

Section 54

JESUS ENTERS JERUSALEM IN MESSIANIC TRIUMPH

(Parallels: Mark 11:1-11; Luke 19:29-44; John 12:12-19)

TEXT 21:1-11

1 And when they drew nigh unto Jerusalem, and came unto Bethphage, unto the mount of Olives, then Jesus sent two disciples, 2 saying unto them, Go into the village that is over against you, and straightway ye shall find an ass tied, and a colt with her; loose *them*, and bring *them* unto me. 3 And if any one say aught unto you, ye shall say, the Lord hath need of them; and straightway he will send them.

4 Now this is come to pass, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken through the prophet, saying,

5 Tell ye the daughter of Zion, Behold, thy King cometh unto thee, Meek, and riding upon an ass, And upon a colt the foal of an ass.

6 And the disciples went, and did even as Jesus appointed them, 7 and brought the ass, and the colt, and put on them their garments; and he sat thereon. 8 And the most part of the multitude spread their garments in the way; and others cut branches from the trees, and spread them in the way. 9 And the multitudes that went before him, and that followed, cried, saying, Hosanna to the son of David: Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord; Hosanna in the highest.

10 And when he was come into Jerusalem, all the city was stirred, saying, Who is this?

11 And the multitudes said, This is the prophet, Jesus, from Nazareth of Galilee.

THOUGHT QUESTIONS

- a. Men usually conceive of Jesus as a mild-mannered gentleman too humble for such ostentatious display as we see clearly occurring during His entry into Jerusalem here. Why do you think Jesus would desire to ride into Jerusalem? And why on such an animal?
- b. Why do you suppose Jesus sent two disciples to get the donkeys—would not one disciple have sufficed to bring them back?
- c. Why would Jesus instruct the men to take the animals without first asking permission of the owner?
- d. Do you think there was any virtue in riding upon a colt that has never been broken for riding? If so, what? If not, why not?

- e. Do you see anything significant about Jesus' prepared answer: "The Lord has need of them"? Does the Lord really need anything—much less a pair of donkeys?! If so, what does this tell you about Him?
- f. Why did Jesus order them to bring two animals when one would have sufficed?
- g. How did Jesus know about the donkeys tethered outside the doorway of a house in a street over at Bethphage? Did some disciple tell Him about them? Had He already prearranged for His borrowing them at this later time?
- h. Why, when the disciples brought Jesus the donkey and her colt, did they blanket both of them with their robes? Did they think He could ride both of them?! And why, when Jesus had the larger animal available, did He choose to ride the colt?
- i. What do you think is Matthew intending to convey to his readers by including a prophecy that he himself does not quote verbatim and actually changes by mixing another prophet's words together with the one he quotes? Is this proper? Matthew left out of his quotation "triumphant and victorious is he" (RSV) or "just and having salvation" (ASV). Do you think this omission is significant?
- j. Do you think the Apostles and nearer disciples understood what was taking place during the Triumphal Entry?
- k. Usually, pictures of the triumphal entry show people waving palm branches in the air. What does the Bible say was the main purpose for the greenery cut for use that day?
- l. Explain the conduct and mentality of this crowd that praises God for the mighty works Jesus did and that shouts joyfully its happiness with Jesus as the Prophet and as Son of David, the King and Ambassador of the Lord. What did they expect the "coming kingdom of our father David" to be? To what, in their minds, is this procession going to lead?
- m. Explain the Lord's thinking behind this scenario: what were some of His feelings as He rode along? (Cf. Luke 19:40-44.) In what sense is it true that He actually *needed* these donkeys, i.e. what part did they play in His planning?
- n. Why would the people of Jerusalem, agitated by the excitement caused by Jesus' entry, have to ask, "Who is this?" Do you think they had absolutely no idea as to His identity?
- o. Why do you think that the crowds answered the Jerusalemites' question, "Who is this?" by saying, "This is the Prophet, Jesus of Nazareth of Galilee"?

- p. Mark informs us that Jesus went into the temple, but, as it was already late, He merely looked round at everything and went out to Bethany with the Twelve (Mark 11:11). Why do you suppose Jesus did not attack the temple corruption immediately that day while popular support was great and enthusiasm for His cause highest? What could be gained by waiting until the next morning (Mark 11:12, 15)?
- q. How does the triumphal entry harmonize with everything that Jesus had taught previously? How does the Entry, as Jesus conceived of it, perfectly reflect His thinking, rather than the usual world conqueror's ambition?
- r. On what basis would you explain the fickleness of some of Jesus' well-wishers evident in their willingness one day to shout "Hosanna" and later "Crucify Him!'"? Do you think *everyone* did this? Why or why not?

PARAPHRASE AND HARMONY

On the next day after the anointing of Jesus by Mary in Bethany, just six days before the Passover, a large number of pilgrims who had come to the Passover festival heard that Jesus was on His way to Jerusalem. So they took palm branches and went out to meet Him, cheering: "Hosanna! Blessings upon Him who comes as God's Ambassador, even the King of Israel!"

Meanwhile Jesus and His disciples had almost reached Jerusalem, having come as far as the little towns of Bethphage and Bethany, situated on the slopes of the Mount of Olives. Then Jesus sent two of the disciples on ahead with these instructions: "Go into the village just ahead of you. Just as you enter it you will find a donkey tethered with her colt that has never been broken for riding. Unhitch them and bring them here to me. If anyone asks you, 'Why are you untying it?' or 'Why are you doing this?' or says anything to you, just reply, 'The Lord needs them.' And he will send them back with you."

This took place to fulfil what was predicted by the prophet Zechariah (9:9f.):

Tell Jerusalem and its inhabitants: Here is your King: He is coming to you in gentleness, riding on a donkey, Yes, even on a colt, the foal of a beast of burden.

So those disciples went off on their mission and followed Jesus' instructions and found everything just as He said they would. They

found the colt tethered by a doorway out on a street corner, like He said. As they were untying the colt, its owners who stood there, demanded an explanation: "What are you doing there, untying that colt?"

And they made the reply that Jesus had furnished: "The Lord needs it." So the men let them take them. They brought the ass and the colt to Jesus, flung their robes over them like a saddle-blanket and helped Jesus to get on. He mounted the colt and sat on the garments. This had been described in Scripture:

Do not be afraid, city of Zion: see, your King is coming, sitting on a donkey's colt!

His disciples did not understand this at the time. Later, however, when Jesus had been exalted to glory, they remembered that the Scripture said this about Him and that this was in fact what had been done for Him.

Now as He rode along, most of the crowd began carpeting the road with their own robes, while others cut down branches from the trees and still others spread His path with boughs they had cut from the fields. As He approached the place where the road follows the slope down the Mount of Olives, the whole procession—those in front of Jesus that came out of Jerusalem to meet Him, as well as those who followed behind Him,—in their joy began to sing aloud their praises to God for all the tremendous miracles they had seen Jesus do. (In fact, the crowd that had been present when Jesus called Lazarus out of the tomb and raised him from the dead, kept telling what they had witnessed. This is why the crowd went out to meet Him: they had heard that He had performed this miraculous sign of His mission.) They were chanting: "Hurrah for the Son of David! God bless the King who comes in the Name of the Lord! Blessings on the coming kingdom of our father David! Praise be to God in the highest heaven! May there be peace in heaven and glory to God in the highest heavens!"

Some Pharisees in the crowd said to Him, "Teacher, restrain your disciples!"

But He answered, "I tell you, if these were silent, the very stones would burst out cheering!"

Then the Pharisees said to each other, "You see? There is nothing you can do! Why, the whole world is running off after Him!"

When He came in sight of the city, He wept over it, saying, "If you only knew at this late date the things on which your peace depends. . . . Now, however, you cannot see it. In fact, the time will

come when your enemies will raise siegeworks all around you and surround you, blockading you from every direction. They will level you to the ground, and your children within your walls. They will not leave you one stone in its place, all because you did not recognize that God had visited you!"

And when He entered Jerusalem, a shock wave of excitement shook the whole city. "Who IS this?" people asked. And the crowds kept saying, "This is the Prophet, Jesus of Nazareth in Galilee." And He went into the temple courts, where He looked at the whole scene, noticing everything that was going on. But, as it was already late in the afternoon, He went out to Bethany with the Twelve.

SUMMARY

Upon His arrival in the Jerusalem area Jesus organized a public demonstration of His royal Messiahship, wherein He rode into the city amidst the popular acclaim of Israel. His mild manner, when contrasted with worldly triumphs, served to underline the perfect, profound harmony between His methodology and that predicted by the prophet Zechariah. He refused to concede the opposition's demand that He desist by silencing the popular praise, while at the same time He foresaw the nation's fall because of popular rejection of His mission. His Messianic entry caused the otherwise indifferent to ask who it was that caused this uproar. The happy crowds described Him as "the Prophet Jesus of Nazareth in Galilee."

NOTES

21:1 **And when they drew nigh unto Jerusalem**, Jesus and His disciples were arriving from Jericho where He had saved Zacchaeus (Luke 19:1-10) and healed blind Bartimaeus and his friend (Matt. 20:29 = Mark 10:46ff. = Luke 18:35ff.). If Jesus left Jericho in the morning, He and His group could have walked the 25 km (15 mi.) road uphill to Jerusalem that day. John informs us that the Lord arrived in Bethany in the eastern outskirts of Jerusalem, while the other travellers presumably continued on to Jerusalem to seek lodging for the night. (Cf. John 12:2, 12.) While in Bethany, either Friday evening after the long journey or Saturday evening after the Sabbath, a supper was offered in Jesus' honor in the house of Simon the leper, at which time Mary, sister of Lazarus, anointed Him with precious ointment (Matt. 26:6-13 = Mark 14:3-9 = John 12:1-8).

Just when they drew nigh unto Jerusalem is not stated by Matthew, but by John, who dates Jesus' arrival as "six days before the Passover" (John 12:1). John states that "a great crowd of the Jews learned that He was there (at Bethany) and they came, not only on account of Jesus, but also to see Lazarus whom He had raised from the dead" (John 12:9). Time, therefore, is necessary for word to spread among the festal pilgrims, inciting them to hurry to Bethany. Further, more time is required for this excitement to be reported back to the authorities (John 12:10f.).

