

Episode: One Hit Wonders Series No. 01

Narrator: Donkey Owner

Primary Scriptures: Matthew 21:1-17; Mark 11:1-11; Luke 19:29-44; John 12:1-19

Story Summary: The triumphal entry of Jesus into Jerusalem

Location: Mount of Olives

Time: Circa 30 AD

Suggested Memory Scriptures: Matthew 21:3; Luke 19:44; John 12:19

In varying amounts of detail, the Triumphal Entry is described in all four gospel accounts. Only Matthew and John were present at the event, and all four gospel writers had different purposes in choosing the details of their story line.

Although the Triumphal Entry is traditionally taken to have happened on the Sunday before the crucifixion of Jesus, experts vary on the exact day it happened. John wrote that Jesus arrived in Bethany six days before the Passover, and indicates the entry happened the next day. Based on the placement of the passages in the other gospels, it could be interpreted that the entry could have happened as late as two days before Passover.

John says that people were going to see Lazarus, whom Jesus had raised from the dead. Matthew indicates a donkey and its colt were to be brought to Jesus, while the other three gospels mention only a colt. Luke indicates the colt had more than one owner. Mark and Luke have Jesus saying the colt will be unriden.

All of the writers have a common goal of relating the event and crowd's reactions to at least two scriptures:

"Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion: shout, O daughter of Jerusalem: behold, thy King cometh unto thee: he is just, and having salvation; lowly, and riding upon an ass, and upon a colt the foal of an ass." Zechariah 9:9

"Blessed is he that comes in the name of the Lord: we have blessed you out of the house of the Lord." Psalm 118:26

When Jesus arrived on the top of the Mount of Olives, he would have looked over the western side of the Mount, across the Kidron Valley, up the eastern side of the Temple Mount, and at the Temple. The Temple was ornately covered with gifts and offerings, many of which were made of gold. It must have been quite a sight to see the many thousands of pilgrims with their campfires, the fires of sacrifice at the Temple, the ancient graves of the prophets, and the city of Jerusalem. The followers of Jesus were rightly impressed with what they could see. Jesus, however, was sorrowful. He could envision the future destruction of everything that his followers were admiring.

Discussion Questions:

1. What miracle preceded the Triumphal Entry? What was the tie between that miracle and the Triumphal Entry?
2. If you were a religious leader, what would you have done upon hearing that Jesus had raised Lazarus from the dead?
3. How many of the gospels describe the Triumphal Entry?
4. What were some of the things that the followers of Jesus admired about the Temple?
5. Why was Jesus specific about which donkey he wanted?

1. Jesus raised Lazarus from the dead. This miracle was done in Bethany, a town only five miles from Jerusalem. According to John 12:9, a large crowd of Jews went to Bethany to confirm that Lazarus was alive. 2. Probably the same thing that the religious leaders of that time wanted...kill him and eliminate the evidence. John 12:10 3. All four. Some details differ among the accounts. 4. The Temple was adorned with extravagant gifts from rich people. Many of the rocks of the Temple grounds and walls were massive, and all were impressively cut. Herod had spared no expense when building the Temple Mount. 5. In order to fulfill Scripture.

Application Questions:

1. Many theologians describe God as not needing anything from mankind. In what ways did Jesus need the donkey foal? In what ways does Jesus need something from you?
2. The common people recognized the messiahship of Jesus before the Jewish leaders. Do your religious beliefs ever hinder your heart from accepting Jesus as your master?
3. What is the most beautiful church building you have ever seen? Imagine it as a complete ruin.

Application Questions for Teens:

1. What does Jesus need from you that you can give him? Are you willing to do that?
2. A medium-size college football stadium holds 50,000 people. Imagine that many people witnessing the Triumphal Entry, and describe the level of sound they would have made?
3. There were certainly thousands of children who witnessed the Triumphal Entry, and would have gone home with an incredible memory. What is a memory you have that is permanently inscribed?