

*Alêtheia Christian Fellowship*  
*August 9, 2020*  
*“Triumph”*

*Sunday school at 8:30, in-person Indoor Service at 9:15, Outdoor Service at 10:45 with King’s Kids.*

***NEWS***

Be respectful of others by allowing them to deal with COVID 19 in their own way.  
 Church camp at Little Bitterroot Lake, August 14-16.

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Never, ever, under any circumstances, ask God \_\_\_\_\_. You can ask \_\_\_\_\_, but you already know the answer to that question as well.

**MATTHEW 29:34 ~**

I’m sure the two blind men oftentimes asked why...

The journey from Jericho to Jerusalem was...

The parallel accounts in Mark 10 and Luke 18 give us a few more details.

Bartimaeus and his compatriot cried out “Lord, have mercy on us,” we say it Kyrie Eleison.

*Fill out the other side, detach this part of the page, and place it in the offering plate or the prayer/suggestion box in the lobby or with an Elder or Deacon of the church.*

*God Bless You!*

Jesus was “Moved with compassion.” Can you imagine? God among us - was “Moved with compassion.”

How could any of us ever think that God doesn't care about us?

### **MATTHEW 21:1-11 ~**

Bethphage in Hebrew is בֵּית פֶּגֶא (Bāt fägā), Greek Βηθφαγή (Bāth-fägā).

When Jesus said, “You will find a donkey,” He was probably pointing at it.

Luke 19:11 reminds us that because Jesus was approaching Jerusalem, everyone supposed that the kingdom of God was going to appear immediately.

Psalm 118:25-26a, “Save now, I pray, O LORD; O LORD, I pray, send now prosperity. Blessed is he who comes in the name of the LORD!”

Whatever the reactions - the thing is - Jesus always elicits a reaction. It is impossible to be unchanged after an encounter with the Lord.

Jesus, by His very nature demands a decision. What will you do with Him?  
What will you do with Jesus?

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Write a brief note – detach and place in the offering, or the prayer box, or give it to a Deacon/Elder

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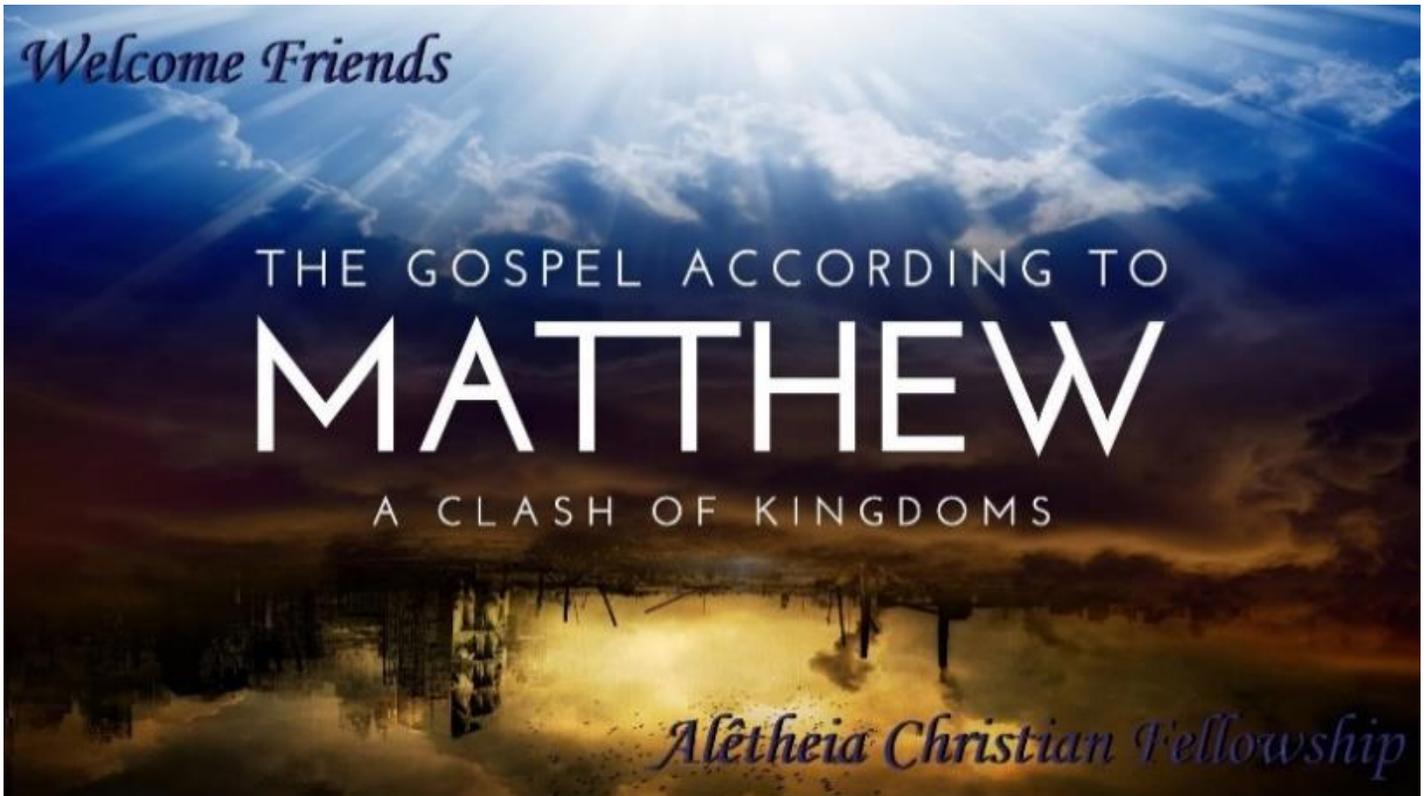


