

Hosanna in the Highest

Mark 11: 1-11

Our text deals with a significant moment and time in the life of Jesus. Most title this passage – the triumphal entry. It begins what has come to be known as Passion Week. The Lord makes His initial entrance into Jerusalem, preparing to offer Himself on the cross as the atonement for our sin. The jubilant reception He received at this moment will soon be replaced with cries for His crucifixion. This is certainly a significant passage for every believer as well.

As we examine this passage, we must keep in mind the sovereignty involved in these events. Jesus had not haphazardly arrived at this moment in time. His life had been spent in preparation for the events that would soon follow. This was the reason for the incarnation and His time spent upon earth as a man. The event that took place that day had been prophesied hundreds of years earlier. [Zech.9:9 – Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion; shout, O daughter of Jerusalem: behold, thy King cometh unto thee: he is just, and having salvation; lowly, and riding upon an ass, and upon a colt the foal of an ass.](#) Jesus was committed to fulfilling the plan of redemption.

As we consider the particular [moments](#) revealed in the text, I want to think on the thought: [Hosanna in the Highest](#). Hopefully we will be reminded of the great love and commitment Christ had for us, and such a reminder should stir our hearts with love and commitment for Him.

I. A Time of Preparation (1-6) – The opening verses of this passage reveal the detailed preparation that went into the triumphal entry. This event was not left to chance; it had been divinely prophesied and would be sovereignly carried out. Consider:

A. The Location (1) – [And when they came nigh to Jerusalem, unto Bethphage and Bethany, at the mount of Olives, he sendeth forth two of his disciples.](#) As Jesus continued to make His way toward Jerusalem, having His heart set on fulfilling the Father's will, they had arrived in the area of Bethphage and Bethany. The two villages were located just to the east of Jerusalem. Bethphage was the larger of the two, but Bethany was dear to the heart of Jesus. Martha, Mary, and Lazarus lived in Bethany, and it was there that Jesus raised Lazarus from the dead. According to [Matthew 21:1](#), it appears the colt Jesus would ride into Jerusalem was to be found in Bethphage. As they stood on the Mount of Olives, lying just northeast of Jerusalem and having an elevation of some 2,600 feet, Jesus could see Jerusalem before Him. One can only imagine the emotion Jesus must have felt at this moment, surveying the city below.

B. The Instruction (2-3) – *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.* We are not given the names of the two disciples that were sent, and the other gospels do not reveal which of the twelve they were either. Some speculate it was Peter and John, but we do not know for certain. These two were instructed to go into the village, where they would find a colt tied as soon as they entered. If anyone questioned why they were taking the colt, they were instructed to tell them that the Lord had need of it. Jesus assured the men that they would be allowed to take the colt, because these would believe their words.

- This is a simple task, but it reveals the sovereignty of Jesus in regard to this matter. He had not gone ahead of the disciples. Jesus knew exactly where they would find the colt tied, and He knew there would be no dispute in the matter. This should encourage us as we walk with the Lord. There is nothing we face in life that He cannot control; He has the ability to orchestrate even the smallest details of our lives.
- I thought of how the two chosen to go after the donkey might have felt. They may have been more than happy to go, but it is possible that they felt this was simple work and there were more important tasks to be handled. They likely had no idea what was about to transpire, and probably never considered they were being used to fulfill ancient prophecy. There are no unimportant or menial tasks when it comes to serving the Lord!

C. The Acquisition (4-6) – *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.* As the disciples obediently went after the colt, they found it just as the Lord had said. As they were preparing to take the colt with them, they were questioned about what they were doing. Simply responding that the Lord needed the colt, they were allowed to take it with them. This happened just as they Lord had described. He had orchestrated these events long before the disciples arrived in Bethphage to get the donkey.

- Isn't that encouraging to consider? Jesus worked out the smallest of details for the disciples. We tend to think that our Lord is unconcerned with the day to day trivial aspects of our lives, but in fact, He is very mindful and in absolute control.

II. A Time of Celebration (7-10) – Here we discover the triumphant entry Jesus made into Jerusalem and the celebration surrounding it. Notice:

A. The Willingness Involved (7) – [And they brought the colt to Jesus, and cast their garments on him; and he sat upon him.](#) This reveals the willingness of the disciples and the colt as well. The disciples laid their garments on the colt in order to make Jesus' ride more comfortable. These were totally committed to Him, being submissive to His will. It is amazing how the animal responded to all of this. Being raised on a farm, I am familiar with how horses and donkeys respond the first time someone tries to ride them. This was a young colt that had never been broken, and yet it submitted to the Lord and allowed Him to ride. The donkey was in complete submission to Jesus as well, willing to let Him ride into Jerusalem.

- That is quite convicting when we pause to consider it. This donkey was more willing to be used of the Lord than a lot of Baptists. We need to possess a willingness to serve the Lord, at His leisure, seeking to please Him in all we do!

