

## THE TRIUMPHAL ENTRY

Matthew 21:1-11

Key Verse: 21:9

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

In the last passage Jesus again predicted his death and resurrection. But his disciples did not know the meaning of Jesus' death for the sin of the world and his glorious resurrection which gives us a living hope, eternal life and the [kingdom of God](#). So the disciples were rather indifferent about his prediction. They were busy in politics; especially two disciples, John and James were eager to obtain the top positions in the earthly Messianic kingdom they thought Jesus would establish. However, Jesus taught them patiently the meaning of his death and resurrection. In today's passage we learn why Jesus' entry into Jerusalem is the triumphal entry. We also learn who Jesus really is when he was about to make the triumphal entry into Jerusalem. We also learn the two disciples' absolute obedience to Jesus.

First, the Lordship of Christ (1-5). Look at verse 1. "As they approached Jerusalem and came to Bethphage on the Mount of Olives, Jesus sent two disciples...." This verse tells us that Jesus traveled from Galilee and came to one of the satellite cities of Jerusalem. Jesus came to Bethphage. It had been a long journey for Jesus and the [twelve disciples](#) on foot. Both Mark and Luke mention Bethany and Bethphage (Mk 11:1; Lk 19:28). When we study the synoptic gospels, we come to know that Bethphage is adjacent to Bethany on the Mount of Olives. In Bethphage Jesus came to the crest of the hill and caught sight of the Holy City. Jesus was going to Jerusalem to destroy the power of sin and death. When we read the prophesy of Isaiah, we see that God had a plan to make Jerusalem a Bible Center for the whole world. Isaiah 2:3 says, "Many peoples will come and say, Come, let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, to the house of the God of Jacob. He will teach us his ways, so that we may walk in his paths.' The law will go out from Zion, the word of the Lord from Jerusalem." How beautiful a plan God had made! But a long time had elapsed. Jerusalem was not established as [the Bible](#) Center for the whole world, but it had become a den of robbers and the fortress of Satan. In order to fulfill the will of God for world salvation, Jesus had to enter into Jerusalem and destroy the power of sin and Satan.

Look at verses 2-3. "...saying to them, Go to the village ahead of you, and at once you will find a donkey tied there, with her colt by her. Untie them and bring them to me. If anyone says anything to you, tell him that the Lord needs them, and he will send them right away.'" In the last part of verse 2, the phrase "The Lord needs them" has a very important meaning in our Christian faith. When we review what Jesus said in verses 2-3, we find that it was a very uncommon instruction to his two disciples. In short, Jesus said, "Go and bring someone else's donkey and her colt." This donkey must have belonged to a widow. She loved her donkey like her own daughter. Her joy was to caress and stroke her back several times a day. As a widow, this might

have been her joy of life. One day the donkey gave birth to a colt. The widow was even more joyful. But Jesus instructed two of his disciples, "Go to the village ahead of you, and at once you will find a donkey tied there, with her colt by her. Untie them and bring them to me. If anyone says anything to you, tell him that the Lord needs them, and he will send them right away." This was a very unusual command of Jesus to them. Jesus had taught them only about the holiness of God, a sanctified life, a compassionate heart toward the needy and poor, and healing and preaching. All of a sudden he said to them, "Go and bring someone else's donkey and her colt." It sounded very ridiculous to his two disciples and they could not believe their ears. What is more, this instruction didn't match his teaching, for it seemed to be an instruction to steal another's colt and donkey. The disciples could have asked, "What kind of instruction is this?" or "Tell us the meaning of it, we don't understand." But they didn't do so. They took Jesus' words to heart and obeyed.

The Lordship of Christ is the same as the sovereignty of God. We must learn this; otherwise, we cannot be children of God. In order to learn the Lordship of Christ, we must be absolute toward the word of God. We must also have an absolute attitude toward the teachings of our Lord Jesus Christ. For example, in Genesis 1:1, it says that God created the heavens and the earth. We must believe that there is God Almighty and that he made the heavens and the earth. If we don't believe this, we cannot believe anything that is written in the Bible.

