

The Prince of Peace on the Beast of Burden

The Triumphal Entry of Jesus

- Luke 19:28 And when he had said these things, he went on ahead, going up to Jerusalem.
- 29 When he drew near to Bethphage and Bethany, at the mount that is called Olivet, he sent two of the disciples,
- 30 saying, “Go into the village in front of you, where on entering you will find a colt tied, on which no one has ever yet sat. Untie it and bring it here.
- 31 If anyone asks you, ‘Why are you untying it?’ you shall say this: ‘The Lord has need of it.’ ”
- 32 So those who were sent went away and found it just as he had told them.
- 33 And as they were untying the colt, its owners said to them, “Why are you untying the colt?”
- 34 And they said, “The Lord has need of it.”
- 35 And they brought it to Jesus, and throwing their cloaks on the colt, they set Jesus on it.
- 36 And as he rode along, they spread their cloaks on the road.
- 37 As he was drawing near—already on the way down the Mount of Olives—the whole multitude of his disciples began to rejoice and praise God with a loud voice for all the mighty works that they had seen,
- 38 saying, “Blessed is the King who comes in the name of the Lord! Peace in heaven and glory in the highest!”
- 39 And some of the Pharisees in the crowd said to him, “Teacher, rebuke your disciples.”
- 40 He answered, “I tell you, if these were silent, the very stones would cry out.”

Luke 19:28-38

Triumphal Entry

It seems to me that the key to not merely **knowing with your head** the things that unfold in the last five chapters of Luke (which anyone can do if they just read), but **believing them in your heart** and therefore having them become the greatest **positive-changing force** in your life is found in understanding the way Luke bookends the story. What do I mean not merely knowing with your head? Many of the stories we will discuss, beginning with the passage today, are as familiar to Christians as close family. But how do we often treat close family? Not the way we treat guests or dates or bosses or people we are trying to impress. We take one another for granted. This can cause our feelings to grow cold, our thoughts to go elsewhere, and our behavior to become rude and disrespectful.

But **to truly believe**, that is to **understand** with your heart, the stories before you is to *feel* something deeply, to *know* something incredible, and to *apprehend* the actions that Christ did for you—his brother, his bride, his family. And he did anything but take you for granted. So what are those bookends? They are things that are **almost entirely foreign** to even most Christians today, as we have taken God's word

for granted, failed to love the Scripture, failed to apprehend the true miracles that are before us, and failed to understand the things we are looking at.

Jesus told his disciples, “Behold, we go up to Jerusalem, and all things that are written by the prophets concerning the Son of man shall be accomplished. For he shall be delivered unto the Gentiles, and shall be mocked, and spitefully entreated, and spitted on: And they shall scourge *him*, and put him to death: and the third day he shall rise again. And they understood none of these things: and this saying was hid from them, neither knew they the things which were spoken” (Luke 18:31-34). The other is, “O fools, and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken: Ought not Christ to have suffered these things, and to enter into his glory? And beginning at ^qMoses and ^rall the prophets, he expounded unto them in all the scriptures the things *concerning himself*” (24:25-27). And again, “These *are* the words which I spake unto you, while I was yet with you, that all things must be fulfilled, which were written in the law of Moses,

^q I thought I would leave in these footnotes from the ESV (see this and the next two notes). Gen. 3:15. & 12:3. & 18:18. & 22:18. & 26:4. & 49:10. Num. 21:9. & 24:17. Deut. 18:15, 18, 19.

^r Isai. 4:2. & 7:14. & 9:6. & 40:10, 11. & 50:6. & 52:13–53:12. & 61:1. & 63:1–6. Jer. 23:5, 6. & 33:14–16. Ezek. 34:23. & 37:25. Dan. 9:24–27. Hos. 11:1. Mic. 5:2. Zech. 6:12. & 9:9. & 11:13. & 12:10. & 13:7. Mal. 3:1. & 4:2. Comp. John 1:45.

and *in* the prophets, and *in* ^tthe psalms, concerning me ... it behoved Christ to suffer, and to rise from the dead the third day” (44-46). The key is realizing that what is going to unfold in these chapters was long ago prophesied, predicted, penned so that you would know and believe that *Jesus is God* and so that when you read them, you would know that God did these things *for you*.