B. The Wonder Involved (8) – [And many spread their garments in the way: and others cut down branches off the trees, and strawed *them* in the way.](#) As Jesus made His way into Jerusalem, the people gathered along the way, spreading their garments and palm branches before Him, showing their awe and wonder of Jesus. Clearly these saw Him as the Christ. He was being celebrated as their King. Some may have hoped, and even thought that Jesus would establish His kingdom at that time, but we cannot deny their reverence for Jesus as He passed before them.

- As we read the accounts of Jesus' life in the gospels, it is easy to become critical of those who experienced Jesus, being in His presence. Clearly these recognized something special about Him, but often He was not given the recognition He deserved. We too tend to become casual regarding our Lord. We need to see Him for who He is – our Lord and Master, Redeemer and Sovereign, our Savior and soon coming King! I am convinced we need a fresh glimpse of His glory that would create a sense of wonder in our hearts!

C. The Worship Involved (9-10) – [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.](#) As the crowds surrounded Jesus that day, they offered genuine praise and worship to the Lord. The word Hosanna means "save now." The people were crying out for their Messiah to provide deliverance. These are worshiping their Lord and King, which was also a fulfillment of prophecy. [Psalm 118:25-26 – Save now, I beseech thee, O LORD: O LORD, I beseech thee, send now prosperity. ^{\[26\]} Blessed *be* he that cometh in the name of the LORD: we have blessed you out of the house of the LORD.](#)

- Luke records an interesting aspect of the triumphant entry. The Pharisees were displeased with the worship of the people. [Luke 19:39-40](#) – [And some of the Pharisees from among the multitude said unto him, Master, rebuke thy disciples.](#) ^[40] [And he answered and said unto them, I tell you that, if these should hold their peace, the stones would immediately cry out.](#) Creation would have praised Jesus at this moment if the multitude had not. I certainly don't want the rocks to cry out in my place; He is worthy of our worship!

III. A Time of Examination (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.](#) As Jesus made His way into Jerusalem, He was very observant of the situation around Him. Notice:

A. His Discernment – Jesus paid close attention to what He saw, discerning the situation. All was not as it appeared. He looked upon:

➤ **The City** – No doubt this would have been a spectacular sight at this moment in time. It is estimated that about 80,000 dwelt in Jerusalem in Jesus' day, but during the Passover the city would have swollen to between two and three million people. Jesus knows what lies ahead for the beloved city. She will deny Him as the Christ, continuing in her complacency and disobedience. Very soon, in AD 70, the Romans will destroy the city, with thousands of Jews being crucified. The Temple will be destroyed and the inhabitants scattered throughout the world. In a few days Jesus will utter heartbreaking words regarding Jerusalem. [Matt.23:37](#) – [O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, thou that killest the prophets, and stonest them which are sent unto thee, how often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not!](#)

➤ **The Temple** – Jesus also looked upon the situation within the Temple. It was arrayed in all its splendor, with the priests going through the formalities of religion, but their hearts were hard and cold. Their Messiah stood in their midst, and yet they failed to see Him as the Christ.

This is a sobering thought. What does Jesus see as He considers His church today? I know overall, He sees us as His purchased possession, and loves us with an everlasting love, but what does He actually see? I fear often He sees a scene very similar to the one He encountered in Jerusalem that day. I am not interested in religious formalities, merely going through the motions. We must see Him as the Christ, our Savior and Lord, with a commitment to serve and honor Him!

B. His Departure (11b) – and now the eventide was come, he went out unto Bethany with the twelve.

At the close of an eventful day, Jesus departed from Jerusalem, returning to Bethany with the twelve. He went back to the place where He was loved and accepted. One would expect Jesus to have felt wanted in Jerusalem, but He knew the condition of the hearts of many. He spent His time among those who cherished Him, seeing Him as the Christ.

- This world has much to offer, and there are many distractions to our faith. We live in such a materialistic society that influences many aspects of life. I am in no way implying that our Lord is never found among the grand sanctuaries and magnificent buildings throughout the world, but that in no way guarantees His presence or blessing. The Lord will be found among those who love and desire Him. In fact, He will more than likely be found in the small villages and remote areas, instead of those who boast of their possessions. I want to have a heart for the Lord. I want Fellowship to be a Bethany, a place where our Lord is known to frequent!

Conclusion: Our text revealed a magnificent moment in Jesus' life. Everyone in Jerusalem did not recognize Him, but many did. He was worshiped and honored for who He was – the promised Messiah. Those who will gather later that week around the praetorium will have a different perspective, but on this day, Jesus was with those He loved and those who returned His love.

Where do our hearts lie today? How do we perceive Jesus? Is He welcome among us? Is He regularly in attendance within your home? I know the Spirit dwells within the believer continually, but do we make any effort to fellowship with our Lord? He must be the object of our affection. If you are unsaved or not where you should be with the Lord, seek Him today!