

Text: Matt. 20:29 – 21:17

Title: “The triumphal entry of the Son of David”

Time: 4/1/2012 am; 4/2/2023

Place: NBBC

Introduction: Today is labeled *Palm Sunday* on our calendars, the Sunday prior to Easter. As such, it is my personal opinion that it is one of the most inadequately named holidays we celebrate.

The day gets its name from the use of Palm branches to pave the way of the Lord into Jerusalem on this day. It is certainly a scriptural name for the day, for John mentions specifically that palm branches were used in his Gospel account, although here Matthew simply says *trees* (21:8).

But what made that Sunday long ago a special day, and what makes this day today a special day, was not the fact that palm branches were used. By the same analogy, we might call the day outer-garment day, because they were used too. Calling this day Palm Sunday is a little bit like using the label “Pen and Parchment Day” for our Fourth of July, rather than Independence Day.

We understand this morning that what made this day a day of celebration was that on this day the miraculously-prophesied and much-anticipated triumphal entry of the Son of David into Jerusalem occurred (note “Son of David” in 20:30, 31, 21:9, 15). The sad fact of the matter is that while many today know that palm branches are important to the celebration of Palm Sunday, few understand why the Son of David is important to that celebration.

I have concluded that the day should be called, “Son of David day.” And while that conclusion will likely not affect

the next printing of our calendars, I do want to use that theme to guide our study of this amazing display of our Savior's triumphant glory on this important day, the first day of the final week of His life. This morning I would like to see five ways in which the Son of David triumphed.

I. The triumphal entry of the Son of David was the triumph of divine compassion for individual need (20:29-34).

Application: Notice the contrast between *multitude* and *two men*. Entering Jerusalem from Jericho was not easy. The walk along the Roman road was about 17 miles and involved an ascent of 3000 feet. It was all uphill.

The texts here and in Mark tell us that Jesus was leaving Jericho, and Luke tells us that He was entering the city. Perhaps the best understanding is to conclude that Jesus was leaving the old site of Jericho and traveling toward the new Roman city of Jericho, when He passes by two blind men. Only one of these is mentioned in Mark and Luke, and Mark tells us this one's name was Bartimaeus (Mark 10:46). He was evidently the spokesman for the two.

So here we have one of the many passages in the Gospels, which tell us that our Lord was moved with compassion (v. 34). How often does compassion move us? You may remember from our study of this Gospel that the word used here is a word used only in the synoptic Gospels, and only either to describe the heart of Christ or to describe a parabolic figure designed to encourage Christ-likeness:

Matt. 9:36; Matt. 14:14, Mark 6:43 – Christ's compassion for a crowd in need of healing;

Matt. 15:32, – Christ's compassion for those following Him needing food;

Matt. 18:27, Mark 8:2 - the compassion of a parabolic lord for his indebted slave illustrating Christ-like compassion for those needing forgiveness;

Matt. 20:34 - Christ's compassion for two blind men needing sight;

Mark 1:41 - Christ's compassion for the leper he healed in Matt. 8;

Mark 9:22 - a request for Christ's compassion on a demon-possessed young man;

Luke 7:13 - Christ's compassion for the widow of Nain whose son needed resurrection;

Luke 10:33 - the parabolic compassion of the Good Samaritan, who alone was Christlike;

Luke 15:20 - the parabolic compassion of the father for his prodigal son.

The world we live in is a world of large media-driven crowds with little compassion (vv. 29, 31). As followers of Christ, we need to be often moved with compassion for the individual needs of others the way our Savior was.

II. The triumphal entry of the Son of David was the triumph of divine power and knowledge (20:34, 21:1-3, 6-7).

Application: One of the glorious features of the triumphal entry of the Son of David is its spectacular exhibition of divine omniscience and divine omnipotence. Omniscience refers to someone who is all-knowing, and omnipotence refers to someone who is all-powerful.

Jesus understood how to heal the blind man's eyes, and He had the power to do so. That is divine omniscience and omnipotence. This healing power simply pours out from the Son of David the way sickness and disease pour out of our own existence. As He comes into the temple, He cannot help but heal many in need (v. 14).

But the verses we have just read about the donkeys do give us an insight into the triumph of divine omniscience and omnipotence that we sometimes miss. It was clearly an act of Christ's omniscience that located the animals He would use to enter the city. But notice what the omniscient and omnipotent Lord expresses in verse 3: "And if any man say aught unto you, ye shall say, 'The Lord hath need of them.'"

"I have a need" is a remarkable thing for the tongue of omniscience and omnipotence to say. By definition, the One who is all-knowing and all-powerful has need of nothing beyond Himself. Yet, it is the condescending choice of our omniscient and omnipotent Lord to tell this villager, "the Lord has need of your donkeys."

The donkeys were going to be the tool of the omniscient and omnipotent Lord of heaven that day. Mark and Luke tell us that the younger of the animals had never before had a rider, so riding it peacefully into the city amidst the earth-shaking noise of the crowd would itself be a wondrous display of the glorious omnipotence of the Savior.

And just like this omnipotent and omniscient Lord stooped low to need a donkey to display His glory, even so He calls you and me to be tools of His amazing power and wisdom. What a privilege to have Jesus say to you and to me - "The Lord has need of you." Have we responded as well as these animals do? Are we willing to be the obedient and submissive tools of divine omniscience and divine omnipotence?

