

# THE TRIUMPHAL ENTRY

## INTRO

Right at the heart of today's passage is this: **who is Jesus?** (video)

Everybody always wants to make Jesus in their image – He won't do it.

- Pharisees – *sinful failure* – wouldn't sin, wouldn't fail
- Crowd – *conquering king* – didn't pick up a sword
- Schweitzer – *overcome by history (crushed by wheel of history)* – changed the world, as planned
- Andrew Lloyd Webber – *self-doubt* - knew exactly what He was doing
- Pullman – *good man / scoundrel* – lived sacrificially, very deliberately started what He did

Jesus came to fulfil everything that God had promised. He wouldn't be distracted, side-tracked or commandeered.

## CLIMAX / ANTICLIMAX

Just before this, Jesus has performed some His most amazing miracles – healing a man born blind (Luke) and raising Lazarus from the dead after four days (John). Amazed by all they have seen, and swept up in the realisation that their promised King has finally come, the people spontaneously burst into song. They praise Him all the way down the Mount of Olives, despite the protesting of the Pharisees, and then...

- He weeps (foresees rejection)
- His palace is not ready (clearing temple)
- He is not welcomed (looks around, goes home, spends next week defending self and warning against Pharisees)

Why the anti-climax? Because everyone had misunderstood what He had come to do.

## LONGSTANDING PROMISES

[Mitsuaki Omata, April 1945](#) – witnessed crash of B-52 bomber in which all 11 airmen died. After burying them, made promise to his father to trace all their families and allow them to grieve at the graveside. 70 years before last family traced and visited.

God's promises about Christ go back much further. Nearly 2000 years before, Jacob prophesied:

*The sceptre will not depart from Judah, nor the ruler's staff from between his feet,  
until he to whom it belongs shall come and the obedience of the nations shall be his.  
He will tether his donkey to a vine, his colt to the choicest branch; (Genesis 49:10-11)*

"Nations" always meant "not just Israel". God's plan is to bring all nations under His good rule, through a descendant of Judah. Even in this early prophecy, the King is connected with gentleness – a donkey, not a horse, camel or chariot. **Jesus came to open God's Kingdom to everyone.**

500 years before Christ, Zechariah prophesies about Jesus again:

*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.  
I will take away the chariots from Ephraim and the war-horses 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. (Zech 9:9-10)*

This develops the theme – God’s promised King would come, riding on a donkey. And His mission would be peace to the nations – an end to war. This is why Jesus was never going to come to lead a rebel army against the Romans! Every war ever fought is the product of someone’s sin: jealousy, greed, oppression, hate, selfishness. Jesus came to put an end to war by striking it at the source. Jesus did not come primarily to deal with the symptoms, but to kill the source. This is why Christians talk about “being born again”: in welcoming Jesus as Lord, we die to our old way of life which thrives on living for self, and accept the life of Jesus which thrives on purity and selflessness. And so, person by person, soul by soul, **Jesus came to defeat sin.**

How did Jesus plan to do this?

800 years before Jesus, Isaiah prophesied:

*Who has believed our message? To whom has the Lord revealed his powerful arm?  
My servant grew up in the Lord’s presence like a tender green shoot, like a root in dry ground.  
There was nothing beautiful or majestic about his appearance, nothing to attract us to him.  
He was despised and rejected— a man of sorrows, acquainted with deepest grief.  
We turned our backs on him and looked the other way. He was despised, and we did not care.*

*Yet it was our weaknesses he carried; it was our sorrows that weighed him down.  
And we thought his troubles were a punishment from God, a punishment for his own sins!  
But he was pierced for our rebellion, crushed for our sins.  
He was beaten so we could be whole. He was whipped so we could be healed.  
All of us, like sheep, have strayed away. We have left God’s paths to follow our own.  
Yet the Lord laid on him the sins of us all. (Isaiah 53:1-6)*

**Jesus came to die in our place.**

Everyone wanted to shape Jesus into their vision of what He should be. He wouldn’t let them, and He won’t let us.

What Jesus offers is radical: a total change of life, with a totally clean slate – His perfection in place of our poor attempts at good living. But it comes on His own terms. We can’t make Jesus just a good teacher. He can’t sit alongside veganism or low-carbon living as “another lifestyle choice”. We accept Him as Lord, King, and our future ruler – with all of its benefits – or we don’t accept Him at all.

*[Pray – invite to pray with – receive Jesus as Lord]*

And what He deserves in return is radical: whole-hearted devotion, endless praise. That’s what we’re going to do now.