Triumphal Entry: Context and Structure

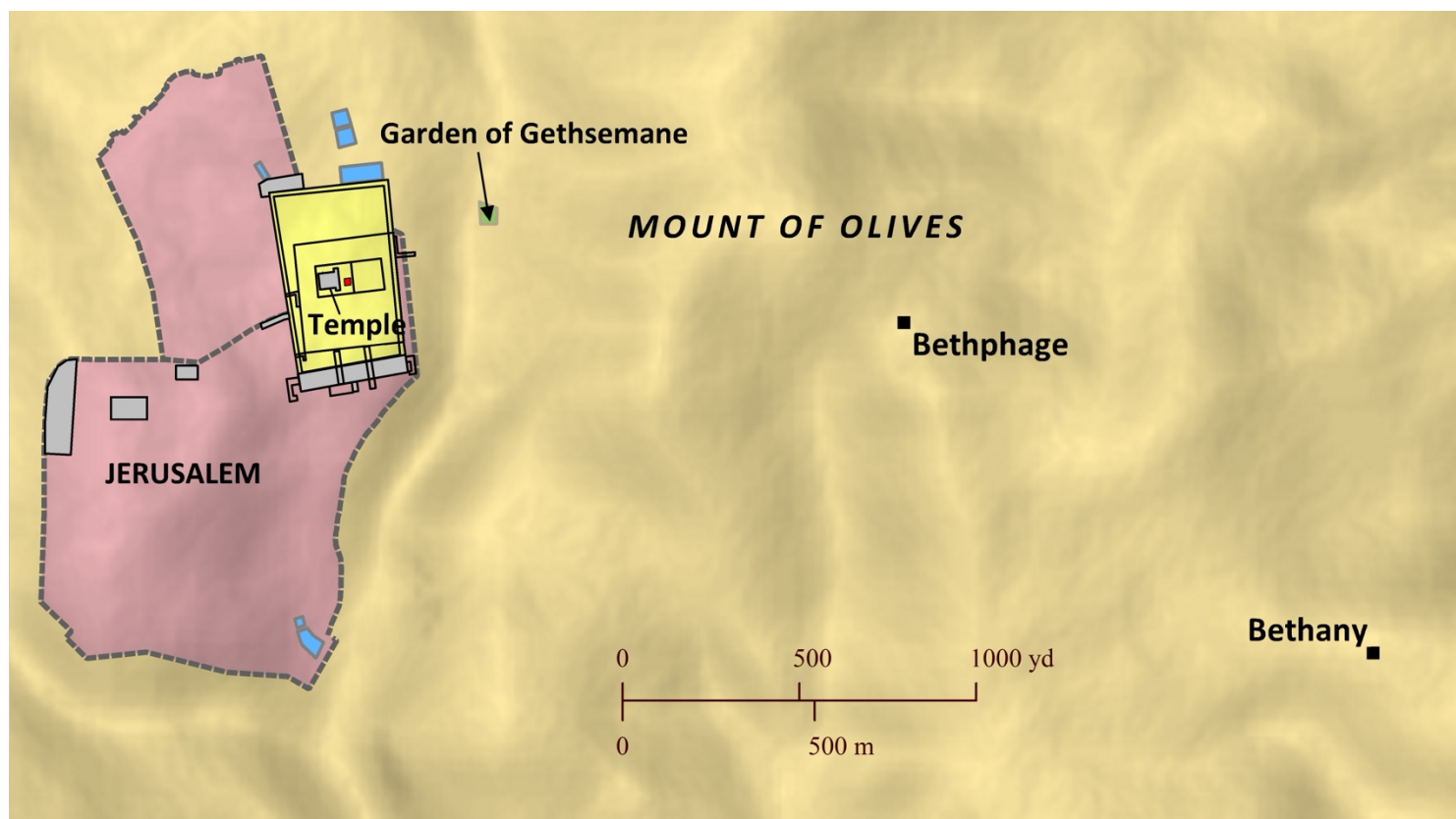
Normally, our passage today is preached on Palm Sunday. This is due to the day it took place, *the first day of the week*, the week prior to Resurrection Sunday, the day after Lazarus Saturday. And it is due to the thing that was done, the laying down of *palm branches* by the people as Jesus entered into Jerusalem. This holy day is exclusively Christian, there is no Jewish equivalent, though it was very much predicted in the Old Testament.

Luke introduces the story to us by telling us that “*when he had said these things, he went on ahead, going up to Jerusalem*” (Luke 19:28). *Jerusalem* is Jesus’ *final destination* before the ending of his life just a handful of days later. An

^t Ps. 16:9, 10, & 22. & 69. & 88:8, 18. & 110:1. & 118:22, 26. & 132:11.

ending that he knew he was inevitably marching towards, an ending that he told the disciples specifically would happen, but they did not understand.

It continues with **more geography**. “When he drew near to *Bethphage* and *Bethany*, at the mount that is called *Olivet*, he sent two of the disciples” (29). Both villages are on the eastern side of the Mt. of Olives. Bethphage means “**House of the Early Figs**” and Bethany means “**House of Affliction.**”



Bethany, the farthest east of the two cities, is where Jesus has just been staying. Why? Because yesterday, he raised

Lazarus from the dead here—in his hometown. In fact, in John’s version of this story, he is the only one to mention Lazarus, telling us specifically that the people who are involved in the shouting as he enters the city were the people who had been with him when he called Lazarus out of the tomb and raised him from the dead and they had come out to see this new sign that is told in our story (**John 12:17-18**).¹ **Bethphage** is the city which Jesus sends his disciples on up ahead (see **Matt 21:1**) in the following verse. Finally, the **Mt. of Olives** is that hill-mountain that sits 100ft. higher than Jerusalem to the east of the city about a half mile between its summit and the temple mount, a pretty easy walk from the east through the Kidron Valley. We will see this mountain several times before Luke is finished with the Gospel.

This mention of locations has a pairing in **vs. 37**. “**As he was drawing near—already on the way down *the Mount of Olives...***” So he is going *up* to Jerusalem as he is going *down* the Mount of Olives. The fact that we have this pairing of places with “up” and “down” signals that Luke is perhaps building this narrative around a structure. And indeed, he appears to be, as we will see “**disciples**” repeated (**29, 37**), as

¹ This reinforces the theory that Lazarus is the source for the notes John used in compiling the Gospel. He’s the only one that mentions it, because Lazarus was there telling it.

well as “**sitting**” on a colt (30, 35) and “**bringing**” the colt (30, 35), a **question** about the colt (31, 33) and the **response**, “**the Lord has need of it**” (31, 34). All these repeat as we get closer to the center. The unrepeating verse is, “**So those who were sent went away and found it just as he had told them**” (32), and what a remarkable center it is, for it shows us both the **miraculous power of Jesus** and the **miraculous predictions of the OT** in one fell swoop.

