**Tychicus and the Donkey**

***“Delivering the Word, Delivering the Messiah”***

End of Ephesians:

**Eph 6:21-23**“Tychicus, the dear brother and faithful servant in the Lord, will tell you everything, so that you also may know how I am and what I am doing. **22**I am sending him to you for this very purpose, that you may know how we are, and that he may encourage you.

**23**Peace to the brothers and sisters, and love with faith from God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. **24**Grace to all who love our Lord Jesus Christ with an undying love”

*Tychicus, who is he?*

Here to explain it is northshorenj.com blogger Shawn Blythe

Tychicus

Mentioned only five times in the Biblical record, Tychicus is indirectly responsible for the availability of at least two—and likely three—books of the New Testament. Unlike Paul, whose exploits are well chronicled, and Luke, who assured his renown by authoring some of the most documented accounts of the early church, Tychicus has no such name recognition—although he accompanied these well-known figures on all or most of Paul’s last two missionary journeys.

Tychicus never met Jesus. His knowledge of Christ came the same way ours does: someone shared it with him. His contributions to God’s plan were directed second-hand.  He had what we would call a “supporting role” in Paul’s ministry, but this did not prevent Tychicus from providing significant contributions to something much larger than he could have ever imagined.

We first encounter Tychicus as one of Paul’s companions on the third missionary journey, from Ephesus back to Jerusalem via Macedonia (Acts 20). Tychicus—and fellow traveler Trophimus—were initially described as coming from a province of Asia (Asia Minor). Trophimus was later identified more specifically as being from Ephesus (Acts 21), lending some credence to the theory that Tychicus was also from that city. If so, he may have been one of the original disciples greeted by Paul upon his arrival (Acts 19). Most certainly, Tychicus would have spent significant time with Paul, a firsthand witness to his ministry and the resulting successes—and near disasters—that marked Paul’s multi-year stay in Ephesus.

Whether he returned with Paul all the way to Jerusalem is not explicitly stated, but Tychicus was definitely with him at Crete and Rome towards the end of Paul’s ministry and life, a partner in the ministry. Describing Tychicus, Paul uses terms such as “dear brother,” “faithful servant,” and “faithful minister,” and he was one of two people considered as a replacement for Titus at Crete, so that Titus could rejoin Paul at Nicopolis (Titus 3).

Most interesting to me is the near certainty that Tychicus was responsible for delivering Paul’s letters to the churches at Ephesus and Colosse. He was most likely the courier for the letter to Philemon as well, accompanying Onesimus on the journey back to his former master at Colosse.

In the Biblical account, these journeys are mentioned almost in passing. Paul writes that he is sending Tychicus to them, a brief notation in each book, with little fanfare, about a journey from Rome to two cities in what is now Turkey. It is effectively a postscript, an administrative update. But the journey this suggests was in no way an insignificant undertaking.

The trip would have been nearly 1,100 miles, requiring one or two sailings and approximately 500 miles of walking. Gordon Franz, in his article *Tychicus: On the Road Again*, provided this contemporary U.S. example:

“This trip would be like getting on a sailboat at Halifax, Nova Scotia, and sailing down to New York Harbor, and then walking from New York City to Cleveland, Ohio. In other words, go to the George Washington Bridge; get on Route 80 and head west on foot! (It would probably take about a month to do the hike.)”

This was, of course, in addition to the journeys Tychicus had already taken with Paul, which probably encompassed another one to two thousand miles of travel. We can only imagine the bond that must have grown between them, traveling together over such long distances on foot and by boat, particularly at a time when travel was risky, accommodations uncertain, and safe return home more hoped for than expected.

Although not a perfect analogy, this brings to mind the 1,500-mile drive that I undertook in the immediate aftermath of 9/11—from Dallas, Texas, back home to New Jersey. During this period of uncertainty, I traveled with two colleagues from my company, relative strangers to me. Yet, over the course of that 24-hour drive, a bond was forged that has connected the three of us over the past twenty years. I suspect Tychicus had something much stronger with Paul and Onesimus.

