

WHEN JESUS ENTERED JERUSALEM (Mk. 11:1-11)

¹ And when they came nigh to Jerusalem, unto Bethphage and Bethany, at the mount of Olives, he sendeth forth two of his disciples, ² And saith unto them, Go your way into the village over against you: and as soon as ye be entered into it, ye shall find a colt tied, whereon never man sat; loose him, and bring him. ³ And if any man say unto you, Why do ye this? say ye that the Lord hath need of him; and straightway he will send him hither. ⁴ And they went their way, and found the colt tied by the door without in a place where two ways met; and they loose him. ⁵ And certain of them that stood there said unto them, What do ye, loosing the colt? ⁶ And they said unto them even as Jesus had commanded: and they let them go. ⁷ And they brought the colt to Jesus, and cast their garments on him; and he sat upon him. ⁸ And many spread their garments in the way: and others cut down branches off the trees, and strawed them in the way. ⁹ And they that went before, and they that followed, cried, saying, Hosanna; Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord: ¹⁰ Blessed be the kingdom of our father David, that cometh in the name of the Lord: Hosanna in the highest. ¹¹ And Jesus entered into Jerusalem, and into the temple: and when he had looked round about upon all things, and now the eventide was come, he went out unto Bethany with the twelve.

Just before the Christmas season began we left off our studies of the Gospel of Mark at the end of chapter ten. Jesus had made His way southwards from Galilee and was travelling with His disciples *up* to Jerusalem from Jericho, and the nearer He came to the city, the more followers He had attracted. ... In our studies, we are now entering the week leading up to His death and resurrection, and that is what we shall be spending our time considering from now until Easter. Matthew (21:1-11), Luke (19:28-44), and John (12:12-19) also record this story of what has become known as The Triumphal Entry. ... What do we understand by that term? Was it ‘triumphant’? What do we mean by applying that description to the entrance of Jesus into Jerusalem?

Let’s begin by looking at some of the background ... Most reliable Biblical chronologists date the year to be 30 AD (7th April), - some suggest 33 AD, but it is more likely to be 30 AD. We know for certain it was the first Jewish month in the religious calendar. ... Judaism has two calendars. It has a ‘civil’ calendar which was compiled by their ‘sages’, and it calculates from the creation of man. ... If you are wondering, today (8th January 2017) is 10th of Tevet, 5777 ... and today is actually the day commemorated in Judaism when Nebuchadnezzar began to besiege Jerusalem in 586 BC ... The ‘civil’ calendar begins in the month of Tishri (usually in late September/early October), during which Rosh Hashanah (Feast of Trumpets) is celebrated.

The ‘*religious*’ calendar begins in the month of Nisan (usually in April), and it began as a commemoration of the exodus from Egypt, - during those times it

was known as Abib (Ex. 13:4; 23:15; 34:18; Dt. 16:1). It is the month during which the Passover is celebrated, - the most important Jewish holy season. And it was for this season Jesus came to Jerusalem. He arrived in the city on the Monday, - the tenth day of Nisan ... How do we know that? We know it because the day He was crucified was the 14th of Nisan, the Friday ... and counting back, that makes Monday the 10th of Nisan. Why is it so important to get the days and the dates right? It is important because the Friday the 14th of Nisan was the day before the Passover Sabbath, when literally tens of thousands of Passover lambs would have been slaughtered for the sacrificial offerings, ... and that was also the day the Lamb of God was offered.

On the Monday, Jesus made an entrance into Jerusalem that was intended to attract great numbers of pilgrims. There was an excited anticipation that something special was about to happen, not least because of all the stories circulating about Jesus. ... Not that this was anything new, because often at Passover the people expected something eventful to happen. It was part of the anticipated ambiance, and why the pilgrims came. ... The Messianic hope was at its highest during the Passover season ... and yes, if the Messiah was to come, it would be the perfect time to receive Him. But, as we shall see, their welcome of Jesus into Jerusalem was nothing more than exuberant excitement for though they seemed to accept Him, they did not see beyond the emotion of the occasion, otherwise they would have prevented His death on the Friday. The whole proceedings turned out to be merely hype and hollow rhetoric.

