

## Palm Sunday 2017 (Matthew 21:1-11)

### Quiz – Road Signs

I have a number of signs here that you might see when you are travelling on the road.

- Each one of these pictures shows us what we might find on the road.
- I wonder how many of you know what they mean.

**Show signs for** i) Road works, ii) Slippery road, iii) Falling or fallen rocks iv)

Toads crossing, and v) horse-drawn vehicles prohibited, then ASK:

How do you know what the pictures I have just shown you mean? (*Receive response*)

- We know what the pictures mean because the book, “The Highway Code” explains them to us.

**Show final quiz slide of Jesus:** today on Palm Sunday we remember the day when Jesus rode into Jerusalem on a donkey.

- In doing this, Jesus gave us a clear “sign” that the people who were there would have understood. They knew what the prophets had said and had written down.

Before we explore what Jesus riding into Jerusalem on a donkey meant to the people of His day, let’s hear what happened....

**Reading: Matthew 21:1-11**

### TALK

We saw from the road signs earlier that pictures can have meanings that go beyond what you see.

- They can be signs that tell you something.

There was a great tradition amongst the prophets of Israel to use actions as visual messages... so let’s think about what Jesus’ ‘sign’ meant (**S**):

1) Firstly Jesus’ action was a clear claim to be King

- Around 500 years earlier the prophet Zechariah had prophesied that Israel would overcome her enemies....and in the middle of that prophecy came this verse:

*“See, your king comes to you, righteous and having salvation, gentle and riding on a donkey, on a colt, the foal of a donkey.”* (Zechariah 9:9)

Jesus’ followers had spent three years hearing him teach,

- seeing him perform miracles and telling them to keep quiet about the fact that he was the Messiah, the Chosen One sent to free Israel.
- Here at last, for all to see, Jesus went public.
- **(S)** No wonder *they* celebrated.

For the crowds who were not yet his followers and who were living under Roman occupation, longing for freedom,

- here was Jesus acting out the prophecy that said.... “I am the king who will bring victory”
- **(S)** No wonder *they* were excited.

2) Secondly Jesus’ picture tells us what sort of King He came as.

- Jesus came on a colt, the animal of a man of Peace,
- not on a war horse, the animal of a conquering king.

Unfortunately the crowd were so intent on welcoming a Messiah, that they paid little attention to that part of Jesus’ message. They wanted Jesus to be the one who overthrew the Romans. But Jesus’ message by riding on a colt was clear to those who wanted to see it.... “I come in peace.”

So Jesus riding into Jerusalem on a donkey wasn’t simply a convenient first century taxi!

- Jesus was saying through his actions that He was **(S)**:
  - coming as King and
  - coming in peace.

So he was a different kind of king. We’ll illustrate that with a couple of volunteers: [Contrast Typical King with King Jesus:](#)

- Money and robe / Simple garment
- Servants bowing down / Bowl and towel
- Crown and 'throne' / crown of thorns

So King Jesus is very different from other earthly Kings isn't He? **(S)**

- Jesus didn't have a palace and riches.
- He didn't expect people to serve Him, but served them.
- He didn't wear a crown or rule his kingdom from a throne, but he wore a crown of thorns as He gave up his life on the cross.

You see Jesus didn't come as a warrior king to set people free from the oppressive Romans.

- He came as the King of peace to set people free from their chains of sin and to bring them peace with God the Father,
- which He did when he willingly laid down his life on the cross, and then rose from the dead three days later.

The crowds didn't understand that at the time – but the question for us today is: will we embrace that now? As we listen to the Easter story again in a few moments, give thanks that Jesus, the servant King, did it for you, for all of us.