



Palm Sunday Not From Shrek!!!

March 16, 2008

Rejoice greatly, O Daughter of Zion! Shout, Daughter of Jerusalem! 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, New International Version

Who steals the show in the three installments of the Shrek movies?

All four Gospels record the Palm Sunday account: Matthew 21:1-11; Mark 11:1-11; Luke 19:28-44; John 12:12-19

Did you ever think you were coming to church on Palm Sunday to talk about a donkey?

There is great significance and symbolism found in this detail that Jesus rode in on a donkey.

A donkey was a lowly animal; a symbol of humility, peace and Davidic royalty (see 2 Samuel 16:2).

The triumphal entry is a deliberate Messianic action.



Symbol of Humility

Donkeys have a reputation for stubbornness, but really this is more of a mode of self-preservation.

Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit, but in humility consider others better than yourselves. Each of you should look not only to your own interests, but also to the interests of others. Your attitude should be the same as that of Christ Jesus:

Who, being in very nature God, did not consider equality with God something to be grasped, but made himself nothing, taking the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness. And being found in appearance as a man, he humbled himself and became obedient to death—even death on a cross!

(Philippians 2:3-8, NIV)

All of you, clothe yourselves with humility toward one another, because, “God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble.” Humble yourselves, therefore, under God’s mighty hand, that he may lift you up in due time.

(1 Peter 5:5b-6, NIV)

Therefore God exalted him to the highest place and gave him the name that is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

(Philippians 2:9-11, NIV)

Often times it is our own pride that gets in the way of right relationship with God.

Living according to the Kingdom of God is different than the way of the world. It requires us to look to the interests of others and be willing to give up ourselves for things that are bigger than us.



Symbol of Peace

For to us a child is born, to us a son is given, and the government will be on his shoulders. And he will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.

(Isaiah 9:6, NIV)

Jesus is declaring himself to all that he is the fulfillment of Isaiah's prophecy – he is the Prince of Peace.

Peace I leave with you; my peace I give you. I do not give to you as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled and do not be afraid.

(John 14:27, NIV)

The Jewish leaders of the day expected the one who would fulfill the prophecy of Isaiah to be a human figure that would rescue them from Roman oppression and return Israel to a land where they would live in peace from its enemies.

Frequently it is our expectations that get in the way and create the lack of peace in our lives.



Symbol of Davidic Royalty

The royal mount used by David and his sons was the mule as horses were not yet the popular choice of kings (2 Samuel 13:29)

Luke 19:31 – “the Lord” = Jesus claiming his unique status as Israel's lord.

Luke 19:35-36 – “spreading cloaks” = a royal act of homage.

There are people at this entry point into Jerusalem that are buying in to Jesus' claims. They are spreading their cloaks before him as they would a king.

The Jewish leaders rejected Jesus' claims to be the Son of God and as king of Israel.

Often it is our perceptions and stereotypes that get in our way of a proper understanding of God's Kingdom.

But God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us.

(Romans 5:8, NIV)