Put simply, Jesus was a 'one-day wonder' for their initial excitement evaporated as quickly as it had developed. ... Let's work out the timescale of this last week ... John tells us Jesus arrived in Bethany six days before the Passover (Jn. 12:1), - that was the Saturday, and He went into the home of Mary, Martha, and Lazarus ... and at the end of the evening meal, - the supper, - Mary anointed His feet. The next day, - Sunday, - **Jn. 12:9** Much people of the Jews therefore knew that he was there: and they came not for Jesus' sake only, but that they might see Lazarus also, whom he had raised from the dead. **10** But the chief priests consulted that they might put Lazarus also to death; **11** Because that by reason of him many of the Jews went away, and believed on Jesus. So, the Sunday was taken up with 'much people' coming to see Jesus, and also Lazarus ... That was a busy day.

The following day, - Monday, - multitudes of people were already in Bethany, and from there they followed behind Jesus as He made His way towards

Jerusalem ... and, as we know, a crowd attracts a crowd so that **Jn. 12:12** On the next day [*Monday*] much people that were come to the [*Passover*] feast, when they heard that Jesus was coming to Jerusalem. ... The many in the crowds that had been attracted by the crowd following Jesus were already waiting up ahead ... inside Jerusalem ... and Jesus enters through one of the major Jerusalem gates, seated upon the colt/donkey. ...

Looking back into their history, let's remind ourselves how the Passover was instigated for it will help us to see the intricate planning of God behind what He was doing when Jesus entered Jerusalem, **Ex. 12:1** And the LORD spake unto Moses and Aaron in the land of Egypt, saying, **2** This month [*Abib, Nisan*] shall be unto you the beginning of months: it shall be the first month of the year to you. **3** Speak ye unto all the congregation of Israel, saying, In the tenth day of this month [*10th of Nisan*] they shall take to them every man a lamb, according to the house of their fathers, a lamb for an house: **4** And if the household be too little for the lamb, let him and his neighbour next unto his house take it according to the number of the souls; every man according to his eating shall make your count for the lamb. **5** Your lamb shall be without blemish, a male of the first year: ye shall take it out from the sheep, or from the goats: **6** And ye shall keep it up until the fourteenth day of the same month [*14th of Nisan*]: and the whole assembly of the congregation of Israel shall kill it in the evening. ... It was the 10th day of Nisan Jesus, - the Lamb of God, - was taken, - brought in the will of God, - into Jerusalem where, - on the Friday, the 14th of Nisan, He would be killed ... offered on the cross of Calvary by God for His people. And, as you know, the Jewish Sabbath begins at 6 o'clock in the evening ... Jesus was nailed to the cross at 12 o'clock noon, and He hung in agony until He died three hours later ... and because it was the day before the Sabbath, His body was taken down from the cross and, - in between the 3 o'clock in the afternoon and the 6 o'clock (... for it would not have been lawful to *carry* Him after the Sabbath had begun) ... during that intervening three hour period, Jesus was laid in the tomb belonging to Joseph of Arimathea. ... God's timing is perfect for He had it all worked out meticulously, in keeping with the ancient instruction He had given centuries earlier to Moses and Aaron, concerning the Passover Lamb.

Here, - as Jesus rode through the gate into Jerusalem, - He was again being presented, *Behold the Lamb of God!* ... And yet, even though the light of His glory was shining in the midst of the people, they comprehended it not (Jn. 1:5). ... Their response to Him was restricted to empty adulation for their frantic excitement was nothing more than that they wanted to see the 'Man of the moment', Jesus.

On that basis, the entrance of Jesus into Jerusalem, - on that day, - was not a *true* coronation, for it was not a *real* acceptance of His Messiahship because the next day, - when He would be arrested, and in subsequent days appear before the hastily-arranged corrupt courts, - the words of the prophet would be fulfilled, **Is. 53:3** He is despised and rejected of men; a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief: and we hid as it were our faces from him; he was despised, and we esteemed him not.

