

²⁸ When He had said this, He went on ahead, going up to Jerusalem. ²⁹ And it came to pass, when He came near to Bethphage and Bethany, at the mountain called Olivet, that He sent two of His disciples, ³⁰ saying, "Go into the village opposite you, where as you enter you will find a colt tied, on which no one has ever sat. Loose it and bring it here. ³¹ And if anyone asks you, 'Why are you loosing it?' thus you shall say to him, 'Because the Lord has need of it.'" ³² So those who were sent went their way and found it just as He had said to them. ³³ But as they were loosing the colt, the owners of it said to them, "Why are you loosing the colt?" ³⁴ And they said, "The Lord has need of him." ³⁵ Then they brought him to Jesus. And they threw their own clothes on the colt, and they set Jesus on him. ³⁶ And as He went, many spread their clothes on the road. ³⁷ Then, as He was now drawing near the descent of the Mount of Olives, the whole multitude of the disciples began to rejoice and praise God with a loud voice for all the mighty works they had seen, ³⁸ saying: "'Blessed is the King who comes in the name of the LORD!' Peace in heaven and glory in the highest!" ³⁹ And some of the Pharisees called to Him from the crowd, "Teacher, rebuke Your disciples." ⁴⁰ But He answered and said to them, "I tell you that if these should keep silent, the stones would immediately cry out."

Text: Luke 19:28-40 A 12/1/24 Jeremiah 23:5-8 Romans 13:11-14 Ps.: 24 Resp. Ps.: 96
Hymns: 645, 98, 712, 62

BLESSED IS THE KING WHO COMES IN THE NAME OF THE LORD!

Oh, come, Oh, come, Emmanuel, And ransom captive Israel
That mourns in lonely exile here Until the Son of God appear.
Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel Shall come to thee, O Israel.

Oh, come, Thou Rod of Jesse, free Thine own from Satan's tyranny;
From depths of hell Thy people save And give them vict'ry o'er the grave.
Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel Shall come to thee, O Israel. (TLH #62:1-2)

Dear fellow believers in Christ,

If you've ever seen the old Gunsmoke TV shows, you're familiar with the figure of Festus riding his mule. Why would Jesus make His 'grand entrance' into Jerusalem on a donkey? Most of the people didn't understand that Jesus had come to save them from their sins, so why did they shout out praises to Him? Why would they take off their coats and lay them in the dirt road for the donkey to walk on? Today is the first Sunday in Advent, leading up to Christmas. Why would we have as our text an event that took place at the very end of Jesus' life on earth, when Christmas is the celebration of Jesus' birth at the beginning of His life on earth?

As our text begins, Jesus and His disciples were approaching Jerusalem. He sent two of them on ahead. He told them they would find a donkey tied up there which had never been ridden, and that its owners would willingly let them take it to Jesus. We're told, "*Those who were sent went their way and found it just as [Jesus] had said to them.*" How could Jesus know exactly how everything would happen before it happened? Jesus knew because Jesus is God. We're told that no one had ever even sat on that donkey before, yet later Jesus calmly rode it through the excited

crowd of shouting people. How could Jesus make the donkey do that? Jesus could keep the donkey calm because Jesus is God.

Two of the other Gospels (Mt. 20:20-21; Mk.10:35-37) tell us that just before Jesus rode into Jerusalem, James and John had asked to have positions of glory with Him in heaven. Jesus told them that those who are great in God's eyes are not those who seek glory for themselves, but those who serve others for the Lord's sake. Jesus then made the point about Himself: "*Just as the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many*" (Mt. 20:28). Now Jesus demonstrated this by the way that He (even though He is God) humbly entered Jerusalem.

When Jesus rode into Jerusalem He did something unusual for Him: He purposely made a very public 'grand entrance.' Everyone's attention was focused on Jesus riding a donkey. Modern-day VIPs travel in beautiful limousines. VIPs in Jesus' day rode beautiful horses. For a VIP in Jesus' day to ride a donkey would be like a modern-day VIP riding in a Volkswagen Bug. Jesus rode on lowly a donkey because even though He is our almighty God, He is also our humble Savior. Jesus didn't come as an earthly king who lords it over his subjects. He entered Jerusalem on a beast of burden as our Heavenly King who came to serve us. Jesus didn't come as an earthly king to have his subjects fight battles for him. Jesus came as our Heavenly King to defeat Satan and sin and death and hell for us, and give us the victory over them. "*Comfort, ... comfort My people!*" Says your God. *'Speak comfortingly to Jerusalem, and cry out to her, that her warfare is ended, that her iniquity is pardoned'*" (Is. 40:1-2). Less than a week after Jesus humbly rode through Jerusalem on the donkey, He humbly gave His life on the cross to save us from our sins.