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Name \_\_\_\_\_ Address \_\_\_\_\_

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Alêtheia ~ Matthew 21a ~ 080920  
“Triumph”



Last week Rich used the powerful example of Job to point out a truism... Something fundamental, not just to thoughtful, mature Christian living - not even to Christianity as a whole, but really something basic to universal reality... Never, ever, under any circumstances, ask God why?

Never - not only is it blasphemous, in that it shows a profound distrust of a Holy and Perfect God - which is blasphemy - but there can never be a more beneficial response to that question than...



“Because I’m God... Because I AM pure existence permeating all things, because I’m all-seeing, all-knowing, all-powerful, and as Love itself, I AM competent - I know what I’m doing.”

That’s the best answer that can be given and I just gave it to you... Never ask God why. There’s no profit in that question, nor in the attitude that spawns it.

Can you see that when we ask “Why,” we are openly questioning God’s competence? The very impulse to ask, “Why,” means that we require an answer from God - that He must answer to us, about what He’s doing, how He’s doing it and why He’s not doing it differently.

The gist of Romans 9:20 is “But who are you, O man, a mere human being, to question God?” Paul then went on in that place to quote from the great prophet Isaiah, “Woe to him who questions, who argues with, or who complains against Almighty God! One who is an earthenware potshard among earthenware potshards! Shall the clay say to the Potter, ‘What in the world are You doing?’ Your work is clumsy, and it lacks skill!” (Isaiah 29:16, 45:9).

When the question comes to you - as it surely will - do as Rich suggested... Ask “How?” instead. Lord, how can I go forward? Of course, we already know the answer to that question as well - the only answer is in Him - through His power manifested within us, but perhaps even more than that, His power manifested in others as He comforts, corrects, strengthens and loves us through our Christian family.

The “How” question puts us on the right course. I get through by embracing Jesus and His church, NEVER by isolating myself from both.

