



March 24, 2024
"Triumphal."

Sunday school at 9:30, Service at 10:30.

News:

March 31st Resurrection Sunday Open House at 9:30, Service at 11:00
 Wednesday Evening Classes at 6:30

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Today is Palm Sunday.

Bible interpretation: I do this not to _____ you, but to _____ you.

The Bible is like the Trinity in that...

The Bible is simple in its simple bits, and it is too deep for anyone in its deepest bits...

A) The Bible, as a revelation of God Himself, is progressively profound...

B) The Bible was written long ago...

C) The Bible is not Charlotte's Web...

1) It all starts with our approach...

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!

2) Context is king...

- a.) What God's Word is, Whom it's about, and what it's for...
- b.) The contextual framework includes the genre and style, the cultural and historical setting, the author's intent, and much more...
- c.) The small details that are so easily overlooked...

3) The next biggest cause of Bible misinterpretation is you...

- a.) Recognize that it's true...
- b.) Become familiar with your particular bias...
- c.) Pray for discernment...

4) We are still deceived unless we actually put into practice what we know...

Matthew 21:1–16 ~ 1When they had approached Jerusalem and had come to Bethphage, at the Mount of Olives, Jesus then 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 it. Untie them and bring them to Me. 3And if anyone says anything to you, you shall say, ‘The Lord needs them,’ and he will send them on immediately.” 4Now this took place so that what was spoken through the prophet would be fulfilled: **5“Say to the daughter of Zion, ‘Behold your King is coming to you, Humble, and mounted on a donkey, Even on a colt, the foal of a donkey.’”** 6The disciples went and did just as Jesus had instructed them, 7and brought the donkey and the colt, and laid their cloaks on them; and He sat on the cloaks. 8Most of the crowd spread their cloaks on the road, and others were cutting branches from the trees and spreading them on the road. 9Now the crowds going ahead of Him, and those who followed, were shouting, “Hosanna to the Son of David; Blessed is the one 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?”

This coming to us is ἔρχομαι (ěř-ǰō-mī)...

Will you allow the true Jesus to ἔρχομαι to you?

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

Name _____ Address _____
Phone _____ Email _____



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CHRISTIAN FELLOWSHIP





Before we read from God's Word, let me remind you of something. I do this not to intimidate you, but to empower you. Please keep that in mind as I ramble on here about this topic. So many people think that the Bible is a simple, easily understandable Book. They believe that practically anyone can read it or hear it read out loud and comprehend its meaning.

That's not true. But because most people think that it is true, we have had millions of people take from their simplistic understanding of the Bible and create all sorts of crazy and contradictory doctrines that we deal with today under the umbrella of Christianity. Worse, there are literally millions of unbelieving naysayers

pointing out all manner of irregularities and inconsistencies in the Bible, all because they too think that they can easily understand the Scripture.

I could give you the history and all the reasons why we're in the pickle we're in but let me cut to the chase and give you the way out of the conundrum. The first thing to recognize is that the Bible is like the Trinity in that it describes God, the Creator and Sustainer and Savior of the universe... Why would we assume that either would be easy for a human brain to fully comprehend?

Roughly 1,600 years ago, Jerome, fluent in Latin, Greek, and Hebrew, translated the whole Bible into Latin. He said, "The Scriptures are shallow enough for a babe to come and drink without fear of drowning and deep enough for a theologian to swim in without ever touching the bottom." We hear that and allow it to confirm our bias that anyone can understand the Bible, but that's not what Jerome said.

Again, similar to the Trinity, any child can understand the surface meaning, but not even the greatest theologian can understand the entirety of its meaning. The Bible is completely approachable, and the basic

Salvation Message contained within is easily understood by anyone, yet to get down through the layers of meaning requires effort.

I don't know what it was last week. I really struggled with crafting the sermon for today. I must have written and rewritten it five different ways and in none of them did I go into this topic like this. I don't know. I'm guessing, hoping... praying that it's relevant for someone.

