

PALM SUNDAY – Who is this man?

By Tom and Alberta Ecker

Many different elements come together to create this Palm Sunday parade. Let's join this parade and become more than just spectators. Let's become participants from beginning to end and discover together the meaning of this parade and the surprise ending that it pointed to. The events of that week begin with.....

1) The obedience of the disciples:

When Jesus came back into Judea on his way to Jerusalem he spent the night before the parade in Bethany. He entered Jerusalem by way of Bethphage, a small village on the east side of the Mount of Olives. He instructed two of his disciples to go ahead into Bethphage where they would find a donkey and its colt. They were to bring the donkey and colt to him.

Matthew 21:1-2 & 6-7 *As they approached Jerusalem and came to Bethphage on the Mount of Olives, Jesus sent two disciples, ² saying to them, "Go to the village ahead of you, and at once you will find a donkey tied there, with her colt by her. Untie them and bring them to me.*

⁶ *The disciples went and did as Jesus had instructed them. ⁷ They brought the donkey and the colt, placed their cloaks on them, and Jesus sat on them.*

2) The generosity of the donkey's owner:

Part of Jesus' instructions to his disciples was the possibility of the donkey's owner questioning their actions. If someone asked them why they were doing this, taking the donkey and colt, they

were to say that “the Lord” needed them. In using this term for himself, Jesus was clearly claiming to be “The Lord.”

Matthew 21:3 *If anyone says anything to you, tell him that the Lord needs them, and he will send them right away.”*

3) The prophecy of Zechariah:

Once the disciples brought the donkey and colt to Jesus all the disciples joined in putting their cloaks over the donkey and colt. Jesus sat on the colt and began this short trip on his way to entering Jerusalem. This was to fulfill the prophecy found in Zechariah.

Matthew 21:4-5 *This took place to fulfill what was spoken through the prophet: ⁵ “Say to the Daughter of Zion, ‘See, your king comes to you, gentle and riding on a donkey, on a colt, the foal of a donkey.’ ”*

4) The enthusiasm of the crowds:

As Jesus rode the colt his disciples began to celebrate as they laid their cloaks on the road ahead of Jesus. The people along the road joined with the disciples by laying down their cloaks on the road. The people also cut palm branches and put them on the road for Jesus as he came riding on the colt.

Matthew 21:8 *A very large crowd spread their cloaks on the road, while others cut branches from the trees and spread them on the road.*

5) The praise of God:

As excitement swept along the road, caused by this parade, people began to spontaneously praise God with a familiar phrase from scripture, "Hosanna to the Son of David! Blessed is the one who comes in the name of the Lord! Hosanna in the highest heaven!" The people were crying out for their savior to come and set them free.

Matthew 21:9 *The crowds that went ahead of him and those that followed shouted, "Hosanna to the Son of David!" "Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord!" "Hosanna in the highest!"*

6) Jesus enters Jerusalem:

When Jesus entered Jerusalem the people were rejoicing and some of the people who came to see what was going on were amazed to see the manner in which Jesus had entered the city. The question in Matthew 21:10 would be more familiar in the vernacular as an expression of surprise: "Who **is** this man?"

Matthew 21:10 *When Jesus entered Jerusalem, the whole city was stirred and asked, "Who is this?"*

What a wonderful parade this was that began Jesus' last week on earth as a physical human being. What a wonderful way to "parade" the precise selection of all the elements that were used in this marvelous parade. The selection of an untamed colt showed the authority that Jesus has over every creature on earth, even those who are untamed. The use of the cloaks to create a saddle on the colt and to pave the way for the passage to Jerusalem was nothing short of amazing. In those days, cloaks were very expensive items, removing

ones cloak and putting it in the path of another was a great act of honor and humility. Cutting and laying down Palm branches was an act reserved specifically for a King coming into a city that he ruled or a city he had conquered. The parade as a whole pictured the fulfillment of prophecy.

The final week of Jesus' life begins with a parade and all the events of that week will point to a resurrection. What began with a parade will end with a resurrection.

QUESTIONS: Will we join in a parade like this some day in the future? Will there be a Palm Sunday in the future in which there will be a Heavenly Choir singing the Hallelujah Chorus while standing on the Mount of Olives? A Heavenly Choir welcoming our King of kings and Lord of lords as he enters Jerusalem? Will we be joining in that chorus of praise and welcome? Will we as kings and priests line up along the road to Jerusalem and as we remove our royal crown will we bow down and lay our royal cloaks before our Conquering Savior as he rides a fearless horse into Jerusalem to claim the City of Peace as his own? **I'll be there, so will you!**

IMPLICATIONS: Let's **remember** the significance of The Triumphal Entry on that Palm Sunday long ago. Let's **remember** the resurrection that came the following Sunday. And let's **look forward** to The Triumphal Entry yet to come, the one we **will join and rejoice in to see** our Savior's Triumphal Entry into Jerusalem once again and for all time. Amen and amen, and the Spirit and the bride say, "*Come, Lord, come.*"