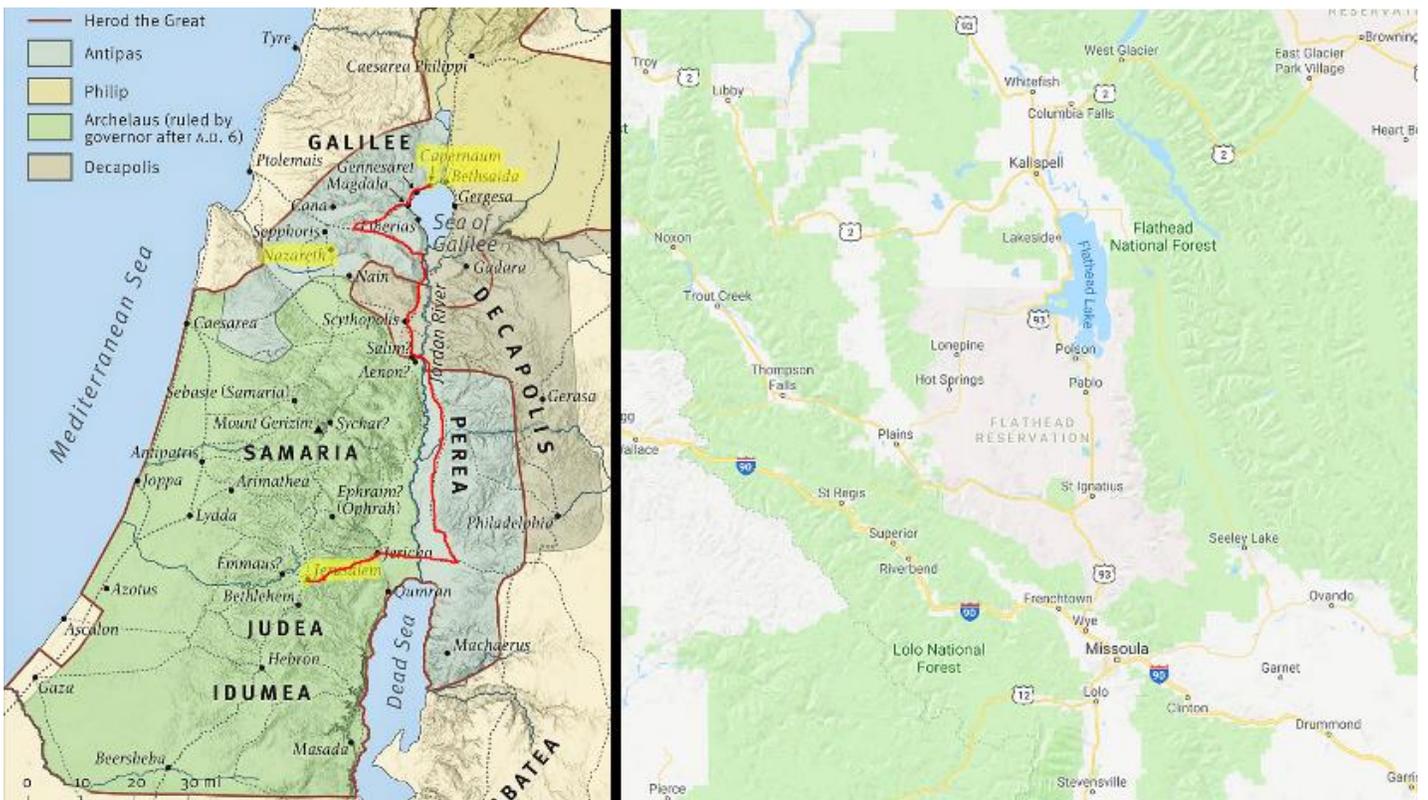


Matthew 20:29-34NASB ~ 29As they were leaving Jericho, a large crowd followed Him. 30And two blind men sitting by the road, hearing that Jesus was passing by, cried out, “Lord, have mercy on us, Son of David!” 31The crowd sternly told them to be quiet, but they cried out all the more, “Lord, Son of David, have mercy on us!” 32And Jesus stopped and called them, and said, “What do you want Me to do for you?” 33They said to Him, “Lord, we want our eyes to be opened.” 34Moved with compassion, Jesus touched their eyes; and immediately they regained their sight and followed Him.