Note how Matthew and Mark introduce their account with: "while Jesus was at Bethany in the house of Simon the leper." They may have done this, not only because they recount their story out of chronological order, but perhaps because a stay of some time was involved, i.e. Friday night and Saturday too. Word got around that Jesus had come, so the streets of Bethany were filled Saturday evening with people curious to see Jesus and Lazarus. Next day (John 12:12), or Sunday morning, Jesus launched the messianic entry into Jerusalem.

In light of the above, Matthew's expression, **and came unto Bethphage**, is not intended to ignore or deny Jesus' stop in Bethany, since our Apostle intends to recount this event later (26:6ff.). Rather, his mention of Bethphage is intended to say, simply, that Jesus will start the triumphal entry from this general staging area. Bethany and Bethphage were apparently two little villages not far apart on the eastern slopes of the Mount of Olives east of Jerusalem. Today, unfortunately, no trace of Bethphage remains, while Bethany is identified in the Arab town of El 'Azariyeh. Nor is it any longer possible to affirm just how the ancient roads would have approached Jerusalem from Jericho, or precisely which Jesus would have used during the triumphal entry. **The mount of Olives** is a ridge in the hill country of Judea, parallel to mount Zion or Moriah on which Jerusalem is built and separated from the latter by the narrow Kedron Valley (Valley of Jehoshaphat). Because the elevation of the temple area of Jerusalem is 744 meters (2440 ft.) as opposed to Olivet's 814 m (2670 ft.), when Jesus arrived at the crest of Olivet, He could have looked across the Kedron Valley that separated the two parallel eminences and seen all Jerusalem laid out before Him. Because the western part of the city back of the temple area rises from 30 to 40 meters (100-300 ft.), He would have been able, from His vantage point, to see buildings even farther away on that side of the city. In fact, the entire city seems laid out, map-like below the viewer,

with the map slightly raised in back so that it slopes toward the viewer. This detail is vividly recalled by Luke (19:41). While in Bethany, however, Jerusalem would be out of sight on the other side of the hill. Thus, He first saw the City when He approached it over the top of Olivet during the Messianic entry.

It is not unlikely that **Jesus sent two disciples**, because, although one man accustomed to handling animals could easily bring back the mare which would be followed by the colt, He preferred to use two men on this errand as on others. (Cf. Mark 6:7; Luke 9:51; 10:1; Mark 14:13). Further, "the testimony of two men is valid" (cf. John 8:17), hence would more likely be credible for anyone challenging their right to take the donkeys. *Jesus sent*: this deliberate choice, when seen in context with all of the public notice He sought throughout the rest of this day, His accepting Messianic praise from the crowd, His adamant refusal to silence the people's joyous acclamation when the Pharisees demanded it, is but the beginning of a deliberate assertion of His Messiahship and His invitation to the nation to acknowledge Him as such.

21:2 **saying unto them, Go into the village that is over against you.** If Jesus spent Saturday night in Bethany (John 12:1-11), He is now there looking in the direction of Bethphage that now lay "just ahead of you," to which He directs two Apostles. **Ye shall find an ass tied:** near the entrance to the village "immediately as you enter it" (Mark 11:2). They easily located the animals in question "tied at the door out in the open street" (Mark 11:4). It is impossible to decide whether the animals' owner lived in the house in Bethphage, or whether He were merely a Passover guest. Although normally animals would be led through a doorway into a courtyard surrounded by the house with its connecting buildings, their owner could have left them hitched out on the street for some other reason. Had the owner promised Jesus they would be left there?

Mark and Luke describe the colt as one "on which no one has ever yet sat." Does this fact suggest the usual qualification of an animal to be consecrated to the Lord? (Cf. Num. 19:2; Deut. 21:3.) If so, it is surprising that Matthew entirely ignores this detail so suggestive to a Jewish reader. However, even non-Jewish readers could appreciate the choice of an animal to be ridden for the first time in an unusual situation (Philistines, I Sam. 6:7).

And a colt with her. The ass-colt would not likely have been newborn, if it must be strong enough to carry Jesus. **Loose them and bring**

them unto me. See on 21:5 why Jesus desired both animals, not merely the colt.

21:3 And if anyone says anything to you, you shall say, The Lord has need of them, and he will send them immediately. Some commentators see these instructions as furnishing evidences of divine foreknowledge: Jesus precisely (1) the number and kind of animals; (2) where they would be found; (3) the friendly, willing reaction of their owner. Support offered for this conclusion is as follows:

1. Some see a parallel between these rapid-fire orders concerning the finding of the donkeys and the arrangements for finding and preparing the upper room for the Passover (Mark 14:12-16 = Luke 22:7-13), in both of which His miraculous insight is thought to be discernible.
2. Luke's expression, "they found it just as he had told them," *heûron kathôs eîpen autoîs*; 19:32), communicates the impression that Jesus used supernatural knowledge, by pointing to the precise correspondence (*kathôs* = "just as") between Jesus' prediction and what the men encountered at Bethphage.
3. Although Matthew's expression seems weaker than that of Luke ("they did just as *kathôs*, Jesus had directed them," 21:6), Plummer (*Matthew*, 294f.) sees supernatural knowledge implied even here, since the Apostles could not even have done as He had appointed "if what they found had not agreed with what He had foretold."
4. The strongest argument for supernatural knowledge is the exact timing: Jesus, even as He was speaking, knew that both animals were tied at the door of a house precisely at the moment He needed them and was ordering His disciples to go bring them back.

The weakness of this conclusion lies in the following unprovable presuppositions: (1) It is assumed that in the Gospels we have absolutely every detail of this event. (2) It is assumed Jesus had never previously talked with the donkeys' owner about borrowing the animals for precisely this use at this time; (3) It is assumed that the owner himself was not a Galilean disciple traveling with Jesus, but a dweller in Bethphage who hardly knew Jesus. Nevertheless, other principles would also lead us to discount the above conclusion:

1. The parsimony of miracles. The sobriety with which Bible writers refuse to multiply miracles, in contrast to apocryphal miracle-mongers, and the Lord's own habit of not resorting to supernatural means where natural ones were available, would suggest

prudence in pronouncing the event in question as miraculous, especially where our Evangelists do not so pronounce it.

2. The confessed incompleteness of Gospel records. (Cf. John 20:30; 21:25.) Not only are whole events omitted, but also unimportant details in those recorded. By simply inventing another series of possible details, it is possible to see that no miracle was intended by the Evangelists. Jesus had been to the Bethany-Bethphage areas just a few months before (John 11:17f.) and could have prearranged everything with the donkeys' owner then, so that it would only have been necessary to send a couple of men to bring the donkeys. Further, the owner, either a disciple or sympathetic to Jesus' cause, may have promised to leave the animals tied in that particular place, beginning about Saturday of the week just before Passover. **The Lord has need of them**, then becomes a password that indicates to the owner that the moment of which Jesus had spoken earlier had now arrived. This explanation furnished by Jesus to cover the taking of the donkeys, assumes that those who challenged the disciples know exactly who *the Lord* is. In fact, in Greek, *the lord* (*kùrios*) might refer generally to any gentleman. (Cf. Matt. 13:27; 20:8; 21:30, 40; 25:20, 22; 27:63; Luke 13:8, 25; 14:22; note the suggestive use of *kùrios* in Luke 19:33f.: "his lords said to them . . . the Lord has need of him.") For the animals' owners to let two valuable donkeys go off unaccompanied to some unknown "lord" or in the hands of strangers would have been the height of naivetè, if not downright folly. It is more likely that the owners were themselves disciples of "the Lord Jesus." They may have not even been local residents of Bethphage, but Galileans recently arrived in the Jerusalem area for the Passover and lodging with friends in Bethphage. This would explain the details of the text without seeing a miracle of divine knowledge where none was intended.

The Lord has need of them: observe how Jesus identifies Himself to the owners of the donkeys. If this expression is all He said, "it is clear, therefore, that this epithet was not an invention of the early church after Christ's departure . . . not something borrowed from a non-Christian culture. It came from the very mouth of Jesus" (Hendriksen, *Matthew*, 764). Further, beyond the reason assigned for Matthew's citation of Zechariah at precisely this point (see on 21:4), we must see that Zechariah's prophecy is fulfilled by this paradoxical expression of Jesus' Lordship. It is *the Lord*,

not merely of His personal disciples, but the Owner of all things, that now *needs* the asses! What an amazing combination of sovereign dignity, with its authority and power, united with the painful need and destitution of poverty!

21:4 **Now this is come to pass, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken through the prophet.** Note how eager Matthew is to make his point: no sooner has he described the procuring of the donkeys than he passes immediately to the main significance the reader must see in the event described. Reasons for this may be:

1. The very mode of procuring the donkeys is part of the main point:
 - a. Those who see supernatural insight exercised by Jesus, point to His divinity as forepictured by Zechariah.
 - b. It is more likely that Matthew means: "Jesus, whom I present to you as the Messiah of Israel, HAD TO BORROW something required for His purposes!" At first glance the casual reader could snort, "What's the matter: did He not BY RIGHT own sufficient means to avoid the embarrassment of having to requisition the property of others?! What kind of Christ IS this Nazarene, if he can point to no solid real estate, no institutions and property and no hard, countable results?" But this is precisely what Matthew is driving at! The citation of Zechariah's prophecy at this point decidedly meets this kind of thinking head-on by categorically asserting that God had promised just this sort of Messianic King to Israel.
2. Now, if Jesus be the Lord of the Universe, who is the donkeys' true Owner? Can He not make use of what is His own however and whenever He chooses? And is not such divine ownership in perfect harmony with Zechariah's picture of the divine Messiah?
3. By citing the prophecy now, rather than at the end of the section, Matthew induces his reader to begin to interpret the entire scene in the light of all of Zechariah's ideas relevant to the Messiah's coming.

