

The Passion of Lent – Matthew 21 Bible Study by Rev. Dr. John C. Tittle

SCRIPTURE: Matthew 21:1-11 (NRSV)

When they had come near Jerusalem and had reached Bethphage, at the Mount of Olives, Jesus sent two disciples, saying to them, "Go into the village ahead of you, and immediately you will find a donkey tied, and a colt with her; untie them and bring them to me. If anyone says anything to you, just say this, 'The Lord needs them.' And he will send them immediately." This took place to fulfill what had been spoken through the prophet, saying,

"Tell the daughter of Zion, Look, your king is coming to you, humble, and mounted on a donkey, and on a colt, the foal of a donkey."

The disciples went and did as Jesus had directed them; they brought the donkey and the colt, and put their cloaks on them, and he sat on them. A very large crowd spread their cloaks on the road, and others cut branches from the trees and spread them on the road. The crowds that went ahead of him and that followed were shouting,

*"Hosanna to the Son of David! Blessed is the one who comes in the name of the Lord!
Hosanna in the highest heaven!"*

When he entered Jerusalem, the whole city was in turmoil asking, "Who is this?" The crowds were saying, "This is the prophet Jesus from Nazareth in Galilee."

BIBLE STUDY QUESTIONS

1. Questions or comments about the passage?
2. Do you think Jesus made previous arrangements or was he predicting where the colt was and what people would say to the disciples?

The prophet Zechariah foretold centuries before Christ: *"Rejoice greatly, O daughter Zion. Your king comes to you, triumphant and victorious is he, humble and riding on a donkey and on a colt... and he shall command peace to the nations."* (Zechariah 9:9-10 NRSV)

3. How has Jesus fulfilled this Scripture?
4. What do donkeys teach us about Jesus' character?
5. In what ways today do we attempt to convince Jesus to mount a war steed instead of donkey?

6. David Hawkins in his book *"Power vs. Force"* shows the contrast between power and force. What do you think of his assessments?

Power	Force
Humble	Arrogant
Unassuming	Has all the answers
Supports life	Exploits life
Attracts	Repels
Serves others	Self-serving
Stays true to values	Will violate values for gain
Relies on truth	Relies on rhetoric and propaganda
Unifies	Polarizes
Appeals to our higher nature	Appeals to our lower nature

7. Henry Nouwen once said that the way to power involves "not upward mobility, but downward mobility." How do we live this out in the midst of a pandemic?