



## Sermon

Palm Sunday, 13<sup>th</sup> April 2014

### ***Who is this Man?***

**Matthew 21:1-11**

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Riding into Jerusalem on a donkey was an important action. Let's explore some of that together.

Jesus normally walked everywhere but this time he chose to ride. It was deliberate claim; it was a fulfilling of a Messianic prophecy that their king would come riding on a donkey.

We all remember that the people spread their cloaks on the ground before him – this was an acknowledgement of royalty – it is a custom described in the Old Testament.<sup>1</sup>

They called him "Son of David" which was a royal title – the Messiah was to be a descendent of King David who would rule with justice.

The crowd were proclaiming him as Messiah and King.

He rode into Jerusalem, the City of the Great King on a donkey not a warhorse. Normally kings entered cities on a horse as conqueror. Here is a clip from the film, *Alexander*, where we see something of the power of a warhorse and culminating in the triumphal entry into Babylonian.

[Video]

Contrast that with this depiction of Jesus' entry.

We see there a deliverer rather than a conqueror; a king of peace rather than a warlord.

It was not even a donkey but the foal of a donkey. Mark and Luke make it clear that it was the foal he rode – the weaker of the two animals and one which had never been ridden before – a combination of humility and while showing his subjection of nature.

By riding into Jerusalem he claimed the title of King. The people accorded him that title but also that of prophet. They said of him, "This Jesus the prophet from Nazareth."<sup>2</sup>

Having reached Jerusalem what does he do? If we read on from verse 12, we find he goes to the temple and drives out the money changers and those selling doves.

He quotes several verses of scripture. I remember hearing the then Vicar of Lancaster, Peter Guinness, saying of this passage that when a rabbi quoted a text he meant the whole passage not just the words

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<sup>1</sup> 2 Kings 9:13

<sup>2</sup> V11

quoted. So when he says that his Father's house shall be called a house of prayer, he is quoting from Isaiah 56. It is a passage about foreigners who seek God having the access to him although they are not Jews. Jesus is asserting that gentiles are welcome to worship God.

He says, "But you have made it a "Den of Robbers" which is a quote from Jeremiah 7:11. That passage is about judgement on Israel for not keeping the covenant. They were warned not to put their trust in the temple itself. Not to think they could sin with impunity and come back to the temple and worship regardless. They were warned that the destruction that had been visited on the Tabernacle site at Shiloh would come upon the temple they valued. Jesus was warning the Jewish leaders of the coming judgement on Jerusalem and the destruction of the Second Temple.

In taking control of the temple courts he acts as a priest. In his declarations he functions as a prophet.

Then we are told some blind and lame people came to Jesus and he healed them - this on the day of the Triumphal entry with irate Pharisees and Sadducees around him. Those leaders then turned on him with the accusation that children are singing "Hosanna to the Son of David" of him. His response is revealing: "From the lips of children you have ordained praise." It is a quote from Psalm 8 about the praise of ... God! That was not a random quote from the Old Testament with the word praise in it. In saying it, he claims to be worthy of the praise for God ... to be God.

In one day, he has been feted as Messiah, King and prophet, he has asserted the right of Gentiles to worship God, warned the Jewish leaders of potential judgement and claimed to be God.

## **Prophet, Priest and King**

Jesus entered Jerusalem as the King not to establish a monarchy over them, but to bring peace between God and humanity through his own death.

Jesus came to the temple not simply to restore the integrity of the temple worship but as the priest who would offer the final sacrifice to open permanent access to God for all people through himself.

Jesus pronounced judgement on Israel like the prophets of old, not simply to restore order. He functioned as the Prophet who had fulfilled the Old Testament and now would enable his disciples to live kingdom-empowered lives as his witnesses.

This was the day of publicly laying claim to his position. This was quite a day! This is quite a man!

What do you make of this man Jesus?

What is your response to this Priest who offers you access to God the Father?

What is your response to this Prophet who would calls you to walk in the power of the Spirit as his witness?

What is your response to this King who would rule those who respond and lead them into harmony between God and man?

What is your response to this God?

I would like us to watch a short video from CBA, Christian Broadcasting Association.

[CBA Video]

Again, I ask, What is your response to this God? Will you follow him as your Prophet, Priest and King? Will you choose to be a witness for him? Will you support others telling of him in NZ through outreaches and CBA; in Tanzania through the work of Bishop Given?

Who is this man? He is Prophet, Priest and King. He is God.