

The Jerusalem Road

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"The Jerusalem Road"

Matthew 21:1-11 Read at beginning of Service:

Matthew 21:1-11 (NIV)

1 As they approached Jerusalem and came to Bethphage on the Mount of Olives, Jesus sent two disciples, 2 saying to them, "Go to the village ahead of you, and at once you will find a donkey tied there, with her colt by her. Untie them and bring them to me. 3 If anyone says anything to you, tell him that the Lord needs them, and he will send them right away." 4 This took place to fulfill what was spoken through the prophet: 5 "Say to the Daughter of Zion, 'See, your king comes to you, gentle and riding on a donkey, on a colt, the foal of a donkey.'" 6 The disciples went and did as Jesus had instructed them. 7 They brought the donkey and the colt, placed their cloaks on them, and Jesus sat on them. 8 A very large crowd spread their cloaks on the road, while others cut branches from the trees and spread them on the road. 9 The crowds that went ahead of him and those that followed shouted, "Hosanna to the Son of David!" "Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord!" "Hosanna in the highest!" 10 When Jesus entered Jerusalem, the whole city was stirred and asked, "Who is this?" 11 The crowds answered, "This is Jesus, the prophet from Nazareth in Galilee."

Today we begin a journey toward Easter, the death, burial and resurrection of Jesus Christ. The roads we will travel on will take us in different directions and locations but in the end they all lead to one destination and that is Jesus, God's Son our Savior. This is not to say that all roads lead to heaven, as the world assumes and promotes. No, the roads lead to the One called Jesus. Some of these roads we will travel on in this series will be roads that Jesus himself along with his disciples trod. Some are roads that Jesus asks us to travel. These are roads of passion. You see, if there is one thing that characterizes the Easter event – it is the word passion! It was God's passion for a lost mankind that brought Jesus to travel the journey to the cross and forward to the triumph of the resurrection. It is the disciples passion for the call placed on the lives by Christ that motivated and inspired their foray into the world as His witnesses following His ascension. And it is the same passion that Jesus would like us to have as we embark on the road He places us on. We begin our journey along the Roads of Passion with a walk down the Jerusalem road.

If you were given the opportunity to make a grand entrance on either a small frail looking donkey or a blazing white stallion, which would you choose?

The followers of Jesus I believe were assuming Jesus would break out of his meek and mild mood and finally make His grand entrance into Jerusalem on a blazing white stallion.

Sort of like the Lone Ranger. Jesus comes riding in on Silver who is kicking up dust. He comes to a standing stop, Jesus hops off Silver performs the necessary work of rapping up the bag guys (you know the devil). Then He jumps back onto Silver pulling the reigns having Silver rear in full gallantry and speeds off again with Silver kicking up dust and Jesus yelling "Hi Ho Silver, away!" as the William Tell Overture plays in the background. And someone left standing by the cross asks all the all important question, "Who was that masked man?"

I can see on your faces how much you would like that Jesus. We like the theatrics and the staged events to make us look good. Who wouldn't follow a Jesus like that?

But the Jesus we read of today in the gospel of Matthew is not so easily followed. In His life were exhibited two reoccurring purposes.

To do the will of the Heavenly Father.

To fulfill the Old Testament prophecies of the Messiah's first coming.

With these two purposes He set His face to go to Jerusalem.

Luke 9:51 (NIV)

51 As the time approached for him to be taken up to heaven, Jesus resolutely set out for Jerusalem. He made His entrance on the Jerusalem road. It is the road less traveled, for it speaks of humility, fulfillment, obedience and destiny.

a road of humility

Matthew 21:1-3 (NIV)

1 As they approached Jerusalem and came to Bethphage on the Mount of Olives, Jesus sent two disciples, 2 saying to them, "Go to the village ahead of you, and at once you will find a donkey tied there, with her colt by her. Untie them and bring them to me. 3 If anyone says anything to you, tell him that the Lord needs them, and he will send them right away."

When you think of the "King of Kings and Lord of Lords" (Rev 19:16) do you think of humility? We might think of pomp and pageantry, conquering and ruling but not humility.

Among the triumphal cries of welcome by the people the disciples must have thought, "This is it! He is finally going to overthrow the likes of the Romans!" After all it was Passover, the celebration of God's miraculous deliverance of Israel from Egyptian bondage. What better occasion to bring about the establishment of His kingdom.

