

Day 1
March 26



Pray | Ask God to show you how his plans exceed your expectations.

WHAT DO THE POPE, A FIAT, AND A LAMBORGHINI HAVE IN COMMON?

The truth: The current Pope owned both cars but chooses to drive a Fiat 500 even though he was recently given a custom Lamborghini Huracan. The latter car he auctioned off to raise funds to help others. In some ways the world may want to see a Pope triumphantly arriving in the awesome splendor of a Huracan, but he knows such an entrance is unnecessary and possibly even contrary to delivering his message. Search something like “the Pope’s Fiat” or “the Pope’s Lamborghini” to fact check. You do almost have to feel sorry for the new owner of the Huracan though: “Sir, do you know why I pulled you over? ... I just wanted to make sure everything was OK. I usually don’t see these cars driving at the posted speed limit. Well Officer, you see I bought the car from the Pope...” Seriously though, only God’s son can ride a donkey and still be savior of the world.



Read | Zechariah 9:9; Revelation 19:11-16



Reflect | Spend some time reflecting on the following questions.

These scriptures paint two pictures of the king which are associated with a “triumphal entry.” Often people who do not meet our expectations affect our thoughts about them. What things does Jesus’ entrance on a donkey tell you about him?

After reading Revelation 19: 11-16, perhaps a lowly king, not riding a war horse, with his army at his back, is a good thing. Yet Jesus the savior is both gentle and warlike and needs to be. How can you reconcile Jesus as presented in Zechariah with the Jesus of Revelation as the same God?

One verse from Zechariah’s prophecy is enough to jar us. The king comes righteous and victorious ... “Amen.” Lowly and riding on a donkey ... “Say what?” Consider the contrast between people’s expectations of Jesus and what he did as the hosannas of his triumphal entry degrade into cries to crucify.

Day 2
March 27



Pray | Thank God that Jesus was willing to be what he needed to be.

THE FIRST RIDE-SHARING SERVICE STARTED NEAR JERUSALEM.

There was the prophecy in Zechariah about the donkey. Matthew and John reference that very passage in telling their stories of Jesus' triumphal entry into Jerusalem. Think of all four gospels not as contradictory and confusing versions of similar stories, but rather as different camera angles of the same events. Each author, through divine inspiration, adds different pieces to fill out the whole of the story. Perhaps in the days of smart phones where we can track our packages, and our Uber driver's progress, we may miss the many miracles happening in this story. Sometimes the Bible tells us the thoughts the disciples were having, sometimes not. The singular act of acquiring that donkey is present in all four accounts and was necessary to fulfill prophecy.



Read | Matt. 21: 1-6; Mark 11: 1-7; John 12: 14-15; Luke 19: 28-35



Reflect | Spend some time reflecting on the following questions.

List some of the many things that needed to happen perfectly in order to make Zechariah's prophecy come true. In what ways do you find yourself relating to the disciples' statement in John 12:16?

Thinking back to the donkey acquisition, what apparent asides in your life have turned out to be God at work? And, what are you learning about how he chooses to work?

God does not need our cooperation to make things happen. He is God, and he can make people comply. However, as Matthew 21:6 says, the disciples went and did as Jesus instructed them. Are there any crazy things God is telling you to do right now that you are resisting?

Day 3

March 28



Pray | How can you bring Easter truth to others this year?

DIVINE CHOREOGRAPHY.

The Super Bowl happens every year. Now when “it” happens in your state, your city, even almost happens for your team in their home stadium, it’s different. Passovers happened in Jerusalem, but this year Jesus would be there too, and that was very different indeed. There is no better description for the scenes that Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John provide us as Jesus approaches and enters Jerusalem on what is now referred to as Palm Sunday. Depending on the perspective, it was a very large crowd that preceded and followed Jesus into the city. Was it that they heard he was coming and went out to meet him? Maybe it was the disciples’ loud and joyful praises for the miracles they had seen that gathered such a crowd from a city already swelling beyond capacity? The King was coming, and everyone wanted in.



Read | Matt. 21: 8-11; Mk. 11: 8-11; Lk. 19:35-38; John 12: 12-19



Reflect | Spend some time reflecting on the following questions.

Consider God’s divine choreography as the faithful coming to celebrate the Passover would become the first to see God’s salvation as Jesus entered Jerusalem. The scene is contagiously energetic, spreading, and drawing others in. The truth of the Messiah is still the same. How do we make our modern Easter worship do the same thing for the city and people around us?

Look at the various words and phrases used by the crowds to worship Jesus as he entered Jerusalem. What words do you choose to use when you worship him, and what is the significance of those choices to you?

In many ways, the people spontaneously worshipping Jesus as he rode into Jerusalem brought and used what they had at hand – palm branches and their cloaks. How are using the things God has provided you with to worship him?

Day 4
March 29



Pray | Thank God that he saves despite our “if only.”

IF ONLY...

If only King Jesus had ridden into Jerusalem with an army at his back and sent the Romans packing. If only Jesus had rebuked his disciples, then the stones crying out would have put those Pharisees in their place. If only the Kings of Israel and Judah had been better examples. If only Jesus had not stopped after clearing the Temple, but had driven out the Pharisees and Sadducees, too. Everything Jesus did was necessary so that prophecies could be fulfilled and God's plan of salvation could unfold at the time and place of God's own choosing. Jerusalem and the temple needed to be destroyed because the holy city and holy temple had become too self-important. They took people's eyes off the God they were supposed to be pointing the people toward worshipping. The people wanted to be saved, but how and when they wanted it was not in God's timing, nor was it the way he chose to save them.



Read | Luke 19: 37-44; Matthew 21: 12-16



Reflect | Spend some time reflecting on the following questions.

If only Jerusalem had recognized the time of God's coming. What “if only” statements apply to your ability or willingness to see Jesus as God coming to you?

God's ways and timing are intricate. If only Jesus had not assaulted the money changers, or healed people in the temple, or let those kids be so disrespectful (in church). Would it have changed what God already set in motion that would turn the very people who praised him during Jesus' triumphal entry into the people whose cries of “crucify” would soon echo in the city?

If only there were some way that sinful people could be reconciled to a holy God... There is, through faith in Jesus Christ as your savior. If you know Jesus as your savior, take some time to pray for his prompting, his nudge, to share the Gospel with someone else who doesn't yet know him.

Day 5
March 30



Pray | Thank you, Lord, for becoming like us in order to save us.

COMING UP DONKEYS?

Jesus, the king of all kings, rode a borrowed donkey on his way to save the world! To someone who does not believe in God, things occurring again and again could be seen as a coincidence. To believers, it is so much more. Take a moment and brainstorm everything you know and think about donkeys.

Now plug “donkey” into biblegateway.com... you’ll see 142 results. Scroll through the descriptions to see how your expectations of what donkeys are stack up to their Biblical references. Donkeys of the Bible were signs of wealth and status, readily at hand, often used to carry goods (even the most important of people’s things). When God chooses to use them, they become so much more. Think Samson and his weapon of choice here. As a matter of fact, they are very prevalent in the book of Judges in relation to the rulers of the time. Balaam’s talking donkey saved his life. (Numbers 22: 21-32)



Read | Romans 10: 9-13



Reflect | Spend some time reflecting on the following questions.

What do the verses in Romans say we need to do to be saved, and have you done these things in your own life?

Why is it important that there is no longer a difference between Jew and Gentile when they believe in the Lord?

As we fully enter the Easter season, think about whom you need to be praying for that they would come to see and accept Jesus as their own savior. In what ways can you make your faith real for these people, especially during the Easter season?

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