Probably none of those people who witnessed Christ's entry into Jerusalem understood its real significance at the time. Yet "*as [Jesus] went, many spread their clothes on the road.*" They 'rolled out the red carpet' for Jesus. They took off their coats and spread them in the dirt road before Jesus so that the donkey on which He was riding could walk on them. They felt great love and respect for Jesus to do that! John tells us that the people felt that for Jesus because of all of His miracles, especially His miracle of raising Lazarus from the dead (which Jesus had done only a few weeks earlier) (Jn. 12:17-28).

As Jesus rode through Jerusalem, the people praised Him, "*Blessed is the King who comes in the name of the LORD!*" The Pharisees (Jewish religious leaders) told Jesus to tell the people not to praise Him like that. But Jesus told the Pharisees, "*If these should keep silent, the stones would immediately cry out.*" Jesus received and accepted the people's praise because as almighty God and the Savior of the world He deserves such praise!

Hundreds of years before Jesus came to earth, Zechariah had prophesied about Him, "*Rejoice greatly, O Daughter of Zion! Shout, Daughter of Jerusalem! See, your king comes to you, righteous and having salvation, gentle and riding on a donkey, on a colt, the foal of a donkey*" (9:9). Jesus came just as that prophecy and so many other Old Testament prophecies had predicted about the Messiah because Jesus Christ is the Messiah, the Son of God.

Today we start the Advent season in which we celebrate Jesus' birth at the beginning of His life on earth. So why are we using as our text an event that took place less than a week before Jesus' crucifixion at the end of His life on earth? It's because Christ's cradle and cross cannot be separated. Jesus humbly came to earth, born as a lowly baby in a cattle barn and laid in a feeding trough for His bed, to save us. Jesus humbly entered Jerusalem on a lowly donkey to go to His death on the cross to save us. The people cried out to Jesus, "*Blessed is the King who comes in the name of the LORD!*" Matthew tells us that they also cried out, "*Hosanna to the Son of David!*" (21:9). The people correctly believed that Jesus was the promised Messiah descended from King David. Their problem was, they thought the Messiah would be a great earthly king who would keep on miraculously healing them and feeding them, and would make their Jewish nation a mighty earthly nation again. Jesus really is "*the King who comes in the name of the LORD*" – our Heavenly King – God Himself come down to earth in human form. The people cried out to Jesus, "*Peace in heaven and glory in the highest!*" These are in essence the very same words the angels sang when Jesus was born: "*Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will to men*" (Lk. 2:14). God is the source of peace in heaven, and God is the source of true peace on earth. The people thought that Jesus had come to give their nation earthly peace. But as the Son of God and Savior of the world, Jesus came to give heavenly peace to all people on earth. Through Jesus' perfect life, death, and resurrection, God has taken away our sins and given us peace with Him.

Jesus humbly came to earth as the baby in the manger, and humbly rode through Jerusalem on the donkey. We're told in the second chapter of Philippians, "*Christ Jesus, ... although He existed in the form of God, did not regard equality with God a thing to be held onto, but emptied Himself, taking the form of a servant, and being made in the likeness of men. ... He humbled Himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross*" (vv. 5-8). Jesus made His 'grand entrance' into Jerusalem on a donkey to make a point. Jesus deserved the 'red carpet treatment' the people gave Him when they laid their coats in the road before Him and shouted out their praises to Him. Jesus Christ, together with God the Father and God the Holy Spirit, created and rules over all the universe! Jesus Christ is almighty God Himself in human flesh! As John says about the Son of God, "*And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth*" (Jn. 1:14). Jesus Christ came down to earth to die for our sins on the cross and rise again as the living God and Savior of the world! "*Blessed is the King who comes in the name of the LORD! Peace in heaven and glory in the highest!*"

Oh, come, Thou Dayspring from on high, And cheer us by Thy drawing nigh;
Disperse the gloomy clouds of night And death's dark shadows put to flight.
Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel Shall come to thee, O Israel.

Oh, come, Thou Key of David, come And open wide our heav'nly home;
Make safe the way that leads on high And close the path to misery.
Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel Shall come to thee, O Israel. Amen. (TLH #62:3-4)