A.(28) And when he had thus spoken, he went before, **ascending up to Jerusalem**. (29) And it came to pass, when he was come nigh to Bethphage and Bethany, at the mount called the mount of Olives, he sent **two of his disciples**, (30) Saying, Go ye into the village over against you;

B. in the which at your entering ye shall find a **colt** tied, whereon yet **never man sat**:

C. **loose him**, and **bring him hither**.

D.(31) And if any man ask you, **Why do ye loose him?** thus shall ye say unto him, Because **the Lord hath need of him**.

E.(32) **And they that were sent went their way, and found even as he had said unto them**.

D'.(33) And as they were **loosing the colt**, the owners thereof said unto them, **Why loose ye the colt?** (34) And they said, **The Lord hath need of him**.

C'.(35) And they **brought him** to Jesus:

B'. and they cast their garments upon the **colt**, and they **set Jesus thereon**.

A'.(36) And as he went, they spread their clothes in the way. (37) And when he was come nigh, even now at **the descent of the mount of Olives, the whole multitude of the disciples** began to rejoice and praise God with a loud voice for all the mighty works that they had seen.²

² RS, “Luke 19:28-37,” *Biblical Chiasm Exchange* (Feb 12, 2016).

But think about this last part, about the OT, because **this is precisely what I said is the bookends** to learning to deeply cherish and believe the things that you are reading. Those bookends are right here in the Palm Sunday central verse. Prophecy has such amazing power, precisely because it is impossible. And if it is impossible and yet true, then what kind of power are we dealing with here? And those prophecies are about this person—Jesus. And he’s the one who taught and precited these things. What power this is. How worthy Jesus is to be worshiped.

The Pachyderm

There are **three main things** to wrap our heads around in this Triumphal Entry story. I’ll call them the *prophecies*, the *potentate*, and the *pachyderm*. Because they really overlap and come in the same context, and we can only deal with one at a time, let’s start with **the animal**. It tells us that Jesus “**sent two of his disciples, saying, ‘Go into the village in front of you [Bethphage], where on entering you will find a colt.’**” Luke only uses the word “colt” (*pōlos*) for this animal. This seems to be because he is following Mark here, who also only uses this word. So what kind of a colt is it?

We can rule out one right away. [It isn't the pistol or a riffle](#) (maybe, if this was vs. .45. Just kidding). Knowing the sword incident that comes up just as Jesus is being arrested, perhaps Peter might have liked it to be that, but alas, Samuel Colt would not make its first firearm until 1831. While I'm trying to be a little funny, it's actually an important point that will be understood better as we figure out what kind of a colt this actually is.

Second, [this is not a horse](#). This one is also important to note, because Revelation does speak of Christ on a horse, indeed a glorious white one ([Rev 19:11](#)). But what is he coming to do on that horse? "[In righteousness he judges and makes war](#)." Ah, this idea overlaps with the gun. Whether you are a vigilante or a desperado or a general or a king, you usually ride on a horse, either to make war or as a sign that you have just conquered.

That leaves only one thing left. [A donkey](#). Let it sink in. Jesus rides a donkey. Not the glorious Shadowfax or Silver or Secretariat, but that [annoying little beast from Shrek](#). Now, we know this is a donkey from Matthew and John who also use this word (*onos*). This matters for the prophecy stuff that we will look at shortly. It also matters for the king

stuff we will look at, in a very surprising way for people who do not know the history of this. But first, I just want to look at the donkey itself.

The *Dictionary of Biblical Imagery* has a very interesting entry called, “Donkey, Ass,” which I’ll tell you about in a moment. First, in “things you never thought you’d hear in a sermon,” I’ve always been curious to know how we ended up with two such different words for this beast of burden, one which became a curse word. Anyone else ever wonder this? I mean, women blush because of this, children giggle, and some won’t even read the old translations because of it. So, it’s something we should try to understand. Jesus riding an ass isn’t a curse word and we shouldn’t blush or laugh when we say it. God’s word is at stake here. But it’s actually quite interesting and, I think relevant to what Jesus is riding.

“Ass” is the older and original-proper word, by far, for this beast.³ “Donkey” is actually the slang term, much newer in origin!⁴ Why? You can probably thank the poets. In fact,

³ All of the surrounding nations had a similar word for it (Old English: *assa*; Old Saxon: *esil*; Dutch: *ezel*, Old High German *esil*; German: *esel*; Gothic: *asilus*; Old Church Slavonic: *osl*; Russian: *oselŭ*), which are all related to the Latin: *asinus*. The Greek is *onos* and it appears to be a word that comes from Asia Minor such as the Sumeria *ansu*. See “[Ass \(n.1\)](#),” *Online Etymology Dictionary*.

⁴ Of unknown origin. Some suggest from *dun* (“dull gray-brown”); others *Dunning*, the name of a horse in the mid-14c.). Some say perhaps it was influenced by *monkey*. Other says it comes

it's doubtlessly because of Shakespeare whose character [Nick Bottom](#) in *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, turns into a [donkey](#). Others started making word-rhymes with the animal and the derrière (*arse*⁵). Thus, polite company starting using the word “donkey” (which seems to come from the word Dun meaning “grey” and perhaps a word-play on monkey). At this point, the words weren't even spelled the same, as the part of the anatomy still had the “r” in the word, and still does in England and Australia—so they don't really even have the giggle or offense factor that we do. The same thing ironically happened to the word “curse,” which became the slang term “cuss.” It reminds me of a school I always wanted to start and give out diplomas for \$100. I want to call my school “*Haavaad*,” so that a person can say they graduated from *Haavaad*.” In the same way, probably from someone living near Boston, the “r” dropped off and the curse word was now spelled just like the word for Donkey.

