

## The Beginning of the End

Written by Keith Butler

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The Lord Jesus Christ came to the earth as a babe born of the virgin Mary (Matt. 1:23). The Word of God says that as He grew, He "...increased in wisdom and stature, and in favour with God and man " (Luke 2:52). Then Jesus had a ministry on earth that lasted approximately three years before He was crucified.

Today Jesus, the Risen Lord who's seated at the right hand of the Father, still has a ministry on earth. But His ministry as He walked the earth in the flesh is what is commonly referred to as His earthly ministry. That ministry had a definite beginning and a definite ending.

We want to take a close look at the last week of Jesus on earth. For example, have you ever wondered what happened during the last seven days of Jesus' earthly ministry - what He taught?

Throughout Jesus' three-year ministry on the earth, everything He taught was important. But, usually, a teacher brings out his most important points at the end. As a teacher of the Word of God myself, I always bring out my most important points at the end of my teaching. I understand that what I say at the end is probably what the people will remember most.

So let's take a look at Jesus' last week and see what it was that He ministered during His last few days on the earth.

### **Jesus Enters Jerusalem Triumphantly**

Palm Sunday is the recognition of the day one week before what we call Easter Sunday—the day we celebrate the resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ. Palm Sunday commemorates when Jesus entered Jerusalem triumphantly. Let's read about His entry into Jerusalem.

*And when they drew nigh unto Jerusalem, and were come to Bethphage, unto the mount of Olives, then sent Jesus two disciples, Saying unto them, Go into the village over against you, and straightway ye shall find an ass tied, and a colt with her: loose them, and bring them unto me. And if any man say ought unto you, ye shall say, The Lord hath need of them; and straightway he will send them....*

*And the disciples went, and did as Jesus commanded them, And brought the ass, and the colt, and put on them their clothes, and they set him thereon. And a very great multitude spread their garments in the way; others cut down branches from the trees, and strawed them in the way. And the multitudes that went before, and that followed, cried, saying, Hosanna to the Son of David: Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord; Hosanna in the highest (Matt. 21:1-3,6-9).*

This passage is referring to Palm Sunday, which marked the beginning of Jesus' last week. For the most part, Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John all recorded the same events. But it is a fact that every person sees different sides and, therefore, emphasizes different aspects of what he sees. For example, if a certain incident occurred in front of a large church, all the thousands of people of that church might witness the incident. Yet if the police took statements from each person, they would find some variations in the statements.

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All of the statements might be true and right; they would consist of what each person saw. But each person would see the incident from his own vantage point.

The same thing is true with the Gospels of Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John. Each writer recorded what he saw from his own vantage point.

Let's read Mark's account of Jesus' entry into Jerusalem:

*"And when they came nigh to Jerusalem, unto Bethphage and Bethany, at the mount of Olives, he sendeth forth two of his disciples, And saith unto them, Go your way into the village over against you: and as soon as ye be entered into it, ye shall find a colt tied, whereon never man sat; loose him, and bring him. And if any man say unto you, Why do ye this? say ye that the Lord hath need of him; and straightway he will send him hither...."*

*"And they said unto them even as Jesus had commanded: and they let them go. And they brought the colt to Jesus, and cast their garments on him; and he sat upon him. And many spread their garments in the way: and others cut down branches off the trees, and strawed them in the way. And they that went before, and they that followed, cried, saying, HOSANNA; BLESSED IS HE THAT COMETH IN THE NAME OF THE LORD" (Mark 11:1-3,6-9).*

In verses 1 through 3, we find that Jesus was about to make His entrance into Jerusalem. He knew He was going to ride into Jerusalem in triumph. He also knew what was going to happen a few days from then. Those very same people who would shout, "Hosanna" and lay their palm branches and garments on the ground as He came in would stand before Pilot and say, "We don't know the Man. Crucify Him!" (Mark 15:13,14).

Jesus knew He would be stretched on that Cross between Heaven and earth. He knew He was about to be crucified. But before that would happen, He would make a triumphant entry into Jerusalem.

### **Jesus' VIP Transportation**

Jesus told the disciples that there was a colt which no man had ever sat upon. He told them to go get that colt. Why did He do that? Why did He tell them to get this colt that had never been used?

Today, of course, we wouldn't use a colt to enter a city; we wouldn't use that mode of transportation. We would say, "Go get me a brand-new car, not a used one."

You see, God always has the best, and He doesn't settle for anything less! That was His will for Jesus, and that's what God wants for His people today. God's perfect will for His people is that they come to the place where they have everything new. God wants you to have new clothes, a new house, and a new car that nobody else has had before!

When Jesus gave the disciples their instructions, they said to Him, "Well, when we get this colt and untie it to bring it to You, they are going to stop us. What are we to say?" Jesus answered, "Tell them that the Lord has need of it" (Mark 11:3).

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The Lord doesn't want your leftovers. No, He wants your best. He wants your best years. He doesn't want you to wait until you get old before you decide to serve Him. Serve Him while you are the age you are now. God wants your best in everything you have. He has need of what you have to finish His work.

The disciples of Jesus put their own clothes on that new colt for Jesus to ride on (Mark 11:7). They took off what they had on and prepared the colt for Jesus to ride into Jerusalem triumphantly. The disciples understood that they should take what they had and give it to the Lord for His final service.

Let's continue reading what happened in the final moments of Palm Sunday:

*And many spread their garments in the way: and others cut down branches off the trees, and strawed them in the way. And they that went before, and they that followed, cried, saying, Hosanna; Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord: Blessed be the kingdom of our father David, that cometh in the name of the Lord: Hosanna in the highest. And Jesus entered into Jerusalem, and into the temple: and when he had looked round about upon all things, and now the eventide was come, he went out unto Bethany with the twelve (Mark 11:8-11).*

Remember, this was Jesus' last week. Some could sense that this thing was coming to a head. There was an air of expectancy and excitement. The anointing was building as the consummation of God's plan drew nigh. It was the beginning of the end of Jesus' last days on the earth.

Source: *The Last Week of Jesus* by Keith A. Butler

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