The important question now is: what had Zechariah prophesied during the zenith of the Persian empire under Darius I (522-486 B.C.), Xerxes (or Ahasuerus, 486-465) and possibly Artaxerxes I (465-424)? Just as today, the reader of the Old Testament prophecies in Jesus' day needed to know something of the history contemporary to the prophets themselves, in order to make sense out of their writings. In fact, their prophecies were directed not merely to the future times

in which their later readers would be living, but also to events in the prophets' own times. For them, as for us, the historical connections were important to be able to see the mighty acts of God operative in and through the events. Thus, we may assume that Matthew depends upon the reader's appreciation of Zechariah's message in its proper historical context.

In chapters nine through thirteen, Zechariah described God's future program for both Israel and the Gentiles in terms of four basic emphases: (a) the blessing of Israel by the salvation and refining of a godly remnant; (b) the blessing of the nations by the salvation of a godly remnant from among the Gentiles; (c) the punishment of the ungodly nations who manifest their ungodliness by their hostility to Israel, and (d) the punishment of the ungodly in Israel through the destruction of the old order. Four times in this latter section Zechariah furnishes glimpses of the Servant-King Messiah and His ministry, ALL CITED BY MATTHEW:

1. The Messianic King and His reign (Zech. 9:8-10; cited by Matt. 21:5)
2. The Good Shepherd's ministry unappreciated by Israel and so terminated (Zech. 11:9-14; Matt. 27:9)
3. Israel's bitter wailing over the death of the Pierced One (Zech. 12:10-14; Matt. 24:30)
4. God's Shepherd smitten and His flock scattered (Zech. 13:7; Matt. 26:31)

Matthew does not cite all of Zechariah's messianic prophecies or prophetic allusions, leaving his readers to recall them. (Study Zech. 2:10f.; 3:8f.; 6:12-15.) In fact, he does not even quote Zechariah closely, choosing rather to utilize only certain suggestive portions, but they are heavy with meaning every time.

Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion! Shout aloud, O daughter of Jerusalem! This wording of Zechariah 9:9 Matthew has exchanged for Isaiah's graphic: **Tell the daughter of Jerusalem** (cf. Isa. 62:11), because, not only must the City of God be informed, since she cannot recognize her King who comes to her, but also because other great prophecies other than Zechariah's find their fulfillment in Him who so comes. (Study Isa. 61, 62.) Even John rewords this quotation, weaving in wording from Isaiah 40:9 (LXX) or 44:2. Jerusalem is strangely unable to rejoice because of her indifference toward Him

who was to prove to be her true King. Ironically, the rejoicing and shouting aloud expressed the infectious enthusiasm of only the multitudes of pilgrims present. Jerusalem was no more than mildly interested (21:10). **Lo, your king comes to you.** Zechariah's original readers might have supposed that the victorious conqueror of Syria and Philistia (Zech. 9:1-8) would set the style for the Messianic King, in the power and pomp of an Alexander the Great who so remarkably fulfilled Zechariah's words. Nevertheless, Jerusalem's righteous King has a style far different from the standard operating procedure of earthly rulers. He is to be:

1. **Your King**, i.e. the king that suits you, is best fitted for you, the one God has chosen for you, in contrast to foreigners or usurpers who set themselves up over you. He is to be no foreign Alexander nor usurping Herod. Although the King would be God Himself come to rule (cf. Zech. 2:10; 8:3; 14:9), He would also be fully Hebrew (cf. Deut. 17:14f.).
2. He **comes to you** at some unspecified future date. He had not therefore appeared on the political scene of the world in Zechariah's time nor would necessarily appear shortly after Alexander the Great, even if after him. This promise intended to inspire hope in the Coming One. By John's time, "the Coming One" had been transformed into a Messianic title. (John 1:15, 27; 3:31; 6:14; 11:27; 12:13; cf. Matt. 11:3; 21:9 and parallels.) But Zechariah 2:10 promised the COMING OF JAHWEH to His people, so in some way the Messianic King must either be God incarnate or somehow possessed of the fulness of deity.
3. **Righteous**, or just. (Cf. Jer. 23:5; Acts 3:14.) This describes His personal character, His moral principles and His personal practice. (Cf. Deut. 17:18-20.) His royal administration would be conducted on the basis of true justice and uncorrupted righteousness. Truth stands at the foundation of everything He says or does. (Cf. John 14:6; Rev. 19:11.) Consequently, He qualifies to be the means for making others righteous before God. (Cf. Isa. 53:11; I Peter 3:18; 2:21-25.) Why Matthew omitted this expression of Zechariah is not clear.
4. **Having salvation** (ASV) is also omitted by our author. Because of an ambiguity in Hebrew, two meanings are possible:
 - a. "One who is saved." This is based on the passive rendering of the Nifal verb form. It is not unlikely that Matthew should omit

this phrase because a Messianic King who Himself needed saving would be unthinkable to the righteous, and Matthew did not desire at this point to explain how the Messiah could have been saved, if He was Himself to be the Savior of all others. After the resurrection, however, the Apostles could shout, "God raised Him from the dead!" Accordingly, Zechariah would mean that the Lord would render Him justice after His rejection by men, by restoring Him His rightful honor after He had shown Himself the suffering Servant of Jahweh. (Zech. 3:8; 11:8-14; 12:10; 13:7; Isa. 53:10-12; cf. John 17:5.)

- b. "Victorious." The RSV is not incorrect thus to render the Nifal form (*nosha'*), because Nifal, while often passive, is also reflexive or reciprocal. (Cf. Nakarai, *Biblical Hebrew*, 28, 32; Gesenius, *Lexicon*, 374 has "conqueror"; see Ps. 33:16.) Thus, this interpretation would be: "saving Himself," hence, "victorious."
5. **Humble** or **meeek** translates *'ani*, rendered in Greek by *prauts* by Matthew and the LXX. Zechariah's word amplifies the Messiah's miserable condition, His lowliness as one afflicted, and His consequent mildness.

Although Keil (*Minor Prophets*, II, 334) may be right to note that *'ani* does not mean gentle, as if *prauts* were perfectly equivalent to the Hebrew word, because its primary sense is the humiliation of affliction, still there are numerous passages, like Psalm 68:10; Isaiah 41:17; 49:13; 51:21; 54:11 and Zephaniah 3:12, which speak of the nation of Israel from the point of view of its afflictions and low position. In such passages *'ani* gradually becomes equivalent to "the godly poor, the righteous who suffer, the godly servants of Jahweh who, however, are afflicted." This concept develops a moral and religious significance as these are distinguished as the people in whom faithfulness to Jahweh is maintained and spiritual religion developed. (*I.S.B.E.*, 2420b; cf. Num. 12:3; Ps. 10:12, 17f.; 22:26; 25:9; Prov. 3:34; 16:19; Isa. 29:19; 32:7; Zeph. 2:3.) Accordingly, Messiah embodies this character personally.

Therefore, the distinctively ethical flavor of *prauts* (Arndt-Gingrich, 705: "gentle, humble, considerate, meeek, unassuming") may not be absent from the mind of Zechariah, especially as he describes the Messiah. Nevertheless, the affliction of material poverty is never far from the meaning-potential of the prophecy.

6. **Riding upon an ass, and upon a colt the foal of an ass.** This expression is unquestionably intended to define more precisely the Messiah's characteristic meekness, since no reader need be informed that any ass ridden by the Messiah would be a **colt the foal of an ass**. In fact, every ass is the colt of an ass! Hebrew parallelism in Zechariah's poetry does not necessarily require this expression for fulness, since he could have written some other harmonious line to complete his thought. Rather, Zechariah chose this double definition of Messiah's meekness, because of the peculiar image these words convey. (See below on "Why Two Donkeys?") While it is true that donkeys are not so despised in countries where they are in common use, as they are elsewhere, they have never enjoyed the prestige of the horse. In fact, both Zechariah (LXX) and Matthew picturesquely describe the colt as a *hypozugion*, literally "under the yoke," hence "a draft animal, beast of burden, pack animal," (Arndt-Gingrich, 852).

Horses have ever been the animal most prized for its strength, agility and speed. (Cf. Zech. 1:8; 6:1-7; 9:10; 10:3, 5; 12:4; 14:20.) Nevertheless, asses were used in war along with horses, mules and camels (Zech. 14:15). They were considered valuable property among wealthy people (Gen. 12:16; 22:3; 30:43; Job 42:12; I Chron. 27:30; I Sam. 9:3ff.). Although asses were a beast of burden in common use (cf. Isa. 1:3; I Chron. 12:40; more numerous than horses, mules and camels after the exile, Ezra 2:64ff.), even as in earlier times when Israel as yet possessed no horses, so they also remained in common use for riding even after Solomon's time. (Cf. Judg. 10:4; 12:14; II Sam. 17:23; 19:26; I Kings 2:40; 13:13-29; II Kings 4:24.)

Solomon's great interest in horses, however, underlines their supposed all-round superiority to donkeys and helps to explain why God prohibited Israel from depending upon horses for tactical military superiority. (Cf. Deut. 17:16 with II Kings 10:26-29; II Chron. 9:24f.) Horses may be appropriate symbols of war, but it does not necessarily follow that donkeys are symbols of peace. The donkey, as will be shown, may be rather the symbol of the common life as opposed to the prestigious one. It is only as the humility of the Messiah is seen in His riding an ass that His peace is seen. Peace is in the total prophecy, not in the donkey! *Meek*, in context, says: "Peaceful."

Rather than foster materialistic hopes, Zechariah clearly warned that God's Messianic King would not ride in triumph on a fiery-eyed Egyptian battle horse or in an imperial chariot, like an Alexander. Nor would He initiate a reign of arrogant cruelty, like that of a Herod or a Jewish Nero. More surprisingly than that, this divine King would not even appear to Israel on the clouds of heaven! Instead, like the common man of all times, He would appear as a peaceful citizen, riding a common, unimpressive beast of burden.