. . . Just to be specific about this . . . The true coronation of Jesus Christ as King is in two parts for he is already King, and He is yet to come as King. The first phase of His coronation has already taken place when He ascended from the Mount of Olives and entered Heaven, - this was His Heavenly coronation (**Heb. 1:3** Who being the brightness of his glory, and the express image of his person, and upholding all things by the word of his power, when he had by himself purged our sins, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high). . . He is already King for He is already reigning, **Eph. 1:21** Far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come: **22** And hath put all things under his feet, and gave him to be the head over all things to the church, **23** Which is his body, the fulness of him that filleth all in all. . . He is reigning for He has already had His Heavenly coronation.

The second part of His coronation is yet to take place when He leaves the palace of Heaven and returns to this earth, **Zech. 14:1** Behold, the day of the LORD cometh . . . **2** For I will gather all nations against Jerusalem to battle; and the city shall be taken, and the houses rifled, and the women ravished; and half of the city shall go forth into captivity, and the residue of the people shall not be cut off from the city. **3** Then shall the LORD go forth, and fight against those nations, as when he fought in the day of battle. **4** And his feet shall stand in that day upon the mount of Olives . . . **9** And the LORD shall be king over all the earth. . . And here is how Ezekiel describes it, **Ezek. 43:2** And, behold, the glory of the God of Israel came from the way of the east: and his voice was like a noise of many waters: and the earth shined with his glory. . . **4** And the glory of the LORD came into the house by the way of the gate whose prospect is toward the east. **5** . . . and, behold, the glory of the LORD filled the house. . . What a day that will be when King Jesus returns!

But, as for this occasion, this was merely a consequence of the excitement associated with the hopes and expectations of the Passover week. This was no coronation for, - as the remaining days of the week were to prove, - they did *not* receive Him as their King.

In fact, that is what Jesus had previously told His disciples on their way up to Jerusalem, **Mk. 10:32** And they were in the way going up to Jerusalem; and Jesus went before them: and they were amazed; and as they followed, they were afraid. And he took again the twelve, and began to tell them what things should happen unto him, **33** Saying, Behold, we go up to Jerusalem; and the Son of man shall be delivered unto the chief priests, and unto the scribes; and they shall condemn him to death, and shall deliver him to the Gentiles: **34** And they shall mock him, and shall scourge him, and shall spit upon him, and shall kill him: and the third day he shall rise again. ... He let them know He was not planning a coronation, He wasn't planning a 'takeover' of the city and an expulsion of the Romans ... Just in case any of them were itching to ask prematurely, **Acts 1:6** Lord, wilt thou at this time restore again the kingdom to Israel? ... No, not this 'time' ... He wasn't going to do anything they would expect their Messiah to do ... and that is why He told them the plain facts He was going to be arrested, condemned to die, mocked, beaten, spat upon (... - such detail!), killed, but then He would rise from the dead. ... He gave them all the information they required for those next few days.

So, He wasn't coming into Jerusalem to reign, but He was coming into Jerusalem to die ... even though none of those excited people at that time had any desire or any thought of putting Him to death, least of all, on the afternoon before Passover! In fact, it went against what they believed for the chief priests and scribes and elders of the people were afraid what might happen, **Mt. 26:5** they said, Not on the feast day, lest there be an uproar among the people. ... The ruling Jewish authorities wanted to kill Jesus ... but at a time suitable to them. ... God's timing prevailed though, for He had it planned that on the Friday before the Sabbath Passover His Son would die as the Passover Lamb in front of the multitudes gathered. ... Out of all the days in the year, this would be the day when the greatest number of the people of Israel would be present in the city of Jerusalem ... from all over the ancient world, for the Passover (cf. **Acts 2:9** Parthians, and Medes, and Elamites, and the dwellers in Mesopotamia, and in Judaea, and Cappadocia, in Pontus, and Asia, **10** Phrygia, and Pamphylia, in Egypt, and in the parts of Libya about Cyrene, and strangers of Rome, Jews and proselytes, **11** Cretes and Arabians), and, - four days before, - God introduced His Son into Jerusalem ... the Monday, the 10th of Nisan ... on the eastern side of the city.

