

Passion Narratives—Class 3

The Entrance of Christ into Jerusalem (Palm Sunday)

Matthew 21.1-11. Mark 11.1-10. Luke 19.29-38. John 12.12-15.

Troparion for the Feast—Tone 1

By raising Lazarus from the dead before Your **Passion**,
You confirmed the universal resurrection, O **Christ** God!
Like the **children** with the palms of **victory**,
We cry out to You, O **Vanquisher** of death;
Hosanna in the **highest**!///
Blessed is He that comes in the **Name** of the Lord!

Mt 21.1-11: 21 Now when they drew near Jerusalem, and came to Bethphage, at the Mount of Olives, then Jesus sent two disciples, 2 saying to them, “Go into the village opposite you, and immediately you will find a donkey tied, and a colt with her. Loose them and bring them to Me. 3 And if anyone says anything to you, you shall say, ‘The Lord has need of them,’ and immediately he will send them.”

4 All this was done that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophet, saying: 5 “Tell the daughter of Zion, ‘Behold, your King is coming to you, lowly, and sitting on a donkey, a colt, the foal of a donkey.’”

6 So the disciples went and did as Jesus commanded them. 7 They brought the donkey and the colt, laid their clothes on them, and set Him on them. 8 And a very great multitude spread their clothes on the road; others cut down branches from the trees and spread them on the road. 9 Then the multitudes who went before and those who followed cried out, saying: “Hosanna to the Son of David! ‘Blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord!’ Hosanna in the highest!”

10 And when He had come into Jerusalem, all the city was moved, saying, “Who is this?” 11 So the multitudes said, “This is Jesus, the prophet from Nazareth of Galilee.”

GENESIS 49.10-11 (Heb). The scepter will not depart from Judah, nor the ruler’s staff from between his feet, until he comes to whom it belongs and the obedience of the nations is his. He will tether his donkey to a vine, his colt to the choicest branch; he will wash his garments in wine, his robes in the blood of grapes.

GENESIS 49.10-11 (LXX). 10 A ruler will not cease from Judah, and one who leads from his thighs, until the things laid away for him come, and he is the expectation of nations. 11 Binding his foal to a vine and the foal of his donkey to the branch, he will wash his garment in wine and his cloak in the blood of grapes.

St Ambrose of Milan, *The Patriarchs*, 4.21-22: And so the patriarch is saying this: The inheritance of an unblemished line of succession, traced through the kings, will be kept among the judges and kings of the Jews, “until he comes for whom it has been reserved,” reserved that he may gather together the church of God out of the assembly of all the nations and the devotion of the Gentile peoples. That is, this awaits him, this is kept for him as his due—the prerogative of such great grace is given to him.

“And he is the expectation of the nations.” Jacob spoke more meaningfully than if he had said, “The nations are expecting him,” for in Christ lies the entire hope of the church.

St Ephrem the Syrian, *Commentary on Genesis 42.6*: When our Lord came, he also bound his foal to the true vine. Just as all the symbols are fulfilled by him, he would fulfill in truth even this that was handed down to them in likeness. Either there was a vine in Jerusalem outside of the sanctuary to which he bound his foal when he entered the temple, or in that city from which the foal came it had been bound to a vine. He said, “If they say to you, ‘Why are you untying this foal?’ say to them, ‘The master requires it.’”

PROPHET ZEPHANIAH 3.14-15. Sing, O Daughter of Zion; shout aloud, O Israel! Be glad and rejoice with all your heart, O Daughter of Jerusalem! The Lord has taken away your punishment, He has turned back your enemy. The Lord, the King of Israel, is with you; never again will you fear any harm. On that day they will say to Jerusalem, “Do not fear, O Zion; do not let your hands hang limp. The Lord your God is with you, He is mighty to save. He will take great delight in you, He will quiet you with His love, He will rejoice over you with singing.”

St Cyril of Alexandria, *Commentary on Zephaniah 43*: As far as the deeper meaning of the passage is concerned, it clearly commands Jerusalem to rejoice exceedingly, to be especially glad, to cheer up wholeheartedly as its trespasses are wiped out, evidently through Christ. The spiritual and holy Zion—that is, the church, the holy multitude of the believers—is justified in Christ and only in him.

PROPHET ZECHARIAH 9.9-15. Rejoice greatly, O Daughter of Zion! Shout, Daughter of Jerusalem! See, your King come to you, righteous and having salvation, gentle and riding on a donkey, on a colt, the foal of a donkey.

St Justin, Philosopher & Martyr, *Dialogue with Trypho the Jew, 53*: Indeed, our Lord Jesus Christ, when he was about to enter Jerusalem, ordered his disciples to get him the ass with its foal, which was tied at a gate of the village of Bethphage, and he rode upon it as he entered Jerusalem. Since it had been explicitly foretold that the Christ would do precisely this, and when he had done it in the sight of all he furnished clear proof that he was the Christ. ... The prophetic spirit, as well as the patriarch Jacob, mentioned the ass, an animal accustomed to the yoke, and its foal, which were in his possession. Then he asked his disciples, as I have said before, to lead the beasts to him. This constituted a prediction that both you coming from the synagogue and those who would come from the Gentiles would believe in him. As the unharnessed foal was a figure of the former Gentiles, so the ass, accustomed to the yoke, was a symbol of those coming from among your people [the Jews].