Josephus (*Contra Apion*, II, 7) thought of donkeys this way: "Asses are the same with us which they are with other wise men, viz. creatures that bear the burdens which we lay upon them; but if they come to our threshing-floors and eat our corn, or do not perform what we impose upon them, we beat them with a great many stripes; because it is their business to minister to us in our husbandry affairs." This was said in contrast to Egyptians who do honor to crocodiles and asps.

Zechariah's point of comparison is the more striking when it is observed how he emphasizes the total absence of any dependence upon the war chariots and horses upon which worldly kingdoms count so heavily for their power (Zech. 9:10). This very contrast between proud generals mounted upon richly decorated horses with flashing, ornamental harnesses and saddles, armed with battle bows and leading hordes of war chariots and on the one hand, and, on the other, the Messianic King, quietly riding unarmed into the City of God, mounted on a common donkey, unsaddled except for someone's robe tossed over its back, serves to deflate all nationalistic dreams of earthly power and exaltation connected with Jesus of Nazareth! He depicts a Kingdom that would not be established by a power struggle, nor would it depend upon worldly might for its stability. Any reader of Zechariah should conclude that, if the Messiah is to reign at all, especially over a worldwide dominion, He must gain this control by quite unworldly means. If not by tyrannical use of authority, He must conquer men's hearts by the persuasive force of His moral leadership, by the convincing power of His revealed truth and by the example of His humble service.

Matthew's style of quotation is perfect: not too much and not too little. Had he quoted Zechariah's next verse: "I will cut off the chariot from Ephraim and the war horse from Jerusalem; and the battle bow shall be cut off," he might have prematurely turned off the

pro-Zealot sympathizers among his readers, because of the evident non-violent approach predicated of Israel's Messiah. Had he quoted the following portion, "and he shall command peace to the nations," he might have unnecessarily enflamed the Gentile-hating reactions of nationalistic conservatives. And by not quoting the final portion, "his dominion shall be from sea to sea and from the River to the ends of the earth," he did not excite futile hopes of a materialistic messianic kingdom. His citation focuses on the spiritual details just enough to spur his readers both to reread the ancient prophets and re-examine the life and ministry of Jesus of Nazareth in order that they might be smitten by the remarkable resemblance between the prediction and the fulfilment and be persuaded to surrender to Him.

In the same way Matthew did not cite all of Zechariah's words, Jesus did not personally or literally act out all of the prophet's message either. He did not instantly nor publicly eliminate the use of military to promote His kingdom (Zech. 9:10), even if He later refused Peter's offer to defend Him with the sword (Matt. 26:52) and affirmed the spiritual character of His reign before Pilate (John 18:36). Nor did He then and there proclaim peace to the Gentile nations (Zech. 9:10), and it has taken centuries for His dominion to be spread over the earth in world missionary movements. It is clear, then, that Jesus meant to draw attention to Himself in this vivid way which recalls the total prophecy of Zechariah, so that the thoughtful might examine the total Jesus-phenomenon in the light of the prophet's predictions, and conclude that Jesus of Nazareth was all that the prophet had pictured and more too. In fact, peace was proclaimed to the nations later. (Cf. Eph. 2:17; Acts 2:39.) Military might has also been eliminated as a means to advance His kingdom, because evangelism and patient teaching are the only methods permitted (Matt. 28:19f.; Mark 16:15f.; Luke 24:47; John 20:21ff., 30f.; Acts 1:8). Rather, His Royal Entry into Jerusalem perfectly harmonized with Jesus' earlier teaching in that He did not destroy His enemies by making political use of the opportunity and power unquestionably within His reach by virtue of His popular support and His miracle-working power. Rather, He pursued His usual course of quiet teaching and humble service even to the most undeserving.

This is come to pass that it might be fulfilled. The Lord Jesus had always intended to enter Jerusalem in precisely this manner, so He inspired Zechariah to announce that He would. Now He merely moved into human history to carry out what He said He would and in perfect harmony with the proper interpretation of His own prophecy.

As on so many other occasions (cf. John 2:22; 20:9), the disciples did not instantly catch the overriding theological significance of the Messianic Entry as this is expressed in Zechariah's prophetic statement (cf. John 12:14-16), until the light of His resurrection glory illuminated and explained His mighty acts in their proper perspective. (Cf. Luke 24:44ff.; John 14:26; 7:39.)

WHY TWO DONKEYS?

Matthew has been accused of misreading Zechariah's prophecy by seeing two donkeys there, and then of adding another donkey to this scene to make it agree with his misunderstanding of the prophecy. This arises out of the word "and" in the expression: "riding upon a donkey AND upon a colt the foal of a beast of burden." Matthew supposedly mistook the "donkey" and the "colt" for two animals, and against the testimony of the other Evangelists, gratuitously introduced another female donkey into his record to cover up the apparent discrepancy between Jesus' triumphal entry with only one donkey (as recorded by Mark, Luke and John), and Zechariah's prophecy as he understood it.

The critics are correct to point out that "and" does not always serve to link two distinct objects. Gesenius (*Lexicon*, 234) could be cited to show that the Hebrew *vav* ("and") is also used:

(b) to connect nouns, the second of which depends upon the first as though in the genitive (hendiadys) . . . (c) inserted by way of explanation between words in apposition. . . . Sometimes two nouns are joined together by *vav*, the former of which denotes genus, the latter species, or at least the latter is also contained in the former, so that one might say, *and specially*, and particularly, and namely.

Thus, our sentence would read: "Meek and riding upon an ass, and specifically upon an ass colt, the male foal of she-asses" (Zechariah in Hebrew).

As might be expected of Greek-speaking Jews, the LXX and NT Greek reflect the same usage. Arndt-Gingrich (393) note that *kai* ("and") is often "explicative; i.e. a word or clause is connected by means of *kai* with another word or clause, for the purpose of explaining what goes before it . . . *that is, namely, and indeed, and at that.*" Thus our sentence would read: "Gentle and mounted upon a beast

of burden, that is, upon a young colt," (Zechariah in LXX) or "Gentle and mounted upon an ass, and upon a colt at that, the foal of a beast of burden" (Matthew).

Thus, the ancient prophet intended to point out a fact as surprisingly noteworthy, because it stood in striking contrast to the usual style of all other world conquerors. Filled with incredulous wonder, Zechariah exclaimed: "Note, your king is coming to you: humble and mounted on an ass, and on a colt at that, the foal of asses!"

But Matthew is Hebrew enough to recognize idioms in his own language better than his distant critics. In fact, while the above argumentation is valid, it is the critics who fail to see the TWO ASSES IN ZECHARIAH! Any careful reading of Zechariah in Hebrew will show that there really are two asses: the male ass (*chamor*) on which the King was to ride, and the female ass (*athon*), mother of the former. Nothing is said in Zechariah about the King's riding upon both animals. All that is affirmed is that he will ride upon the male ass-colt.

It appears, therefore, that our Lord requested that both animals be brought in order better to emphasize His intention to fulfil Zechariah's prophecy. Thus, that unmounted she-ass in the Messianic Procession was not extra at all. Because she came along beside her colt mounted by Jesus, her otherwise unexplained presence draws attention to the fact that the colt ridden by Zion's King is truly a "colt, the foal of she-asses." By re-enacting everything in Zechariah's prophecy down to the fine detail of including the seemingly unnecessary she-ass in the picture, Jesus intended to focus public attention on the prophecy. And yet everything took place so naturally that the disciples did not immediately see the connection between Jesus' actions and the prophecy. This came upon later reflection, but Jesus had laid the groundwork for their understanding (cf. John 12:16).

Why, then, did Matthew report two donkeys, when his colleagues report only one? Matthew objectively counted both of them, because there were two to be counted! The other Evangelists characteristically singled out the donkey most important for their report, i.e. the one Jesus actually rode, without mentioning the colt's dam or denying her presence in the parade that day. The former publican can hardly be criticized for his continued careful attention to numbers, even after his call to Apostleship! (Other examples of this procedure: two demoniacs, Matt. 8:28 = Mark 5:2 = Luke 8:27; two blind men, Matt. 20:30 = Mark 10:46 = Luke 18:35.) In fact, Mark and Luke do not quote Zechariah's prophecy and John shortens it, leaving

out Zechariah's mention of the colt's mother, so they would not need to mention two animals.

21:6 **And the disciples went, and did even as Jesus appointed them,** because "they found it as he had told them" (Luke 19:32) **7 and brought the ass, and the colt, and put on them their garments; and he sat thereon.** Although Jesus could really ride only one animal, nevertheless, because the Lord had not yet indicated which He intended to mount, the men prepared both for the procession. However, it does not follow that Jesus mounted both the colt AND the older donkey, as some commentators attempt to force Matthew to say. Because He wrote: "they brought the ass and the colt and put their clothes on them and he sat on them (*kaì epéthekan ep 'autôn tà himàtia, kaì epekàthisen epàno autôn*), it is thought that the plural *autôn* ("them") refers to "donkeys" in both cases. The last *autôn*, however, refers to the near antecedent, i.e. the *garments* placed upon the donkeys. The pronoun's antecedent is normally the noun which is mentioned closest in the near context, unless other reasons prevail. In our case, the other interpretation would create the absurdity of seeing Jesus try to sit astraddle of two donkeys contemporaneously.

Their garments were the long, outer robe that served the purpose of overcoat. (See note on 5:40; cf. Exod. 22:26f.) Since the unbroken colt would not be saddled, Jesus' men, instantly and without a thought for self, whipped off their own robes—the best that they had for Passover—to create a makeshift saddle blanket for Him. *He sat thereon*: Luke mentions how the disciples assisted Jesus in seating Himself comfortably on His mount.

Plummer (*Matthew*, 286) is mistaken to write: "There seems to be no example of *epàno* being used as riding on an animal; it would perhaps be as unusual as for us to talk of riding 'on the top of' a horse." While he may be correct with regard to "riding" as such, Matthew did not say, "he rode thereon," but "he SAT thereon" (*kaì epekàthisen epàno autôn*). And THIS idiom is well documented (Matt. 23:22; 28:2; Rev. 6:8; cf. other passages where there is implied a similar contact between one object and another placed on top of it: Matt. 5:14; 23:18, 20; Rev. 20:3). Plummer simply failed to see that the procession had not yet started and that Jesus had merely mounted the donkey.

