‘Blessed is He who comes in the name of the LORD!’¹⁰ Blessed is the kingdom of our father David that comes in the name of the Lord! Hosanna in the highest!”**
- Are you among the great company of His followers through the ages who look to Him as Saviour?
 - If you are not, I would ask you how you hope to stand before Him at the last day?
 - If He is God’s salvation from heaven and you will not have Him, you will have to bear your own sin and you cannot do that.
 - Your torment will never end.
 - But His call goes out to ends of the earth, “Look to Me and be saved.”
 - Come to Him and say, “Hosanna.” “O save us.”
 - His promise is that whoever calls on Him will be saved.
 - Thanks be to God.

The Public Presentment of Jesus Hosanna in the Highest Triumphal Entry

Mark 11:1-11

Halifax: 21 June 2020 AM

Ps. 118, 2

Gathering Music: Psalm 24-C
Call to Worship: Zechariah 9:9
Confession: Confession of the Mystery of Godliness
Song of Approach Psalm 21-A
OT Scripture Reading: Zechariah 9:1-17
Song of Promise and Warning Psalm 2
Song of Assurance Psalm 118-C
Benediction: Numbers 6:24-26

Afternoon Service: WSC Q-18 Our Sinful Estate (Rom 6:1-23, Rom 3:1-31)

Call to Worship: Isaiah 55:6-9

Opening Song sequence: Ps 51-F

Scripture Reading: Genesis 6:1-8

Extra:

Closing Song: 36-A

Benediction: Gal 1:3-5

Outline>

RYLE

I. Observe how public our Lord made the last act of His life.

- He wanted everyone to know that He came to Jerusalem to die.
- He did His miracles mostly in more remote places and his teaching with his disciples, but when it came to dying, it was at Jerusalem.
- He overruled things in such a way that all eyes were upon Him at His death.
- Let us never forget that the crowning fact in all we know of Jesus Christ, is His death upon the cross.

JRS> What is it that we remember at the supper? His miracles? His good deeds? No. It is His death.

II. Observe the voluntary poverty which our Lord underwent, when He was upon the earth.

- He came on a borrowed colt with clothes for a saddle. He crossed the sea in a borrowed boat, He rode into the holy city on a borrowed beast, He was buried in a borrowed tomb.

- We see divine strength and human weakness united in Him. We have divine acts joined with human weakness... He feeds multitudes, but hungers, raises the dead, but himself dies, heals the sick but is himself weary.

III. Observe that as He rode a borrowed ass, it shows that poverty is not sinful.

General Introduction

COLE names 11:1 – 13:37 *The Zeal of Thine House: The Jerusalem Ministry*

EDW> A theme here begins that runs through chapter 13 describing Jesus' conflict with and rejection of the temple in Jerusalem, including the religious system and the leadership centred there.

FRAN notes that the ministry at Jerusalem has few healing miracles because the faith upon which they depend is here absent.

- FRAN> Chapters 11-12 are a period of public confrontation with the rulers at Jerusalem. Chapter 13 shows what the end of that confrontation will be even though chapter 14-15 show us what happens to Jesus before that.

ALEX> Having finished his account of Christ's long journey to Jerusalem, Mark, passing over some particulars preserved by Luke and John, relates his joyful recognition by the multitude as the Messiah, and his public entrance as such into the Holy City (1—11)...

- ALEX> The new features which distinguish this part of the history, besides the change of scene from the villages of Galilee and Perea to the streets and temple of Jerusalem, are Christ's avowal of his Messianic claims, and his assertion of them by official acts, and in reply to the objections of the national authorities.

INTRODUCTION

TRIPP> asked, what kind of Jesus are you looking for? A therapeutic Jesus? A political Jesus? A give me my desires Jesus? An avenge me Jesus? A popular Jesus? A prosperity Jesus? A make me great Jesus?

FRAN> Jesus' entry into Jerusalem here stands out very prominently in Mark. This is the first time an entry into Jerusalem is presented to us in Mark. With all the pilgrims coming, Jesus and His disciples might have been much less conspicuous, but instead there are two very public and very dramatic events—the triumphal entry and the cleansing of the temple. Both actions draw attention to His authority. Here is a decisive confrontation in which neither side is in a mood to compromise.

