



"All One In Christ"

**THE UNITED CHURCH OF ZAMBIA
SYNOD MISSION AND EVANGELISM DEPARTMENT
2023 PALM SUNDAY SERMON OUTLINE**

THEME: UNDERSTANDING THE TIMES AND WHAT TO DO-

1 CHRONICLES 12:32

**SUB THEME: " : UNDERSTANDING THE TRIUMPHANT
ENTRY INTO JERUSALEM".**

BIBLE READING: MATHEW 21:1-11.

INTRODUCTION

Jesus enters Jerusalem to begin the passion and last week of His earthly life. As He enters the city, there is a huge crowd of Jewish pilgrims that are going up for the Passover celebration. They welcome Him with shouts of praise as He is riding on a donkey, one would think they really knew Him well, and they fully understood what kind of a King He was, and what His kingdom was all about, but the events that follow clearly showed that the people who **celebrated** Him, probably were also a part of those who **condemned** Him to be **crucified**.

This year like all the years in our past history, we have come to focus on the triumphant entry of Jesus Christ into Jerusalem, which we call Palm Sunday, and we want as our Synod Annual theme, "**Understanding The Times And What To Do**" to be reflected upon in the context of the triumphant entry of Jesus into Jerusalem **leading to his betrayal, last supper, arrest, death and resurrection**. So, we will focus on some scriptural details that will take us back and forth of this very important event.

BIBLE EXPLANATION

A remarkable aspect of Jesus' triumphant entry into Jerusalem was that He entered Jerusalem on a colt (a young donkey). Have we ever wondered why Jesus did not walk into Jerusalem as He had always done before? With the exception of travelling by boat, this is the only instance recorded in scripture of not walking somewhere. In verse 3 Jesus instructed His disciples to tell the owner of the colt (exercising His divine power), "The Lord has need of it". Why did the Lord need to ride on a colt as He entered Jerusalem?

1. IT WAS A PROPHETIC FULFILMENT.

Jesus needed the colt in order to demonstrate to the people of Jerusalem that He is the Messiah. About five hundred years before Jesus was born, the word of the Lord came to Zechariah in chapter 1:1. Zechariah's primary message was to call the people of Israel to repentance and he also prophesied of a future time when the Messiah (coming King who is the Christ) will appear. ***Zechariah 9:9, "Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion! Shout aloud, O daughter of Jerusalem behold, your King is coming to you; righteous and having salvation is He, humble and mounted on a donkey, on a colt, the foal, of a donkey."***

Jesus demonstrated to the people that Zechariah's prophecy was about Him. Emmanuel, by riding a donkey instead of walking, sent a clear message to the Jews especially those who knew and had studied scripture that He was their King. Most Jews of Jesus's day had distorted perceptions of Jesus, they could not accept Him as their Messiah, maybe because of His place of upbringing and earthly parentage, John 1: 46, "*Can anything good come out of Nazareth?*", and John 1: 11, says, "*He came to His own, but His own did not receive Him.*" The Jews had their own expectations of the Messiah, which according to them did not fit on Jesus, and so by riding on a donkey He made a very bold and truthful statement that the finger prints of the Messiah from Zechariah's prophesy were actually His.

God will always fulfil what He has said prophetically, His word cannot return to Him void (Isaiah 55:10-11). We have read in Mathew 21:4 that all this was done to fulfil what the Prophet had predicted.

Even in this time and season God is still fulfilling all that He has said concerning our individual lives, families, the church and the world at large. Some of the things we are seeing today which are happening globally are prophetic fulfilments of God's word, concerning the end times. So, we can all trust and depend on God and His word concerning any situation.

2. IT WAS A PREPARATION FOR THE PASSION WEEK.

A few days after Jesus' triumphal entry into Jerusalem on a **colt**, we see His horrific exit from Jerusalem with a **cross**. The question you may be asking could be, "What happened?" How did the crowd change from shouting "*Hosanna*" in Mathew 21:9 to "*Crucify Him*", in Mathew 27:23. Those with little understanding may have thought Jesus had come to fulfil what Isaiah in Chapter 61:1-2, predicted, from a physical point of view, and also, He Himself had confirmed it in Luke 4:18-19(read). And it was also not long from the time He had raised Lazarus from the dead in John 11, and some of the Jews went to Bethany to confirm the miracle, with the view of crowning Jesus as King, so they had so much expectation from Him to an extent that they thought He was going to liberate them from the bondage of the Roman government.

Alas, Jesus did not come for that, He came to liberate mankind from sin (Mathew 1:21, Luke 19:10). There was a moment they would have made Him King by force, but He could not allow them (John 6:15), so some thought this time around He will take over the throne and be King over them and exercise His earthly functions using His divine power to rule them in peace, but alas! Jesus was not coming to Jerusalem to sit on a throne, but to the cross to make atoning sacrifice for sins. A lot of activities happened that week, from Monday to Friday, when finally, He died on the cross for all of us, and on Sunday He rose again.