We can learn the sovereign rule of God through studying the entire Bible. God made heaven and earth. He made paradise. He also established God's family between Adam and Eve. To believe in God's creation of the universe is the beginning point of being a child of God. The sovereignty of God is also well-explained in Acts chapter 9. This chapter explains that the sovereignty of God and the Lordship of Christ work together. As we know well, God had a world salvation plan. For this, God sent his one and only Son Jesus Christ to this world to save men from their sins. When the gospel seed was spread and was sprouting, and when the young Christians began to grow, there was great persecution from the traditional Jewish people because Christians did not keep the Jewish tradition. Christians also received persecution from the Roman government because they did not worship the Roman Emperor as God. In this situation there was one man named Saul who called himself, "The Greatest." He began to persecute the early Christians. Finally he became a ringleader of persecuting the early Christians. He was on the way to Damascus to root out Christians there. On the way the Lord, the Risen Christ, called to him, "Saul, Saul, why do you persecute me?" (Ac 9:4) Saul fell down from his horse's back and was blinded. Then the Risen Christ sent Ananias to take care of him. Ananias was deadly afraid. But he went to Saul and delivered the message of the Risen Christ. Acts 9:15,16 says, "Go! This man is my chosen instrument to carry my name before the Gentiles and their kings and before the people of Israel. I will show him how much he must suffer for my name." Saul was an enemy of God. But the Risen Christ visited him and called him. He forgave all his sins and commissioned him as a shepherd for the Gentiles. Here the word "Gentile" is synonymous with the whole world at the time---everyone except the Jewish people. It was the Lordship of Christ in God's sovereign rule that he chose Saul to be the four-star general in evangelizing the

Gentile world, including the Roman Empire.

The Lordship of Christ sometimes looks ridiculous to those who are living in this world only practically. If the philosopher Bergson, who was a philosopher of contradiction, heard this story, he would say that Jesus was just like him in his ridiculousness. But it is not so. Jesus is the Son of God and the Sovereign Ruler. He has the Lordship of Christ over our lives. Here we can see a good example. It is a man whose name was Job. This man was blameless and upright; he feared God and shunned evil. He had seven sons and three daughters and he owned seven thousand sheep, three thousand camels, five hundred yoke of oxen, five hundred donkeys, and he had a large number of servants. One day God allowed Satan to test Job's faith. Suddenly all of his children died, his animals were all taken away and he had skin diseases. So he had to scratch his whole body all day and night. Three Satans began to test him so as to complain to God. But he did not do so. He said, "Naked I came from my mother's womb, and naked I will depart. The Lord gave and the Lord has taken away; may the name of the Lord be praised." In all this, Job did not sin by charging God with wrongdoing (Job 1:21-22). Job upheld the sovereignty of God and he rather praised him by saying, "May the name of the Lord be praised."

In the course of living in this world, many bad things happen to us. Then we don't know what to do. There was a very dedicated medical doctor with a Ph.D. in pathology. He had three daughters and a son. The son was twelve years old and very lovely and cute. But he contracted bone cancer and died at the age of fifteen. To us, he was so lovely even to look at; how much more to his parents! But his father Dr. Suh did not complain to God. He is keeping up his chapter, delivering Sunday messages and teaching the Bible to many students. It is tearful to think about him and his son. Many people do not know what to say to him. But he rather comforts and encourages others who are hanging around him.

There was a man named Dr. Coddington. He was a Christian hospital director. He had the compassion of Christ. So whenever he saw needy people he gave them some food and clothing from the hospital supplies. He gave away so much that it was difficult for the hospital to run. So he was dismissed from the directorship of the hospital. After being dismissed from the hospital directorship, he went to a seashore well-equipped with swimming facilities. He had three sons. His youngest son Philip drowned. But he did not cry; he prayed to God that God may receive his youngest son's soul. Around one hundred ministers attended the going-to-heaven ceremony for his youngest son. No minister wanted to preside or make a speech at the ceremony. After waiting ten minutes, Dr. Coddington stepped out and said, "There is no accident with God. God is good. My youngest son Philip is with my Father in the kingdom of God. Let's rejoice." At his words, many ministers and all other attendants to the ceremony began to cry, not because of the son but because of Dr. Coddington's faith in the Lordship of Christ.