- FRAN emphasises that what Jesus does here was very much focused on drawing attention to Himself. Pilgrims were expected (if at all able) to walk into Jerusalem, not to ride. By doing this, He engineered the outburst of praise that followed.

- FRAN says that the crowd here is made up of those who travelled with Jesus and His disciples on the road to Jerusalem. This is brought out in verse 9. It is actually not Jesus entry into Jerusalem, but His approach to the city. The preacher's favourite point of fickleness does not work here. These were his Galilean followers that shout "Hosanna." The ones who say "crucify Him" are the Jerusalem skeptics.

EDW> One third of Mark (Chapters 11-16) and one half of John (12-21) is of the last seven days of Jesus' life.

RYLE points out how extraordinary this is for our Lord, that of His own initiative, He draws attention to Himself. There was probably not a house in Jerusalem where the entry of the prophet from Nazareth was not known and talked about says Ryle.

EDW/LANE> However, there is some evidence (not that least of which is all that happens here) that Jesus may have been at Jerusalem from the feast of tabernacles in the fall (as this narrative would be more in keeping with and some of His comments such as that He was daily teaching in the temple).

- JRS> Yes, but that evidence is trumped by John 12:1: "Then, six days before the Passover, Jesus came to Bethany, where Lazarus was who had been dead, whom He had raised from the dead." and John 12:12: "The next day a great multitude that had come to the feast, when they heard that Jesus was coming to Jerusalem, took branches of Palm trees and came out to meet Him."

EDW> The first six verses of our narrative are devoted to preparation for the entry into Jerusalem and are narrated so as to demonstrate Jesus' precise foreknowledge and sovereignty over subsequent events. Subtle details carry messianic connotations.

- The colt is identified as the mount of the Messiah (Zeh 9:9, Gen 49:11)
- The commandeering of a beast was the prerogative of a king
- An unbroken beast was considered sacred (Num 19:2, Deut 21:3)
- Mishna said that no one else should ride a king's horse (*m. Sahnh.* 2:5)
- He is not coming as an unknowing victim, but with the same foreknowledge and sovereignty with which He travelled "on the way."

JRS> John 12:16 informs us that while this was a fulfilment of Zach 9:9, Jesus' disciples did not understand that.

- John 12:16: "His disciples did not understand these things at first; but when Jesus was glorified, then they remembered that these things were written about Him and *that* they had done these things to Him."

JRS> John also mentions that many of the people honoured Jesus because they knew about the raising of Lazarus.

- John 12:17-18: Therefore the people, who were with Him when He called Lazarus out of his tomb and raised him from the dead, bore witness. ¹⁸ For this reason the people also met Him, because they heard that He had done this sign."

- LANE stresses that the messianic character was hidden and not understood until later.

JRS> It is interesting that John focuses much more on Jerusalem and how the people from there came out to Jesus, whereas Mark emphasises those who were already with Jesus and started the procession. John seems more interested in Jerusalem's response than the other gospels. He alone records the raising of Lazarus the affect that had on the people in coming out to the triumphal entry.

LANE> It was customary for pilgrims to enter Jerusalem on foot, so by riding Jesus does something very conspicuous.

LANE mentions the rabbinic interpretation as they struggled with such a humble entrance for the Messiah: "Behold, the Son of Man comes 'on the clouds of heaven' and 'lowly and riding an ass.' If they (Israel) are worthy, 'with the clouds of heaven'; if they are not worthy, 'lowly, and riding upon an ass.'" Was Jesus' entry a declaration of Israel's unworthiness?

CAL is wonderfully clear: In consequence of the time of his death being at hand, he intended to show, by a solemn performance, what was the nature of his kingdom. He had begun, indeed, to do this at his baptism, but it remained that this demonstration should be given by him towards the end of his calling: for why did he hitherto refrain from the title of King, and now at length openly declare himself to be a King, but because he is not far from the end of his course? [710] So then, as his removal to heaven was at hand, he intended to commence his reign openly on earth. This would have been a ridiculous display, if it had not been in accordance with the prediction of Zechariah, (9:9.) In order to lay claim to the honors of royalty, he enters Jerusalem, riding an ass.

CAL> Jesus made it clear that he did not unwillingly receive these honours.