How is this in any way related to the beast Jesus is riding? That's where the *DBI* comes in. It's interesting that

from the proper name Duncan applied to an animal. See “[Donkey \(n.\)](#),” *Online Etymology Dictionary*.

⁵ The English “*arse*,” comes from the Old English: *aers*, which in turn had words like the Proto-Germanic *arsoz* and even older Latin, Greek, even Sanskrit **ors-* or *arrash* in Hittite. For a similar but deeper dive, see the interesting Quora article from Oacar Tay [here](#).

they begin the entry by saying, “We must take care not to read our own attitudes toward the donkey into the biblical materials.”⁶ And I totally agree. But the donkey itself has dual images in the ancient world. On one hand, it is a symbol of absurdity and obstinacy. Plato called them “perverse” and Minucius Felix called them, “the meanest of animals” (clearly, he wasn’t nice to his!). It’s easy to see how this became applied to “stupid, obstinate, or wrong-headed people”⁷ in the English crossover of the animal and the body part. Even more, it became the mount of the demon of sloth and the red donkey became a figure of Satan! If you take this imagery out of the creature, you lose something very important. You can let your mind go wild for now, and I’ll return to this and the other image shortly.

As I’ve said, we only get the “donkey” from Matthew and John. Luke only uses “colt.” Technically, a colt is a young horse or young donkey or perhaps a young camel. But it is always young. This is important for what comes next. “... you will find a colt tied, on which no one has ever yet sat” (Luke 19:30). Have you ever considered this? Why

⁶ Leland Ryken et al., “Donkey, Ass,” *Dictionary of Biblical Imagery* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2000), 215.

⁷ See entry on “Donkey” above.

does this matter? Many have spiritualized it as if this refers to the new covenant vs. the old, new wineskins vs. old. Jesus is coming in with the new, not the old. *Perhaps*. But I think it's probably at least more literal than this, as we will see.

Jesus tells them to “**untie it and bring it here**” (30). He is clearly still in Bethany. At this point, Jesus says, “**If anyone asks you, ‘Why are you untying it?’ you shall say this: ‘The Lord has need of it’**” (31). Now, “**lord**” (kurios) can mean simply master or someone much greater, like a king or even God. Which is it here? We must keep reading.

“**So those who were sent went away and found it just as he had told them**” (32). **How did he know?** Had he gone there ahead of them already? It certainly doesn't appear like it. This verse is the center of the story, but it can only be understood by reading the rest of the story. We are not in a position to know what the answer is yet.

It begins its reversal. “**So those who were sent went away and found it just as he had told them**” (32). So, Jesus tells them something and **it is exactly the way he said it would be**. It makes you wonder what was going through their minds. Did they look at one another and shrug their

shoulders? Did they start to ask their questions out loud, seeing if the other disciple knew something they didn't? Maybe he had been here already?

“And as they were untying the colt, its owners said to him, ‘Why are you untying the colt?’” (33). He must have already been here. Did he put these guys up to this question? *Of course not.* That's not in Jesus' character. And it goes completely against the seriousness of the context of the next five chapters. And therefore, this verse inserts **the beginning of a chain of events** that show you just how remarkable this story truly is. **Jesus knew** ahead of time that they would ask this exact question of a colt that he knew would be right here. Jesus' omniscience is on display. Have you noticed it before as you've read this story?

They answered exactly as he told them, “**The Lord has need of it**” (34). Now, given the very next verse, it is clear that this answer satisfied the owner. Knowing what we know about John's additional comments about Lazarus, I think we can figure out why. Bethphage is right next to Bethany. And with such an amazing miracle as raising a man from the dead, you know that the word had already spread. **They knew who this “Lord” was**, and even though he

wasn't the owner, the owner was perfectly willing to let Jesus take the colt because of what had just happened.

While I'm sure people probably let this amazing fact about Jesus' fame go right past them, and even more, that there are hints here that "lord" means much more than just the rabbi of some vagabond group of disciples from the north in town on a pilgrimage, what comes next is really quite **amazing**. "And they brought it to Jesus, and throwing their cloaks on the colt, they set Jesus on it" and he began to **ride** (35). Why is this so amazing?

This colt is young, so under two. And, it has **never been ridden**. Do you know what these creatures do the first time you try to get on them? Listen to **a rancher** describe what you are seeing.

If you google any number of unbroken donkey videos or look at videos of any donkey accepting their first rider, it looks as if the donkey does everything BUT accept their rider. They plant their feet, they buck, they rear, they twist, turn, attempt to get the rider off by running them into fences... it is a long, meticulous, and often dramatic-looking feat to "gentle" (in that day or as the common term

“break”) a donkey to ride- let alone handle the chaos of a shouting crowd waving palm branches and closing in.⁸

In a word, **Jesus is embodying the fact that he is indeed God**. This is no mere ride. It is a miracle ride, in every sense of the word. And, in fact, this is one of Luke (and Mark’s) main points, because the only word they choose is “colt”—thus emphasizing that *it is young*, and unlike Matthew and John, they further tell you that it had never been ridden. This is the very point you are to come away with after the reading. The God of gods is about to ride into the Holy City of David.

