

The DAILY JESUS NEWS #242

Passion Week: Sunday...Day of Acclamation and Praise

A Colt is Prepared For Jesus

MK 11.1-7 (Parallel Texts: MT 21.1-7; LK 19.29-34; JN 12.12)

^JThe next day the huge crowd that had come for the Feast heard that Jesus was on his way to Jerusalem. (Mk 11.1) As they approached Jerusalem and came to Bethphage and Bethany at the Mount of Olives, Jesus sent two of his disciples, ²saying to them,

“Go to the village ahead of you, and just as you enter it, you will find ^{MT}a donkey and a colt ^Mtied there ^{MT}with her, which no one has ever ridden. ^{MT}Untie them and bring them here to me. ³ ^MIf anyone asks you, ‘Why are you doing this?’ say, ‘The Lord needs ^{MT}them, ^Mand will send them back here shortly.”

^{MT}This took place to fulfill what was spoken through the prophet:

“SAY TO DAUGHTER ZION,
‘SEE, YOUR KING COMES TO YOU,
GENTLE AND RIDING ON A DONKEY,
AND ON A COLT, THE FOAL OF A DONKEY.” (Zech. 9.9)

⁴ ^MThey went and ^{MT}found it as Jesus had directed them; ^Ma colt stood outside in the street, tied at a doorway. As they untied it, ⁵ some people standing there asked, “What are you doing, untying that colt?” ⁶ They answered as Jesus had told them, ^Lsaying: “The Lord has need of it.” And the people let them go.

⁷ So they brought ^{MT}the donkey and ^Mthe colt to Jesus, throwing their garments on them, ^Lthey set Jesus on it, ^Mand he rode on it.

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NOTE: We use superscript identification of the source gospel in "blended texts" as follows: Matthew = ^{MT}, Mark = ^M, Luke = ^L, John = ^J, Acts = ^A. This “superscript ID” is inserted at the beginning of the quoted text, identifying that Bible book until a different superscript appears. In addition, *red italics identify the words of Jesus*. Old Testament quotations are CAPITALIZED.

	CONTEXT DIGEST
Location	Bethany, just outside Jerusalem
Timeline	Early April (Month 39)
Jesus' Life Context	Stage VIII: Passion Week
	A. Sunday: Day of Acclamation and Praise
Title	I. A Colt is Prepared for Jesus

COMMENT:

Today's reading begins the narrative of the extraordinary events that made up the eighth major stage of Jesus' life: "Passion Week." It all began on "Palm Sunday."

(The terms "Palm Sunday" and "Passion Week" are not used in the New Testament--but emerged early in Church history, and have been a regular part of our Christian vocabulary for over a thousand years.)

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The gospel content devoted to each day of Passion Week grows progressively in both quantity, and significance as the week develops. This is the "holy of holies" of our knowledge of Jesus.

On Sunday, the "first day of the week" in Jewish thinking, Jesus made his official entrance into Jerusalem as the Messiah. Our reading for today focuses on preparation of the donkey colt which Jesus rode into the city to the acclaim of a great crowd. While the kind of animal Jesus sat on may seem like a rather mundane detail, all four gospel writers pointed out various aspects of its importance. Here are the most important of them.

First, the significance of riding a colt was pointed out in the prophecy of Zechariah. Jesus came as the Davidic King, whom God promised would reign forever over an eternal Kingdom (II Sam. 7.13). He came **"gently, riding on a colt..."** In Old Testament culture a conquering King who came against his enemies to wage war rode on a horse (This is the image of Jesus in the Book of Revelation). However, a King who came to his subjects in peace rode a colt. Jesus was entering HIS royal city--Jerusalem-- to claim his throne as the Messiah in peace.

Secondly, Jesus mounted a colt that had never been ridden before. This speaks of his power and authority, which even a animal could sense, for the colt had never been trained to obey a rider. Donkey's are not known for their quiet, submissive personalities. Yet this colt humbly submitted to Jesus, the first time it was ever ridden. Winds, seas, waves, bread, bodies--all of his creation--knew and obeyed the authority of Jesus like this colt.

In addition, because it had never been ridden before, this colt gave its obedience and submission exclusively to Jesus. No doubt its owners never let it be ridden again, in honor of belonging only to Jesus. This is a beautiful picture of holiness--to belong exclusively and totally to God. Just as the colt was exclusive to him, Jesus was exclusively and totally submissive to his Father's will.

Finally, the salient phrase, *"the Lord has need of it,"* which was mentioned a second time by Luke in his narrative for emphasis, contains great depths of meaning. The events of Passion Week were endured by Jesus for our benefit to be sure, but they ultimately met God's own need to satisfy the demands of his own righteousness and moral purity.

The death of Jesus was necessary to meet God's own requirements for perfection--something that our fallen, finite minds cannot really begin to comprehend. The death of Jesus happened because it was necessary for God to make sure that it did happen.

The Father had need of his Son to die, in order to obtain a vast family of children conformed to the image of his first-born. The Son had the need to die, in order to obtain his perfect Bride. The Spirit had need of Jesus' death, in order to sanctify a holy temple in which to dwell forever, within the sons of Adam. The Trinity had need of Jesus to die. That meant that Jesus needed this colt.

What God needs, he provides for himself. The timing and preparation of the colt that had never been sat upon before, for Jesus to ride in peace as God's Son and Messiah into the Holy City, was the first of hundreds of minute details of perfect preparation that came together during Passion Week. What the Lord needs will always be provided.

APPLICATION:

Think about how each of the aspects of the colt that we have mentioned relate directly to you in your relationship with Jesus.

What we want, or think we need in life does not really matter. The question is: What does the Lord Jesus need to do in and through you, in order to accomplish HIS purposes?

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This will surely be provided by God. Your part is to offer your exclusive devotion to Jesus, just like the colt. How will you do that?