

THE KING IS COMING!

1. The Readiness (Matthew 21:1-7)

Do you have a tendency to worry about things before they happen? Have you found that much of what we worry about, we do not need to worry about? Our Lord knew about the donkey and her colt that He would need for His triumphant entry into Jerusalem for the Passover. He knows who had them and where to find them. What confidence and composure our Lord possesses, even in the last week of His life on earth! He told two of his disciples that if anyone asks what you want with the donkeys, just tell him, *"...The Lord hath need of them; and straightway he will send them"* (Matthew 21:3). The Lord knows what you are experiencing. He knows the path we should take, so we don't have to worry about the details or how things will work out when we get there. When encouraging Israel to go to the Promised Land and possess their possessions, we discover this command: *"Then I said unto you, Dread not, neither be afraid of them. The LORD your God which goeth before you, he shall fight for you..."* (Deuteronomy 1:29a; 30b). Not only does the Lord go before us, the Bible says, *"For ye shall not go out with haste, nor go by flight: for the LORD will go before you; and the God of Israel will be your rereward"* (Isaiah 52:12). "Rereward" is an old Anglo-Norman expression that means "rear guard." To use more modern terms, the Lord "has your back." The Lord goes before us, He has our back and we see that He also is prepared to catch us when we fall: *"The eternal God is thy refuge, and underneath are the everlasting arms: and he shall thrust out the enemy from before thee..."* (Deut. 33:27a). We can also be assured that everything over our head is under His feet. *"I will cry unto God Most High; unto God that performeth all things for me"* (Psalm 57:2). He is the Most High God far above all our problems and all of our life. In summary, God is in front of us, behind us, beneath us and below us.

The Lord was preparing things ahead of time, fulfilling prophecy on time and in His way. *"All this was done, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophet, saying..."* (Matthew 21:4) And what was spoken by the prophet? *"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"* (Zechariah 9:9). Even the fact

that the Lord was able to ride a colt that had never been broken was a small act of God's mighty providential hand!

2. The Ride (Matthew 21:8-11; Mark 11:8-11; John 12:12,13)

Our Lord mounts the donkey and begins the triumphant entry into Jerusalem from Bethphage, a town on the Mount of Olives. A donkey or mule was the royal transportation of the mighty kings of Israel. When David was arranging the coronation of Solomon, the Bible records, *"The king also said unto them, Take with you the servants of your lord, and cause Solomon my son to ride upon mine own mule"* (I Kings 1:33).

This is the fulfillment of Psalm 118:22-29. As a matter of fact, these are the words you hear on the first Palm Sunday, prophesied 1,000 years before: *"Save now (Hosanna) I beseech thee, O LORD: O LORD, I beseech thee, send now prosperity. Blessed be he that cometh in the name of the LORD: we have blessed you out of the house of the LORD"* (Psalm 118:25, 26).

There was a unique Jewish custom of the usage of the palm branches. These were not the freshly broken branches that were layered in the path of our Lord for the donkey to ride over along with the people's garments. These palm branches had been left over from the Feast of the Tabernacles. When first cut, these branches were green and tight, but by now they had dried and opened up. As the Jewish people prepared for Passover, they would get their houses immaculately clean and a main cleaning tool of choice was the dried branch left from the Feast of the Tabernacles. They would use these branches like brooms to sweep their houses clean. As they raised these palms to our Lord, they were in essence saying, "Lord, clean up Your house and set up Your kingdom on earth!" This was no small crowd. It was estimated by one source that five million people gathered for the Passover for this celebration. This is why the enemies of Christ were getting nervous, *"The Pharisees therefore said among themselves, Perceive ye how ye prevail nothing? behold, the world is gone after him"* (John 12:19).

3. The Rejoicing (Luke 19:36-44)

Although all three Gospels mention this event, Luke adds an interesting twist. The cry of "Hosanna" was a cry for the Lord to "save now." The Pharisees were desirous of Jesus to calm the people down. Luke 19:29, they asked the Lord to rebuke His disciples. Then the Lord said, *"...I tell you that, if these*

should hold their peace, the stones would immediately cry out" (Luke 19:30b). What a statement! Many years ago, I came across some remarkable scientific speculations. It is believed by some scholars that sound waves, much like water waves travel out from the point of initiation. A rock thrown into water causes the water to ripple outwards and then fades and finally disappears. Many have believed the same thing happens basically in the air currents. A sound is made; it ripples outward then fades and finally is silenced. Some scientists are believing now that sound may be trapped in solid objects near where the sounds have been made. One scientist believes that one day we shall be able to take the rocks from Gettysburg and have a method that releases the voice of Abraham Lincoln.

Jesus will get praise, either voluntarily from us or He will pull it out from the very rocks beneath us. I have often wondered what would have happened if praise had not been given forth to Christ? Perhaps the voice of Zechariah and the Psalmist would have been pulled from the very rocks declaring Jesus Christ is Lord!

4. The Rebuke (Matthew 21:11-16)

When the Lord Jesus entered the Temple, He was angry. He was angry at the way the men who were supposed to be spiritual leaders were taking advantage of the people of God. He flipped the moneychanger's tables over and the seats of those who sold doves. The people were required to have a sacrifice. Roman coins were not permitted into the Temple because the image of Caesar was considered a graven image, making the very coin a piece of idolatry. So the moneychanger's were trading the coins of Rome for a Temple coin with a rate of exchange that severely took advantage of the people. Jesus tells us that the House of God is to be a place where worshippers feel such a close contact with God that they will be encouraged to pray and expect God to answer. Instead of helping the people seek the Lord, the so-called spiritual leaders had struck deals under the tables with the moneychangers in a form of embezzlement.

After leaving the Temple and experiencing rejection from those who should have been harbingers of the truth, Christ finds a fig tree that should have had a handful of newly repined fruit. Like the fig tree our Lord suffered disappointment in Israel's response to their Messiah. This is expressed in Matthew 21:19, *"And when he saw a fig tree in the way, he came to it, and*

found nothing thereon, but leaves only, and said unto it, Let no fruit grow on thee henceforward for ever. And presently the fig tree withered away."

5. The Return (Revelation 19:11)

The first time our Lord came, He rode upon a donkey, not only symbolizing royalty, but also symbolizing peace. He came as the Prince of Peace to give peace to whosoever believes in Him. When Christ returns to earth in glory, Revelation 19:11 tells us, *"And I saw heaven opened, and behold a white horse; and he that sat upon him was called Faithful and True, and in righteousness he doth judge and make war."*

The triumphant entry of Jesus into Jerusalem was the announcement to all present and to all who would come after this event that He is the Savior of the world. If you reject Jesus as your Savior, you must face Him as your judge. Jesus loves you and you are the reason He came to Jerusalem on that first Palm Sunday and stayed long enough to redeem us through His death, burial and resurrection.

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Johnny Pope". The signature is written in black ink and features a long, horizontal flourish extending to the right.