The Potentate

The next thing we need to know is a little **biblical-theology of the donkey** that is related to our story. This will take us in a different way to our Potentate. Again, our *Dictionary* is helpful. We looked at one of the two images of the donkey—that of **obstinacy and stubbornness**. But the other is that it is a worker, particularly as **a vehicle “for rich and**

⁸ **Carissa Ramsdell**, “[Psalm Sunday Thoughts From a Rancher](#),” *Freedom Reigns Ranch* (April 14, 2019).

poor alike.” This might surprise some people. In fact, the rancher I quoted earlier, said, “The kings in Jesus day would have never rode on a donkey. The very idea would have been an insult ... Donkeys were meant for packing or were transportation for common folk.” But this is not historically accurate.

Ugaritic sources show gods on the backs of donkeys. The Sumerian heroes Gilgamesh and Agga, the sons of the kings, ride donkeys. Later on, Muslims call several heroes “donkey-riders.” One early Christian take called the *Vita Sanctae Pelagiae Meretricis* presents as the apex of beauty and sensuality a woman riding on a donkey. Donkey’s were not universally mocked. This is the paradox about them.

In fact, we find this much closer to home in the kings of the OT. In a very important parallel, Solomon rides David’s mule’s to Gihon where he will be anointed king (1Kg 1:33-44). Prior to this, David was weeping as his son Absalom was usurping his throne. He did so going to the Mt. of Olives (2Sam 15:30). When he arrived there, his servant Ziba met him with a couple of donkeys saddled for “the king’s household to ride on” (16:1-2). This was an act of kindness, not humiliation.

It seems that while the horse was an emblem of **victory and war**, the riding the donkey was an emblem of **anointing and peace and meekness**. The Dictionary rightly points out **Moses**, taking his wife and sons and riding on a donkey on their way back to Egypt (**Ex 4:20**). This was not because he was poor or common. But it was a sign of humility and meekness. Moses was the most humble man on the face of the earth (**Num 12:3**). This takes me again to that idea of the gun and the war-horse. Jesus is going to ride in—as the king, *but he is not looking for war*. He is *not coming to conquer Pilate or Herod, much less Caesar*. The people may have thought this was the case, but if they did, they got the wrong animal. This sign should have told everyone “**Clearly he is innocent of the charge of rebelling against Caesar,**” that would be brought by the Pharisees soon enough. We’ll see more of the “king” imagery as we go to the third portion of important things that we need to grasp, which is still related to a biblical-theology of the donkey. This has to do with prophecy.

The Prophecies

As I began today thinking about these “bookends” that teach us to see the depths of what we are truly reading, so

now we come to what I think is the most significant of these three things we are looking at in our passage. This is because the **prophecies** encompass the meaning of the donkey, the kingly imagery, and the nature of the one riding in our midst all at one time.

Something we need to grasp early on in this part of the Gospel is something called **an echo or allusion**. These will become increasingly important as we head towards the crucifixion and resurrection. These are different from flat out **prophecies**, but not in the sense that they aren't prophetic. **Prophecies are explicit** statements that something from the OT is being fulfilled right now. An echo is a reverberation from the OT that finds its way onto the pages of the NT, often because it is being fulfilled right now, but it doesn't necessarily tell you that is what is going on. It is much more subtle. An allusion is something more obvious than an echo which most people will probably grasp, but which still is not as explicit as a prophecy.

Nevertheless, they are very important, all the more when reading a Gospel like Luke as opposed to a Gospel like Matthew. What do I mean? Matthew feels a great burden to mention specific prophecies by name whereas Luke does

not. This seems to be because of **the intended audience**. While Luke knows that Jews will read his Gospel, he's actually writing to his friend Theophilus. Matthew is more focused on teaching the Jews that Jesus is their Messiah and so he uses specific quotes more often than Luke to prove it. All the Gospels echo and allude to prophecies or things that we may not even have known were prophetic. So we need to be paying attention even when we do not see, "**As it is written,**" or "**as the prophet said.**"

Let me be specific here. Even though they are telling the same story, Matthew gives us **one explicit prophecy** in this story that Luke does not. After telling us that Jesus sent two disciples into Bethphage where they would find a donkey tied and a colt with her, and the disciples obeying him (**Matt 21:1-3**), Matthew says, "**This took place to fulfill what was spoken by the prophet, saying, 'Say to the daughter of Zion, 'Behold, your king is coming to you, *humble*, and mounted on a donkey, on a colt, the foal of a beast of burden''**" (4-5). This quote is a composite of **Isaiah 62:11** and **Zechariah 9:9**. The latter says, "**Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion! Shout aloud, O daughter of Jerusalem! *Behold, your king is coming to you; righteous and having salvation is he, *humble and mounted****

on a donkey, on a colt, the foal of a donkey.” Isaiah says, “Behold, the Lord has proclaimed to the end of the earth: *Say to the daughter of Zion, ‘Behold, your salvation comes; behold, his reward is with him, and his recompense before him.’*”

It's only the beginning of Isaiah that is quoted, and though the same idea even here is found in the Zechariah passage, commentators think it is quoted because it is word for word from Isaiah. And there's no problem with this, because it is quite possible that Zechariah is actually seeing more about this original prophecy than Isaiah himself saw. The context of Isaiah is very clearly **messianic**. As Blomberg says, “The Lord is proclaiming to his people (‘the daughter of Zion’) that their savior (or salvation) comes through a specific individual, who will lead to them being called the holy people, the Lord’s redeemed.”⁹ Likewise, Zechariah “introduces a section describing the coming of Zion’s king (9:9–13), heralding the appearance of the Lord, who will restore Israel’s beauty and grandeur (9:14–17). [... The king] is righteous, bringing salvation, riding a donkey’s colt. However, the context is one not of warfare, but of peace.”¹⁰

⁹ **Craig L. Blomberg**, “Matthew,” in *Commentary on the New Testament Use of the Old Testament* (Grand Rapids, MI; Nottingham, UK: Baker Academic; Apollos, 2007), 63.

