

**Joke:** A boy was sitting on a park bench with one hand resting on an open Bible. He was loudly exclaiming his praise to God. "Hallelujah! Hallelujah! God is great!" he yelled without worrying whether anyone heard him or not.

Along came a man who had recently completed some studies at a local university. Feeling himself very enlightened in the ways of truth and very eager to show this enlightenment, he asked the boy about the source of his joy.

"Hey" the boy in return said with a big laugh, "Don't you have any idea what God is able to do? I just read that God opened up the waves of the Red Sea and led the whole nation of Israel right through the middle."

The enlightened man laughed lightly, sat down next to the boy and began to try to open his eyes to the "realities" of the miracles of the Bible. "That can all be very easily explained. Modern science has shown that the Red Sea in that area was only 10-inches deep at that time. It was no problem for the Israelites to wade across."

The boy was stumped. His eyes wandered from the man back to the Bible laying open in his lap. The man, content that he had enlightened a poor, naive young person to the finer points of scientific insight, turned to go. Scarcely had he taken two steps when the boy began to rejoice and praise louder than before. The man turned to ask the reason for this resumed jubilation.

"Wow!" exclaimed the boy happily, "God is greater than I thought! Not only did He lead the whole nation of Israel through the Red Sea, He topped it off by drowning the whole Egyptian army in 10 inches of water!"

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Life is sometimes all about perspective.

### **Felix's Big Day - Week 3**

So did everybody search their concordances, or Google who Felix was? I mentioned that we were going to look at him. Did you found out who he was? No. Ready to hear about who Felix is?

**Show video. . .[www.skitguys.com](http://www.skitguys.com)**

While there is no record of the donkey that Jesus rode into Jerusalem on Palm Sunday being named Felix, the story is found in Mark 11:1-11.

Mark 11:1–11 (NIV): As they approached Jerusalem and came to Bethphage and Bethany at the Mount of Olives, Jesus sent two of his disciples, 2 saying to them, “Go to the village ahead of you, and just as you enter it, you will find a colt tied there, which no one has ever ridden. Untie it and bring it here. 3 If anyone asks you, ‘Why are you doing this?’ say, ‘The Lord needs it and will send it back here shortly.’ ” 4 They went and found a colt outside in the street, tied at a doorway. As they untied it, 5 some people standing there asked, “What are you doing, untying that colt?” 6 They answered as Jesus had told them to, and the people let them go. 7 When they brought the colt to Jesus and threw their cloaks over it, he sat on it. 8 Many people spread their cloaks on the road, while others spread branches they had cut in the fields. 9 Those who went ahead and those who followed shouted, “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 heaven!” 11 Jesus entered Jerusalem and went into the temple courts. He looked around at everything, but since it was already late, he went out to Bethany with the Twelve.

As this exciting day that unfolded in Jerusalem, there are so many details that are unknown to us, such as the donkey's name, the names of the disciples whom Jesus sent to retrieve the donkey, the names of the people from which the donkey was borrowed and later returned.

What we do know is that Jesus was at the center of this palm parade of celebration and hope.

There was such hope among the people along the parade route because the people were beginning to believe that Jesus may be the long-awaited Messiah that the Jewish people had been waiting on for centuries.

And while Jesus was indeed at the center of the

celebration, that little donkey was right there in every scene of the story that was mentioned in the video.

And the donkey, although seemingly a small detail at the moment, conveyed a much larger message to the masses that triggered prophecy in their historical memory bank.

The prophecy of how the Messiah would enter Jerusalem when the time was right is referenced in the Old Testament writings of Zechariah.

Zechariah 9:9-10 (NIV): Rejoice greatly, Daughter Zion! Shout, Daughter Jerusalem! See, your king comes to you, righteous and victorious, lowly and riding on a donkey, on a colt, the foal of a donkey. 10 I will take away the chariots from Ephraim and the warhorses from Jerusalem, and the battle bow will be broken. He will proclaim peace to the nations. His rule will extend from sea to sea and from the River to the ends of the earth.