CAL, in speaking of the prophecy in Zech 9, says: Accordingly, the Prophet shows that the coming of Christ yields to believers a full and complete ground of joy; for, since God is not reconciled to them in any other way than through the agency of the Mediator, and as it is the same Mediator who delivers his people from all evils, what can there be, apart from him, that is fitted to cheer men ruined by their sins, and oppressed by troubles?

1 Now when they drew near Jerusalem, to Bethphage and Bethany, at the Mount of Olives, He sent two of His disciples;

¹ Καὶ ὅτε ἐγγίζουσιν εἰς Ἱερουσαλήμ, εἰς Βηθσαφαγὴ καὶ Βηθανίαν, πρὸς τὸ ὄρος τῶν Ἐλαιῶν, ἀποστέλλει δύο τῶν μαθητῶν αὐτοῦ,

JRS> His public entrance to Jerusalem did not just happen—He prepared for it.

When they drew near Jerusalem

- FRAN> We should assume that the subject *they* here is the crowd that was with Jesus in 10:46.

Bethphage and Bethany

- Means *house of dates* and *house of figs*.

Mt. of Olives

- FRAN, EDW> May be mentioned because it was associated with Messianic expectations by the Rabbis and Josephus. It is also the place of final judgment (Zech 14:14) and the place where the glory of God when it departed from the temple (Ezek 11:23, 43:1-5).

two of His disciples

- COLE> This is always the way of our Lord—to send them in pairs. The *monachos*—monk, on-his-own Christian, was not introduced until later... same with the *eremites*—hermit, literally meaning ‘living in the wild’, away from men.

2 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.

² καὶ λέγει αὐτοῖς, Ὑπάγετε εἰς τὴν κώμην τὴν κατέναντι ὑμῶν· καὶ εὐθέως εἰσπορευόμενοι εἰς αὐτὴν εὐρήσετε πῶλον δεδεμένον, ἐφ’ ὃν οὐδεὶς ἀνθρώπων κεκάθικεν· λύσαντες αὐτὸν ἀγάγετε.

on which no one has sat

- DONN> Such were used for things that were holy. Animals that had never borne a yoke. It was used for this purpose alone.
- ALEX> a circumstance required in certain animals employed in religious uses:
 - Deut 21:3: And it shall be *that* the elders of the city nearest to the slain man will take a heifer which has not been worked *and* which has not pulled with a yoke.
 - I Sam 6:7: “Now therefore, make a new cart, take two milk cows which have never been yoked, and hitch the cows to the cart; and take their calves home, away from them.”

EDW> Mark typically prefers subtle messianic imagery, so does not quote Zech 9.

HENRY> This colt was borrowed too. Christ went upon the water in a borrowed boat, ate the passover in a borrowed chamber, was buried in a borrowed sepulchre, and here rode on a borrowed ass.

3 "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."

³ Καὶ ἐὰν τις ὑμῖν εἶπῃ, Τί ποιεῖτε τοῦτο; εἶπατε, ὅτι Ὁ κύριος αὐτοῦ χρεῖαν ἔχει· καὶ εὐθέως αὐτὸν ἀποστέλλει ὧδε.

JRS> Is this prophecy or had Jesus made pre-arrangements? Certainly it gave His disciples confidence to see how they found things just as He said.

- CAL> Again, as Christ strengthens the disciples, that they may be more ready to obey, so we see how they, on the other hand, yield submission. The result shows that the whole of this affair was directed by God.
 - Let us also learn by their example to press forward through every kind of difficulty, so as to render to the Lord the obedience which he demands from us; for he will remove obstacles, and open up a path, and will not permit our endeavors to be unavailing.
- ALEX> The supposition that this was prearranged has no foundation in the text or context, but even if it was, there is evidence of superhuman foresight in our Lord's exact description of the incidents as they occurred.
- COLE> This was a faith-building thing as they learned to venture out at His command. Cole suggests that the individual must have been a friend or follower of the Lord, but actual contingency described in either case required divine foreknowledge, of the type often vouchsafed to the prophets of Old Testament days.
- EDW who wrongly suggests that Jesus was in Jerusalem for several months or weeks at least suggests that Jesus knew these folks, however EDW recognises the supernatural character of this event.
- LANE sees it as prearranged and interprets it with the “immediately he will return it here” as part of what they were to say to the objectors. Lane believes that the “lord” here is the owner—they are to say that the owner needs it (who was presumably with Jesus.)
- HIEB says it seems clear that Mark understood this as supernatural. The detailed events specified call for that interpretation.

