

Easter

Part 1

Palm Sunday

We come to Easter week or Passion week as it is called and often what happens is that Easter is taken out of context. WE do it with Christmas too. We isolate the events and leave out the context of how and why things happened that way.

Looking at Palm Sunday can be the same. We isolate it from what goes on before.

IN the chapter straight before this Jesus is doing His thing. Teaching about the Kingdom of God (20:1-16) Talking about the future (20:17-19) Sorting out politics with John's mum (20:20-28) and healing people (20:29-34) Seems to me we have a mini example of what Jesus did.

Then we get to chapter 21. Jesus really shows Himself to be something special.

Mat 21:1 Now when they drew near to Jerusalem and came to Bethphage, to the Mount of Olives, then Jesus sent two disciples,

Mat 21:2 saying to them, "Go into the village in front of you, and immediately you will find a donkey tied, and a colt with her. Untie them and bring them to me.

Mat 21:3 If anyone says anything to you, you shall say, 'The Lord needs them,' and he will send them at once."

A couple of questions: How does he know where the donkey is?

How does He know someone will ask?

Does "The Lord needs them" justify "borrowing them"?

Imagine if I went up to someone with a motor home and said The Lord has need of it. It could actually be a true statement but I think I'd get my head punched in if I tried to drive away, but not these guys.

Well, if Jesus is God – He knows stuff – like knows everything. As well as that it's all part of the plan. Look at the next verses.

Mat 21:4 This took place to fulfill what was spoken by the prophet, saying,

Mat 21:5 "Say to the daughter of Zion, 'Behold, your king is coming to you, humble, and mounted on a donkey, on a colt, the foal of a beast of burden.'"

Notice a couple of things: The donkey is "Accompanied " by a colt. What does Jesus need them both?

Jesus the King is coming to you, lowly, and sitting on a donkey: Jesus comes in humility, yet with appropriate dignity. Instead of coming on a colt as a conquering general,

BUT

He comes with a **colt**, as was customary for royalty. He comes as the Prince of Peace.

Do we get that of Jesus? Do we really get His humility? He is playing with culture and convention. He makes a statement by His action and people would have got the message. Get it He comes with both!!! Awesome God.

Now, Jesus symbolic action is taken up by first the disciples, then by the crowds.

Mat 21:6 The disciples went and did as Jesus had directed them.

Mat 21:7 They brought the donkey and the colt and put on them their cloaks, and he sat on them.

They treat Jesus special – they use their coats, not saddle cloths, their jackets. Then Jesus gets on.

A couple of questions: Was this done in front of the crowd, was this one big symbolic teaching time? Probably.

From the way that it is recorded in Matthew it looks that way. The crowd is following Jesus so they hear the instructions to the disciples, they see the reactions and then they participate.

Mat 21:8 Most of the crowd spread their cloaks on the road, and others cut branches from the trees and spread them on the road.

Why? This was a way of honouring someone. Usually, a returning victor from battle or a specific politician was treated in this fashion. Here it is Jesus.

Another question: Did Jesus manipulate the Old Testament prophecy to make it happen? Is manipulation the right word or is fulfil better. Is it wrong to deliberately fulfill the prophecy? Does Jesus intent matter? Yes, His will is done, prophecy fulfilled, God's plan continued. Manipulation is not always a bad thing. We don't complain when God manipulates a situation to answer our prayers do we?? I think we have a negative about the word manipulate.

Mat 21:9 And the crowds that went before him and that followed him were shouting, "Hosanna to the Son of David! Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord! Hosanna in the highest!"

Now. Here is one of those untranslated words.

Hosanna. The literal interpretation "Save, now!"

So these people are saying "Save us now". Also, they are saying **Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord!**

In this context the meaning of blessed is something made holy or consecrated.

So, it would read "Special and consecrated is He (Jesus) who comes in the name of the Lord.

What is that about?

The people are recognising the significance and specialness of Jesus. They may not totally understand who He is but they know He is different.

Actually, from a discipleship point of view, we are still learning that stuff. We are learning how different and Special Jesus is, the more we grow in our spirituality the more we understand who Jesus is AND also how we interact with that specialness. It is on going – the people in this story may not have know but at least they were on a journey that increased their understanding.

But how do we react?

Do we throw our jackets at his feet, or cut trees and throw in front of Jesus car? How does it work, how do we give Him the equivalent credit?

I think that is a huge thing for us to confront before Easter, **How do I give Jesus the credit He deserves?**

I think the next verses give a starting place.

Mat 21:10 And when he entered Jerusalem, the whole city was stirred up, saying, "Who is this?"

Mat 21:11 And the crowds said, "This is the prophet Jesus, from Nazareth of Galilee."

Look at it.

Ask the question: Who is Jesus really?

Ask the question: How do I answer that?

Notice the crowds answer.

"This is the prophet Jesus, from Nazareth of Galilee."

They Got part of who Jesus was at that stage but not all of it.

What is your answer?