The point that I'm trying to make is that the Bible is God's Holy Word, His Divine Self-revelation, Self-disclosure crafted by Him through 40 different human authors each inspired by the Holy Spirit, the very Breath of God breathing through each one of them to record the Message God wanted mankind to possess.

These human authors wrote over a span of 1,500 years, starting almost 3,500 years ago and finishing nearly 2,000 years ago.

They represented 19 different professions, such as prophets, priests, princes, apostles, shepherds, kings, tax collectors, theologians, and fishermen, to name a few. These men wrote from 11 different geographic

locations on 3 different continents in 10 different genres and in 3 different languages.

Yet, when you read it straight through, cover-to-cover, from Genesis 1:1 to Revelation 22:21 you will discover a perfect symmetry and a coherent progressive revelation unlike anything else in human history. It is a single cohesive whole with, as one scholar put it, a “Scarlet Thread” that is woven through it from beginning to end. A thread of blood being shed on account of sin.

On account of our sin, the human tendency to reject God and replace Him with, ultimately, our own individual self as our own personal god – because of that, blood is shed. What is violence, but human gods trying to create the world in their own image – to suit themselves better?

Because humans are utterly incapable of saving themselves let alone anyone else, God paid for our sin with His own blood. We can continue to struggle, fight, and kill, to get our way – to make the world look and act like we think it should, or we can let God be God and accept that He has paid the price for our freedom from having to run the world and everyone in it.

That's what the Bible is... it is a divinely produced and supernaturally preserved Message from God, showing us the way to freedom from sin, in Him. As such, the Bible is both accurate and authoritative. Further, its purpose is right relationship between God and man.

Put another way, the Bible in its entirety is the Gospel, the Good News, which can Save man from himself unto God in right relationship with Him. That is the overall context of God's Word, both as Jesus, the Word incarnate and as the Holy Bible, the Word in written form.

So, the Bible is simple in its simple bits, and it is too deep for anyone in its deepest bits because it describes, not what, but Who, is indescribable. That implies that there are all kinds of levels in-between. Levels that we can understand, but that will take more effort from us to understand.

A) The first thing is what we've discovered, the Bible, as a revelation of God Himself, is progressively profound and so, if we want a deeper meaning we must work to find it.

B) Second, the Bible was written long ago, by people on the other side of the world, from cultures vastly different than our own and in languages that we don't speak. Even though the translators have done a masterful job, it takes more than reading what they have produced to get to the deeper meanings contained therein. A little scholarly assistance is required. Someone might say, I don't need no stinking eggheads – I got the Holy Spirit! He'll give me understanding. If that's true, then you don't need the stinking eggheads who translated the Bible into English. Go pick up a Bible in the original languages and find out how well the Holy Spirit will enable you to understand.

C) Third, the Bible is not the Hobbit, or Charlotte's Web. It is far more important than a story. You wouldn't approach a textbook for a class that you must pass the same way you would approach a novel. The Bible is God's textbook, and the class is pass/fail. Perhaps we take it more seriously and study it more carefully than we would a storybook.

1) How? Well, it all starts with our approach. I mentioned recently that a young man declared to me that he was certain that God did not exist. I asked him

how he could be so sure, and he told me that he had gone to a beautiful overlook by himself and essentially said, “Okay, God, I’m here. If You are real, show Yourself to me in some way.” He said that he waited for several minutes, and nothing happened – ergo, God does not exist.

We must approach God and His Word with the humble reverence such an endeavor requires. Good grief, the God Who literally speaks galaxies into existence cannot be approached like He’s your hairdresser! The Bible is extremely clear that “God actively opposes the proud but gives His magnificent grace to the humble” (Psalm 138:6, Proverbs 3:34, Matthew 23:12, James 4:6, I Peter 5:5, etc.).

Salvation – the cancellation of sin – consists of entire surrender to your Rescue by Jesus. To stop trying to rescue yourself, to stop fighting against the Rescuer, requires humble submission. Proud people cannot be Saved. They cannot tolerate accepting that they desperately need rescue and that their own efforts will only make things worse. They detest being that helpless and so...