LANE says that this all corresponds to the prophecy in Gen 49:8-12 with the colt tied to a vine and its association with Shiloh who is to come “the coming one”.

HIEB is very good on the debate about who *the Lord* is here.

- The problem is that Jesus does not refer to himself this way in Mark except here if that is the case. However, Luke and John show that He did speak of Himself in this way. Moreover, “Jesus and His disciples were well known in the area (Jn 11), and the owner would readily understand that the reference was to Jesus.

and immediately he will send it here.

- HIEB says that this is part of what they were to tell the questioners—it was the promise that the Lord (Jesus) would return the animal when as soon as He was finished with it. HIEB says the adverb *back* is well attested here.

4 So they went their way, and found the colt tied by the door outside on the street, and they loosed it.

⁴ Ἀπῆλθον δὲ καὶ εὔρον πῶλον δεδεμένον πρὸς τὴν θύραν ἔξω ἐπὶ τοῦ ἀμφοδου, καὶ λύουσιν αὐτόν.

tied to the door outside on the street

- ALEX> a description from an eyewitness and a detail such as we often find in Mark.

5 But some of those who stood there said to them, "What are you doing, loosing the colt?"

⁵ Καὶ τινες τῶν ἐκεῖ ἐστηκότων ἔλεγον αὐτοῖς, Τί ποιεῖτε λύοντες τὸν πῶλον;

HIEB> Luke 19:33 makes it clear that these were the owners: "But as they were loosing the colt, the owners of it said to them, "Why are you loosing the colt?""

- JRS> Why do so many of the other commentators even bother with the notion that the owner was with Jesus? Do they not believe Luke?

6 And they spoke to them just as Jesus had commanded. So they let them go.

⁶ Οἱ δὲ εἶπον αὐτοῖς καθὼς ἐνετείλατο ὁ Ἰησοῦς· καὶ ἀφῆκαν αὐτούς.

so they let them go

- ALEX notes that *go* is not in the original.

COLE points out that we can commandeer into service those whom God calls, and that even father and mother cannot withhold the one that the Lord calls.

7 Then they brought the colt to Jesus and threw their clothes on it, and He sat on it.

⁷ Καὶ ἤγαγον τὸν πῶλον πρὸς τὸν Ἰησοῦν, καὶ ἐπέβαλον αὐτῷ τὰ ἱμάτια αὐτῶν, καὶ ἐκάθισεν ἐπ' αὐτῷ.

JRS> Notice that the disciples are the ones who begin.

COLE> These first clothes were utilitarian, to serve as a rough saddle, but the leafy branches and the clothes on the road were purely honorific.

EDW> Clothes were thrown on the bare steps when Jehu was inaugurated in Israel: 2 Kings 9:13: "Then each man hastened to take his garment and put *it* under him on the top of the steps; and they blew trumpets, saying, "Jehu is king!"

DONN> Judas Mac. had ridden in like this about 150 years prior.

ALEX> Mark and Luke omit or take for granted what is stated expressly both by John (12. 14. 15) and Matthew (21,4. 5), that this was in fulfilment of a prophecy of Zechariah (9. 9), which describes the King of Zion as coming to her mounted on an ass and a colt the foal of an ass, two parallel descriptions of the same thing. According to the ancient oriental custom, the ass and the mule were used by persons of the highest rank for ordinary riding and on state occasions (see Gen. 22, 3. Num. 22,3!. Josh. 15,18. 1 Sam. 25,23. 2 Sam.13. 29. 18, 9. 1 Kings 1, 33. 38. 44), while the horse mentioned in the scriptures is invariably the war-horse (see Ex. 15, 21. Judg. 5.22. Ps. 33, 17. 76. 6. 147, 10. Prov. 21. 31. Jer. 8, 6. Zech. 10. 3.) By describing the Messiah therefore as thus mounted, Zechariah represents him as a peaceful king; and by actually thus appearing, Christ appropriates the passage to himself and claims to be the peaceful sovereign there described.

8 And many spread their clothes on the road, and others cut down leafy branches from the trees and spread *them* on the road.