How long it took the disciples to go and return with the animals is not stated. However, we must not imagine the Royal Entry into

Jerusalem as occurring in one morning's time, because Mark informs us that when Jesus finally arrived in the temple, "it was already late" (Mark 11:11). Further, John's account (12:12f.) implies enough time on this day for a great crowd in Jerusalem to hear of Jesus' coming and to go to meet Him as He arrived over Olivet's brow.

21:8 And the most part of the multitude: where did all these people come from? The Synoptics are surprisingly brief here, since suddenly, almost miraculously out of nowhere, people not only begin milling around Jesus and shouting Messianic slogans, but launch a demonstration so portentous that not only are the jealous Pharisees deeply shaken (John 12:19) and impotent to stop it (Luke 19:37-40), but also the entire city of Jerusalem is eventually stirred (Matt. 21:10). It is John (12:12f., 17f.) who provides the explanations:

1. The multitude consisted of pilgrims "who had come to the feast" (John 12:12). They are already people "on the move" in Jerusalem, hence relatively free to flow to points of interest. These "heard that Jesus was coming to Jerusalem," (John 12:12b). How they heard is not stated, although it is not impossible that Jesus had already announced His intention to make such an entry into the city on Sunday morning. These rumors must have been spread through the Capital by excited Galilean pilgrims who had travelled with the Lord and had gone on into the city earlier.
2. Even some Jerusalemites who had been present in Bethany's cemetery to console Martha and Mary concerning their brother Lazarus (cf. John 11:18f., 31, 45f.), bore witness to Jesus, because they had witnessed Lazarus' resurrection (John 12:17f.). This too swelled the crowd now standing to meet Jesus.

The fact that the Synoptics omit this rich information may indicate that the Triumphal Entry had become a fact so well-known by the time of its documentation, that no explanation of the crowds' presence was thought essential to communicate the basic story. So we must picture a convergence of two streams of people on the Mount of Olives, the larger one approaching from Jerusalem, the other flowing along beside Jesus coming from Bethany. Some estimate of the magnitude of this demonstration may be had by remembering the census taken when Cestius was governor during the time of Nero, at which time it was learned that more than two and a half million Jews were present at that later Passover (Josephus, *Wars*, VI,9,3). If we arbitrarily deduct from the population of Jerusalem and reduce

the remainder by three-fourths, the remaining throng of people ready to acclaim Jesus is no small crowd! But it was *the multitudes*, not the authorities in Israel, who joined in this happy occasion. Only the common people praised Jesus, a rather common occurrence throughout Jesus' ministry. (Cf. Mark 11:18; 12:37; Luke 18:43; 19:48; 21:38; 8:40; 13:17.) Just a few, omnipresent, grouchy Pharisees stood around criticizing. Remarkable for their conspicuous absence are the political heads, the religious hierarchy and the military. This is the day of the lower, middle class and the poor, the unarmed, the unlearned, the unappreciated masses.

The multitude spread their garments on the way, a gesture to show royal honor to Jesus. (Cf. II Kings 9:13.) In this, they followed the example of the disciples who sacrificed their own outer garment to drape it over the donkeys. Feel the infectious enthusiasm that motivated these generous well-wishers to carpet Jesus' path with their best outer robes worn to the Passover. No waving banners, no battle flags, no velvet carpet: just the homespun cloth of common people. Love is mother of inventive ways of showing this high honor and lowly submission. **Others cut branches from the trees and spread them in the way.** Back in Nehemiah's time (Neh. 8:15), people were ordered to "go out to the hill and bring" such branches as were needed for making the typical booths for the Feast of Tabernacles. Perhaps the trees were considered public domain for precisely this purpose.

Grand processions of this same nature had been organized to greet Alexander the Great (Josephus, *Antiquities*, XI,8,5). But is there any special significance in the choice of palm branches carried by many in the multitude (John 12:13) or that others, finding themselves no more palms, also **cut branches from the trees** (Matthew) to spread their leafy branches on the road ahead of Jesus?

1. A mixture of palm branches and those from leafy trees combined with fruit of goodly trees and willows of the brook was symbolic of the Feast of Tabernacles (Lev. 23:39-43; cf. Rev. 7:9, 13-17, esp. v. 15 *skênôsei*). Since Matthew does not specify which trees furnished branches, this cannot be conclusive against identification of the idea in the minds of the well-wishers celebrating Jesus' entry.
2. When Judas Maccabeus led Israel in rededicating the Temple (the first Feast of Dedication, cf. John 10:22), they "celebrated it for eight days with rejoicing in the manner of the

feast of booths, they had been wandering in the mountains and caves like wild animals. Therefore bearing ivy-wreathed wands and beautiful branches and also fronds of palm, they offered hymns of thanksgiving to him who had given success to the purifying of his own holy place." (II Macc. 10:6f. However, this detail is not mentioned in I Macc. 4:36-51.)

3. Simon Maccabeus' cleansing of the Citadel was celebrated with a procession of Jews bearing palm branches and singing as they went (I Macc. 13:50-52).

Can it be that, for the Israelites, these branches represented a symbol of triumph over their enemies? Or are they just part of the usual scenario appropriate for offering homage to a triumphant leader? (Cf. Edersheim, *Life*, II,372.) In the light of the above references, is it not likely that the transferring of some of the symbolism of the Feast of Tabernacles is the work, not of our Evangelists, as some assert, but of the people? If the zealous puritans who purified the Temple and Citadel saw nothing inappropriate about Psalm-singing and tree branches as an expression of special joy granted them by God, why should not this Passover crowd greet Jesus in precisely the same way and for the same reasons? Nevertheless, the SPIRIT of the Feast of Booths permeates the present demonstration. Admittedly the people's actions do not indicate a full consciousness of Jesus' Messiahship as His disciples later came to understand this (John 12:14-16), but who can affirm with certainty that these excited people did not desire to proclaim the typical meaning of the Feast of Booths? Hailing Jesus as the Christ (King of Israel and Son of David), it is not impossible nor unlikely that these crowds, in their longing for the permanent restoration of all things, should have desired to express themselves in terms of the Feast of Booths. This is not contradicted by the fact that it was Passover, because, if they hoped that the Messiah would bring in a new era, entirely different from all that went before, Passover could be forgotten, lost in the permanent joy of eternal peace!

Nevertheless, the more certainly it can be determined that the multitudes intended to communicate something of the Tabernacles festal spirit, the more wrong-headed they appear. In fact, they would have confused the Messiah's first coming for His second, the sacrifice of the Paschal Lamb for the joyous feast of booths at year's end, the cross for the eternal kingdom.

If the Tabernacles flavor should be thought important for our understanding of Matthew, why did not Matthew make it explicit as he writes for Jews?

1. By referring to what Zechariah had written concerning the Messiah, he spoke of it indirectly. (Cf. Zech. 14:16-19.)
2. By simply narrating the event objectively, Matthew spoke volumes to any Jew who, sensitive to the history of his people and to his own experience of worship at the great feasts, would recognize, in the facts narrated, the high symbolism intended by the crowds.

21:9 **And the multitudes that went before him, and that followed** . . . are definitely two groups. The former (*hoi dè òchloi hoi proàgontes autòn*) are probably those whom John mentions as coming from Jerusalem to meet Jesus (John 12:12f.). Turning as they meet Him coming over the hill, they become the vanguard moving at the front of the procession. Luke (19:37f.) connects this dramatic moment with Jesus' arrival at the summit of the Mount of Olives where the descent begins. At precisely this moment "the whole multitude of the disciples began to rejoice and praise God with a loud voice for all the mighty works that they had seen." (See Paraphrase/Harmony.) A futile attempt by some Pharisees to silence this popular enthusiasm is itself squelched by Jesus' famous rebuttal: "If these were silent, the very stones would cry out!" (Luke 19:40). It may well have been in this very connection that frustrated colleagues of those who remonstrated with Jesus, now dissuade them from further, useless attempts: "You see that you can do nothing. Look, the world has gone after him" (John 12:19). This bitter Pharisean confession, while admittedly exaggerated, provides some estimate of the magnitude of this mass rally. Certainly, THEIR world had gone after Him, since the Pharisees normally had the common people in the palm of their hand (*Antiquities*, XIII,10,5,6). But now these are mobilizing around these bigots' latest, most serious Rival.

But Jesus' thoughts were disturbed by something other than His supposedly universal popularity indicated in the frustrated Pharisees' unintended praise (Luke 19:41-44). When, at a bend in the road or after crossing a last ridge of the mountain, Jerusalem came into full view, Jesus no longer heard the happy shouting, no longer saw the masses milling around Him. He could only weep as He clearly fore-saw the final tragic end of what had been so dear to Him, the city

of the Great King, its inhabitants and its Temple. He wept, because neither Israel nor Jerusalem had recognized Who it was that had visited them. Not only was earth now a "visited planet," but God Himself, in the person of His Son, had now visited His nation, His city and would soon visit His house, the Temple, for the last time before its final fall. He was the only person that day who understood the real issues, and His sobs, seemingly so out of place amidst the well-nigh universal rejoicing around Him, proved far more realistic than did the hosannas. He understood what His coming could have granted to the nation, but this did not blind Him to the real punishment hanging over the people who turned a deaf ear to His offers.