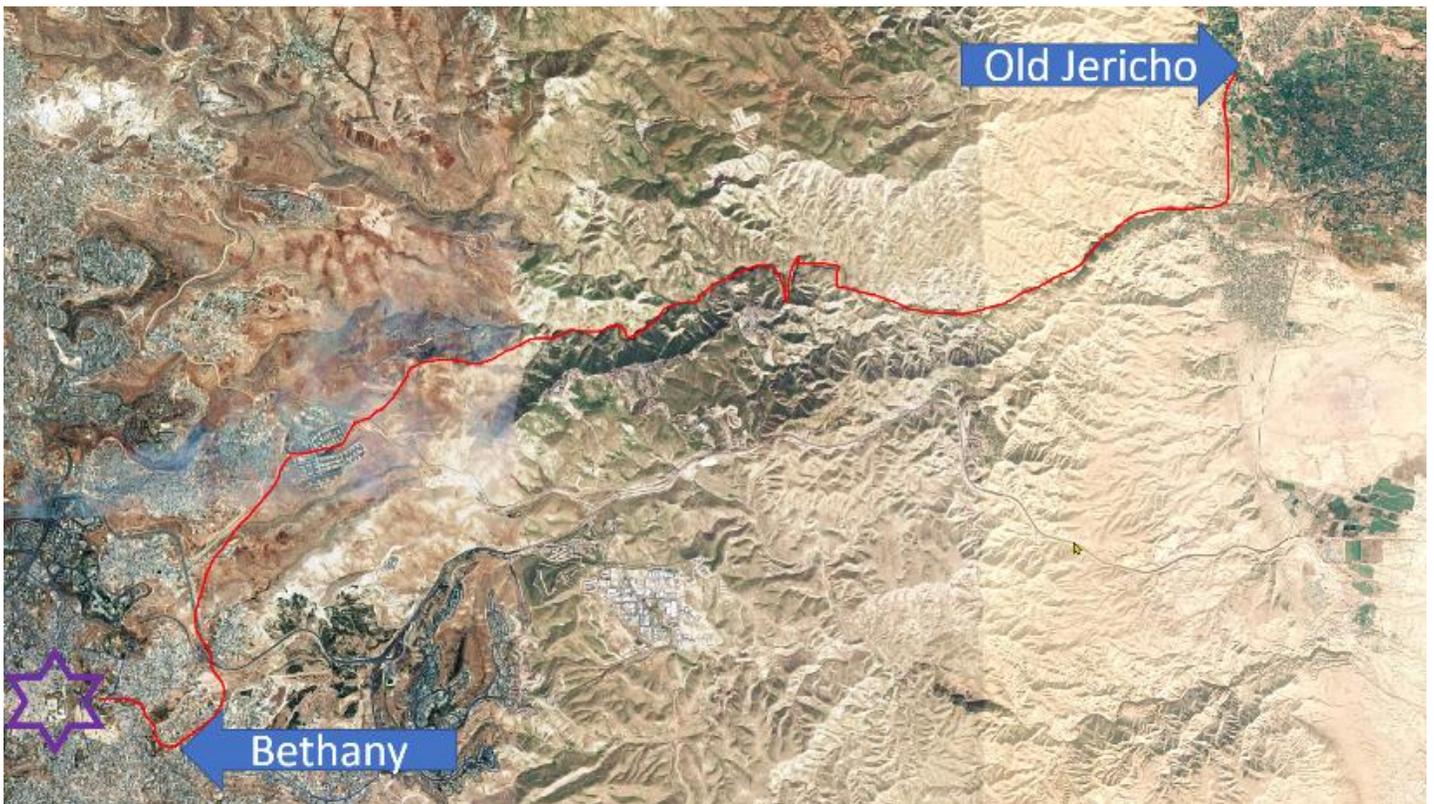
I’m sure the two blind men oftentimes asked why... Perhaps the primary reason was in order for Jesus to

personally heal them - so, He could once again demonstrate the fact that He was the “Son of David” the Messiah, filled with both compassion and power.

For them, the why doesn't matter - only the how... How do we go forward as blind men? The answer seems to be, do it without losing hope, without thinking that God has abandoned them... They cried out for help and redoubled their efforts when they encountered opposition to their plea. Don't lose hope in God. You can lose hope in our government, in humanity, but never, ever lose hope in God... To do so, is the same as asking why?



So, as we saw a while back, Jesus and His group were travelling from the northern province of Galilee to Judea, and the capital city Jerusalem. The normal procedure, at the time, was to bypass the land of the Samaritans by crossing the Jordan River near the city of Scythopolis, also called Beit She'an. Then travelling on the east side through the province of Perea and re-crossing the Jordan River, near the city of Jericho.



The journey from Jericho to Jerusalem was a big undertaking. The old road distance is only about 17 miles, but it's a hot, dusty, all-uphill, 17 miles with an elevation gain of almost 3,500'. People typically did it in two days going up, and one day going down.



The parallel accounts in Mark 10 and Luke 18 give us a few more details. One of the blind men, probably the more vocal of the two was named “Bartimaeus, the son of Timaeus.” That’s what the “Bar,” part indicates - son of. It’s incredibly common throughout various cultures. Dracul, becomes Dracula, Brian becomes O’Brian, Arthur becomes MacArthur, Winkle becomes Van Winkle, John becomes Johnson, etc.

