

Advent I: Matthew 21:1-11: The Triumphal Entry of the King

1. The parallel accounts are found at Mk. 11:1-10; Lk. 19:28-40 and Jn. 12: 12-19. These ought be read first. For a study on this pericope in Luke cf. the exegetical study for Advent I, ILCW Gospel Text, Series C.
2. Hendriksen: "On reasonable grounds it may be assumed that Bethany, the home of Simon the leper, Lazarus, Mary, and Martha, was reached before sunset on Friday; that on the sabbath (Friday sunset to Saturday sunset) Jesus enjoyed the sabbath-rest with His friends; that on Saturday evening a supper was given in His honor; and that the next day, being Sunday, the triumphal entry into Jerusalem occurred."
3. Vs. 1: Note correlative $\delta\tau\epsilon$ $\tau\acute{o}\tau\epsilon$ "when-then". Note also that this vs. contains three prepositional $\epsilon\iota\varsigma$ phrases. JB does them well: "near-in sight of-on," respectively. On Bethphage, Expositor's says: "Mentioned nowhere else in OT or NT. . . . No trace of it now." IB adds: "Medieval tradition places it about halfway between Bethany and Jerusalem." Bethany can still be seen on the east side of the Mt. of Olives. $\tau\acute{\omega}\nu$ $\epsilon\lambda\lambda\alpha\iota\acute{\omega}\nu$ is adjectival genitive. $\acute{\alpha}\pi\epsilon\sigma\tau\epsilon\iota\lambda\epsilon\nu$ "sent with a definite commission." Who the two disciples were, we know not.
4. Vs. 2: $\lambda\acute{\epsilon}\gamma\omega\nu$ is attendant circumstance. $\tau\eta\nu$ $\kappa\alpha\tau\acute{\epsilon}\nu\alpha\nu\tau\iota$ $\upsilon\mu\acute{\omega}\nu$: TEV, NIV, AAT translate "ahead of you". $\kappa\alpha\iota$ means "and then". $\epsilon\upsilon\theta\acute{\epsilon}\omega\varsigma$ "immediately", our first indication of Jesus' omniscience and omnipotence. He knew precisely what would happen and was graciously ruling the entire matter. $\delta\epsilon\delta\epsilon\mu\acute{\epsilon}\nu\eta\nu$, the perfect participle of existing state. $\lambda\upsilon\sigma\alpha\nu\tau\epsilon\varsigma$ is virtually imperative mood. Greek very often states a double command by making the first a circumstantial participle.
5. Vs. 3: A future more vivid condition. Note the combination of $\tau\iota\varsigma$ and $\tau\iota$, which covers a challenge of any kind, from no matter who. Jesus foreknew what would happen. Lenski says: "We draw the obvious conclusion that these owners were very good friends of Jesus and of His disciples" but that can't be proved. Inasmuch as Jesus foreknew and if these were friends, would Jesus have said "anyone"? $\acute{\epsilon}\rho\epsilon\iota\tau\epsilon$, the future indicative is the strongest impv. $\delta\tau\iota$ is recitative, like our quotation-marks. \acute{o} $\kappa\acute{\upsilon}\rho\iota\omicron\varsigma$: KJV, RSV, NIV, AAT, NASB and NKJV rightly translate "The Lord." LB, TEV, JB and NEB wrongly: "The Master" or "Our Master". We mention this because IB, like others, says: "The Lord may be Jesus, but the evangelists seldom use this designation and Jesus does not use it of himself." Hendriksen rightly says: "Note especially that Jesus is here using the title 'Lord' to designate himself (see Mt. 11:27; 28:18)." And Fahling: "The Lord in the same sense as used of Christ in the gospels otherwise. Mt. 8:25." What lies at the bottom of the refusal to translate \acute{o} $\kappa\acute{\upsilon}\rho\iota\omicron\varsigma$ as "the Lord" is higher criticism which claims that Jesus got His title from the early Christian Church. Implicit in "has need of them" is the divinity of Jesus. He owns them in the first place and, therefore, can speak thus. Note $\epsilon\upsilon\theta\acute{\theta}\delta\varsigma$ again. Jesus knew precisely what would happen. The subject of $\acute{\alpha}\pi\omicron\sigma\tau\epsilon\lambda\epsilon\iota$ is, of course, the man in Bethphage, not Jesus. The man "sent with a commission", just as Jesus had, for Jesus Himself willed and caused it. This needs to be mentioned because it has been suggested that Jesus is the subject.
6. Vs. 4: Note that the fulfillment of a Messianic Prophecy is mentioned before the event itself (vss. 6 and 7). The disciples did not realize this until after Jesus' resurrection (Jn. 12:16) much less before it happened. The point is: Jesus was consciously fulfilling prophecy as at Lk. 4:21. $\iota\nu\alpha$ introduces a purpose clause. This expression is frequent in Matthew. $\rho\eta\theta\acute{\epsilon}\nu$ is passive with God as agent. The $\delta\iota\acute{\alpha}$ phrase denotes the agent, the prophet who was moved by the Holy Ghost to record it. The inspiration of the OT is implicit in this vs.

