

# **Bible Studies for Enquirers and New Believers: A Series of Eight Studies**

## **Study 2 – Jesus Enters Jerusalem: A Palm Sunday Meditation**

taken from  
***Bible Studies for Enquirers and New Believers***  
by Vivienne Stacey

**Readings:** Zechariah 9:9-10; Luke 19:28-39

**Memory Verse:** Luke 19:38

Jesus Christ poses questions by putting together categories which we do not naturally or normally connect. He does this in his person, in his deeds and in his words. For example, he is the eternal Word of God who became man. The incarnation is a miracle. All miracles pose questions. He healed a man who was blind from birth and set all Jerusalem buzzing with questions. He sometimes answered questions by another question. As we recall his entry into Jerusalem during the last week of his earthly life we think of several characteristics which we do not usually connect.

### **He is the Humble King**

Kingship is associated with pomp and ceremony: Few kings are known for their humility. "Lo, your king comes to you; triumphant and victorious is he, humble and riding on an ass, on a colt the foal of an ass. I will cut off the chariot from Ephraim and the war horse from Jerusalem; and the battle bow shall be cut off, and he shall command peace to the nations; his dominion shall be from sea to sea, and from the River to the ends of the earth" (Zechariah 9:9-10). Jesus came on that first Palm Sunday riding into the holy city of Jerusalem. Kamel Hussein, an Egyptian writer and thinker, described Jerusalem during that week particularly on the first Good Friday. He called his book City of Wrong: A Friday in Jerusalem. He acknowledged the intention of the Jews to kill Jesus and the willingness of Jesus to die. Jesus knew that he was going to die and that although he was being acclaimed that day the mob would shout for his death a few days later. Jesus' humility is not found, as some have thought, in that he rode on an ass – on a donkey. The donkey was not at that time a despised animal – princes as well as commoners rode on asses. We are influenced by current views – for example, by G.K. Chesterton's poem The Donkey. He describes the donkey as "the devil's walking parody of all four-footed things". At the time of Jesus the choice of a donkey symbolized peace. We see in Zechariah 9:10 that the horse symbolized war and that God's king speaks peace. Jesus' humility is shown in his lowly position as a Galilean peasant and in his meekness of disposition. Humility is not to be confused with weakness. Jesus was meek and lowly in heart. He made himself vulnerable. He said to his disciples "Take my yoke upon you, and learn from me; for I am gentle and lowly in heart; and you will find rest for your souls" (Matthew 11:29). He was humble in his submission to God and in his death; as the apostle Paul wrote in his letter to the Philippians: "And being found in human form he humbled himself and became obedient unto death, even death on a cross" (Philippians 2:8). Nevertheless he is a king – eternally in his own right, and through exaltation by God. He did not need to present his credentials. He is a humble king. As a modern hymn writer, Graham Kendrick, wrote:

**From heaven You came, helpless babe,**  
entered our world, Your glory veiled,  
not to be served but to serve,  
and give Your life that we might live.

*This is our God, the Servant King,  
He calls us now to follow Him,  
to bring our lives as a daily offering  
of worship to the Servant King.*

There in the garden of tears  
my heavy load He chose to bear;  
His heart with sorrow was torn;  
'Yet not my will but yours,' He said.

*This is our God...*

Come see His hands and His feet,  
the scars that speak of sacrifice,  
hands that flung stars into space to  
cruel nails surrendered.

*This is our God...*

So let us learn how to serve  
and in our lives enthrone Him,  
each other's needs to prefer,  
for it is Christ we're serving.

*This is our God...*

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Jesus is history's king. Following God's timetable he was born of a woman (Galatians 4:4); he died at the appointed time (Romans 5:6), and will be shown as the king at the climax of the ages (Ephesians 1:9-10). He is a humble king. His humility and his kingship both pose questions for us. So Jesus Christ poses questions by putting together categories which we do not naturally connect.

### **He is the Suffering Servant**

That he is the suffering servant is illustrated in Philippians 3:6-8 and in Isaiah 52:13-53:6. He is vulnerable. He is a stumbling block to the Jews and foolishness to others (1 Corinthians 1:18-25). Here is the weakness of God which is stronger than man. I have a friend who became a follower of the Lord Jesus Christ through a study of the Bible. She learned Isaiah 5:1-6 by heart and started to reflect on its meaning for her. She saw the love of Jesus demonstrated in the life of one of her school teachers. For her the suffering and servanthood of Jesus posed questions. She found the answer in a living relationship with God.

### **He is the Loving Lord**

Why did Jesus humble himself? Why did he suffer? He humbled himself because he loves. Love always identifies with others. The Father identifies with the Son. Love and communication are in the very essence of the Trinity, as Francis Schaeffer writes in his book

Genesis in Space and Time (pg. 24). God speaks in love. He speaks in Jesus. The eternal Word became flesh. This is God's supreme communication (John 1:14). Here is the love of God demonstrated in a way that defies all definition – in the coming of the incarnate Word, even Jesus the eternal Word. He came not just to break in but to identify, to obey, to submit, to suffer and to die. Here is the greatest expression of love – God's Son dying on a cross for the sin of mankind. So Jesus Christ poses questions. His love poses questions. His lordship poses questions:

1. He is the Humble King. Where are we in humility?
2. He is the Suffering Servant. Where are we in suffering?
3. He is the Loving Lord. Where are we in loving?

If we are his followers our lives should be posing these questions for others. Some of our secular and religious friends will not look at Jesus Christ but at us. He is the supreme communication of God but we are the communicators. We are living letters seen and read by all men (2 Corinthians 3:3-4). We were not there with our palms and acclaim in Jerusalem, the city of wrong, on that day when Jesus rode into the city more than nineteen centuries ago. However, we could be there in heaven at the climax of history with the multitude made up of people from every nation worshipping before the throne of the Almighty God and before the Lamb of God with palms in our hands. The apostle John describes his vision of that great event: "After this I looked, and behold, a great multitude which no man could number, from every nation, from all tribes and peoples and tongues, standing before the throne and before the Lamb, clothed in white robes, with palm branches in their hands, and crying out with a loud voice, 'Salvation belongs to our God who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb'" (Revelation 7:9-10). Will some of our friends, some of our neighbours, some of our fellow countrymen be there, because in our lives, like Jesus Christ, we pose questions about humility, about suffering and about love and they have found the answers in Jesus who is the humble king, the suffering Servant and the Lord?