**TRIUMPHAL ENTRY – Palm Sunday**

**EYES ON JESUS**

In these times, we need to keep our eyes on Jesus more than ever before. We do that by looking into His word, particularly the gospels where we see glimpses of his life, what He did, what he said and how that impacted the world forever and is very important for us today.

We have been tracking Jesus through the first 4 chapters of Mark. We’ve seen him come from relative obscurity to an instantly famous teacher, healer and miracle worker in Northern Galilee. He has collected 12 Apostles and is being followed by massive crowds. Meanwhile the Pharisees are plotting with the Herodians on how they can capture him and put him to death.

All along the way, from the time He was born, along with his teaching and miracle-working, Jesus has been accomplishing an important mission; fulfilling the Messianic prophecies that were written of Him since ancient times.

We will look this week into the gospel of Matthew instead of Mark. The Gospel of Matthew alone, records over 20 times that Jesus said or did something that was a direct fulfillment of a Messianic Prophecy, in other words, if He is truly the Messiah, these are the criteria that need to be met.

It starts from before he was born;

**When Mary conceived him by the Holy Spirit:**

**Matt 1:22-23** **22**All this took place to fulfill what the Lord had said through the prophet: **23**“The virgin will conceive and give birth to a son, and they will call him Immanuel” (which means “God with us”).

*(This fulfills Isaiah 7:14)*

* ***Being Born in Bethlehem:***

**Matt 2:5-6**“In Bethlehem in Judea,” they replied, “for this is what the prophet has written: “‘But you, Bethlehem, in the land of Judah, are by no means least among the rulers of Judah; for out of you will come a ruler who will shepherd my people Israel.”

*(This fulfills Micah 5:2)*

* ***Fleeing to Egypt during Herod’s slaughter of the innocents***

**Matt 2:15** **“**where he stayed until the death of Herod. And so was fulfilled what the Lord had said through the prophet: “Out of Egypt I called my son.”

*(This fulfills Hosea 11:1)*

* ***Being Called a Nazarene***

**Matt 2:23** **“**and he went and lived in a town called Nazareth. So was fulfilled what was said through the prophets, that he would be called a Nazarene.”

(*This is said to fulfill* of *Isaiah 11:1*)

* ***Preceded by a Voice Calling in the Wilderness***

**Matt 3:1-3** **“**In those days John the Baptist came, preaching in the wilderness of Judea **2**and saying, “Repent, for the kingdom of heaven has come near.” **3**This is he who was spoken of through the prophet Isaiah: “A voice of one calling in the wilderness, ‘Prepare the way for the Lord, make straight paths for him.

*(This fulfills Isaiah 40:3)*

* ***Moving from Nazareth to Capernaum***

**Matt 4:13-16** **“**Leaving Nazareth, he went and lived in Capernaum, which was by the lake in the area of Zebulun and Naphtali— **14**to fulfill what was said through the prophet Isaiah: “Land of Zebulun and land of Naphtali, the Way of the Sea, beyond the Jordan, Galilee of the Gentiles—**16**the people living in darkness have seen a great light; on those living in the land of the shadow of death a light has dawned.”

*(This fulfills Isaiah 9:1,2)*

* ***Healing the Sick***

**Matt 8:16-17 “**When evening came, many who were demon-possessed were brought to him, and he drove out the spirits with a word and healed all the sick. **17**This was to fulfill what was spoken through the prophet Isaiah:

“He took up our infirmities and bore our diseases.”

*(This fulfills Isaiah 53:4)*

* ***Followed by, and healing Multitudes***

**Matt 12:15-17 “**Aware of this, Jesus withdrew from that place. A large crowd followed him, and he healed all who were ill. **16**He warned them not to tell others about him.This was to fulfill what was spoken through the prophet Isaiah:

“Here is my servant whom I have chosen, the one I love, in whom I delight;
I will put my Spirit on him, and he will proclaim justice to the nations.

*(This fulfills Isaiah 42:1)*

* ***Speaking in Parables***

Matt 13:35-35 **34**Jesus spoke all these things to the crowd in parables; he did not say anything to them without using a parable. **35**So was fulfilled what was spoken through the prophet:

“I will open my mouth in parables, I will utter things hidden since the creation of the world.”

*(Fulfilling Psalm 78:2)*

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 remining 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 another prophecy not yet fulfilled. One that was public and unique, and required a donkey.

**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 rapidly lead to His arrest, torture and crucifixion.

When he fulfilled this one, he knew that the end would come quickly…

***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!”

This story 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".
* 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:*

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

*(It wasn’t just a pleasant pony ride into town)*

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

**MATTHEW 21:9** *“*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”) – Is not so much a name, or even a praise, but a cry for help.*

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!”

*It’s followed by the words, “Blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord”*

*This is very much a “praise phrase”,*

All four gospels present different renditions of these words. If you added them all up and paraphrased them, they would be something like this:

**“Save us, our Messiah, who comes to fulfill God’s mission! Save us, we beseech you, as you take your rightful throne and extend heaven’s salvation to us!”**

*It was a worship event like no other that ever been!*

*This is the most fantastic Worship Celebration that Jerusalem has ever experienced because Jesus was being worshiped right there in Jerusalem. (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.*

*PHARISEES RESPONSE:*

**Luke 19:39-40** *“Some of the Pharisees in the crowd said to Jesus, “Teacher, rebuke your disciples!” “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 it would have freaked out the Pharisees if Jesus had told the people to BE SILENT and the stones began to cry out…

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

***Let’s take a look at this phrase:***

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

*Hosanna (Hoshi-ana) -  “Lord Save Us”*

*“Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord!” (Baruch Haba Beshem Adonai)*

*The welcome for the Messiah to come.*

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 a cry for help to the Lord,

A recognition and welcome of the 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. They were waiting for a King-Messiah to free them from the tyranny of Rome and restore Israel to the Powerful place it held under King David.

While these crowds praised him, He found himself rejected at the temple by their leaders and Priests at the very place that he called His father’s house.

After experiencing this rejection, he wept and spoke forth a prophecy, using the very same words that were proclaimed to him in praise…

**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 in Hebrew – Baruch haba…)

[Several people asked me this week if this crisis and pandemic marks the end times and if Jesus is coming back soon? (in April or May).]

I usually respond with “*Matt 24:36, no one knows he day or the hour”,*

however, there will be a time when Jesus comes back and surprises us all.

When he does, we will be with him, and know fully what we now only see in part.

When we do, we are likely to say to each other,

We should have seen it coming, the rise of godlessness, the increase of knowledge,

Wickedness, selfishness, natural disasters, pestilence, disease,... ISIS, the coronavirus, the signs were all there…

We are closer to the day of the Lord’s return than ever before in history. He may be coming very soon. Our job is not to wonder and ponder and try to research the exact date…, our job is to occupy until he comes, to do the things he told us to do, “Go and preach the gospel”, “Make disciples of all nations”

Lastly, The Donkey

I think about the donkey in the story of the Triumphal entry. He is sometimes overlooked, but is in reality the most significant donkey in the history of the universe.

All he did was lift up Jesus and carry him on his back to the place where people could experience Him. Whether it’s to 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

Lift Him up in praise, 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?*** *(these times offer a lot of opportunity to reach out to people by text, email, chat or even phone call). Make the most of this unique situation.*

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 in all you do, through this crisis and beyond, till the day we go to Him, or he comes for us.

Lift up Jesus, and watch what happens…

He will draw people to himself through you!