7. Vs. 5: The first line is quoted from Is. 62:11. Σιών is genitive, adjectival or locative, limiting it to Jerusalem. Good commentators, including Lutherans, say this line refers only to the believers in Jerusalem. Hengstenberg (see vol. 2, pp. 1028-37) says: "The prophet has in his mind only the better portion of the covenant nation, the true members of the people of God, not all Israel according to the flesh." Keil-Delitzsch (at Zech. 9:9): "The Lord calls upon the daughter of Zion, i.e. the personified population of Jerusalem as a representative of the nation of Israel, namely the believing members of the covenant nation to rejoice." The word ἴδου alerts them to something important. Something like "look here". On the word σου, Hengstenberg says: "He who alone is thy king, in the full and highest sense of the word, and in comparison with whom no other deserves the name." And Lenski: "'Thy King' by his very birth as the Son of David (II Sam. 7:12 etc.; Ps. 110:1.2; Rom. 1:3)." And Ylvisaker: "The kings of earth conquer by oppression. Jesus shall be victorious while He would seem to surrender." Lenski quotes Luther: "He is a peculiar King: thou dost not seek him, he seeks thee; thou dost not find him; he finds thee; for the preachers come from him not from thee; their preaching comes from him not from thee; thy faith comes from him not from thee, and all that thy faith works in thee comes from him not from thee." Well said. σοι: not only "to thee" but also "for your good." It is dative of advantage. προῶς means "humble". He made Himself of no reputation. Cf. its use in Mt. 11:29. The incarnate Christ is lowly so that no burdened sinner is driven away. Hengstenberg says on this word: "(It) embraces the whole of the lowly, sorrowing, suffering condition so fully depicted in the 53rd chapter of Isaiah." The fact that He is riding upon an ass is a sign of the lowly condition of this King. The third line of vs. 5 is to be taken as a unit. The last καὶ in vs. 5 has evoked much discussion. It is the LXX version of the Hebrew text. Keil-Delitzsch: "The waw (καὶ) is epexegetical." Hengstenberg agrees with this: "He could not mount more than one of the animals. For it would have been very unseemly, as Bochart observes, when the distance was so short, to mount first one and then the other."
8. Vs. 6: καθῶς means "exactly as". They did not yet understand at this time that they were fulfilling prophecy but they did precisely as Jesus said. In a remarkable way the God-man ruled and over-ruled this whole situation, making them completely willing.
9. Vs. 7: τὰ ἱμάτια denotes their outer garments. No one told them to do this. It was all of God and prophecy. Somehow the disciples did this instinctively because of the will of Jesus, though unspoken. The antecedent of the first αὐτῶν is both of the donkeys. Without being told, they were anticipating Jesus' sitting on one of the animals, but they did not yet know which animal. What is the antecedent of the second αὐτῶν? ICC: "He may have meant it to refer to the animals, regardless of the impossibility of riding more than one at a time." And IB: "Matthew pictures Jesus as ordering both the ass and the colt to be brought, and riding on them both." This is truly ridiculous. It makes a circus of the whole affair. Expositor's says: "If the second αὐτῶν be taken to have the same reference as the first the meaning will be that Jesus sat upon both beasts (alternately). But this would require the imperfect of the verb instead of the aorist. It seems best, with many ancient and modern interpreters, to refer the second αὐτῶν to the garments." That's right. He sat on the garments, but on only one donkey, the colt. By the way, look at the variant readings on αὐτῶν for this vs. Though not decisive, it does show that some scribes changed the text to make sure that it would not be misunderstood. Mark and Luke do not mention the prophecy, not the two animals. John quotes the prophecy in abbreviated form, mentioning only one animal. Matthew quotes almost the entire prophecy, involving both animals. Therefore, Matthew alone treats both animals as to what happened. To say that Matthew pictures Jesus riding on two animals, either simultaneously or alternately, violates the epexegetical translation of καὶ ("namely") in the last line of Mt. 21:5 and violates the obvious antecedent of the second αὐτῶν in vs. 7 which is "garments", not "the animals". Redaction critics claim that Matthew is here expanding Mark's account, but that Matthew misunderstood. Matthew, not

the redaction critics, was a witness to what happened. And, if his account were different from Mark's, wouldn't he have made that clear?

10. Vs. 8: ὁ δὲ πλεῖστος ὄχλος KJV and NKJV read: "a very great multitude"; RSV, AAT and NASB have: "most of the crowd (people, multitude)." The difference is not significant. Matthew is likely indicating that the majority of those present did this. The disciples laid their outer garments on the animals. Taking this as their cue, but also because of the will of the Lord, though unstated, the majority spread their outer garments on the road where the animals would walk. What a remarkable thing to do! ἄλλοι denotes simply "others" or the rest of the crowd. Note that both verbs which follow are impf. tense. It pictures the scene graphically. Another act of homage, instigated by the will of the Lord to fulfill the prophecy.