Hosanna to the Son of David. The word *Hosanna* is the Greek form of the Hebrew expression *Hoshiah nah*, which originally indicated a liturgical appeal to God: "Help" or "Save, I pray." This crowd seems to be using it more loosely, in the sense of "Give victory to the Son of David!" (Cf. "God save the King!" Ps. 20:9 = LXX 19:10; see Gesenius, 374.) Although *Hosanna* originally meant "O save!" the fulness of salvation is life unbroken by death. Consequently, *Hosanna* became equivalent to "Live for ever!" It was an easy step to broaden its restricted usage to express hearty best wishes, a sort of holy hurray, mingling approval, admiration and highest good feelings toward the person thus addressed. Nevertheless, the extent to which those Hebrews' shout appealed to the Nazarene for the nation's salvation is the extent to which Jesus' enemies must have been infuriated. To hear the Nazarene claimant to Messiahship so addressed constituted a far more serious scandal in the leaders' thinking than merely to shout a comparatively harmless and complimentary Psalm of praise to welcome Him into Jerusalem. Who is HE to be able to "save" Israel?! Did the crowds have in mind the Messianic Psalm 118? To a Hebrew ear, there is practically no difference between Matthew 21:9b, c and the first lines of Psalm 118:25, 26, with the single addition of "to the Son of David," which is a perfectly natural paraphrase for "Messiah."

How the other Evangelists inflect this basic quotation is also instructive. Whereas Mark, Luke and John unitedly cite "Blessed (be) He who comes in the name of the Lord," rather than explain the Jewish expression "Son of David" (Messianic King), they spell it out: "even the King of Israel" (John 12:13), "the coming kingdom of our father, David," (Mark 11:10) or simply "the king" (Luke 19:39). On *Son of David*, see notes on 1:1, 20; 9:27; 12:23; 15:22; 20:30.

He who comes in the name of the Lord, in Psalm 118:26 could refer to ANY worshipper of God arriving at Jerusalem. In fact, Edersheim (*Life*, II,368) notes that, according to Jewish tradition, Psalm 118:25-28 was commonly chanted antiphonally by the people of Jerusalem as they went to welcome the arriving pilgrims (Midrash Tehilim on Psalm 118; cf. Flusser, *Jesus*, 150). But how much more applicable is this expression to the Anointed of God who comes! Significantly, the following line from Psalm 118:26 affirms: "We bless you from the house of the Lord." Shortly thereafter the Lord suddenly came to His temple (cf. Mal. 3:1). As will be noted later, Psalm 118:22f. is to be understood in a Messianic sense. (Cf. Matt. 21:42 = Mark 12:10 = Luke 20:17; Acts 4:11f.; I Peter 2:7.)

Hosanna in the highest! If "hosanna" means "give victory" (cf. Rev. 7:9f.), then they may be praying God's blessing on Jesus, seeking for Him the highest possible victory, not merely God's help to win over earthly enemies, but the conquest of the principalities and powers throughout the universe. (Cf. Ps. 148:1c.) Luke (19:38b) paraphrases this lovely prayer: "Peace in heaven and glory in the highest!" (Cf. Luke 2:14.) May Messiah's reign over the universe bring peace and glory!

How is it that so many people could rise so spontaneously and so ecstatically to this occasion?

1. This was the Passover season with its commemoration of the redemption of Israel from the slavery of Egypt. The Egyptian bondage would remind them of the Roman occupation. This, in turn, would call for prayer for liberation from this latest bondage. Although the crowds would assume that liberation from Rome must come through military might, their very deliverance from Egypt was an act of totally divine omnipotence, unaided by human intervention. God could do it again!
2. The worship of the pilgrims approaching Jerusalem was begun as they neared the city, chanting Psalms, and their celebration of God's redemptive power continued as they sang Psalms 113-118 during the feast. Since the Hebrew people knew the words of this great poetry by heart and were accustomed to singing it together, it is no more amazing that they should break forth in well-known songs of praise than for a group of Christians to use some well-known Christian hymn to proclaim their praise. The surprise of this scenario does not consist in singing what they already knew, but in directing this praise to Jesus.

3. Jesus' multitude of disciples had well-founded reason to rejoice and praise God "for all the mighty works that they had seen" (Luke 19:37), because these miracles evidenced the presence of One in their midst who could bring their long-cherished hopes to reality. Further, the stupendous miracle of raising Lazarus from the dead had stirred the admiration of almost everyone who learned of "this sign" of Jesus' power and identity (John 12:17f.).
4. Psychologically, who could NOT rejoice that God's redemption of His people, so long-awaited, is about to take place in one's own generation?
 - a. In fact, if Jesus IS the Messiah they think He is going to be, God's great, eternal Feast of Booths is about to begin. (See note on 21:8.)
 - b. The crowds' emphasis on the Davidic Kingdom (Mark 11:10; Luke 19:38; John 12:13) accurately summarizes the popular impression "that the Kingdom of God was shortly to appear" (Luke 19:11).
 - c. Since they had endured poverty and enslavement for centuries and sustained the waiting for their Messiah to bring them unparalleled prosperity, no wonder their enthusiasm exploded in jubilant singing, when they believed that their economic woes were now to be over! National independence was within reach! It was an extraordinary, unforgettable moment in Israel's history: a day-long, palm-branch-wrapped outpouring of national pride, patriotism and joy—millions of fellow Hebrews feeling together, laughing together, praying together, crying and rejoicing together.
5. McGarvey (*Fourfold Gospel*, 575) notes that the Messianic cheering began largely with the crowd coming out from Jerusalem to meet Jesus. Therefore, "the apostles who were approaching the city with Jesus had nothing to do with inciting this praise." And yet, while they may not have initiated it, they could very well have coordinated and continued it. After all, their own views of Jesus' mission were almost perfect copies of the popular views.
6. People recognized in Jesus a regal glory greater than all else on earth:
 - a. They remembered His supernatural power superior to all that the great of earth could ever possess.
 - b. They recalled His undoubtedly prophetic teaching "as one who possesses authority, not like the scribes."
 - c. They were in love with His matchless character so much like God.

- d. They had begun to appreciate Him as the promised Christ, the fulfiller of their Bible's prophecies.
 - e. By faith they had caught a glimpse of the foundational reality which this event portrayed. The fact that our Lord welcomed their unabashed adoration merely served to stabilize and fortify their confidence in Him and belief in that reality.
7. The people more closely associated with Jesus are completely open to a "triumphal entry." It seemed that the hour for the manifestation of His royalty, so long desired by His mother (John 2:4), demanded by His brothers (John 7:4) and dreamed of by His followers (Matt. 20:21; Luke 19:11; cf. Acts 1:6), was about to strike. All that was lacking to release their restrained impatience and free their enthusiasm was a signal from Jesus. In fact, all their present exhilaration now completely justified His earlier Messianic reserve. (See notes on 16:20; 14:22; 17:9.)

If so many reasons seem excessive to explain the crowd's enthusiasm, let it be remembered that it is with a CROWD that we are dealing, a vast concourse of milling, wondering single individuals with quite varied reasons for what each does. None of those present were motivated by just one reason. Many were undoubtedly stirred by conflicting reasons. Yet, for the most part, they thought they were really praising God by welcoming Jesus in this way (Luke 19:37). This explains why Jesus could accept their unashamed praise and identify with their enthusiasm, however poorly they truly understood Him and His mission. He accepted their holy enthusiasm and spiritual joy.

Lest the majority of these well-wishers be maligned by picturing them as readily swaying one day from high Messianic fervor toward Jesus, to bitter, determined opposition to Him on another,—one day singing "Hosanna," another day angrily bawling, "Crucify Him!"—let us recall several facts:

- 1. John 12:12f., 17f. clearly identifies this crowd as made up largely of disciples and sympathizers friendly to Jesus.
- 2. Even the Pharisees on location credit the multitude with being largely composed of "your disciples" (Luke 19:39).
- 3. Matthew seems to trace a contrast between "Jerusalem" and "the crowds" (Matt. 21:10f.).
- 4. The rulers could not count on popular support for their assassination of Jesus, and the blow must necessarily be dealt "by stealth . . . not during the feast lest there be a tumult among the people"

(Matt. 26:3-5 and par.). The presence of Jesus' supporters among pilgrims at the feast posed a serious hindrance to the authorities' freedom to act (cf. Matt. 21:26; Mark 12:12).

5. Although Peter, addressing a mixed audience of pilgrims and local citizenry, accuses them all generally (Acts 2:14, 23, 36; 3:14, 17), it is significant that Paul, when addressing Hebrews of the Diaspora, specifically accuses the dwellers of Jerusalem and their rulers (Acts 13:26f.). The difference is that Peter was addressing more directly the murderers mixed among the various listeners, while Paul was singling out those materially responsible for Christ's murder. Cleopas makes this same distinction (Luke 24:19f.).
6. Edersheim (*Life*, II,371) also distinguishes the leaders and people:

The very suddenness and completeness of the blow, which the Jewish authorities delivered, would have stunned even those who had deeper knowledge, more cohesion and greater independence than most of them who, on that Palm-Sunday, had gone forth from the City.

Thus, the majority of people did not sway from "Hosanna" to "Crucify Him!" Rather, they lamented Jesus' fate (Luke 24:19f.). This, of course, is not to say that absolutely no one wavered. In fact, if anyone swayed from unmitigated admiration of Jesus to bitter resentment and readiness to crucify Him, it would be because Jesus had disappointed him by not bringing in the expected Kingdom. (Remember 11:2-6. Judas Iscariot may be a sad case in point.) Wrong expectations concerning Jesus' Messianic program could not help but set people up for a letdown. If they hoped He would instantly set up the Kingdom and rule from Jerusalem on David's throne, realize national ambitions of glory and independence, then this very expectation, when disappointed, psychologically prepared them to turn against Jesus when they saw Him the apparently helpless prisoner of the very Romans He should have been most ruthlessly ready to eliminate. Shaken by His steadfast refusal to use His power to defend Himself and their cause, dazed at His continuing to promote purely ethical ends, stunned by the consequences of being found on the losing side when Jesus permitted Himself to be beaten by the hierarchy, those who were fundamentally undecided earlier could easily swing over to the opposition. But even then, it is to be doubted how many would be so ready to sell out to His enemies when there was hope Jesus might yet act, that is, until Thursday night of the Passover week.

