



For Further Study



Read and meditate on the passage below:

21 As they approached Jerusalem and came to Bethphage on the Mount of Olives, Jesus sent two disciples, ²saying to them, “Go to the village ahead of you, and at once you will find a donkey tied there, with her colt by her. Untie them and bring them to me. ³ If anyone says anything to you, say that the Lord needs them, and he will send them right away.”

⁴ This took place to fulfill what was spoken through the prophet:

⁵ “Say to Daughter Zion,

*‘See, your king comes to you,
gentle and riding on a donkey,*

and on a colt, the foal of a donkey.’” (Matthew 21:1-5)

The above passage comes from Matthew’s gospel account of the triumphal entry into Jerusalem to begin Passion Week. We call this day, Palm Sunday, to remember the palm branches used to celebrate Jesus’ arrival as the anticipated Messiah.

Matthew differs from the other two Synoptic Gospels (Mark and Luke) in saying that the disciples are to find “a donkey...with her colt by her.” Matthew wants to tie this to the prophetic text of Zechariah 9:9. Remember that prophecy is not primarily futuristic foretelling; Zechariah is not predicting Jesus’s actions. Rather, Zechariah is using metaphorical, poetic language to speak about the nature of God’s deliverance. God’s arrival is not as a conquering hero but as a gentle and humble servant. If Matthew changed the Markan text to further emphasize the point, he is not being malicious. Instead, he is using a literary device to hyperlink to the ancient text and to tie Jesus to the theme of a servant-King.



REFLECTION:

Consider how literature oftentimes is written with layers of meaning and the value of thinking deeply about what we read.

PRACTICE:

Look deeply at something this week and consider the “hidden” meaning as it speaks to you.