The people celebrating Jesus riding in on a donkey truly were having their hearts and minds flooded with hopes of

the long-awaited triumph that the anticipated Messiah would bring.

They were shouting and celebrating because what their ancestors had hoped for seemed to be happening right before their very eyes.

They were thinking: "Rescue is coming! The King is here! Our Messiah is arriving just as the prophet of old said he would."

All was about to be made right in the eyes of the Jewish people along the parade route.

Freedom from their Roman oppressors was about to be more than a promise they longed for to come true.

In their eyes, what they saw in these scenes was to be the start of a new life because Jesus had shown up in this symbolic manner. In their minds the Messiah on the donkey was a revelation of the arriving revolution.

Had Jesus come riding in on a stallion, it would have sent a different message that the Roman authorities likely would have shut down quickly.

An overt warhorse being ridden in such celebration with a person as popular as Jesus in that moment would have sent a totally different message as opposed to a subversive, meek donkey.

The donkey represented a fulfillment of prophecy, which the Romans likely would not have been aware of and permeated peaceful intentions to those ruling with the watchful eye on the people.

The Jewish people waved the palms and shouted with hopeful joy while quoting one of the famous lines from Psalm 118:25-26 as they cried out, "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!"

The word "Hosanna" was a call that meant to "save" us! It was a cry for help by a people who had been oppressed for

far too long in their estimation.

The lyrics from this Psalm were said and sung each year at this time.

They were words from a group of Psalms known as Hallel Psalms. Psalm 113-118 are Hallel Psalms that are predominantly psalms of praise associated with the Passover celebrations and sacrifices of the Passover lambs in the Temple.

The Messianic overtones from the chanting and singing of the crowds on that Palm Sunday no doubt stirred the dreams of a new Davidic dynasty among the people of God.

However, those same chanting voices would turn to “crucify him” within the week’s end. The vocal crowd soon would realize that Jesus did not fit into their form of preconceived expectations of a conquering King.

What true Messiah would start the week in a parade like



Palm Sunday and end with an embarrassing crucifixion like the one that would take place on Good Friday?

This was not the trajectory of the Messiah they had in mind.

Their expectations did not line up with the reality before them.

Has that ever happened to you?

Have you had an idea of what something or someone was going to be like in your mind, but then when you got into that situation or got to know that person, what you expected in your mind and what you experienced firsthand were two different realities?

Our expectations and our realities do not always align in life.

Some married people would agree that what they experience in marriage may be a little bit different than

what they had in mind before they were married.

Can I get an amen?

Perhaps you thought she would be like this, or he would be like that. And your expectations have been altered a bit after you got into the marriage and experienced firsthand that person didn't change quite like you thought they would.

Truth is you probably are not going to change that person to become like you want them to be. And so the expectations that you had may not be the reality of what is.

What you think about something or somebody can be built up in your mind to be one way. . .and you can expect one thing. . .and then experience something different. . .be that marriage. . .or how money can make you happy. . .or what a long-awaited Messiah may or may end up being.

Our expectations don't always match our reality.

And the same is true about God. We think of God one way in our minds, but our reality with Him can be quite different at times.

Listen to what Eugene Peterson said about those who study and read the Bible to try and understand who God is and what God wants for our lives.

“Every careful reader of the Bible is struck by how odd and unaccommodating it is to what we are used to and expect.”

Eugene Peterson says that sometimes our expectations about God and what we see God doing, in reality, do not always align.

That means we have some growth and change to do in our lives.

Think about some of the things Jesus said and did that quite different than what we might think and most of our modern-day expectations.

- “Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you.”
- “The greatest among you will be the greatest servant.’
- “If you want to save your life, you must lose it. For those who lose their life for my sake will save it.”
- Jesus is the King of Kings and Lord of Lords, and He was born where: In a stinky stable.
- A king wears a crown of gold and sits upon a throne to be worshiped; Jesus wore a crown of thorns and hung upon a cross as people spat on him and mocked him.

Throughout the Bible, our expectations about life and who God is gets reshaped and realigned the more we get to know who God is and what this life God desires us to experience is all about.