Jesus just finished saying that He came to serve, rather than to be served and immediately He has another opportunity to prove that very thing.



The men cried out “Lord, have mercy on us.” In Greek, it is Κύριε ἐλέησον (kü-řē-ě ěl-ě-ā-sōn), which we sing it as Kyrie Eleison, “Lord have mercy.” Then they call Him, “Son of David.” As we’ve seen before, this is a well understood Messianic title... They are calling Jesus “Lord,” they are acknowledging Him as the Messiah, and they are confirming their belief that as such He can have mercy on them and heal them.

If we’re honest about it... Their primary desire, as confirmed by their answer to Jesus’ question, was their physical sight. That’s not as mercenary as it sounds. For the Jews there at that time, the assumption was that the Messiah would set everything right and establish the Kingdom of Heaven of earth fully. That

included physically blind Jews, no longer being physically blind.

When we understand that, we realize the significance of the healing... It confirmed to the crowd that Jesus was the Messiah and that once they all got to Jerusalem, He would formally complete His mission and it would be happy days forevermore.

Well, again, they were right in essence, simply wrong in the details. That's why they couldn't understand His talk about suffering and dying... It made no sense.

I love that Jesus asked them what they wanted. How utterly human to answer the way they did. I wonder what would have happened if, instead of asking for their own sight, they had asked Him to open the eyes of their fellow Jews.



Nevertheless, Jesus was “Moved with compassion.” Can you imagine? A couple of blind beggars ruining the beautiful morning with their incessant screams for help and Jesus - God among us - was “Moved with compassion.”

How could any of us ever think for even a moment that God doesn't care about us? Through His death and Resurrection, we are His friends - His family... How could we think that He doesn't care? See, the “Why,” question means just that... Something is happening, or failing to happen, and I want to know why You don't care enough to make it the way I think it should be. Kyrie Eleison, “Lord, have mercy on us.”

They were instantly healed and were then able to physically follow and so they did. The fact that Bartimaeus is named probably indicates that he went on to be a fairly well-known Christian.

Certainly the fact that Jesus is recorded in both Mark and Luke, as saying that it was his “Faith that made him well” and then, all three accounts, mention that he followed Jesus afterwards would confirm the church tradition that at least Bartimaeus was a true Believer.

That’s probably why Mark and Luke only mention him and not his associate.



Matthew 21:1-11NASB ~ 1When they had approached Jerusalem and had come to Bethphage, at the Mount of Olives, then Jesus sent two disciples, 2saying to them, “Go into the village opposite you, and immediately you will find a donkey tied there and a colt with her; untie them and bring them to Me. 3“If anyone says anything to you, you shall say, ‘The Lord has need of them,’ and immediately he will send them.” 4This took place to fulfill what was spoken through the prophet: 5“Say to the daughter of Zion, ‘Behold your King is coming to you, Gentle, and mounted on a donkey, Even on a colt, the foal of a beast of burden.’ ” 6The disciples went and did just as Jesus had instructed them, 7and brought the donkey and the colt, and laid their coats on them; and He sat on the coats. 8Most of the crowd spread their coats in the road, and others were cutting branches from the trees and spreading them in the road. 9The crowds going ahead of Him, and those who followed, were shouting, “Hosanna to the Son of David; Blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord; Hosanna in the highest!” 10When He had entered Jerusalem, all the city was stirred, saying, “Who is this?” 11And the crowds were saying, “This is the prophet Jesus, from Nazareth in Galilee.”

From John we know that Jesus spent the night in Bethany and remained there on the Sabbath. From Mark we know that the trip to Jerusalem on Sunday was delayed - by the time they arrived in the Temple area “It was already late.”



The total walk from Bethany through Bethphage to Jerusalem would be about like walking from here to the White Oak along the road and highway. Bethphage in Hebrew is בֵּית פְּגָא (Bāt fägā), meaning the “House of Unripe Figs.” The closest Greek can come is Βηθφαγή (Bāth-fägā). Between all of that and the English spelling we get all kinds of different pronunciations -

what I heard in Israel was Bāt-fäğy. Most American scholars say Běth-fāže.



