

Time Audit Chronicles: The Triumphal Entry

(John 12:12-19)

Prologue: Jesus Enters Jerusalem as King

The Presswood family sat around the table, reading John 12:12-19, where Jesus enters Jerusalem in a moment of great triumph and significance. The warm glow of the lamp illuminated their faces, adding a cozy atmosphere to their study. Ariel had been reflecting on how Jesus' entry into the city fulfilled the prophecy in Zechariah 9:9, which was written hundreds of years earlier, promising that the Messiah would come to Jerusalem in humility, riding on a donkey. This fulfillment was significant to the people of Jerusalem because it confirmed Jesus as the prophesied King, and what it meant for Him to be welcomed as King by the people. Alice, still holding Mr. Fluffernutter, imagined herself waving palm branches in excitement, feeling the warmth of the sun on her skin, and cheering for Jesus as He rode in on a donkey.

"Daddy," Ariel asked, her brow furrowed in thought, "Why did Jesus choose to ride on a donkey instead of a horse like other kings? Isn't that a little strange for a king? I mean, usually kings ride horses, especially in the stories I've read."

Ryan smiled, pleased by the insightful question. "That's a really good observation, Ariel. In ancient times, kings would often ride horses when they were going to war—horses symbolized military power and conquest. For example, Alexander the Great famously rode his horse Bucephalus into battle, demonstrating his strength and authority. But when Jesus chose to enter Jerusalem on a donkey, He was fulfilling a very specific prophecy from the Old Testament in Zechariah 9:9, which said, 'Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion; shout, O daughter of Jerusalem: behold, thy King cometh unto thee: he is just, and having salvation; lowly, and riding upon an ass, and upon a colt the foal of an ass.'" (Zechariah 9:9). The term 'lowly' signifies Jesus' humility and His mission to serve rather than to dominate. Riding on a colt, a young donkey, also symbolizes peace and a gentle approach, contrasting with the image of a conquering king on a warhorse. This was a deliberate act to show that His kingship was about humility, service, and bringing salvation rather than military power.. The people of that time would have recognized the significance of this act because they were familiar with the prophecy.

Ariel's eyes lit up. "So, Jesus was fulfilling a prophecy by choosing to ride a donkey, and that's why it was so important?"

"Exactly," Ryan said. "Jesus was declaring Himself as the Messiah, but not in the way that many people expected. He wasn't coming to conquer through force and violence; He was coming to bring peace and salvation. The donkey was a symbol of humility and peace, not of war. Jesus' choice shows that His kingship is different—it's not about earthly power, but about bringing God's kingdom in a humble, loving way. Remember how Jesus washed His disciples' feet? That's another example of how His leadership was centered on serving others."

Ariel nodded, understanding. "So, Jesus was showing that He's the King who came to bring peace, not war."

“That’s right,” Ryan said. “Let’s use the Time Audit Machine to go back and witness the Triumphal Entry and see how this powerful moment unfolds.”

The Journey Begins: Jesus’ Arrival in Jerusalem (John 12:12-15)

The Time Audit Machine powered up, and with a flash, the family found themselves standing at the gates of Jerusalem, just outside the city walls. The streets were filled with people who had come to celebrate the upcoming Passover festival. The air was thick with dust, the scent of spices and baked bread mingled in the breeze, and the noise of merchants haggling and pilgrims chattering filled their ears. They could hear the braying of donkeys, the laughter of children, and the occasional clang of metal from nearby stalls. There was a special buzz in the air today—everyone seemed to be talking about Jesus.

Ariel looked around at the crowd, noticing how the people were preparing for something momentous. She saw children running, people gathering palm branches, and an excitement that seemed almost electric. “It looks like everyone is waiting for Jesus to come into the city,” Ariel said, her voice filled with wonder. She wondered if the people really understood who Jesus was or if they were just caught up in the excitement.

“Yes,” Ryan said. “Jesus’ entry into Jerusalem was a huge moment. He had been teaching and performing miracles, and now He was entering the city in a way that would show the people that He was the Messiah, the King that God had promised. This was a fulfillment of the prophecy in Zechariah.”

As they watched, they saw Jesus riding on a young donkey, just as the prophecy described. The crowd was ecstatic, and they began to take off their coats and spread them on the road in front of Him, creating a kind of royal carpet. In their culture, spreading coats and palm branches was a significant act of honor and respect, symbolizing their recognition of Jesus as a king. Others cut palm branches and waved them, shouting, “Hosanna! Blessed is the King of Israel that cometh in the name of the Lord.” (John 12:13). The atmosphere was filled with the rustling of palm branches, the shouts of “Hosanna,” and the palpable excitement of the people. It was a moment of great joy and anticipation, as if the whole city was holding its breath for something extraordinary.