11. Vs. 9: Only Luke does not distinguish two groups. The three others do. John is clear on these two crowds: one had gathered in Bethany to see Jesus and Lazarus, now raised from the dead, and started with Jesus to Jerusalem; the other crowd, when it got word of Lazarus' raising from the dead and that Jesus was coming, came out from Jerusalem to meet Him. From Lk. 19:39 we know that there were some hostile Pharisees in the throng. Did this throng include pilgrims from Galilee and Perea? Hendriksen thinks so because of vs. 11. That may be but the text does not say so. At any rate, Mt. 21:9 clearly indicates two crowds, that with Him and the one coming out of Jerusalem. ἔκραζον, ingressive and continued action: "They began to cry and continued to do so." One cried this, another that. Cf. the four Gospels on this point. It is a burst of acclamation, prayer and praise to Jesus, involving Messianic titles, the nature of His person and the nature of His work. Ps. 118:25,26 is quoted by them, a Messianic Psalm and also a Hallel Psalm, always used at the time of the Passover. The most often quoted Messianic Psalms in the NT are: 2, 22, 69, 89, 110 and 118. "Hosanna" means "save" or "help". Under the Holy Spirit the people add "to the Son of David", a Messianic title. An ethical dative. Together they mean: "Help the Son of David, may He succeed." εὐλογημένος; this form of the word "blessed" (a passive adjective) is consistently used only of human beings in NT. (εὐλογητός, meaning "praised be" is used only of God). εὐλογημένος points to the human nature of Christ, blessed by God. ὁ ἐρχόμενος reminds us of ἔρχεται in the prophecy in vs. 5. It is truly Advent. He comes to believers. ὁ ἐρχόμενος is a Messianic title. The prep. phrase, beginning with ἐν, is not an easy one. It has variously been interpreted by respectable commentators thus: "in keeping with the revelation of the Lord"; "in obedience to the Lord's order"; "under the authority of the Lord." It is all of these. It tells us how and on what basis He comes: With the Lord's full backing and approval. The second prep. phrase, beginning with ἐν, is not easy either. Is it locative, telling where? If so, it means: "May this hosanna resound in the highest heaven." Hendriksen says: "It shows that the Messiah was regarded as a gift of God." Lenski: "in connection with God's abode." We suggest that it means the same as in Lk. 2:14: "Thank God because God and man are reconciled in this incarnate Christ." By the way, under God's impulse the crowds add two phrases: "to the Son of David" and "in the highest". Was all of this mere lip-service or was it meant genuinely? In view of Lk. 19:39,40, we must insist that it was genuine, accepted by Jesus. But why did the people cry "Crucify Him" just a few days later? In the first place, human nature is very fickle and inconstant. There is a warning here: One day I may praise God to the highest heaven for what He has done. That is of God and is God-pleasing. A few days later I may be despondent and quite the opposite. That is not God's fault. It's my sinful nature. Furthermore, it cannot be proved beyond a shadow of doubt that these crowds and those which condemned Him on Good Friday were identical although it's hard to believe that those who acclaimed Him on Sunday, if consistent, would have refrained from acknowledging Him on Friday, unless overcome by fear.

12. Vs. 10: ἐσεΐσθη is a very strong word. TEV: "thrown in an uproar"; JB: "in turmoil"; NEB: "went

wild with excitement". Expositor's says: "Even Jerusalem, frozen with religious formalism and socially undemonstrative, was stirred by the popular enthusiasm as by a mighty wind or by an earthquake." Fahling: "'Who is this?' is asked from the windows, the roofs, the streets, and the bazaars. Even Jerusalem, frozen with religious formalism, is moved."

13. Vs. 11: Not "a prophet" but "THE Prophet". Hendriksen says: "He was, and is, indeed a prophet, for he revealed and reveals the will of God to man. Note how in the present connection he is represented both as the fulfillment of prophecy (21:4.5.9) and as being himself a---yes 'THE' prophet (21:11)." Why do they say: "from Nazareth of Galilee"? Lenski: "This reply sounds as though it was made by festival pilgrims from Galilee. We may note that tone of pride with which they name his home town. Most of the ministry of Jesus had, indeed, been devoted to Galilee, and these pilgrims from Galilee sum it up in the title 'the prophet'. Perhaps they told of his wonderful teaching and of his astounding miracles." We add the thought that the One Who had been rejected in Nazareth at the beginning of His ministry (Lk. 4:16-29), is now acclaimed, under the influence of God, as THE Prophet.
14. On a comparison of The Hebrew, LXX and Matthew concerning vs. 5, the reader is referred to ftnt. 722 in Hendriksen's commentary on Matthew. He concludes: "Taken in its entirety (all four lines) the passage does not in any essential differ from its original in Zech. 9:9."