¹⁰ Ibid.

It's really **because of Matthew** that most people read **Zechariah 9:9** into what Luke is saying—even though Luke doesn't tell you anything about the prophet or the prophecy. And this is *perfectly legitimate* to do and is precisely the point of the obvious allusion to this prophecy.

It's fascinating to me that John's version also quotes the OT. But right after doing so, it says, “**His disciples did not understand these things at first, but when Jesus was glorified, then they remembered that these things had been written about him and had been done to him**” (**John 12:16**). This, I believe, is exactly why Luke does not always come out and tell you that something is a prophecy. He's treating the reader like one of the Disciples.

What do I mean? If you only had a copy of Luke's Gospel and had never heard of Matthew's Gospel, and you read this story for the first time, **you may or may not have known about the Zechariah prophecy**. It's even more fascinating to me in this regard that the next verse in John says, “**The crowd that had been with him when he called Lazarus out of the tomb and raised him from the dead continued to bear witness. The reason why the crowd went to meet him was that they heard he had done this sign**” (**12:17-18**). Now, we

haven't looked formally at the sign yet, but I'm bringing it up here because the point is the same whether we are at the beginning or the ending of the story. The disciples didn't get it; but the crowds somehow did. That is, they were familiar with the prophecy and were expecting the sign of the donkey-rider to be fulfilled. So when they heard that this was what was happening, they had to go see it for themselves.

Now, let's say that you, as you are reading through Luke for the first time, are like the disciples—blind to what even the crowds were not. That's OK. Luke doesn't mind. He's going to tell you the story anyway. But [at the end of his Gospel](#), he is going to tell you something. Now that Jesus has appeared on the road to Emmaus and taught us how to read the Bible, we need to go back to the Old Testament and see that this was exactly what God predicted. It doesn't matter if you didn't get it the first time through so much as that you get it the next time or the next time because now you have learned that all the Scripture is about him. Now that you know, you can be on the lookout for this, just like the disciples would be from that moment on.

This [makes studying the Bible come alive](#), because you don't need a Gospel writer to tell you explicitly that Jesus has

just fulfilled something, you are given permission to go and figure it out yourself. All you have to do is start reading the OT with new eyes, the eyes of faith. Eyes that realize these words are about Jesus. Eyes that see that Jesus is fulfilling all kinds of things that the Gospels don't even explain to us. Sometimes they will, like Matthew does here, but sometimes they won't, as you find in Luke in the same passage.

You read that Solomon rode a donkey to be anointed king? You read Moses riding the ass. You read David having them brought to him. **You don't need Matthew to tell you the meaning** of this through an explicit prophecy, that it is about a kingly humble ride. You are reading it right there in the pages of the OT and your mind now naturally goes to what happened to Jesus. This is precisely how Jesus taught us to be thinking about the OT. And he even chastised his disciples for not doing.

What greater power could there be to keep a Christian in fellowship with God and his Word than knowing there is always something new to discover about their Savior and what he has done for them? But if they aren't looking or have been told not to or never told anything about this at all, how sad it is for God's people to never get to experience

themselves the amazing gems in the OT? They will never truly understand **the joy of being a Berean**, those who searched the Scriptures diligently to see if what was said was actually true.

Let's continue in Luke to see this more specifically. We've not only seen the allusion to **Zechariah 9:9** made explicit in Matthew, but we've thought about the whole idea of donkeys being ridden in the OT by kings or prophets. Moses rode one. David rode one. Solomon rode one on his way to his coronation. Now, in **Luke 19:30**, Jesus tells the disciples to untie the donkey. **Vs. 31** has him repeat this in the form of someone asking them about why they are untying it. He then raised the question of him being the "**Lord.**" **Vs. 32** says the disciples did exactly what they were told. **Vs. 33** brings up that question again, as the owners asked, "**Why are you untying the colt?**" This is essentially four verses focusing on the untying of the donkey. Why?

It's most likely because this is **a fulfillment** of **Genesis 49:11**. This passage is Jacob's last will and testament to his sons. This one concerns Judah. **Vs. 8** begins the oracle. "**Judah, your brothers shall praise you.**" "Praise" (*yowdukha*) is a word play on "Judah" (*yehudah*), as Judah means "Praise."

“Your hand shall be on the neck of your enemies; your father’s sons shall bow down before you.” Somehow, Judah is going to be elevated above all his brothers. But how?

“Judah is a lion’s cub” (9). The lion is the “king” of the jungle. “From the prey, my son, you have gone up. He stooped down; he crouched as a lion...” “The *scepter* shall not depart from Judah, nor *the ruler’s staff* from between his feet, until tribute comes to him; and to him shall be the obedience of the peoples” (10). So, Judah is going to be a king. This is why it is so important in the books of Samuel, Kings, and Chronicles that David and all his sons come from tribe of Judah. It fulfills this prophecy. And, as we know from Luke 3, Jesus also comes from this line.