Actually, He was ready for this because He had already set His mind to it and He had told His disciples that He was going to Jerusalem to suffer and die, (Mathew 16:21-23). This is why Jesus Christ's entry into Jerusalem was necessary.

God always prepares things before they happen, such that whatever is going to happen in our lives He first prepares us for the same. Sometimes we go through wonderful experiences before our bad experiences take place, and thereafter we also experience another moment of victory. This preparation of the triumphant entry led Jesus to suffer for us and die for us, how amazing is God's way of arranging things, before they are concluded.

3. IT WAS A PATHWAY FOR OUR TRIUMPH AS BELIEVERS.

Jesus demonstrated that He is King and can triumph over anything and everything on our behalf. The initial part of the story is interesting in itself. Jesus was, in effect, invoking the ancient principle of *Angaria* (from a Babylonian word meaning 'mounted messenger') by which kings, rulers and other individuals with official responsibilities could requisition property for official use. *Angaria* originated in the earliest postal systems in the ancient Persian, Greek and later Roman cultures where an animal could be requisitioned from its owner to carry the mail

on the next stage of its multiple-staged journey. So, Jesus divinely invoked this principle and got the donkey for use as a mounted messenger.

This incident was, then, the royal prelude of the triumphal entry in which crowds provided what we would call a 'RED CARPET' reception, where the road was covered with the people's treasured clothes and palm branches. It was clear that Jesus did not want a grand entry like the Kings of the earth would come with horses and chariots, he chose a humble donkey yet He was King of Kings, though a time will come in future when He will come as King of kings riding on a white horse, (Revelation 19:11-16). Jesus Christ accepted the people's praise (Luke 19:40), because this entry was a symbolic victory celebration on behalf of all humanity.

The words of the crowds who welcomed Jesus in this triumphal entry are important. Luke tells us that they quoted from the great Messianic Psalm 118 (Luke 19:38)- which is why the Pharisees attempted to silence them (Luke 19:39). This is the Psalm that contains the statement so significantly quoted by Jesus: *"The stone the builders rejected has become the cornerstone"* (Psalm 118:22), but it also contains the clear references to the triumphal entry of the Messiah: *"I look in triumph on my enemies"* (Psalm 118:7), it further says, *"Open for me the gates of the righteous; I will enter and give thanks to the Lord"* (Psalm 118:19), *"Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord from the house of the Lord we bless you. The Lord is God, and He has made His light shine on us. With branches in hand, join in the festal procession up to the horns of the altar"* (Psalm 118:26). Although Luke only cites a few of the words from this Psalm 118, it is a full prophetic description of the triumphant entry, with a lot of predictions showing the Messiah's victory for His people (believers).

For our sake Jesus can requisition anything here on earth or in heaven, just for Him to use it so that He meets our needs.

But if this was a triumph what was our victory then? Just as He rode on that humble donkey, Jesus wants to ride on our humble lives so that He may declare through us that He is the Saviour and King of the world. It is up to us as He is calling us to be AVAILABLE, ACCESSIBLE and ACCOMODATING, like the donkey was. We should be ready to lay down for Him anything of treasure in our lives like the crowds of people did, and while holding palm branches in our hands as symbols of peace, let us give Him befitting praise, shouting HOSANNA! BLESSED IS HE WHO COMES IN THE NAME OF THE LORD, HOSANNA TO THE SON OF DAVID, and for sure He will come now and save us.

He wants to fulfil God's word in our lives and through our lives, defeat all our enemies by bringing them under His feet, and our feet, (Luke 10:19).

CONCLUSION

The word of God cannot fail to be fulfilled in our lives. For sure God's promises will always be fulfilled, (2 Corinthians 1:20). Even in those moments when we pass through suffering and pain, after having a time of celebration, God will always prepare and equip us to go through any situation. Our present suffering cannot be compared to the glory that shall be revealed, (2 Corinthians 4:17).

The triumphant entry is symbolic of our victory, He is entering into all our situations, spiritually, physically, politically, economically, culturally, individually, collectively and globally. And as King of kings, He is bringing everything which is against us under His feet, and giving us authority to overcome every adversity and all manner of evil. Victory over sicknesses and diseases, poverty and economic hardships, tribalism and corruption, hatred and jealousy, family divisions and child delinquency, rape and child abuse, robberies and murders, barrenness and unfruitfulness, backwardness and lack of progress have all been overcome through Jesus' triumphant entry, etc. (1 Corinthians 15:25).

Beloved in God, understand that the Triumphant entry into Jerusalem can be a Triumphant entry into your life and all your situations in 2023 and beyond in Jesus's name. **HAVE A TRIUMPHANT PALM SUNDAY, AMEN.**

**THE MISSION AND EVANGELISM DEPARTMENT WOULD LIKE TO
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PALM SUNDAY SERMON OUTLINE FOR THE MONTH OF APRIL, 2023.**

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