I wonder if Tychicus had any idea of the importance of the letters he carried? They were, after all, relatively short communications from Paul to some small churches. I picture a rolled-up parchment stuffed in a bag, arriving at Ephesus significantly crumpled, torn at the edges, and slightly stained from the journey. Did Tychicus envision the impact of these letters over the following 2,000 years?

If we just consider the letter to the Ephesians, it was a document of only about 3,000 words.  However, an Amazon.com search today reveals over 1,000 books written about those words. Commentaries comprising hundreds of pages scrutinize a letter that, in my Bible, fills just over five pages. There are also sermons, study series, and PhD dissertations, all focused on this single letter.

It was a letter that needed to be delivered, not only for the Ephesians, but for the countless millions who have read its words down through the ages. It was God’s message, communicated through Paul’s writing—but it was Tychicus who delivered the goods.

Willingness to hold the ministry of Christ first in his life put Tychicus in position to be of service to God in ways he could not possibly have imagined. He was a companion, not the main event. He carried the letter, but did not compose its message. He did not receive top billing; instead, his name is buried in the credits. Despite this, the contributions of Tychicus were critical to the existence of the New Testament as we know it.

Tychicus may have operated on the margins of our world, but he was a central figure in God’s plan, creating an impact that far surpassed what could have been reasonably expected from the simple delivery of a letter. This is a great reminder not to underestimate the importance of the tasks set before us.  Our life is a journey of uncertain length and unknown destinations that fits within the context of a heavenly itinerary far beyond our understanding.  Like Tychicus, we are unlikely to know the ultimate impact of each step of our journey.

**Tychicus and the Donkey**

That was Tychicus,

Now let’s talk about the Donkey

The Triumphal Entry/Palm Sunday

Throughout His entire Life, even at His birth, Jesus fulfilled all of the Messianic Prophecies that were required for Him to be considered the Messiah, who he was, where he lived, what he did and what happened to Him all were prophesies throughout the Old Testament.

Jesus knew these prophecies well. He knew that He was the chosen one of God and as he walked through life, step by step, day by day, that these and many other prophecies were being fulfilled all around Him. He also knew that the remaining prophecies had to do with his betrayal, his trial before the religious leaders, his torture and suffering, and His death and resurrection.

But there was one prophecy not yet fulfilled.

**Zech 9:9** “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.”

This prophecy in Zechariah 9:9 was different than the others and not just because it involved a donkey. The prophecy required him to make a public proclamation of himself as King and Messiah, and would definitely set off a chain of events that would quickly lead to His arrest, torture and crucifixion.

***The Triumphal Entry***

***Matt 21:1-11 (NIV)***

***21 As they approached Jerusalem and came to Bethphage on the Mount of Olives, Jesus sent two disciples, 2saying 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. 3If anyone says anything to you, say that the Lord needs them, and he will send them right away.”***

***4This took place to fulfill what was spoken through the prophet:***

***5“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.’”***

***6The disciples went and did as Jesus had instructed them. 7They brought the donkey and the colt and placed their cloaks on them for Jesus to sit on. 8A very large crowd spread their cloaks on the road, while others cut branches from the trees and spread them on the road.9The 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 heaven!”***

***10When Jesus entered Jerusalem, the whole city was stirred and asked, “Who is this?”***

***11The crowds answered, “This is Jesus, the prophet from Nazareth in Galilee.”***

This account takes place in all four gospels:

* Matthew 21:1-11
* Mark 11:1-9
* Luke 19:28-40
* John 12:12-15
* Matthew and John mention the verse in Zechariah 9:9, “*riding on a donkey, on a colt, the foal of a donkey*.”
* All but Luke mention "branches", and only John specifies "palm branches".
* The crowd's greeting to Jesus is different in all accounts.
* Matthew and Luke include some admonishment by the Pharisees and a reply by Jesus.

