

People Rejoice as Jesus Enters Jerusalem

Mark 11:1-11

The beginning of this passage always strikes a new reader as unlikely. Who would have allowed the disciples to take a young donkey—something poor people didn't possess—simply because they said the Lord needed it and would return it? We don't know if this was a completely supernatural event or if these people knew the disciples and Jesus, but whatever the case, it happened. God had prepared for this moment in history.

And this moment in Jewish history had long been anticipated. Zechariah 9:9 predicts that the Messiah would come "gentle and riding on a donkey, on a colt, the foal of a donkey." Without question, the Jews along Jesus' path made this connection and knew what it meant. They celebrated as they covered Jesus' path with their outer robes and palm branches—a demonstration of honor and submission.

By riding a donkey, Jesus not only fulfilled Zechariah 9:9, he also indicated that he came in peace. In Jewish culture a donkey was no less valued or respected than a horse, but to enter Jerusalem on a horse would have indicated warlike intentions. Riding a donkey, Jesus represented a king who came to bring peace.

The cries of the people were also significant. As they shouted "hosanna," they were saying, "Lord, save us!" As they referred to Jesus as "he who comes in the name of the Lord" and spoke plainly of "the coming kingdom of our father David," they were making clear references to the Messiah predicted many times in the Old Testament.

After the excitement of his triumphal entry, Jesus and his disciples left Jerusalem to spend the night in Bethany, where Mary, Martha, and Lazarus lived. No mention is made

of the crowd following them. After all the cheering had died down, everyone must have gone home. Jesus had spoken earlier of his imminent death, but the day's events probably encouraged the disciples to think about Jesus being made king. Throngs honored Jesus that day, but only a few days later the disciples hid in fear of the authorities, trying to find a way to live for the crucified Jesus.

Fortunately, we know the rest of the story. After the Resurrection, everything changed. And that's how it should be in our lives. When we choose to live for Jesus, everything changes. We don't honor him just by cheering and praying and singing great worship songs. We honor him—as the disciples did—in every facet of our lives. We honor him not only through our worship but also through our obedience, service, witness, and gratitude.

Devotion for Teachers

The One Thing: "Hosanna! Lord save us!" Jesus answers that plea; through a relationship with him, we can experience this great gift of salvation.

Weaving Faith Into Your Life: It's easy to unintentionally develop a ho-hum attitude about faith. Yet in this story, the crowds honored Jesus with extravagant, public displays of worship. What can you do to break free of complacency? How will you extravagantly worship Jesus this week? Pray about actions you can take or words you can say this week to honor Jesus as the Messiah.