Look at verse 5. "Say to the Daughter of Zion, 'See, your king comes to you, gentle and riding on a donkey, on a colt, the foal of a donkey.'" Zechariah 9:9-10 explains this verse exquisitely: Firstly, our Lord Jesus' humbleness as our spiritual king. Zechariah 9:9 says, "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." Jesus was going to make a triumphal entry into Jerusalem. But he was not going to ride a white horse like a triumphal general entering the main city after winning many great victories. Jesus wanted to ride a donkey to enter into Jerusalem. This shows that Jesus is a humble king, not like a triumphant king of the world. Secondly, Jesus is the King of peace but is mighty. Zechariah 9:10 says, "I will take away the chariots from Ephraim and the war-horses from Jerusalem, and the battle bow will be broken. He will proclaim peace to the nations. His rule will extend from sea to sea and from the River to the ends of the earth." Praise Jesus that he is a humble King! Praise Jesus that he is a King of peace, but is mighty enough to destroy the fortress of Satan, Jerusalem.

Second, the two disciples' obedience (6-11). Through the disciples' obedience we can learn the Lordship of Christ. Verses 6-7 say, "The disciples went and did as Jesus had instructed them. They brought the donkey and the colt, and placed their cloaks on them, and Jesus sat on them." Figuratively, it was as though Pope John Paul II stole a neighbor's dog and cat and gave them to Jesus to play with. It was a great surprise for the two disciples to hear Jesus' command. But they obeyed and went down to the village and brought someone else's donkey and colt. The two disciples were very obedient. When we study the Bible, we can see that obedience and disobedience change the world. As we know well, God made the world and paradise within it, and established a family of God. The family's wife Eve was very aesthetic. When the woman Eve saw the silky serpent, she was greatly attracted due to her aesthetic sense. After a minute, a conversation started between them. As soon as she was tempted, Eve took the fruit of the forbidden tree, the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. The tree was a symbol of the order between God and man and the world. Nevertheless, Eve violated the holy command of God. As a result, man lost paradise and could not but live in a cursed world. When we study the Bible diligently, we learn that we must obey God as a matter of first importance. Deuteronomy 6:5 says, "Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength." In obeying God, we must use not only our ears, but also our hearts and souls and strength. We must obey God with all our strength. To obey God or not to obey God's word determines our fate. There were three medical doctors. They came as UBF missionaries to Chicago. But when their commander arrived, they all ran away so as not to suffer in doing the work of God. The leader was unhappy about them and did not bless them. Then soon one of the doctors, who was an anaesthesiologist, overdosed a patient for an operation and the patient died. So he lost his medical doctor's license. Now he is running a grocery store very poorly. Another one, influenced by American relativism, cursed the servant of God. Then he left UBF. After several years, he was in a severe car accident. His body was totally crushed and his hands and feet were paralyzed. The third one got a proper job. But he has rheumatism in his right leg and in his left hand. He suffers day and night. All these events happened when they took God's word lightly. This is to say that when we obey God's word, God blesses us; when we disobey, God does not bless us.

We can find a very beautiful example when we read John chapter 2.