But the King of Kings and Lord of Lords chose the road of humility. Entering into Jerusalem a few days before His crucifixion, He chose to ride the colt of a donkey, not a white stallion.

He did not come in . . .

Wealth but in poverty.

Grandeur but in meekness.

Fortune & fame but in humility.

He had always talked about His kingdom being one of servanthood and humility (Matt 18:1-4). He came in humble fashion to show what His Kingdom was all about.

"None of the disciples, including the two sent for the donkey, understood the Lord's purpose in this or in the other events of the coming week." - John MacArthur On the last night spent with His disciples in the upper room, only hours before His death, some of them were arguing over who would be the greatest in His kingdom. Pretty humble guys!

Luke 22:24-27 (NIV)

24 Also a dispute arose among them as to which of them was considered to be greatest. 25 Jesus said to them, "The kings of the Gentiles lord it over them; and those who exercise authority over them call themselves Benefactors. 26 But you are not to be like that. Instead, the greatest among you should be like the youngest, and the one who rules like the one who serves. 27 For who is greater, the one who is at the table or the one who serves? Is it not the one who is at the table? But I am among you as one who serves.

They just did not understand this road of humility Jesus was walking on. And by all appearances neither do we.

We like the grandeur thoughts of being saved from hell's fires. We love and desire the blessings of God, but do we want to enter with Jesus into the road of humility? The road of humility that says I will live as Christ lived. To be conformed to His life and death.

To follow Jesus into His salvation is to go the way of the cross. The way of the cross calls for our humiliation, the giving up of selfish desires to be a part of all that Christ is, including His humility. In fact it goes one more step beyond the giving up of our selfish desires – the way of the cross calls for the giving up of our "self".

Philippians 2:8 (NIV)

8 And being found in appearance as a man, he humbled himself and became obedient to death-- even death on a cross!

The Jerusalem road is a road of humility.

a road of fulfillment

Matthew 21:4-5 (NIV) 4 This took place to fulfill what was spoken through the prophet: 5 "Say to the Daughter of Zion, 'See, your king comes to you, gentle and riding on a donkey, on a colt, the foal of a donkey.'"

Jesus entering into Jerusalem on the colt of a donkey was not by chance or luck. He was fulfilling the divine plan of God.

Zechariah 9:9 (NIV)

9 Rejoice greatly, O Daughter of Zion! Shout, Daughter of Jerusalem! See, your king comes to you, righteous and having salvation, gentle and riding on a donkey, on a colt, the foal of a donkey.

This is just one of the many prophecies regarding Jesus' entrance, arrest, trial and crucifixion.

Betrayed by a friend ... Ps 41:9 Sold for 30 pieces of silver ... Zech 11:12 False witnesses accusing Him ... Ps

27:12 Silent when accused ... Isaiah 53:7 Struck and spit on ... Isaiah 50:6 Suffered in our place ... Isaiah 53:4-5 Hands and feet pierced ... Ps 22:16 Mocked and insulted ... Ps 22:16-18 Prayed for His enemies ... Ps 109:4 His side pierced ... Zech 12:10 Soldiers cast lots for His clothes ... Ps 22:18 Not a bone broken ... Ps 34:20 Buried with the rich ... Isaiah 53:9 Cannot we not see that the whole life of Jesus was the divine plan of God to redeem us. All that Jesus went through was for the fulfillment of man's salvation. Every blow was planned by God and fulfilled by Christ.

Consider this, will the fulfillment of God's plan be made manifested in your life? Jesus traveled the road of Jerusalem knowing it was leading to His death on the cross, but also knowing it would lead to a better life for you and I.

Hebrews 12:3 (NIV)

3 Consider him who endured such opposition from sinful men, so that you will not grow weary and lose heart. The Jerusalem road is a road of fulfillment.

a road of obedience

Matthew 21:6-7 (NIV)

6 The disciples went and did as Jesus had instructed them. 7 They brought the donkey and the colt, placed their cloaks on them, and Jesus sat on them.

Jesus had told two of His disciples to go and get the colt He would ride to make His entrance into Jerusalem. The disciples obeyed Him.

Is such obedience a part of our lives? Are we as willing to obey the words of Jesus?

Jesus' life was one of obedience. His first loyalty was to His Father.