⁸ Πολλοὶ δὲ τὰ ἱμάτια αὐτῶν ἔστρωσαν εἰς τὴν ὁδόν· ἄλλοι δὲ στοιβάδας ἔκοπτον ἐκ τῶν δένδρων, καὶ ἐστρώννουσιν εἰς τὴν ὁδόν.

JRS> This is way of showing honour. The palm branches symbolised peace.

many spread their clothes on the road

- ALEX> an ancient practice at the proclamation of new sovereigns.
 - 2 Kings 9:13: “Then each man hastened to take his garment and put *it* under him on the top of the steps; and they blew trumpets, saying, "Jehu is king!"”
- COLE> This is love’s extravagance to honour their king.
- HIEB> Those spreading their garments in the road recognised that the entry was messianic.
- JRS> It is so strange that some say the crowd did not recognise that this was messianic and that the greeting was just that which any pilgrim might be given.
- LANE suggests that there was no thought by the crowd that Jesus was the Messiah.

LANE also says that this is reminiscent of the entry into Jerusalem of Simon, the last of the five Hasmonean brothers, on a triumphal occasion (1 Macc 13:51).

HIEB> By this action Jesus openly presented Himself as the fulfillment of the Messianic prophecy. But the very manner of His entry indicated that He presented Himself not as the political Messiah they were eagerly expecting. The ass was the animal of peaceful daily pursuits and was not associated with thoughts of conquest like the horse.

9 Then those who went before and those who followed cried out, saying: "Hosanna! 'Blessed is He who comes in the name of the LORD!'

⁹ Καὶ οἱ προάγοντες καὶ οἱ ἀκολουθοῦντες ἔκραζον, λέγοντες, Ὡσαννά. Εὐλογημένος ὁ ἐρχόμενος ἐν ὀνόματι κυρίου.

HENRY says here that they “welcomed His person” (v. 9) and “wished well to His intent (v. 10). They believed that, mean a figure as he made, he had a kingdom, which should shortly be set up in the world, that it was the kingdom of their father David (that father of his country), the kingdom promised to him and his seed for ever; a kingdom that came in the name of the Lord, supported by a divine authority. Blessed be this kingdom; let it take place, let it get ground, let it come in the power of it, and let all opposing rule, principality, and power, be put down; let it go on conquering, and to conquer.

ALEX> Thus far the proclamation of the new king and his public recognition had been only by significant actions upon his part and that of his attendants. But now it was to break forth into language, in a sort of alternate or responsive chorus, uttered in succession by the crowd which went before and that which followed Jesus, the distinct mention of which, both by Mark and Matthew (21, 9), was probably intended to suggest some such antiphony, the rather as it seems to have been practised in the Jewish worship and particularly in the chanting of the Psalms from which the particular passage sung on this occasion was selected, being still found in Ps. 118, 25. 26.

HENRY> Christ received the joyful hosannas of the people; that is, both the welcome they gave him and their good wishes to the prosperity of his kingdom, v. 9. It was God that put it into the hearts of these people to cry Hosanna, who were not by art and management brought to it, as those were who afterward cried, Crucify, crucify.

HIEB> The before crowd was those that met them coming out of Jerusalem (that John mentions), and the after crowd were those that followed him from the starting point.

LANE says that this was a typical greeting that was given to pilgrims when they arrived at Jerusalem.

FRAN> Psa 118, the last of the Hallel Psalms was recited at all major festivals in Jerusalem.

Hosanna

- FRIBERG> Ὡσαννά a particle transliterated from the Aramaic; strictly, a cry expressing an appeal for divine help *save! help, we pray!* in a liturgical usage, a shout of praise and worship *hosanna, we praise you* (MT 21.9)
- LOU-NIDA> an Aramaic expression meaning 'help, I pray' or 'save, I pray,' but which had become a strictly liturgical formula of praise.
- ALEX> Hosanna is a Greek modification or corruption of a Hebrew phrase occurring in that passage and strictly meaning *save now* (or *we pray thee*), but here used as a joyful acclamation or acknowledgment that the salvation so long promised was now come.