He had come from away down in Jericho. He had made His way, - with His disciples and the ever-growing crowd, - up the 2,500+ feet from Jericho. He is approaching Jerusalem, and He comes into the villages of Bethphage ('house of unripe figs') and Bethany ('house of dates/misery'), - an agricultural area

on the Mount of Olives ... on the outskirts, to the east of Jerusalem. And two of His disciples had been instructed to go to the exact place where they would find a colt tied ... and this colt had never before been ridden by anyone (v.2), - it had not been 'broken in'. Understandably, they are going to be asked what they were doing taking the animal, and Jesus told them the answer to give, ³ And if any man say unto you, Why do ye this? say ye that the Lord hath need of him; and straightway he will send him hither ... And, off they went. ... Jesus knew the colt would be there, - for He is God, - and He also knew questions would be asked as to what they were doing with it so He had it all worked out what the two disciples were to say, ⁴ And they went their way, and found the colt tied by the door without in a place where two ways met; and they loose him. ⁵ And certain of them that stood there said unto them, What do ye, loosing the colt? ⁶ And they said unto them even as Jesus had commanded: and they let them go. He knew there would not be any problem because He is God, and He is in control, the Lord hath need of him. ... He even had the issue of the donkey planned!

The two disciples led the donkey along the streets and returned to Jesus, ⁷ And they brought the colt to Jesus, and cast their garments on him; and he sat upon him. ... They threw a blanket over the back of the animal, to make it more comfortable for Jesus ... and to give it a bit of etiquette as well. ... But, why the donkey? Matthew explains why, Mt. 21:4 All this was done, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophet [*i.e. Zechariah, five hundred years earlier, cf. Zech. 9:9*], saying, ⁵ Tell ye the daughter of Sion, Behold, thy King cometh unto thee, meek, and sitting upon an ass, and a colt the foal of an ass. ... This was prophecy being fulfilled, *literally*. ... He is not coming as a Sovereign, but a servant to suffer on the cross.

... And did His disciples understand what was happening? No, because John recorded, Jn. 12:16 These things understood not his disciples at the first: but when Jesus was glorified, then remembered they that these things were written of him, and that they had done these things unto him. ... It wasn't until *afterwards* they understood, i.e. after the ascension. ... Daniel, in Dan. 9:24-27, *also* prophesied this event, to the exact day. Everything was working out as God had explicitly planned it!

And yet, perfect as it all seemed to be, the people were not truly realising Who Jesus was. Yes, ⁸ And many spread their garments in the way: and others cut down branches off the trees, and strawed them in the way ... That was their custom, and it symbolised their submission, and their attitude to the occasion, - they laid their coats out on the road, in as much as they were showing their consent. ...

They were *hoping*, but not with the hope that came from God for they had their own idealistic view that saw a Messiah coming to rid their land of the invader and establish His Kingdom for them. ... Really, it was all so superficial ... more in hope than expectation

But the streets were packed with people watching and following Jesus, ⁹ *And they that went before, and they that followed ...* They were making their way, - with Jesus at the front. The crowd was growing, the excitement fever-pitch ... they are approaching the top of the Mount of Olives, looking out over their glorious city of David ... There is the temple ... and the people following Jesus see it all, and they are crying, and shouting, and ⁹ *saying, Hosanna; Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord: ¹⁰ Blessed be the kingdom of our father David, that cometh in the name of the Lord: Hosanna in the highest. ... 'Hosanna', 'save us now, we pray' ... and what they meant was, "Come and be our King. Come and deliver us from the invader!"*

There was nothing spiritual attached to their words, - it was a purely national aspiration, "We want our country back, and we are putting our trust in You as a Messiah to establish Your Kingdom". ... But *that* wasn't the time when Jesus was coming to set up His Kingdom, for it was the time when He was coming to be their Passover Lamb. Yes, He was coming to *save* them, but not the way they were thinking. He didn't come to save their land, instead, He came to save His people, *Mt. 1:21 thou shalt call his name JESUS: for he shall save his people from their sins.* ... but the multitudes could not see it that day!