That is true of us today, just as it was true of those who wanted a warrior Messiah 2000 years ago.

We sing that song Good, Good Father and it starts out by saying. . .

Oh, I've heard a thousand stories of what they think you're like.

What seemed clear in one instance became murky regarding the Messiah in the next. It was hard for the people and even the disciples to figure out what was happening as the time with Jesus progressed.

It would not be until after Jesus had walked through the week and eventually been crucified, buried, and resurrected that all would begin to make sense.

Hindsight is after all twenty-twenty.

Those understandings and clarifying perspectives would come later.

That was true for the disciples and followers of Jesus in biblical days. It's just as true for followers of Jesus today.

If you are having a hard time figuring out what all God is doing in your life today, you are not alone.

Perhaps you expected something different than what God is allowing you to experience during this season. If that is your reality but not what you expected, then you need give God and yourself a little more time.

He is always up to something and is constantly at work in ways we may not fully realize.

As you find yourself in the alignment tension of your expectations and reality, perhaps you could choose to do two things that we see people within the text of the Triumphal Entry doing on that Palm Sunday when Jesus came riding in on the donkey.

One thing we see happening is that people entrusted what they had into the care of Jesus.

We see this happening here with the people allowing Jesus to use their donkey.

We have no idea how the simplest thing may be used by God in a big way. The people who owned the donkey had

no idea that you and I would be hearing their story 2000 years later when they said, “Yes” to what Jesus was asking them to do.

So, be open-handed with the things God has allowed to be in your possession and care.

Offer whatever you have, as well as who you are, to the purposes of God and just see what might happen next.

I mean look at all those throughout Scripture who did that, Moses what’s that in your hand, a rod. And it parted the sea and brought victory. All we have is a little boys lunch and it fed multitudes. All I have is a little oil and after it was poured into empty containers it provided for her family. David wasn’t a warrior, but when he offered himself he was able to take down a giant.

You need to realize that little is much when God is in it.

What was said in the video was powerful and true: “We got to be used by God that day because you said, “Yes,” when

everybody else would have said, “No.”

Be open-handed with the things God has allowed to be in your possession and care.

Offer whatever you have, as well as who you are, to the purposes of God and just see what might happen next.

Put your “yes” on the table before God and let Him work with what you offer in ways you could never imagine.

Let me read this from The Passion Translation. . .

Ephesians 3:20 (TPT): Never doubt God’s mighty power to work in you and accomplish all this. He will achieve infinitely more than your greatest request, your most unbelievable dream, and exceed your wildest imagination! He will outdo them all, for his miraculous power constantly energizes you.

A second thing we see happening in the story is the people at the Palm Parade chose to celebrate.



Choose to rejoice in who God is even if it seems He is not meeting your expectations. Or that He is not there. Because the truth is He is.

Like the people in the streets of Jerusalem, keep singing the songs and chanting the truths of what you know to be true about God.

Keep worshiping and looking up even when things in your life may be what you expected them to be.

It's been said that a person cannot worry and worship simultaneously.

Choose to rejoice today, worship today. Lift your voice in praise rather than in complaining and criticizing.

Philippians 4:4 (NIV): Rejoice in the Lord always. I will say it again: Rejoice!

Declare that God is who He says He is and that He will do what will bring Him the most glory and the most good into

your life.

Romans 8:28 (NIV): And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose.

Once more from The Passion Translation. . .

Romans 8:28 (TPT): So we are convinced that every detail of our lives is continually woven together to fit into God's perfect plan of bringing good into our lives, for we are his lovers who have been called to fulfill his designed purpose.

God sees you.

God knows you.

God has a plan for you.

Just keep waiting and hoping. Your king has not forgotten you. You will see and experience all the Messiah has in store for you in time. So stay available and stay ready with your "yes" as you continue praising Him with all of who you are day after day after day.

There's the song that goes like this:

You are Way maker, miracle worker, promise keeper

Light in the darkness, my God

That is who You are

Then it continues. . .

Even when I don't see it, You're working

Even when I don't feel it, You're working

You never stop, You never stop working

You never stop, You never stop working,