John 6:38 (NIV)

38 For I have come down from heaven not to do my will but to do the will of him who sent me.

In this week known as the passion week, Jesus made entrance into the garden of Gethsemane. There He poured out His heart to His heavenly Father, "O My Father, if it is possible, let this cup pass from Me." (Matt 26:39) There in the midst of agonizing prayer He knew the only way for all of humanity, you and I to be saved, reconciled to God, was to obediently go to the cross. And so He prayed in that same breath, "nevertheless, not as I will, but as You will."

Just as He had stated as a young child, He was to be about His Father's business (Luke 2:49).

Luke 2:49 (NIV)

49 "Why were you searching for me?" he asked. "Didn't you know I had to be in my Father's house?"

Even now as a man He knew He was to obediently fulfill His Father's business by dying on the cross. He knew it was the only way.

The road to Jerusalem is one of obedience. It calls for you and I to hear and heed the words of our Lord Jesus.

Galatians 3:1 (NIV)

1 You foolish Galatians! Who has bewitched you? Before your very eyes Jesus Christ was clearly portrayed as crucified.

The Jerusalem road is a road of obedience.

a road of destiny

Matthew 21:8-11 (NIV)

8 A very large crowd spread their cloaks on the road, while others cut branches from the trees and spread them on the road. 9 The crowds that went ahead of him and those that followed shouted, "Hosanna to the Son of David!" "Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord!" "Hosanna in the highest!" 10 When Jesus entered Jerusalem, the whole city was stirred and asked, "Who is this?" 11 The crowds answered, "This is Jesus, the prophet from Nazareth in Galilee."

The people spreading clothes and palm branches (sign of salvation) was a sign of destiny. The words they cried out, "Hosanna" (save now) were words of destiny.

Destiny is the setting apart for a special purpose. It speaks of the inevitable..

There is a painting that depicts the manger in which Christ was born. In the background is a shadow of the cross. He was destined by God to die on the cross.

Revelation 13:8b (NIV)

8 ...the Lamb that was slain from the creation of the world.

Luke 2:34 (NIV)

34 Then Simeon blessed them and said to Mary, his mother: "This child is destined to cause the falling and rising of many in Israel, and to be a sign that will be spoken against,

By decree of God's divine plan of salvation, Jesus' destiny was the cross. The cries of welcome would soon to be saying, "Crucify Him!"

Pontius Pilate thought he would satisfy the people by offering Barabbas, but Jesus was destined by the hand of God to die.

John 18:36-37 (NIV)

36 Jesus said, "My kingdom is not of this world. If it were, my servants would fight to prevent my arrest by the Jews. But now my kingdom is from another place." 37 "You are a king, then!" said Pilate. Jesus answered, "You are right in saying I am a king. In fact, for this reason I was born, and for this I came into the world, to testify to the truth. Everyone on the side of truth listens to me."

Jesus was destined to die that you and I might live.

Romans 6:8 (NIV)

8 Now if we died with Christ, we believe that we will also live with him.

"As Jesus' destiny led Him to the cross, we also must be people of the cross." - Larry Michael

Galatians 2:20 (NIV)

20 I have been crucified with Christ and I no longer live, but Christ lives in me. The life I live in the body, I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me.

We cannot separate ourselves from our destiny to die and become like Christ. Jesus traveled the Jerusalem road, it was His destiny and so it is ours.

Conclusion

And so we have begun our journey toward Easter. It is a journey that leads to the One called Jesus. As the people began to ask "Who is this?"(not, Who was that masked man?) The multitudes answered "Jesus."

Will you consider Jesus today?

Will you consider what He has done for you?

Will you consider giving Him your life?

Will you consider walking down the Jerusalem road with Him?

This sermon was preached by Darren Ethier at Hanover Pentecostal Church on April 8, 2001 for Palm Sunday. This message is Part 1 of the sermon series: Roads of Passion. This message series is inspired from the series "The Road" by Bob Aubuchon. The outline and title for this particular message in the series has been gleaned from Bob Aubuchon's message, "The Jerusalem Road" All Scripture quotations, unless otherwise indicated are taken from the HOLY BIBLE, NEW INTERNATIONAL VERSION, Copyright © 1873, 1978, 1984 International Bible Society. Used by permission of Zondervan Bible Publishers.