Ariel was amazed. “The people are treating Jesus like a king! They’re shouting Hosanna, which means ‘save now,’ right?”

“Yes,” Ryan said. “The people were recognizing Jesus as the Messiah who had come to deliver them. They believed He was the one who would bring salvation and restore God’s kingdom. Hosanna was a cry for God to save them, and they believed Jesus was the one who could do that.”

The Crowd’s Expectations: The Messiah King (John 12:16-19)

As Jesus rode into the city, the crowd continued to cheer, waving palm branches and celebrating His arrival. Ariel noticed the expressions of the disciples—some looked confused, others looked unsure. John, the author of this Gospel, notes, “These things understood not his disciples at the first: but when Jesus was glorified—meaning after His resurrection and ascension—then remembered they that these things were written of him, and that they had done these things unto him.” (John 12:16). The disciples

didn't fully grasp the significance of what was happening; they were swept up in the moment, just like everyone else.

Ryan pointed out, "Even though the disciples were part of the crowd, they didn't fully understand that Jesus was fulfilling the prophecy. It was only after Jesus was glorified—after His resurrection and ascension—that they understood the deeper meaning of these events."

Ariel was thoughtful. "So, even though the disciples were with Jesus, they still didn't completely understand what He was doing?"

"Yes," Ryan said. "The disciples, like many of the people, were focused on the physical kingdom that they thought Jesus would establish. They didn't realize yet that Jesus' kingdom was not going to be an earthly one, but a spiritual kingdom that would bring salvation to all people."

The Pharisees, who were religious leaders responsible for interpreting the law and maintaining control over religious practices, watched from the sidelines, upset by the crowd's praise of Jesus. They frowned, their faces filled with frustration and jealousy. Some of them clenched their fists, while others whispered angrily to each other. They said, "Perceive ye how ye prevail nothing? behold, the world is gone after him." (John 12:19). They were frustrated because Jesus' popularity was growing, and they feared losing their power and influence. Ariel noticed their reaction. "The Pharisees are jealous of all the people following Jesus. They're worried about losing control."

"Yes," Ryan said. "The religious leaders were threatened by Jesus. They didn't want to acknowledge Him as the Messiah, and His growing influence was upsetting the status quo. But Jesus wasn't there to fulfill their expectations—He was there to bring God's kingdom, which would turn everything upside down."

The Triumphal Entry and the Fulfillment of Prophecy

Jesus' arrival in Jerusalem was a direct fulfillment of Zechariah 9:9, which predicted that the Messiah would enter Jerusalem in a humble manner, riding on a donkey. The Jewish people had long expected the Messiah to come as a powerful king, but this prophecy showed that He would come humbly, emphasizing peace rather than conquest. This prophecy was well-known to the Jewish people, and by choosing to enter the city this way, Jesus was clearly identifying Himself as the promised King. He wasn't coming to wage war or establish an earthly kingdom through violence, but to bring peace and salvation to those who would accept Him.

Ariel was amazed by how Jesus was fulfilling the prophecy so perfectly. "Jesus was prophesied to come into Jerusalem like this, and now He's doing it exactly as it was written in Zechariah!"

"Yes," Ryan said. "This moment was historic. Jesus was declaring to the people that He is the Messiah, the promised King. But His kingdom would be very different from what they expected. He didn't come to conquer through force—He came to offer peace and salvation to all who would believe in Him."

Reflection: The King of Peace

Back in the garage, the Time Audit Machine powered down, and the family sat in quiet reflection. Ariel thought back on everything they had witnessed, realizing just how different Jesus' kingship was from what many had expected. His humility and peace were what made Him truly remarkable, and Ariel felt

inspired to live with that same spirit of peace and love in her own life. The cool air of the garage contrasted with the warmth of their thoughts. Ariel turned to her father, her mind full of the significance of Jesus' entry into Jerusalem. She imagined the cheers of the crowd and the humility of Jesus riding on a donkey. Alice, still holding Mr. Fluffernutter, was waving an imaginary palm branch and singing "Hosanna" with joy, her voice echoing the excitement they had just witnessed.

"Jesus really is the King," Ariel said softly. "But He's not the kind of King people expected. He came to bring peace and salvation, not to fight or conquer."

"Yes," Ryan said, "Jesus is the King of Peace, and His kingdom is not about earthly power or wealth—it's about salvation, love, and grace. His kingship is not based on the things the world values; it's about the eternal life He offers to all who believe in Him."

Ariel smiled, understanding. "So, when Jesus entered Jerusalem, He was declaring that He is the Messiah, the King, but in a way that showed He came to save us, not to conquer us."