There was a wedding celebration. At that time, customarily, wedding celebrations continued for five days. In Cana, Galilee there was a wedding and the chief cook was Jesus' mother Mary. But the wine was gone. Wine was essential to the wedding festival. So Jesus' mother said to Jesus, "The wine is gone." Then Jesus ordered the servants to fill six stone jars. The jars were for the sake of foot-washing. So the servants, who did not know whose order they had to obey first, could have complained, "What's the purpose of filling the six stone jars which can hold 120 gallons of foot-washing water?" But they obeyed. To them it was not easy to obey and fill the six stone jars. Usually, in the land of Palestine water was very scarce. They worked all night and filled the jars with water up to the brim. Usually, if we are told to do something, we obey only around 55% or 70%. These days the word "obedience" is almost taboo to the modern generation. But these servants filled the jars up to the brim. They obeyed 120%. Then the wash water became sweet wine. The master of the banquet did not know where this wine came from. But he said, "Oh, it is very tasty." When the servants obeyed 120%, Jesus blessed the wedding and revealed his glory. Jesus' blessing this wedding was the sign that he would bless the world all over again like the wedding banquet. As the children of God we must learn obedience. As we experience every day, when we decide to obey a certain teaching of the Bible, at the beginning we are very happy. But the next day, when we are going to put what we know into practice, our hearts become hardened. Soon our sinful nature arises in our hearts, and instead of obeying Jesus' teaching we go to a party and stay there all night. This happens very frequently. It means that obedience is not easy. Even to our Lord Jesus Christ, though he is the Son of God, obedience was not natural. He had to learn obedience through much suffering. Hebrews 5:8 says, "Although he was a son, he learned obedience from what he suffered...." Today let's decide to suffer much to learn obedience to God. We had Easter Conferences last week. When we saw our JBF students, they were like angels. They danced based on Christian rock'n'roll. Still, they looked like angels. I wanted to have them all as my sons-in-law and daughters-in-law. Then I thought about young people in the world. At that time I cried. They live according to their feelings. Their sinful natures ruin their souls. Through the Easter Conference I could refresh my calling from God to take care of young people in this generation.

Why do we say Jesus' entry into Jerusalem on a donkey was a triumphal entry? It did not look like a triumphal entry, but like a children's horse game. In order to enter into Jerusalem to destroy the fortress of Satan, Jesus ordered his two disciples to bring someone else's colt, and they brought it. In this way Jesus showed his Lordship over everything in the world. When the two disciples recognized the Lordship of Jesus Christ, it was possible for Jesus to enter into Jerusalem on a donkey. It looked shabby; no king rides a donkey followed by a colt. But spiritually speaking, Jesus is a humble king. Jesus entered Jerusalem to become a sacrifice lamb through his death on the cross. Jesus' entry into Jerusalem reveals the love of God through his death on the cross as a sacrifice lamb. So Jesus' entry into Jerusalem is indeed a triumphal entry because it shows his humbleness and God's love for him to die on the cross and rise again on the third day. When the two disciples brought the donkey and the colt, a very large crowd spread their cloaks on the road, while others cut branches from the trees and spread them on the road. The crowds that went ahead

of him and those that followed shouted, "Hosanna to the Son of David! Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord! Hosanna in the highest!" (8-9) Their words summarize the key point of the whole Bible. "Hosanna" means "he saves." Jesus came to this world to save men from their sins. "The Son of David" means that Jesus is the promised Messiah who came from the root of King David as was prophesied. When Jesus rode on a colt and entered Jerusalem, their shouting demonstrated the meaning of Jesus' entry into Jerusalem. Their shouting was their own will, but they were instruments of God who proclaimed the Messiah's coming to the world and that now he was entering Jerusalem to save men from their sins. The Bible is written in understatement. Therefore, Jesus riding on a donkey and the huge crowd's shouting, saying, "Hosanna to the Son of David! Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord! Hosanna in the highest!" is the description of the Savior King's coming into the holy city Jerusalem. We can say that it was an unusual event. But spiritually speaking, this event was Jesus' triumphal entry into Jerusalem, The large crowd of people who spread their cloaks on the road were Jesus' huge entourage. Jesus' entry into Jerusalem was indeed the triumphal entry.

Through Jesus' triumphal entry into Jerusalem we learned the Lordship of Christ. We also learned that Jesus is our humble King and Jesus is our King who obeyed God's world salvation purpose. Jesus is our King of love. Jesus is our King of love because he died for our sins on the cross.