But then there’s **Vs. 11**. “Binding his foal to the vine and his donkey’s colt to the choice vine...” This cryptic saying has to do with the ass and its colt being tied to a vine. This is precisely what happened (In Matthew, we see both the donkey and its colt). The colt was tied and the untied. It was untied so that the prophecy of **Zechariah 9:9** could be fulfilled. But in this case, **Genesis 49:11** is also being fulfilled. And amazingly, it was predicted **in the first book of the Bible**. *All the Scripture* is about him.

Luke 19:35, “And they brought it to Jesus, and throwing their cloaks on the colt, they set Jesus on it.” Throwing their cloaks on the donkey means that they expected Jesus to ride it. He didn’t put it on. The people did. Amazingly, this is precisely **what the people did for King Jehu in 2Kings 9:13 LXX**, as they paid homage to the newly anointed king. Of course, we have not yet seen that Jesus is king, but we have seen that he is Lord and that he knows the impossible and that he has done the impossible, riding a colt that had never been ridden before as if it were nothing. So we are getting there.

Vs. 36 tells us that not only did they spread their cloaks on the colt, it says that **Jesus began to ride along the road**. This is that miracle of taming the young colt, riding in the new as it were, **the Prince of Peace on the beast of burden**. But then it says they spread their cloaks on the road too. Now, Matthew, Mark, and John all say that they took **palm trees** and branches and laid them out. Hence, palm Sunday. Luke, though, makes little of this, presumably because he is **highlighting the cloaks** and the fact that this is what was done for kings of old.

“As he was drawing near—already on the way down the Mount of Olives—the whole multitude of his disciples began to rejoice and praise God with a loud voice for all the mighty works that they had seen” (Luke 19:37). The people sense that something special is happening. Some have figured out the fulfillment of Zechariah 9:9 seems to be in the air. Perhaps others were thinking of Genesis 49:11. Riding down the Mt. of Olives is the scene. Some think that this mountain serves no purpose here in terms of fulfillments of prophecy. That will happen later. And truly, it will. However, remember that David was up on the Mt. of Olives as he began to ride his donkey the other way. So it does seem to me that Jesus’ riding towards Jerusalem rather than away from it is a kind of hopeful allusion to what should have been with David, had Absalom not usurped his rule.

Now, we’ve seen that this multitude of disciples include the twelve and the host from Bethany and probably Bethphage, as well as most likely the seventy he had sent out and probably others. This is no small throng. Still, it is *his disciples*. It isn’t everyone in Jerusalem suddenly joining in on praising Jesus and worshiping God. This is important, be-

cause I think some people have this impression that the entire world was there praising God and rejoicing at this scene. We know that isn't true from the next lines about the Pharisees. But we also know it from this word "disciples." And this helps explain why, later, the whole city will be in an uproar trying to get Pilate to kill him. It isn't like everyone turned on Jesus in a matter of four or five days. No. Most were never on his side to begin with. Many who wanted him dead didn't even know who he was.

Finally, we come to what they were shouting. "... saying, 'Blessed is the King who comes in the name of the Lord! Peace in heaven and glory in the highest!'" (Luke 19:38). All four Gospels record this, but they all put it a little differently. Matthew, "Hosanna to the Son of David! Blessed is he who comes in the name of the LORD! Hosanna in the highest!" This is the one we usually sing. Mark, "Hosanna! Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord! Blessed is the coming kingdom of our father David! Hosanna in the highest!" John, "Hosanna! Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord, even the King of Israel." We'll just look at Luke.

Luke's wording is identical to the LXX of Psalm 118:26 (117:26 LXX), except that he adds, "the king:"

eulogēmenos ho erchomenos *ho basileus* *en onomati kyriou*
eulogēmenos ho erchomenos *en onomati kyriou*

Why would he do this? It is because **this is how the peoples ushered in kings of old** (1Sam 10:24; 1Kgs 1:34, 39; 2Kg 11:12) and because it seems that the historical context of this psalm was to the king.¹¹ The reason Luke does not have “Hosanna” seems to be simply that he is following the Greek LXX, rather than the Hebrew. The king also reinforces the point about **Jesus as the Lord**, about his incredible knowledge and his divine power all being fulfilled in **Zech-ariah 9:9**.

This is not just the king. It is **the King of kings** and he is now triumphantly riding into his city, victorious. *Already* victorious, *but the final battle has not truly begun*. Yet, Jesus is entering **not to do war against men** or their kingdoms, **but against Satan** and his kingdom. Entering on the beast of peace—the foal of a donkey, rather than the steed of war. But again, he is only being welcomed at this time, *by his disciples*. The rest of the city has not received Jesus as king-messiah.¹²

¹¹ David W. Pao and Eckhard J. Schnabel, “Luke,” in *Commentary on the New Testament Use of the Old Testament* (Grand Rapids, MI; Nottingham, UK: Baker Academic; Apollos, 2007), 355.

¹² *Ibid.*, with notes.

But their praises are not concluded. **They end** by saying, “**Peace in heaven and glory in the highest!**” Many think that what this means is that because there is peace in heaven, may there now be peace on earth. But that isn’t what it says. It may in fact be rather complicated what’s going on here, and surely it has to do with salvation coming from God to men in the form of Jesus. However, the form here echoes **Psalm 148:1**. “**Praise the LORD! Praise the LORD from the heavens; praise him in the heights!**”¹³ The next verse commands **the angels** to praise him, and in the Targum, this verse does too.