2) Next, when we humbly and carefully approach Scripture, we must notice the context before we assign meaning. In understanding any communication, context is king. Mis-contextualizing equals miscommunication, which equals misunderstanding, which equals disunity as a best-case scenario. Relationships suffer and can even end with enough misunderstanding.

Context is huge, not only in its importance, but also in its scope. It's far more than merely noticing what came before the passage in question. It's about noticing the small details, the word choices, the cultural and historical aspects, the connections with other Scripture and the framework from overarching to minute, before we try to assign meaning.

a.) The first and most important level of context is never forgetting what God's Word is, what it's about and what it's for... You see, contrary to popular opinion, the Bible is not about you. Don't worry, it's not about me either. In fact, it's not about human beings at all – the Bible is about God and even more specifically it is about God the Son. The Bible is Christocentric, and it cannot be properly understood otherwise.

In the process of revealing God the Son to us we get information about the Father and about the Holy Spirit, as well as a lot of information about Salvation history and therefore about how that history intersects with mankind – with us. Because of that we can easily forget that it's about Jesus and make it about us. The Bible is to be understood through a Christ-centered lens not through our man-centered, or more accurately our me-centered, lens.

b.) Beyond that we must recognize that God wrote through human authors in a contextual framework, which includes the genre and style, the flow of the writing, the cultural and historical setting as well as the author's intent, and more.

c.) Finally, we need to see the small details that are so easily overlooked when we lack patience and discipline. The Bible, as a translation, requires even more work to properly understand. We need to go slowly and notice the little connecting words, the prepositions, and the verb tenses, as well as noticing what is not recorded along with what is recorded.

I said I was bringing this up not to intimidate you, but to empower you. You don't need to be a scholar by any

stretch of the imagination, but what you do need to do in order to glean the deeper meaning of Scripture is to yield to the Holy Spirit and carefully notice the details before you assume a meaning, let alone adopt an application, of God's Holy Word.

3) That brings me to the final thing that I'll mention regarding your interpretation of God's Message to you. Besides taking Scripture out of context the next biggest cause of Bible misinterpretation is you. It is your hidden desires, secret fears, and preconceived ideas. You bring an incredibly complex, intensely powerful, and often unrecognized bias to your investigation of God's Word. Unaccounted for, it will lead you to erroneous interpretation and then to faulty application.

To minimize that as much as possible it requires that you:

a.) First recognize that it's true, you do have a strong bias, I guarantee it.

b.) Second you need to become familiar with your particular bias, with what it encompasses. Your bias is not the same as my bias, or anyone else's bias – it is yours.

c.) Third, you must pray for discernment. Isn't it funny how we always think of discernment as finding falseness in others? Here, we're talking about the discernment to see your own self-deception. You must apply Holy Spirit discernment to your own falseness by seeing how your bias impacts your understanding of Scripture and then adjust accordingly.

4) I guess there is one more related issue I should mention. It has to do with the Biblical injunction found in the first chapter of James where the brother of Jesus said, "do not deceive yourselves by merely knowing the Bible." It's fascinating really... Even if we accurately and correctly know the deeper things of God's Word we are still deceived unless we actually put into practice what we know. "Prove yourselves to be doers of the Word because active doers will be blessed in their doing" (James 1:21-27). That means Saved. Only doers, not hearers, of the Word will be Saved. We must actually obey what God chose to reveal in His Scripture for it to have its intended effect.

Given all that I just said I will read a short passage pertaining to Palm Sunday that would take us days to properly dissect. Since we don't have days, I want to

focus on a single verse. You all know the story very well. I teach it every year and we recently covered it in our journey through John's Gospel and in our study of Matthew before that. If you are not familiar with the context, I'll do my best to bring you along and perhaps afterwards you'll be interested in investigating it further for yourself. It is a pivotal event told in all four Gospels – we'll read it from...