It seemed as from the lips they were saying the right words ... but really, from their hearts, they were getting it all wrong. To a degree, they had a form of 'religiosity' for they had associated the Rider on the colt with God, and David, and the Kingdom, and glory ... but in reality, *Jn. 1:11 He came unto his own, and his own received him not.* ... They had 'the frills and religious trappings', but nothing of the understanding as to why Jesus came. And that is how it was that at the end of the week their attitude towards Him had changed as they screamed out for Jesus to be nailed to a cross, *Mk. 15:12 And Pilate answered and said again unto them, What will ye then that I shall do unto him whom ye call the King of the Jews? ¹³ And they cried out again, Crucify him.* ... Why did they turn away from Him? They turned away because He did not measure up to their worldly expectations.

But that is not why Jesus came. He entered Jerusalem because His Father loved these people so much that He sent His only-begotten Son Who stooped to come into this world of lost sinners ... God sent His Beloved to these people, even though He knew how they would treat Him.

And when He had concluded His long journey from Galilee, - from away up in the north, and down the eastern side of the Sea of Galilee, along and through Jericho, and *up* to Jerusalem, - ... when He had concluded His long journey, He entered the place where He should have been made most welcome, - the temple. But when He walked in there, and He looked around and saw what was taking place, He got out. ... He was surveying the scene, in preparation for those days leading up to the Passover. Inside the temple, they were 'wheeling and dealing' ... conniving together as to how they could fiddle the best deals out of the excitable people who had travelled from across the then-known world. That is the false religion He was up against. The people wanted Him if He was prepared to work in with their agenda. If He didn't do that, they would reject Him.

Do you notice how Jesus had the problem, not with the Roman soldiers, but with His own *religious* people? Religion, - when it is manmade, - blinds the eyes of those looking for salvation. Such religion hinges upon the two words, "I believe". The sad thing is that it is not simply a matter of whether you believe or not ... the issue is ... in *what*, - *Who*, - you believe ... Do you believe what the Bible says about how you must receive Jesus Christ as your Saviour, and are you following and serving Him as your Lord and Master?

That is the only faith God's Word teaches you to believe. It does not matter what anyone says, or how cleverly they say it ... but it is allegiance to the Word of God that settles the matter. These people, though, were judging Jesus by their own criteria ... and that is how they got it so wrong. Their 'religion' and 'worship' wasn't real for it was only 'a spur of the moment' embrace of the emotional. It had no 'flesh and bones', nothing substantial ... nothing to take away with them on that day Jesus rode into the city.

What did they already know about Jesus? Well, they had heard, - and many of them had seen, - Him work miracles, heal the sick, free the demon-possessed, raise Lazarus from the dead, - if they had taken hold of the evidence, they ought to have believed ... But because Jesus did not do what they wanted Him

to do, they turned on Him. ... Jesus, You haven't come to do what we want
You to do, well, You are no good to us then!

That is how many people think it should be, - you give your life to Jesus, and
He will be like the genie who pops out of the bottle to answer your every
whim. ... No, that is not why He came ... In this account of His entrance into
Jerusalem, He came to be their Saviour ... and that is His intentions today.
Jesus has come into this world to be your Saviour ... and when you become a
Christian your life changes and takes a new direction ... and at the end of your
destination is Heaven.

When you become a Christian, instead of you thinking about how you can
manipulate religion to serve you, you serve the Lord Jesus. ... If He blesses
you with all the luxuries of life, that is beautiful ... but more often than not,
we go from one day to the next with much the same as we have ... the
exception being that He holds our hand in His. When you trust Him as your
Saviour, He directs you in a way that brings honour to Him, for that is His
purpose in saving you ... and you find that when you are honouring Him, that
is when you are at your happiest and most content. ...

And that is the true 'Triumphal Entrance' when Jesus comes your life, and He
takes it over completely, for His glory and for your benefit. In closing, here is
how beautifully the hymn writer puts it ...

I heard an old, old story,
How a Saviour came from glory,
How He gave His life on Calvary
To save a wretch like me;
I heard about His groaning,
Of His precious blood's atoning,
Then I repented of my sins
And won the victory.

O victory in Jesus,
My Saviour, forever.
He sought me and bought me
With His redeeming blood;
He loved me ere I knew Him
And all my love is due Him ...
And some sweet day I'll sing up there

The song of victory.