III. The triumphal entry of the Son of David was the triumph of divine grace (21:4-5).

Application: Matthew quotes parts of Isa. 62:11 and Zech. 9:9 here. Clearly, this is a reference to Christ's claim to be the one who fulfills the ancient prophecies of Israel's

Messiah. He is the King, and in His first advent, He comes humbly and meekly in peace, ready to give His life a ransom for many (20:28).

The Bible says that He is coming a second time, but that this time the transportation will be different (Rev. 19:11-16, the passage goes on to describe the judgments of Armageddon). That coming will be the triumph of divine judgment. The coming of the triumphal entry into Jerusalem, on the other hand, is the triumph of divine grace.

Did you notice the reference to Israel as *the daughter of Zion*? This phrase is far more than an idiomatic way to refer to the inhabitants of a town. We parents who have daughters understand how special a daughter is.

Perhaps it is true that no one can break the heart of a man quite as effectively as a rebellious daughter. Of the 46 Old Testament passages I found containing one of these phrases, 32 of these (70%) refer to the heart-breaking rebellion of the daughter of Zion. Zion is God's daughter who rebels and breaks the heart of her Father in all of these passages, with many of them occurring in the books of Jeremiah and Lamentations.

Yet in the end, daughter of Zion is more powerfully a term that describes the superabounding grace of God for His people who are His own daughter, whose restoration of them is ultimately guaranteed through the forgiveness of His grace. This would cost Yahweh his own life – the King would come meek, and lowly, and ready to die for the sins of His daughter Zion, and ours too. The triumphal entry of the Son of David was the triumph of divine grace.

IV. The triumphal entry of the Son of David was the triumph of the divine plan of salvation (21:8-9; Ps. 118:22-26).

Application: The Psalms are, of course, the great hymn book of Israel. Especially significant during the Passover week was the singing of Psalms 113-118, about the Passover deliverance of the nation from Egypt. So it is not surprising that the crowd break into some of the themes of Psalm 118:22-26.

*Hosanna* in v. 25 is Hebrew meaning *please save*. The last part of the phrase *Hosanna in the highest* was also a term that comes from the Psalms (Ps. 148:2). Clearly, as the crowd was shaking Jerusalem with their praise of Jesus, they were doing so with some very lofty language that their Psalter used of Yahweh God.

But in spite of their language, the expectation was missing something very important from Ps. 118:22 – the stone that was to become the chief cornerstone first had to be rejected by the builders. This same Jerusalem mob would in just a matter of days be yelling at Jesus, “Crucify Him! Crucify Him!”

Why the miscue? They expected one thing when it came to their salvation, and God was delivering another. They expected a King who would conquer to save them from Rome, God was delivering a King who would die on a Roman cross to save them from their sins.

What do you expect salvation to be like? Do you expect it to be through the sacrificial death of a Savior because of your sins? Or do you think that God will save you if you somehow prove yourself to be savable? If your expectation of salvation involves anything other than your need for the sacrificial death of Christ for your sins and His victorious resurrection, you have the wrong expectation, and you need to let God’s plan of salvation triumph in your life.

V. The triumphal entry of the Son of David was the triumph of true worship of the divine (21:10-17).

Application: The chief priest and scribes sense that Jesus is being worshipped, and it made them indignant. Jesus does not respond by correcting their misconception; to the contrary, He rather lays claim to the worship described in Psalm 8, worship that the Psalm tells us is for Yahweh God alone.

Those in charge of the worship of God in the temple had replaced the God of the Old Testament with the God of money. They had replaced prayer with commerce. In many churches today, a consumerist mentality is fostered rather than a prayerful mentality.

The children could see the obvious need for true worship of the divine, and they saw that Jesus is at the center of that worship. The chief priests and scribes could only become indignant, feeling that their opportunity to make more money was being unfairly interrupted. Is your life characterized by true worship, or does the thought that you need true worship offend you in some way?

Conclusion: Jeremy Taylor was a Puritan author who was especially prominent under the Protectorate of Oliver Cromwell in 17th century England. Commenting on this passage, he authored a prayer that captures what true worship of the divine is all about. May it be ours this morning in response to the triumphs of the Son of David on "Son of David Sunday":

"O holy King of Zion, eternal Jesus, be pleased to enter into my soul with triumph, trampling over all thine enemies; and give me grace to entertain thee with joy and adoration,

lopping off all my superfluous branches of a temporal condition, and spending them in the offices of charity and religion.

“Thou, to whose honor the very stones would give testimony, make my stony heart an instrument of thy praises; let me strew thy way with flowers of virtue, and the holy rosary of Christian graces. . . and let us at last follow thee into thy heavenly Jerusalem with palms in our hands, and joy in our hearts, and eternal acclamations on our lips, rejoicing in thee, and singing Hallelujah's in a happy eternity to thee, O holy King of Zion, eternal Jesus. Amen.”

“A man came—I think it was actually in Philadelphia—on one occasion to the great George Whitefield and asked if he might print his sermons. Whitefield gave this reply; he said, ‘Well, I have no inherent objection, if you like, but you will never be able to put on the printed page the lightning and the thunder.’ That is the distinction—the sermon, and the ‘lightning and the thunder.’ To Whitefield this was of very great importance, and it should be of very great importance to all preachers, as I hope to show. You can put the sermon into print, but not the lightning and the thunder. That comes into the act of preaching and cannot be conveyed by cold print. Indeed it almost baffles the descriptive powers of the best reporters.”

—David Martin Lloyd-Jones,

*Preachers and Preaching*