It is important to remember here that this “**refers to the eschatological peace after the expulsion of Satan from heaven** (cp. 10:18).”¹⁴ Satan has been cast out during Jesus’ ministry. So, heaven is now at peace. What Jesus is about to do is **wage war with the dragon in his suffering, death, and resurrection**. So, whether the people understand it or not, they are crying (literally), “in **heaven, peace, and glory** in the **highest**” (a chiasm that is lost in the ESV’s translation), to come down to us through the Messiah whom they are coronating.

¹³ Ibid.

¹⁴ **J. Reiling** and J. L. Swellengrebel, *A Handbook on the Gospel of Luke*, UBS Handbook Series (New York: United Bible Societies, 1993), 632.

And why are the coronating him? Because the rest of the world still sits in total darkness. Because the prophecies must be fulfilled. Because the Potentate is in their midst. Because he rides in on his Pachyderm as the king of peace. Brothers and sisters, though they were in darkness, you need not be. These things have happened and we now know why and how and we have the fullness of all the Bible to teach us the glories of stories like these. May your hearts burn within you as you learn to see the fullness of the meaning of the King of kings riding into Jerusalem on his beast of burden.

| Luke 19:28-37 | Matt 21:1-11 | Mark 11:1-11 | John 12:12-19 |
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| 28 And when he had said these things, he went on ahead, going up to Jerusalem. | 21:1 Now when they drew near to Jerusalem | 11:1 Now when they drew near to Jerusalem, | 12 The next day the large crowd that had come to the feast heard that Jesus was coming to Jerusalem. |
| 29 When he drew near to Bethphage and Bethany, at the mount that is called Olivet, he sent two of the disciples, | and came to Bethphage, to the Mount of Olives, then Jesus sent two disciples, | to Bethphage and Bethany, at the Mount of Olives, Jesus sent two of his disciples | |
| 30 saying, "Go into the village in front of you, where on entering you will find a colt tied, on which no one has ever yet sat. Untie it and bring it here. | 2 saying to them, "Go into the village in front of you, and immediately you will find a donkey tied, and a colt with her. Untie them and bring them to me. | 2 and said to them, "Go into the village in front of you, and immediately as you enter it you will find a colt tied, on which no one has ever sat. Untie it and bring it. | |
| 31 If anyone asks you, 'Why are you untying it?' you shall say this: 'The Lord has need of it.' " | 3 If anyone says anything to you, you shall say, 'The Lord needs them,' and he will send them at once." | 3 If anyone says to you, 'Why are you doing this?' say, 'The Lord has need of it and will send it back here immediately.' " | |
| | 4 This took place to fulfill what was spoken by the prophet, saying, | | 14 And Jesus found a young donkey and sat on it, just as it is written, |
| | 5 "Say to the daughter of Zion, 'Behold, your king is coming to you, humble, and mounted on a donkey, on a colt, the foal of a beast of burden.' " | | 15 "Fear not, daughter of Zion; behold, your king is coming, sitting on a donkey's colt!" |
| 32 So those who were sent went away and found it just as he had told them. | 6 The disciples went and did as Jesus had directed them. | 4 And they went away and found a colt tied at a door outside in the street, | |
| 33 And as they were untying the colt, its owners said to them, "Why are you untying the colt?" | | and they untied it. 5 And some of those standing there said to them, "What are you doing, untying the colt?" | |

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|--|---|---|---|
| 34 And they said, "The Lord has need of it." | | 6 And they told them what Jesus had said, and they let them go. | |
| 35 And they brought it to Jesus, and throwing their cloaks on the colt , they set Jesus on it. | 7 They brought the donkey and the colt and put on them their cloaks, and he sat on them. | 7 And they brought the colt to Jesus and threw their cloaks on it, and he sat on it. | |
| 36 And as he rode along, they spread their cloaks on the road. | 8 Most of the crowd spread their cloaks on the road, and others cut branches from the trees and spread them on the road. | 8 And many spread their cloaks on the road, and others spread leafy branches that they had cut from the fields. | 13 So they took branches of palm trees and went out to meet him, |
| 37 As he was drawing near—already on the way down the Mount of Olives—the whole multitude of his disciples began to rejoice and praise God with a loud voice for all the mighty works that they had seen, | 9 And the crowds that went before him and that followed him | 9 And those who went before and those who followed | |
| 38 saying, "Blessed is the King who comes in the name of the Lord! Peace in heaven and glory in the highest!" | were shouting, "Hosanna to the Son of David! Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord! Hosanna in the highest!" | were shouting, "Hosanna! Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord! 10 Blessed is the coming kingdom of our father David! Hosanna in the highest!" | crying out, "Hosanna! Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord, even the King of Israel!" |
| 39 And some of the Pharisees in the crowd said to him, "Teacher, rebuke your disciples." 40 He answered, "I tell you, if these were silent, the very stones would cry out." | 10 And when he entered Jerusalem, the whole city was stirred up, saying, "Who is this?" 11 And the crowds said, "This is the prophet Jesus, from Nazareth of Galilee." | 11 And he entered Jerusalem and went into the temple. And when he had looked around at everything, as it was already late, he went out to Bethany with the twelve. | 16 His disciples did not understand these things at first, but when Jesus was glorified, then they remembered that these things had been written about him and had been done to him. 17 The crowd that had been with him when he called Lazarus out of the tomb and raised him from the dead continued to bear witness. 18 The reason why the crowd went to meet him was that they heard he had done this sign. 19 So the Pharisees said to one another, "You see that you are gaining nothing. Look, the world has gone after him." |

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