Matthew 21:1–16 ~ 1When they had approached Jerusalem and had come to Bethphage, at the Mount of Olives, Jesus then 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 it. Untie them and bring them to Me. 3And if

anyone says anything to you, you shall say, 'The Lord needs them,' and he will send them on immediately." 4Now this took place so that what was spoken through the prophet would be fulfilled: 5"Say to the daughter of Zion, 'Behold your King is coming to you, Humble, and mounted on a donkey, Even on a colt, the foal of a donkey.' " 6The disciples went and did just as Jesus had instructed them, 7and brought the donkey and the colt, and laid their cloaks on them; and He sat on the cloaks. 8Most of the crowd spread their cloaks on the road, and others were cutting branches from the trees and spreading them on the road. 9Now the crowds going ahead of Him, and those who followed, were shouting, "Hosanna to the Son of David; Blessed is the one 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?"

That's Palm Sunday. We celebrate today what was the Triumphant Entry of God made man into His physical Temple on earth. That idea, that God came unto us, is the most mind-blowing concept conceivable. The notion that the One and Only Creator of the universe Who as I said earlier, literally speaks entire planets, stars, and galaxies, into existence would interject

Himself physically into our reality is incredible, it's astonishing, it's scandalously outrageous.

God graciously humbled Himself to such an extreme degree in becoming like us it's outlandish and to do it in order to intercede for us, is beyond words – I'm out of adjectives. Then, to think that He did it solely for our benefit, makes it the most gloriously extreme munificence conceivable and that, my friends, is to His eternal glory.



The verse I want to look at is the Old Testament prophecy quoted in verse 5, “Behold your King... is coming to you... Humble, or Gentle; mounted, or riding, on a donkey.” This coming part, this coming from

Heaven down to us is ἔρχομαι (ěř-xö-mī). “Your King ἔρχομαι, is coming, to you. Gentle.” We celebrate God entering our plane of existence at Christmas by commemorating the Advent of Christ. The moment when the eternal Word of Almighty God, took on flesh and blood and became one of us as a helpless baby born in a stable in a tiny non-descript village in a forgotten backwater of the Roman Empire.

It was Jesus ἔρχομαι to you.

Today, we celebrate God entering His Holy city and His physical Temple in a formal prophecy-fulfilling Messianic way. It was the Jewish Passover when God’s Anointed, His Messiah, His Christ, would come to the people and save them from oppression both physical and spiritual. The Christ rode through the East Gate from the Mount of Olives as predicted centuries before. It was a triumphal procession of victory announcing to the nation that Jesus was the Messianic Son of David – the King of Kings Who had come to set everything right and rule forever.

It was Jesus ἔρχομαι to you.

Next week we celebrate the proof that it worked – that God indeed made a way for mankind to be Saved. Jesus, the very Word of Almighty God was crucified, He was dead and buried, and then He was bodily Resurrected. Jesus coming to His own after eradicating sin, proven beyond all doubt by His conquering of death, which is sin's horrible consequence. Salvation became available.

It was Jesus ἔρχομαι to you.

In 8 weeks, we'll celebrate Pentecost, the outpouring of the Holy Spirit upon those who embrace Jesus as King and Savior. The Holy Spirit enables Christ to be in us and for us to be in Him.

It was Jesus ἔρχομαι to you.

Every day, for the right-thinking Christian, is a celebration of His imminent return. the Second Coming is Jesus Coming.

It is Jesus ἔρχομαι to you.

That's what it's all about... God coming down to you and to me and to all the other people who welcome Him with open arms.

“Behold your King is coming to you, Humble, and mounted on a donkey.”



During His sojourn on earth many tried to proclaim Jesus as the Messiah, as the Son of God, as the King of Kings, as the Lion of Judah, and He wouldn't have it. It wasn't time. Now it was and for the first time in His human life He allowed the public declaration without hinderance.

This was what the Jewish people were desperately waiting for. They had been dominated, oppressed, reviled, and abused, for generations by the Romans and by their own leaders who were empowered and enriched by their traitorous cooperation with the Empire.