The road from Bethany to Jerusalem went around the town of Bethphage because it was down in a steep ravine. There was no reason to go down, and back up the other side, unless you needed something in the town... Jesus, and the rest of the people, probably travelled along the upper road on the ridge and waited above the town for the donkey rustlers to catch up.

When Jesus said, “You will find a donkey,” He was probably pointing at it.



They arrived with the “Donkey” and her foal - a yet unriden colt, likely two years old. Jesus rode the colt. It fulfilled the ancient prophecy concerning the arrival of the Messiah from Genesis, Isaiah and especially from Zechariah 9:9.

The entire reason that “The Lord had need” of the donkeys was to fulfill Scripture. In Genesis 49, Jacob, renamed Israel, blessed his sons and their descendants into the future. To Judah he said, “Your enemies will be brought under your control.” And, “The right to rule will not leave Judah. The ruler’s rod will not be taken from Him. It will be his until the king it belongs to comes.” Israel finished his prophetic blessing with

this odd phrase in verse 11, “He will tie his donkey to a vine. He will tie his colt to the very best branch.” (Genesis 49:1–12).

Isaiah 62:11, has “Behold, the Lord has proclaimed to the end of the earth, Say to the daughter of Zion, ‘Lo, your salvation comes; Behold His reward is with Him, and His recompense before Him.’” The Prophet Zechariah picks it up in 9:9, “Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion! Shout in triumph, O daughter of Jerusalem! Behold, your king is coming to you; He is just and endowed with salvation, Humble, and mounted on a donkey, Even on a colt, the foal of a donkey.”

In each of the three Old Testament passages we see the Hebrew poetry of parallelism, but the message is clear... The One True King from Judah would eventually come to Jerusalem and while He will be furious whirlwind to those opposed to God’s purposes and His children, He would be humble and gentle to those children providing them with eternal salvation.

What no one got was that the Messiah was going to conquer the greater enemy of sin, death and the grave first... Thereby enabling eternal salvation, rather than a establishing a temporal, physical Kingdom at that time.

Jesus mounted the, as yet, unridden colt, the two or three-year-old foal of the donkey mare that accompanied them and continued into the city.



Now, up the final hill to the ridge and down the Mount of Olives to the Kidron Valley continuing west, up the other side and into the city.



Some people believe that there was an arched Roman-style bridge over the valley. Either way... The people went wild.

The expectation of the Jews was that the Messiah would come and essentially give them Heaven on earth.

Luke 19:11 reminds us that “Because Jesus was approaching Jerusalem, everyone supposed that the kingdom of God was going to appear immediately.”



Jesus knew what the people expected, He knew what He was going to deliver, He knew that there was a major disconnect between the two, and so He knew full well what was waiting for Him in Jerusalem... Yet Luke 9:51 records that, “Jesus resolutely set out for

Jerusalem.” I like that rendering in the NET. I kind of like the ESV, even better, because it just follows the original Semitic idiom, colloquialism or way of saying, “He set his face to go to Jerusalem.”

He set His face, τὸ πρόσωπον ἐστήρισεν (tō prō-sō-pōn ěs-tā-řē-sĕn), means He firmly decided and resolutely determined to go... He would not be dissuaded from His mission.

So, again, the Jews of that time were sorely oppressed, not just by their Gentile masters, but by their own religious leadership as well. They were eagerly looking forward to God’s Anointed One... God’s Messiah who would deliver them out of their bondage to the Romans and to the power grabs of their fellow Jews.

This Messiah would also deliver the Jews from their human frailty and failings – He would enable them to love and obey God.

People being people, I imagine the first part was more interesting than the second. The general consensus was that Messiah would enter Jerusalem during the time of the Passover. So, almost 2,000 years ago,

there was a tumultuous scene of great rejoicing by emotionally exuberant masses, openly, publicly, proclaiming Jesus to be the long-awaited Savior. The story of this “Triumphal Entry” is told in detail in all four Gospels...



The people with Him and then all the pilgrims along the way – the whole vast crowd rejoiced shouting “Save us, we pray, O LORD.”

נָא יְהוָה הוֹשִׁיעָה נָא (ä-nä / Yä-wěh (ADONAI) / hō-shē-ä / nä)

O! / Yahweh (Lord) / Save / Now or Please.