\*Bethpage and Bethany are both towns on the slope of Mount of Olives. Mount of Olives is the elevation just EAST of Jerusalem across the Kidron Valley and gives the best view of the City of Jerusalem, The Temple Mount and the EASTERN GATE

***FULFILLMENT OF PROPHECY:***

***\*Matt 21:*** *4 This took place to* ***fulfill*** *what was spoken through the prophet:  5 “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.”*

***JESUS KNEW what this meant and so did many of the people and the Pharisees.***

*He was either extremely audacious OR He is the messiah!*

*MATTHEW 21:9 says: “*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 heaven!”*

*HOSANNA – “SAVE US” - Used both as a war campaign cry AND an exclamation of Praise and Adoration.*

The Hebrew words *yasha* (“deliver, save”) and *anna* (“beg, beseech”) combine to form the word that, in English, is “hosanna.” Literally, *hosanna* means “I beg you to save!” or “please deliver us!”

*This is the most fantastic Worship Celebration that Jerusalem has ever experienced. (Much like 2 Samuel 6 when David came up to Jerusalem with the Ark of the Covenant – dancing with all his might unto the Lord.) THE WORSHIP of JESUS is the central theme of this passage.*

*PHARISEE’S RESPONSE:*

* *Luke:19 39 Some of the Pharisees in the crowd said to Jesus, “Teacher, rebuke your disciples!”*

*40 “I tell you,” he replied, “if they keep quiet, the stones will cry out.”*

*Jesus once again demonstrated that He had all authority over even the natural world. Including the wind and the waves, the laws of gravity & flotation, sickness, disease and even mortality. IF the crowds did not worship him in this divine moment, then God would have allowed even the* ***stones*** *to become animated and cry out in praise and worship.*

*(I WISH THEY WOULD HAVE KEPT QUIET JUST FOR A MOMENT It would have been incredible!)*

You can imagine how much more it would have freaked out the Pharisees if Jesus had told the people to BE SILENT and listen.

 ***“Hosanna to the Son of David!”  “Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord!” “Hosanna in the highest heaven!”***

***What was said?***

*“Hoshi-ana” (Hosanna)*

*“Lord Save Us”*

*&*

*“Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord!”*

*“Baruch Haba Beshem Adonai”*

This is what was being said by the crowds!

They are quoting

**Psalm 118:25,26**

“Lord, save us! Lord, grant us success!

**26**Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord.
    From the house of the Lord we bless you

This is both a cry for help to the Lord

A recognition of Messiah

And a worship to Him.

Jesus received it from the adoring crowds as he traveled down the Mount of Olives, through the Kidron Valley and into the Eastern Gate, but a few days later he found himself rejected at the temple by the leaders of the Jews, at the very place that he called His father’s house.

This time, he wept and spoke forth a prophecy, Using the very same words.

**Matt 22:37-39**

**37**“Jerusalem, Jerusalem, you who kill the prophets and stone those sent to you, how often I have longed to gather your children together, as a hen gathers her chicks under her wings, and you were not willing. **38**Look, your house is left to you desolate. **39**For I tell you, you will not see me again until you say, ‘Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord.”

*“…you will not see me again until you say, ‘Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord.”*

Jesus was once again predicting that he will return. When He does, he expects to hear “Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord!”

(possibly from Jerusalem and probably in Hebrew – Baruch haba…)

**The Donkey – Delivered the Messiah**

I think about the donkey in the story of the Triumphal entry.

All he did was lift up Jesus and carry him to Jerusalem, where He would die and Rise Again. He brought Jesus before the people where they would cry to him for help “Hosanna” or to worship Him as Lord “Blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord”

That’s our job as well.

As Tychicus carried the letters to the churches for Paul,

Our job is to Lift up Jesus and carry him to the people who desperately need him.

Jesus promises us:

John 12:32 “if I be lifted up from the earth I will draw all people unto myself”.

People are in desperate need of hope, comfort, assurance, healing and salvation that can only be found in Jesus.

People NEED Jesus in their lives, whether they know it or not. YOU and I are given the job of bringing Him to them. That’s what we are to do, as individuals, and as a church. ***What does that look like in your life?***

In your homes, schools, towns, communities, neighborhoods, at your jobs etc.

The most important thing you can do, in fact the only thing you can do with eternal significance is to Lift up Jesus, and bring him to those who need Him,

 in all you do, through these tough times, into this new season, ‘til the day we go to Him or he comes for us.

*Lift up Jesus, and He will draw people to himself through you…*