"That's right," Ryan said. "Jesus is the King who came to offer peace and forgiveness, unlike many earthly kings who seek power and control. His approach was entirely unique—focused on humility, service, and the salvation of humanity. By entering Jerusalem on a donkey, He showed that He wasn't coming to bring destruction—He was coming to bring life and hope to the world."

Takeaway: Jesus, the King of Peace

In John 12:12-19, Jesus enters Jerusalem as the Messiah, fulfilling the prophecy of Zechariah 9:9 by riding on a donkey. His entry is a declaration of peace and salvation, not a call for earthly conquest. Jesus' choice to ride a donkey symbolizes His humility and His mission to bring spiritual renewal to the world. He is the King of Peace, and His kingdom is not based on power or violence, but on love, grace, and eternal life. The people who welcomed Him with palm branches and shouts of "Hosanna" recognized Him as the King who had come to save them, even though they didn't fully understand the depth of His mission. Jesus came to bring peace to all who believe in Him, inviting us to be part of His eternal kingdom of love and salvation.

How can we welcome Jesus as the King of Peace in our own lives? What does it mean for us to be part of His kingdom today? Let's reflect on how we can share His love, grace, and peace with those around us.

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1. Interactive Reflections: Welcoming the King of Peace

- **What does it mean for Jesus to be the King of Peace in your life?**

Think about areas in your life where you need His peace. How can you invite Him to rule in those areas?

- **How can you share Jesus' love and peace with others?**

Consider ways to bring His kindness and humility into your friendships, family, or community.

- **What does humility look like in leadership?**

Jesus came as a humble King. Reflect on how humility can make a difference in your life and the lives of others.

2. Song for Children: “Hosanna to the King of Peace”

(To the tune of “Twinkle, Twinkle, Little Star”)

Hosanna, Hosanna, hear us sing,
Jesus comes, our humble King.
Riding on a donkey small,
Bringing peace and love for all.
Hosanna, Hosanna, voices ring,
Praise to Jesus, Heaven's King!

3. Mr. Fluffernutter's Perspective: “Palm Branch Parade!”

Hi, friends! It's your pal, Mr. Fluffernutter!

I just love a good parade, don't you? Can you imagine what it must have been like to see Jesus riding into Jerusalem on a donkey? All those people waving palm branches and shouting “Hosanna!”—it must have been so exciting!

But you know what really stands out to me? Jesus didn't ride a big, fancy horse like a war hero. Nope, He chose a donkey. I think that means He wasn't there to show off or scare anyone. He wanted everyone to know He's a King who cares about peace and love.

If I were there, I'd wave my fluffy ears instead of a palm branch! What would you do? Leave a comment and tell me how you'd celebrate Jesus as King.

4. Ariel's Journal: Modern Connections to the Triumphal Entry

Dear Journal,

Today, I learned about how Jesus entered Jerusalem as King. But instead of riding a horse like a warrior, He rode a donkey to show He came to bring peace. That got me thinking about how different

Jesus is from the leaders we usually hear about. He didn't try to show off or demand attention—He came to serve and love.

It reminds me of how we can be leaders at school or in our communities without being bossy or proud. Like when I helped my friend calm down during a tough day, I wasn't trying to take charge—I just wanted to show kindness.

Jesus showed us that real leadership is about helping others and being humble. I want to remember that when I have the chance to be a leader, it's not about being the best or most important—it's about showing love and peace, just like Jesus.

5. Alice's Reflection with Mr. Fluffernutter: "Where's My Donkey?"

Alice held Mr. Fluffernutter tightly, her imagination running wild. "Fluffy, if Jesus could borrow a donkey for His big parade, maybe we could borrow one too. But I don't think donkeys would fit in our backyard!"

She giggled, holding her bunny up in front of her face. "Do you think a bunny would be better? You could hop along, leading the way for everyone to shout 'Hosanna!' But then, would Jesus ride on you? Hmm, probably not—you're way too small!"

Alice sighed dreamily. "Jesus chose a donkey to show He's a King of peace. That's like when I share my toys instead of fighting over them—I'm showing peace too, right? Maybe you and I can think of other ways to show people Jesus' peace."

She leaned close to Mr. Fluffernutter. "What do you think, Fluffy? Should we wave palm leaves or bunny ears next time we celebrate Jesus?"

6. Key Scriptures (KJV)

- **John 12:13** – "Took branches of palm trees, and went forth to meet him, and cried, Hosanna: Blessed is the King of Israel that cometh in the name of the Lord."
- **Zechariah 9:9** – "Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion; shout, O daughter of Jerusalem: behold, thy King cometh unto thee: he is just, and having salvation; lowly, and riding upon an ass, and upon a colt the foal of an ass."
- **John 12:15** – "Fear not, daughter of Sion: behold, thy King cometh, sitting on an ass's colt."