The Greek is ὠσαννά, and is Anglicized today as Hosanna; it refers primarily to... Psalm 118, “Save now,

I pray, O LORD; O LORD, I pray, send now prosperity. Blessed is he who comes in the name of the LORD!" (Psalm 118:25&26a).

For the very first time in His earthly ministry Jesus allowed them to enthusiastically announce Him as Messiah... For the first time Jesus wasn't quashing the party, He wasn't putting a stop to it and His followers could not contain their elation.

Everyone, His Apostles, His Disciples, little children, desperate people, intrigued visitors and all those who were, up till then, undecided... stridently, dramatically, heartily, declared Him as the Anointed One of God...

The Warrior-King-Priest come to set all things right! Everyone was free to shout and sing and dance for joy... People were free to pray and praise and worship God for sending them their Salvation.

Everyone there that day knew the implication... God had finally decided to Save His children from the poverty, injustice, oppression and religious ineffectualness of their lives.

In a new and different way God was going to live among His people... They were right about the general idea, but they were very wrong on all the details and that is why it took only a few days, for the crowd to go from, "Hosanna in the Highest," to, "Crucify Him." Matthew 21:9&15, Mark 11:9&10, John 12:13 and then Mark 15:13&14

It only took half a week for His hand chosen Apostles to go from, "Make way for the Holy One," to, "I tell you the truth, I never knew Him." Mark 11:6, Luke 19:34 and then Matthew 26:69-75

Jesus did change everything, and in a far more important way than the Jews back then were looking for... but it wasn't in the way they expected... You don't want to be around when people realize you are thwarting their expectation.

We'll see that Judas Iscariot betrayed Him for 30 pieces of silver. The High Priest and his cronies manipulated Rome into executing Jesus. The disciples tried to be brave, but all seemed lost. Peter went from boldly proclaiming that he would fight to the death, to denying that he even knew Jesus, and then, on to weeping bitterly and hiding in a house with the others.

Whatever the reactions - the thing is - Jesus always elicits a reaction. It is impossible to be unchanged after an encounter with the Lord.

Jesus, by His very nature, demands a decision. What will you do with Him? What will you do with Jesus?



Ultimately, there are only two choices. I not only want you to see that reality - I also want you to see that human beings muddy the water into such a turbid mess of obfuscation, that both of the choices seem to blend into each other and become this wide spectrum of blurred degrees.

Here's what I mean. The two choices that are clearly and repeatedly delineated in the Bible throughout... Are 1) to fully surrender to God through his chosen Savior Jesus and be filled with the Holy Spirit. The second possibility - the only other biblical or factual possibility that exists... 2) is not to fully surrender to God through his chosen Savior Jesus and be filled with the Holy Spirit.

Now, human beings don't like the stark contrast. We don't like the all or nothing nature of the thing and so we try to have our cake and eat it too.

We blur what it means to be fully surrendered. We blur what it means to have Jesus as Savior. We blur what it means to be Spirit-filled. Because, none of us wants to relinquish 100% of the control over our lives to Jesus. In theory possibly - in reality... Please.

For a variety of reasons, we want to retain at least a modicum of control. What if Jesus wants me to stay in a horrible marriage? What if Jesus is willing to let me suffer the ravages of cancer? What if Jesus calls me to walk away from financial security to minister to other people?

What if Jesus really requires me to be an integral part of a church family that demands a great deal of my time, energy and money? What if Jesus is serious about never having sex, outside of the confines of a proper marriage between one man and one woman? What if Jesus really means it when He demands that I love my wife more than my own life? What if Jesus is truly asking me to submit to my husband? What if Jesus asks of me, what I don't want to be asked?

How many people say, and truly mean, "Here I am Lord, I'm a mess, I get that, I am ever deceiving myself, ever forgetting, ever falling back into fear and so ever stumbling, negotiating, manipulating... Here I am Lord, I'm Yours. Do with me whatever You will and give me the courage to follow You wherever You lead."

As our friend Job, who had lost everything, cried out to the Lord, "Though he slay me, yet will I trust in him" (Job 13:15). I'm not going to ask why - I'm just going to trust - Help me trust You Lord.



Fundamentally, it always comes down to faith. We humans in general, lack the faith that Heaven is real, and that God is “A rewarder of those who earnestly seek Him” (Hebrews 11:6b).