God had promised, through His prophets, that one day He would send His Anointed One to Save the people entirely. First and foremost, spiritually, and then physically as well. This Anointed One would be uniquely the Son of Man.

The Son of Man title is a declaration of divinity. It is a Messianic concept where the stress on man is actually a stress on the unique divinity of that man. The Law and the Prophets and the Psalms foretold that this Son of Man would be a direct descendant of King David and that He would be the sacrifice that would enable Salvation. Even though He would suffer and die as a humble servant, because He was without any sin of His own, His death would destroy death. He would return and set everything right and reign as King forever.

The Passover was the most well attended of the three annual Jewish feasts. As an early spring festival, it was

a happy time of year. Everyone emerging from the grip of winter into the warm embrace of spring – everything seems more hopeful when the sun is shining.

It was a feast of hope as a joyous remembrance of God's deliverance of Israel from their Egyptian enslavement. Naturally celebrating a previous deliverance made the Jews incredibly hopeful for a new deliverance.



Traditionally, it was believed that the Messiah would come during Passover. Specifically, that He would come from the Mount of Olives and enter the Temple through the East Gate. Add to that annual hope the excitement about Jesus. Everyone was talking about

Him especially after His raising of Lazarus from the dead. Could this be the year?

So, it says, “your King.” That is directly quoted from Zechariah 9:9 where God declared His intention to send His Messiah. Note that He is not just a King, He is “your King.”



This is profound and it is something so many people miss. In order for the Messiah to be your Messiah He must first be accepted and embraced as “your King.” Frankly, it cannot and simply will not work any other way and this is the sticking point for so many who will end up with their name missing from the Lamb’s Book of Life.

Jesus demands to be embraced for Who He is – on His terms. You can embrace Jesus as your friend, as your Savior, as a good dude, as an ancient hippie Who preached love, but you are embracing a false Jesus if you do not embrace the real Him – the true Jesus.

He is the King of Kings and the Lord of Lords. He is your Master or He is nothing. When you look carefully at Palm Sunday you will realize that just like everything else in His life, Jesus was in complete control. He orchestrated everything. Nothing was done without purpose. Jesus sovereignly set every detail into motion. Jesus led the procession from Bethany, Jesus took them to the overlook above Bethphage, Jesus sent two disciples to get a very specific pair of animals. Jesus traveled to the East gate from the Mount of Olives – He knew exactly what He was doing, and He knew that it would bring the conflict with the ruling class to a head. Jesus forced the issue.

It was time for the confrontation. Yes, certainly the confrontation with the authorities, but really the confrontation with each and every individual person. Jesus is ἔρχομαι, and He's ἔρχομαι as your King, Will you accept Him that way?

“Coming” is present tense which means that His coming is in progress. He is here and He is still coming more and more. It is a transformative coming that increases over time.

He is here in His coming for you as your King... Will you bend your knee and bow to Him? Will you swear your allegiance to Him no matter what happens in the future? Will you be loyal to the crown and obey whatever command He gives? Will you pledge your fealty to Him exclusively and without reservation?

Thinking of Jesus as the eternal King can be a little scary or at least somber. Duty, honor, sacrifice, you know... But look at the final bit.



“Your King is coming to you... Humble and mounted on a donkey.” I’m here to tell you no warrior-priest-king ever rode in a triumphal entry to His capital city on an unbroken donkey colt. A donkey is not the mount of a king, especially not for the King of Kings and yet...

It seems quite contradictory to juxtapose a King and a humble guy riding on a donkey – not a mule mind you, but a donkey. You cannot embrace the actual Jesus without embracing Him as your king, but also embracing Him equally as the self-humbling, gentle, kind, gracious, forgiving, merciful, Savior as well.

Jesus is both. He will envelop you in acceptance and love if you will embrace Him as your true King and then allow Him to likewise be your entire Salvation.

Once you hand your life over to Him you can experience the grace of God and be set free from your bondage. Spiritual first and then physical. Will you allow the true Jesus to ἔρχομαι to you?