

## Review

Last week, I mentioned that we were at "the beginning of the end," the time when Jesus was nearing Jerusalem, where He would be betrayed, tortured, and killed. Now, in our study of the gospel of Matthew, we have arrived at the final week of Jesus, beginning with the day that has been dubbed "Palm Sunday."

### **21:1-3 Bring A Donkey And A Colt**

Jesus and His disciples are just outside of Jerusalem, at Bayth-fa-GAY and Bethany, two little towns at the Mount of Olives, just about two miles east of Jerusalem.

He tells two of the disciples to, essentially, go grab a donkey from the other town. Now, this might sound a bit troublesome to you if you were one of the two guys given the job. Personally, I'd probably be asking for a name, an address, a contact number, and what time the appointment was supposed to be. I'd want the Lord to give me more details, so that I would feel comfortable. "After all, Lord. I don't mind doing the job. I just don't want to be getting into any hot water!" But Jesus doesn't give them any details. He just gives them the assignment.

In fact, Mark tells us that the two disciples did very nearly run into some trouble:

**Mark 11:4-6 They went away and found a colt tied at the door, outside in the street; and they \*untied it. Some of the bystanders were saying to them, "What are you doing, untying the colt?" They spoke to them just as Jesus had told them, and they gave them permission.**

They didn't run away. Instead, "they spoke to them just as Jesus had told them." They were operating in faith.

You know, it was also terribly difficult for Moses to tell Pharaoh, **Ex. 5:1 ..."Thus says the LORD, the God of Israel, 'Let My people go...'"**

But Moses did what God told him to do. The two disciples did what God told them to do. And we need to do the same. Saints, if you know God has told you to do something, then do it, no matter how difficult it

may be. What has He directed you to do lately? Did you respond with fear and doubt, or faith and duty?

### **21:4-5 To Fulfill**

Matthew very often says of events in his gospel, "This took place to fulfill" what was written in the Old Testament. Jesus' triumphal entry into Jerusalem was prophesied by the prophet Zechariah (Zech. 9:9).

Now, just three months ago, on Palm Sunday, we did an entire study on the significance of that event. So, I will refer you to the tape or CD for all the amazing prophecies which were fulfilled by this event, not only the prophecy of Zechariah, but of Daniel, who foretold the exact day on which He would arrive, and Ezekiel, who foretold the direction from which He would come.

### **21:6-9 Hosanna!**

The word "hosanna" in Greek is taken from two words in Hebrew: "Yaw-SHAH," which is the verb "save," and "naw," which is an entreaty of urgency, which can be translated, "we pray" or "now" or "I beseech you," or even "oh!"

And so when we are saying "hosanna," we are crying out an interjection meaning, "Oh Lord, save us now we pray!!"

This was a crowd of people ready and ripe to be saved. They acknowledged Jesus as the Messiah, as their coming King, as their Savior, as He who is highest above all. They welcomed Him and cheered Him.

### **21:10-11 Who Is This?**

I have heard it taught many times that "the same crowds who shouted, 'Hosanna' were shouting, 'Crucify Him,' later that week." But it was not the entire city who were praising Messiah the King. It was "the large crowd who had come to the feast" (John 12:12) - those who were traveling.

In fact, many did not know Who this was, or even what the significance of the commotion had been outside the city. Most were inside Jerusalem, and asking, "Who is this?"

When they were told by those in the parade that the center of all this attention was Jesus of Nazareth, that brought a lot of recognition, for the news had been spreading about Him for the last three or four years.

### **21:12-14 The Temple: Prayer And Ministry Or Profit And Misery?**

Jesus entered Jerusalem and went right into the temple. What He found there horrified Him and consumed Him (Psa. 69:9). Inside the temple grounds were money changers and sellers of sacrifices.

I thought of this last month, when I went to Sea World in San Diego. After walking around for a few hours, I was hungry, and thought I'd get something to eat. I was walking by the barbecue place and thought, "ribs!" On my plate was ribs, fries, a salad, and a drink. Total? \$24.20! Highway robbery, but I was a captive audience, wasn't I?

Of course, we can all acknowledge that using free enterprise to pay for killer whale food and penguin medicine isn't exactly corruption at its lowest level. But the priests had turned the temple into a den of thieves.

They had set up a system: "No, you can't use your money to pay the tithes and offerings. You'll have to exchange it for temple shekels. Oh, by the way, did we mention the astronomical exchange rate?" "No, this lamb you've brought for a sacrifice is unacceptable. You'll have to buy a pre-approved one at that table over there. Yes, it does cost twenty times as much as the one you bought in Bethlehem, but too bad."

This kind of thing sickened Jesus. He drove out the sellers, and turned over the tables of the moneychangers. He quoted Isaiah 56 to them:

**Is. 56:7 "...My house will be called a house of prayer for all the peoples."**

But the temple wasn't about prayer anymore. It was about profit. Once Jesus had driven them out, He focused on ministry to people, healing the blind and lame who came to Him in the temple.

Saints, the church today can be known by either work: It will either be known as a place of profit at the expense of people, or it can be known as a place of prayer and ministry to people.

- When I see churches taking tithes from their members through methods that range from begging to extortion,
- when I see churches profiting from their parishioners' gambling addictions by having bingo and raffles,
- when I read this week that the Archdiocese of Portland paid out \$53 million to settle abuse claims BEFORE having to file bankruptcy,
- when I see these things, I know that most people think of the house of God as a den of robbers. But as long as I'm breathing, this house of God will be known as a house of prayer, and ministry to the hurting.

### **21:14-17 Praise From Babies**

As I picture this scene in my mind, one thing jumps out at me: Where do the kids learn, "Hosanna to the Son of David"? And then it hits me: they heard the crowd saying it earlier (21:9).

God prepared praise for Himself from the mouths of children as they followed the crowd, and imitated their actions. This fascinates me! We as a crowd have the ability to influence the next generation. As we praise the Lord sincerely, the children in our midst pick up on that. As we pray at home, our kids have the opportunity to imitate that. My exhortation to you: be an example of praise and prayer to the next generation.