Even so, how many of those who shouted "Hosanna" were even physically present when, early Friday morning, Pilate presented Jesus to a crowd of people for a final decision (Luke 23:4, 13; Matt. 27:20-25)? Since these were specially primed and prompted to request Barabbas and destroy Jesus, is it even likely that His enemies would have permitted into the judgment area anyone who could raise a dissenting voice at the critical moment in the hearing of Pilate on whose final decision everything depended? No, it appears that the multitude favorable to Jesus succeeded in gathering only after His condemnation. (See Luke 23:27, 35, 48f.)

The point is that we are discussing the separate motives of approximately two and a half million people, some of whom are bitterly jealous of Jesus, others who are ardently admirers but not decidedly disciples, others who are curiosity seekers, others who are profoundly committed to Him, others who are nervously plotting His assassination, others who are "going along for the ride." So, why not let the majority of the Triumphal Entry crowd be thought of as sincere and steadfast to the end of Jesus' crucifixion?

21:10 **And when he was come into Jerusalem, all the city was stirred.** The cheering could have been heard in the city while the procession was yet beginning the descent of Olivet, causing the inhabitants of Jerusalem to turn their gaze toward that mount 70 meters higher than the temple area. Although Jesus was not unknown in Jerusalem (cf. John 2:13-24; 5:1-47; 7-10:39), no Jerusalemite could have dreamed that He would dare stage a Messianic demonstration on this scale, entering the city accompanied by a throng shouting Messianic slogans.

While the expression, *all the city*, may refer not only to the city's usual population but also to the tens of thousands of Passover pilgrims arrived from all over the Roman Empire (cf. the representative samples present on Pentecost just 50 days later: Acts 2:5-11), it is evident from Matthew's antithesis cast between "all the city" (here) and "the crowds" (v. 11), that there is a contrast between the Jerusalemites and the pilgrims. The local citizens evidenced a certain coldness to Jesus. After all Jesus had done in Palestine, after all the "wanted notices" had been circulating (John 11:57), if they still had to ask "*Who is this?*" rather than "*What is going on?*" they were insensitive to Jesus!

While scholars have pointed out the specific interest of Luke in Jerusalem as the City of God that rejected the Son of God, this

emphasis, somewhat less evident, is present in Matthew also. Whereas *all the city was stirred* to ask, *Who is this?* it was untroubled to seek the proper answer to its own question and act on it. It was satisfied to take the lowest possible view of the common evaluation (v. 11). Even as at Jesus' birth (Matt. 2:3), when Jerusalem was shaken (*etaràchthe*) by the disturbing questions of the Magi, so also now she is shaken (*eseìsthe*) by the new reality emphasized by the shouting crowds. But in neither case is there any evidence that Jerusalem took the trouble to examine more than superficially the momentous significance of the events that caused the foreigner tourists within her gates to sing so joyfully.

Who is this? is not so much a question for information (cf. John 9:36) as it is a challenge, half-alarmed and half-contemptuous. Matthew's choice to report this question may have several ramifications:

1. Jesus is not walking into just any city in the world. He has now *come into Jerusalem*. This city was not merely the center of religious and political life in Israel. Rather, it symbolized the sense of Israel's history and importance in the scheme of God. (Study Zechariah's references to Jerusalem in their context: 1:12, 14, 16, 17; 2:2, 4, 12; 3:2; 8:4, 8, 22; 9:9, 10; 12:2-11; 13:1; 14:2, 4, 8, 10-12, 14, 16f., 21. Note also his references to "Zion, House of God, Temple.") How will Jerusalem react to Him? is a question on the mind of Jewish readers. As with "the Jews," in John's language, so Jerusalem too became a symbol of the opposition to Jesus. (Cf. 23:37ff.).
2. For a Hebrew, "to go up to Jerusalem" had a religious meaning, but, for Jesus, it is much more. He is going up there in the name of God to take possession of all that finds its fulfillment in Him. Because He had come to be sacrificed for the world's sins, He did it in the most public way appropriate: He came in His nation's capital at the most significant feast of the year to die as God's Passover Lamb while the nation was assembled to witness it.
3. Thus, Matthew's choice to record this one succinct question inexorably guides the reader. It is as if he were asking: "Dear reader, even as the city asked, so now you too must answer on the basis of all you have seen of this Man: *who is this?*"

21:11 **And the multitudes said, This is the prophet, Jesus, from Nazareth of Galilee.** There can be no surprise that ignorant people should provide such a grossly limited evaluation of our Lord, i.e. was

He no more to them than merely *the prophet*?! Our surprise arises, rather, from the fact that Matthew himself just leaves this answer uncorrected on the lips of the crowds. Is not Jesus so much more?! But, argues Matthew, let men ponder the glorious truth that, after 400 years of Heaven's silence in which no true prophet ever arose in Israel, God has finally sent to His people, not only John the Baptist, but *THE Prophet* (*ho profètes*).

Cf. Mark 6:15; Luke 7:16; 24:19; John 1:21, 25; 6:14; 7:40; 9:17. Although John 1:21, 25 indicates confusion among some Jews about identifying "the Christ" with "the Prophet," since it is evident that some did not consider them as perfectly synonymous, nevertheless John 6:14 and 7:40 indicate that others saw these as more nearly synonymous terms.

It was the Galileans who first identified Jesus as "the Prophet who is to come into the world!" (John 6:14; cf. Luke 7:16). Others too—even Samaritans—had been willing to acknowledge His prophetic office. (Cf. Matt. 16:14; Luke 9:8, 19; John 4:19; 7:4; 9:17.) Even after this, this same popular view protected Jesus (Matt. 21:46). Both Peter (Acts 3:22f.) and Stephen (Acts 7:37) considered the famous "prophet" prediction of Moses (Deut. 18:15ff.) to have real, persuasive power in identifying Jesus as the promised *prophet*. Thus, Matthew has good reason to draw attention to the fact that this *Prophet* holds sway over men, not by the threat of His sceptre, but through the divine power and authority of His teaching. Let the reader examine the Nazarene's credentials to see whether He be a Teacher come from God or not. If so, let him hear Him and submit to Him! If not, He deserved to be crucified!

As an answer to the monumentally dumb question, "Who is this?" the name *Jesus from Nazareth of Galilee*, bears the ring of Galilean pride as His compatriots name His hometown. Nevertheless, we must not forget the scandal of a Nazarene Christ. He is but a mere provincial, whose despised background was cause for raised eyebrows and harsh words in the Council (John 7:45-52). But, best of all, this lowly background was subject of ancient prophecies! (See notes on 2:23 and 4:12-17.)

While their confession of *Jesus (as) the prophet from Nazareth of Galilee* is undoubtedly the understatement of the century, because HE is so far much more than this, still it must be interpreted in the larger context of the same crowd's Messianic salutations expressed during

the procession. Must we not admit that Peter's Pentecostal accusations, that Israel had murdered God's Christ, had far more clout with his audience, precisely because of this earlier public recognition of Jesus as God's *Prophet*? (See Acts 2:22f., 36; 3:13f.) Certainly, there were some fickle people in this host, who, caught up in the excitement, took up a half-believed cry as their impulse led. But Matthew remembers that those who called Jesus *the prophet*, had also called Him "Son of David . . . He who comes in the name of the Lord!" (v. 9).

THE POINT OF THE TRIUMPHAL ENTRY

The point of the Triumphal Entry pageant must be judged, as any other triumph, on the basis of its component parts, its protagonists, its goals.

WHAT THE TRIUMPHAL ENTRY IS NOT

Jesus was not Himself caught up in the popular enthusiasm for His Messiahship. Not even momentarily was He deceived into thinking that people would welcome Him as Messiah totally on His own terms. His weeping over Jerusalem in the midst of the shouting crowds (Luke 19:41ff.) can have no other significance than His unrelenting dedication to the purpose of God, even if it cost Him the loss of Jerusalem, the destruction of the temple and the exile of the majority of His kinsmen. Although some would view His weeping as evidence of human weakness, we must see His tears as underlining His sober realism in the presence of facts that broke the heart of God.

Gentiles, had they witnessed this provincial procession characterized by the lusty, honest celebration of common people, would never have dignified it with the title of "triumph." Rather, they would have smiled at any reference to this event in terms of the ambitious displays of victory and glory which the powerful of this world enjoy after their successful aggressions. Notable for its absence was a display of the wealth of conquered kingdoms. Nothing was spent to guarantee the success of this "triumph." Nor were there costly banners or military flags waving in His honor. No marching armies, no blaring trumpets, no rolling drums. But for the popular acclaim there is hardly anything in this parade to justify calling it anything but a Sunday morning outing! The chief Participant Himself rode a borrowed animal hastily

accoutered with borrowed garments. The parade route was strewn, not with rare flowers, but with country greenery hastily stripped from nearby trees. Nor were supporters hired to stage "spontaneous" demonstrations or to incite artificially canned expressions of fanatic enthusiasm for Jesus. Absent were the wealthy, the erudite and the politically powerful. How could this country-festival atmosphere be confused for a proper imperial "triumph"?

Nor was Jesus temporarily accommodating Himself to His excited disciples' expectations and the multitude's mistaken hopes for a materialistic kingdom, as if He felt He must abandon His divine program to condescend for a moment to the level of those who misinterpreted Him. Even though His enemies would attempt to expose Him as an enemy of Rome, as a Zealot's political messiah, His Messianic Entry into Jerusalem had an entirely different flavor. In fact, Mark's final word about Jesus' entrance into the temple leaves the impression he is presenting a poor, Galilean provincial wandering around the great temple like any out-of-town tourist, gazing upon its stupendous construction (Mark 11:11).

No, if a triumph intends to celebrate the accomplishments of the conqueror, this was no "triumph" in the usual sense, because, for Jesus, the greatest battle was yet to be fought and won at the cross and through His victories through the Church. (Cf. Rev. 1:5, 6; 5:9, 10.) This Kingdom was to come about by the shedding of blood, not of its enemies, but of its King!