- HENRY> The proper signification of hosanna is that which we find, Rev. 7:10. Salvation to our God, that sitteth on the throne, and to the Lamb; success to religion, both natural and revealed, Hosanna in the highest.
- LANE> Hosanna is properly a praying invoking God's saving action ("save us"), but through liturgical use it came to be dissociated from its original meaning and could be used as a shout of acclamation or as a greeting in addressing pilgrims of a famous rabbi.

Blessed

- ALEX> *blessed*- praised, exalted, with divine and royal honours.

Him who comes

- ALEX> *The one coming, or the coming one*, a beautiful description of the great deliver (associated with His name) so long expected.
- COLE> To these, Jesus was the coming One of David's line, about to establish His earthly kingdom there and then.
 - COLE> The Lord's refusal to silence His disciples was a tacit acceptance of the position accorded Him; and this the Pharisees must surely have seen.

CAL> And the design of Matthew [or Mark] was, as we have just hinted, to quote in Hebrew a well-known psalm, for the purpose of showing that Christ was acknowledged by the multitude as a Redeemer.

10 Blessed is the kingdom of our father David That comes in the name of the Lord! Hosanna in the highest!"

¹⁰ Εὐλογημένη ἡ ἐρχομένη βασιλεία ἐν ὀνόματι κυρίου τοῦ πατρὸς ἡμῶν Δαυίδ. Ὡσαννὰ ἐν τοῖς ὑψίστοις.

JRS> Here is a sweet combination. Blessed is the ONE who comes in the name of the LORD, and blessed is THE KINGDOM that comes in the name of the Lord.

EDW says that this could be nothing more than a pilgrim greeting. That they said, "Blessed is he who comes in the name of the LORD" of the understanding that pilgrims were blessed in God's name. EDW says though there are messianic implications here, the crowd of the authorities probably did not understand this.

- JRS> This seems like a very unnatural interpretation. EDW suggests that the authorities would have arrested Him if they had understood such claims, but we know that they wanted to arrest Him, but greatly feared the people.
- FRAN picks up on the same interpretation—that this was a general greeting used of pilgrims that becomes especially suitable when Jesus is the one being addressed.

Hosanna in the highest

- ALEX> *Hosanna in the highest* has been variously understood as meaning in the highest strains, or in the highest places, i. e. heaven, which again may either be a call upon the heavenly host to join in these exulting acclamations, or a direct ascription of the saving influences rejoiced in to the highest source, i. e. to God himself.
- HIEB says that it is a desire for this prayer for salvation to be heard in heaven.

of our father David

- FRAN> It may be, as we shall see at 12:35-37, that Jesus would wish to challenge a *purely* Davidic understanding of His royal claim, but he could not claim that the crowd's Davidic interpretation of His ride into the city was unjustified, however limited their perception of its significance.

in the name of the Lord

- CAL> He is said to come in the name of God, who not only conducts himself, but receives the kingdom, by the command and appointment of God.

FRAN> The first dramatic public gesture, therefore, has placed the Galilean preacher firmly in contention for the title 'King of the Jews', and that title will be at the centre of His Roman trial

11 And Jesus went into Jerusalem and into the temple. So when He had looked around at all things, as the hour was already late, He went out to Bethany with the twelve.

¹¹ Καὶ εἰσῆλθεν εἰς Ἱεροσόλυμα ὁ Ἰησοῦς, καὶ εἰς τὸ ἱερόν· καὶ περιβλεψάμενος πάντα, ὀψίας ἤδη οὔσης τῆς ὥρας, ἐξῆλθεν εἰς Βηθανίαν μετὰ τῶν δώδεκα.

And having looked around,

- ALEX> *And having looked around*, surveyed the temple, not from idle curiosity, nor as a means of gaining information, but as a tacit assertion of his own authority, an act by which he took possession, as it were, of his Father's house and claimed dominion over it, an attitude maintained by him throughout this final visit to the Holy City.
- COLE> Only Mark tells us this.
- LANE sees this as very much a survey of the situation that led to His action on the following day.
 - JRS> He sees the problem but note the measured action—it would be better to deal with them in the middle of the day rather than at the end.

as the hour was already late, He went out to Bethany...

- EDW> In Mark, there is a complete anticlimax. The crowd just disappears. We think something is going to happen when Jesus gets to the temple, but it does not... The whole is like the seed in parable of the sower that receives the word with joy but has no root and lasts a short time.