THE REAL MEANING OF THE TRIUMPHAL ENTRY

I. THE IMMEDIATE PURPOSE:

PHASE I OF THE "MESSIANIC OFFENSIVE"

A. Jesus entered Jerusalem, the City of the Great King, because He was its true King. Although He did not deny His royal dignity, the insignias of this position are reduced to the minimum absolutely indispensable to display His undeniable royalty as Son of David. Although some royalty is shown in this procession, there is also royal irony intended by Jesus whose entire demeanor fairly shouts: "My kingdom is NOT of this world!" The Messiah's irony may be summarized as follows: (*P.H.C.*, XXII, 487).

1. The superhuman under the garb of the human
2. The majestic under the garb of the lowly

3. The eternal under the garb of the incidental and temporal
4. Unquestionable truth enunciated by an erring crowd

Pharisee, disciple and well-wisher alike failed to understand the high irony of Jesus' choice of the lowly to manifest His highness. It is difficult even for us who are heirs of those disciples to admit how often we fail to appreciate His wisdom. How often our desire for power-plays and pageantry betrays our difference from our Lord and unmasks our failure to understand Him! Paradoxically, however, men would soon forget the pomp of all other great human triumphs of the world conquerors, and yet all common Christians the world over know by heart every detail of this one, most unforgettable moment!

B. Jesus entered Jerusalem to present Himself to the nation as Israel's Messiah. Nevertheless, by doing it in precisely this fashion, He called attention to the full teaching of the inspired prophecies with a view to correcting the popular misconceptions of His mission. He does not refuse openly to declare Himself the awaited Messiah announced by the prophets. But He insists on His own interpretation of how those predictions must be realized, as opposed to the popular expectations. Even as He is saying "yes" to their acclaiming Him their King, He says it in a way that meant "no" to their materialistic ambitions. Consider the curious regality of a "poverty-stricken Messiah"! But His point was well-taken (II Cor. 8:9). This is His true glory.

The era of His "Messianic Reserve" is now over. (See notes on 8:4; 9:30; 13:10-17; 16:20; 17:9.) The truth of His Christhood must now be proclaimed in the most public manner possible. Within His Last Week before the cross there would be no significant opportunity for His materialistic followers to unite and frustrate His planning. Rather it is now time for the most public disclosures of His Messiahship, an announcement of which would occur, in the most formal way possible, in the presence of the Sanhedrin (26:63-66 and par.).

But Jesus did not mean just to declare Himself Messiah in a vacuum. Rather, He offered Himself the spiritual Messiah of Israel, in order to do the kind of teaching before the entire nation during this last week that could have saved His people. This valuable publicity furnished Him the platform from which to make His last, great, personal appeals to get the nation to awaken to the spiritual character of His rule. His goal was to encourage people to embrace Him as Messianic Teacher and Prophet, so they could re-evaluate their ideas of what

the Kingdom must be. So the type of triumphal publicity He sought was not the sort of vain display selfish ambition would choose. Rather, its stark contrast to worldly triumphs underscored the God-sent spiritual character of all He stood for.

Jesus' Christhood must be recognized. Though a hunted man (John 11:57); He courageously permitted Himself to be brought by public procession into Jerusalem accompanied by the explosive enthusiasm of the majority of God's people then living! Such a move was geared to push Israel to a decision about Him and His mission. If men would not admit it, even the rocks would herald His identity (Luke 19:40). Should any doubt whether the crowds intended to attribute Messianic dignity to Jesus, the complaint of the Pharisees is proof against any such doubts, because THEY understood! But the Lord refused to still the crowd's Messianic acclamations, because, however ill-informed the content of their praise, its form expressed the reality. However badly mistaken their grasp of His true mission and identity, He encouraged their adoration and approved it (Luke 19:40), because this loving adoration offered to Him is the basis of all Christian service, sacrifice and suffering. Jesus succeeded in making His point with the majority of the crowd, for, however, feeble their faith, they believed something TRUE about Him. Later they would be in a better position to grasp what it means to confess Jesus as Messiah. But people who hold Him for nothing more than a gentle, however quite human, rabbi, will always be shocked at the "exaggerations and fanaticism" of those who adore Him as Lord and King.

C. Jesus' royal entry into Jerusalem is intended to force the Sanhedrin to act in harmony with God's schedule, rather than their own. The Council intended to slay Jesus "not during the feast, lest there be a tumult among the people" (Matt. 26:5 = Mark 14:2. However does this represent previous thinking of the same men?) By deliberately arousing public sentiment in His Messianic Entry into Jerusalem, He shows the authorities with what kind of threat they must deal decisively and soon. Consider the audacity of this demonstration executed by a wanted man! (John 11:57). The Pharisees, who protested to Jesus to hold back the tidal wave of disciples, not unlikely nodded darkly toward the Tower of Antonia where the Roman garrison was stationed, ready to strike at the barest whisper of revolt. Already bloody uprisings had been brutally quelled with speed and ferocity. Nor was it unlikely that even at that moment an uneasy silence reigned in the Tower as hundreds of Roman eyes were scrutinizing the unauthorized

demonstration growing in excitement and edging ever closer to the City from Olivet.

D. By moving deliberately into Jerusalem in this fashion, Jesus indicated His intention to give His life voluntarily. By personally staging a demonstration calculated to push Jerusalem's leaders to the point of decision and, given their hostility to God and truth, He made His own death a certainty. Further, by taking the initiative, He enjoyed the advantage of remaining in control of the events. He was never a helpless pawn or the unwilling victim of a bad situation, trapped by forces beyond His control. Foster (*Final Week*, 34f.) shows how the royal entry into Jerusalem furnished a dramatic prelude that would draw Israel's attention to the facts which would form the essence of the Gospel:

Jesus was deliberately coming up to Jerusalem to give His life as a ransom for the sins of mankind; it was God's will that the sacrifice should be made in such a public manner that the attention of the world and of the ages should be concentrated upon it. He was not to be assassinated in a dark street or done to death in secret. The proof of the resurrection was to be made incontestable by the fact that the attention of the nation was to be concentrated upon the crucifixion. The triumphal entry threw down the gauntlet to the wicked leaders of the nation in such fashion that they not only brought about His death, but that they turned the nation upside down in the effort to disprove the fact of the resurrection and silence or destroy the people who proclaimed it. Thus, the historic facts which are the foundation of the Christian gospel were tested in the most severe and terrible manner which the devil could invent at the very outset. Thus those in succeeding centuries, who, not having seen were yet to be asked to believe, should have the most complete and unshakeable basis for their faith.

II. THE LONG-RANGE GOAL

By His fulfilment of the former part of Zechariah's prophecy ("Your King is coming to you in poverty on an ass"), He encourages us all to expect with watching and prayer, obedience and work, the fulfilment of the final portion of that prophet's words: "His dominion shall be from sea to sea, and from the River even to the ends of the earth."

FACT QUESTIONS

1. When did the "Triumphal Entry" occur? Cite all the Scriptures and facts that combine to indicate the day and time.
2. Describe the route the procession took, beginning from the moment Jesus started giving instructions on the basis of which the procession would begin. Where was Jesus as He gave these instructions? To what village must the two disciples go to find the donkeys? In what general area were these places? Could Jesus and the Twelve see Jerusalem before the procession? If so, how? If not, why not? At what point did they see Jerusalem? Who says so?
3. Where did all the people come from who swelled the crowd of disciples? What motivated them to come to meet Jesus and cheer Him into Jerusalem? There may have been more than one motive.
4. Reconcile the account of Matthew with that of Mark, Luke and John who all affirm that Jesus rode upon a colt, whereas Matthew is equally certain Jesus asked for TWO animals.
5. Locate the prophetic allusions cited by Matthew regarding the Messianic entry into Jerusalem. Explain the significance of such citations here.
6. State the exact instructions Jesus gave the two disciples for finding the necessary animals, then tell what they actually experienced as they obeyed Him.
7. Since Matthew asserts that the disciples threw their robes upon both animals, what are we to understand about the expression, "and He sat thereon": the two donkeys or the robes? Which animal did He ride?
8. Describe the "red-carpet treatment" people gave Jesus as He rode along. Where did the folks get the carpet?
9. Explain the meaning of the phrases or words used in each of the popular shouts and explain where the people got them:
 - a. "Hosanna!"
 - b. "Son of David"
 - c. "He that cometh"
 - d. "In the highest"
10. Describe the reaction of the Pharisees in the crowd (as told by Luke and John). What was Jesus' rebuttal? What were these Pharisees doing in the crowd anyway? Are they Jesus' disciples too?
11. According to Luke, what was Jesus' reaction upon seeing the Holy City? What prophetic words did He pronounce in reference to Jerusalem?

12. What reaction did Jesus provoke in the city of Jerusalem upon His arrival? How did people respond to those who asked what was going on? What did they mean?
13. After the Messianic entry into Jerusalem's Temple, what did Jesus do next, according to Mark? What time of day was it when the procession was finished?
14. List the separate facts in the incident that indicate that Jesus was not merely yielding to the wrong-headed Messianic enthusiasm of the people, but rather deliberately taking the initiative and proceeding according to His own spiritual program.
15. List the separate, new facts that Mark, Luke and John add to our total information about this event.

SECTION 55

JESUS CLEANSSES THE TEMPLE A LAST TIME AND RECEIVES WORSHIP OF CHILDREN

(Parallels: Mark 11:15-19; Luke 19:45-48)

TEXT: 21:12-17

12 And Jesus entered into the temple of God, and cast out all them that sold and bought in the temple, and overthrew the tables of the money-changers, and the seats of them that sold the doves; 13 and he saith unto them, It is written, My house shall be called a house of prayer: but ye make it a den of robbers.

14 And the blind and the lame came to him in the temple; and he healed them. 15 But when the chief priests and the scribes saw the wonderful things that he did, and the children that were crying in the temple and saying, Hosanna to the son of David; they were moved with indignation, 16 and said unto him, Hearest thou what these are saying?

And Jesus saith unto them, Yea: did ye never read, Out of the mouth of babes and sucklings thou hast perfected praise?

17 And he left them, and went forth out of the city to Bethany, and lodged there.

THOUGHT QUESTIONS

- a. In your opinion, why should Jesus have felt it necessary to purify the temple at this historic moment and in this particular way?