

## His Final Steps Led to a Donkey <sup>1</sup>

✦ To fulfill every last one of the Lord's promises. (vv.1-5)

✦ To show us Jesus is the greatest kind of King – we need! (vv.6-11)

In the name of Jesus, our gentle, yet determined King and Savior, dearly redeemed:

How do parents teach their children the difference between *needs* and *wants*? I'd recommend listening to Pastor Mike Novotny's Palm Sunday sermon on *Time of Grace*. He and his wife taught their young daughters three songs as foundational for their faith: "Jesus Loves Me, this I know, for the Bible tells me so." That one calmed my nerves as a two-year-old behind the bandages on my eyes. Second family hit, "I Am Jesus' Little Lamb." Reminds me of a tiny preemie I baptized in the hospital, then sang that song while she power-gripped my finger with her little hand. Third song from the Novotny family faith foundation? Rolling Stones: "You Can't Always Get What You Want." (11M views, 7:38)

Parents who try to teach the difference between *needs* and *wants* may need an imaginary wall like one couple. They give each other or themselves "Parent of the Year" awards. No room for sarcasm?

*Wants* are so ingrained in our culture we can't decide our preferences in Geekdom. Some are obviously little micros who have grown soft, always biting on their little betas. One named himself "Andros," Greek for "man," wants to be a little robot "Droid." Maybe they *need* more fruit in their diet.

So what do you really need in your life? In your heart? Deep in your soul? This place is called a "sanctuary." Is that because God's holy Word is here or is this also a safe "sanctuary" for you no matter what? What if your heart is broken and your spirit broken down? What if you feel like a hypocrite? Can you come? Are you welcome? Do you need this King? **His Final Steps Led to a Donkey !**

✦ To fulfill every last one of the Lord's promises. (vv.1-5)

The folks who came with Jesus and those who streamed out of Jerusalem to meet Him that first Palm Sunday had been waiting for a long, long time. God's chosen people of Israel had been told about the Messiah for centuries, right down to the last details of this day. 700 years earlier this through Isaiah: ***Tell the daughter of Zion: "Look, your salvation is coming. Look, his reward is with him, and his compensation is out in front of him."*** (62:11 EHV) About 500 years earlier Zechariah: ***"Rejoice greatly, Daughter of Zion! Shout, Daughter of Jerusalem! Look! Your King is coming to you. He is righteous and brings salvation. He is humble and is riding on a donkey, on a colt, the foal of a donkey."*** (9:9)

Those crowds had some serious problems that they *wanted* / *needed* this famous teacher to solve as their Christ, their Messiah, their kind of King! The government was terribly corrupt. Officials in power bent the laws for political purposes. Taxes sky high; no one cared except the taxpayers. Immorality of the conquering culture beyond gross and embarrassing. Killing babies – born and unborn! Sound familiar?

So Jesus fit their *wants* and was quietly proving that He could **fulfill every last one of the Lord's promises**. Jesus was omniscient – science in the omni-sense of all-knowing. ***"Go to the village ahead of you. Immediately you will find a donkey tied there along with her colt. Untie them and bring them to me. If anyone says anything to you, you are to say, 'The Lord needs them,' and he will send them at once."*** That would make King Jesus omniscient and omnipotent – almighty with just His words! In fact, to ride an unbroken colt with its mother right there calls for the Creator – whom animals must obey! **His Final Steps Led to a Donkey – To fulfill every last one of the Lord's promises.**

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<sup>1</sup> Based on NPH Lenten Series 2023, by Glenn Schwanke: *His Final Steps*. (NPH 1-800-662-6022)

## ✦ To show us Jesus is the greatest kind of King – we need! (vv.6-11)

Aside from being willing, how could that untrained colt carry a full grown man through crowds shouting and chanting? Now would you feel confident to carry such a King in your heart? Would He accept you if you came? Since He knows all things, couldn't He look deep inside you and see everything? Know what you were going to say before you said it? Would He be angry or welcome you?

*“They brought the donkey and the colt, laid their outer clothing on them, and he sat on it. A very large crowd spread their outer clothing on the road. Others were cutting branches from the trees and spreading them out on the road.”* They must have considered Him a worthy King. Animals had passed that way before. And you know what animals leave to the east when heading west. Plus if that's your only cloak for the Passover feast, will you be holding your breath as the donkeys walk on it?

It would be so easy to get caught up in that crowd! In front and behind they're all shouting: *“Hosanna to the Son of David! Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord! Hosanna in the highest!”* *Hosanna* – Hebrew for *Save us now!* Quoting that great Holy Week Psalm 118, the foremost of Messianic psalms, the last of the Passover collection and maybe the last hymn Jesus and the apostles sang Holy Thursday evening. And this is where the *wants* of loyal citizens began to fall apart.

No one but God knew that for this King, **His Final Steps Led to a Donkey**. They could not realize Jesus had only less than a week to prove He could meet their desires with deeds. They *needed* / *wanted* a Champion to conquer the hated Roman invaders. He could raise the dead – soldiers too. Under siege, all Jesus needed was a little boy's lunch to feed thousands. He did it before, He could do it again. Plus heal the sick, drive out demons, and call on legions of angels. How could the Romans stand up to Jewish Messiah-King like that? So it's a fair question: How many of the enemy did Jesus kill that week?

None! He would not even give the religious/government officials the answer they wanted about taxes. Remember? “Should we pay taxes to Caesar or not?” With a simple coin Jesus silenced them. “Whose image and inscription is this?” “Caesar's.” “Then give to Caesar what is Caesar's and to God what is God's.” (Matthew 22:17-21) People think it's all about politics, but God sees deep in our hearts. As when someone asked Abraham Lincoln, “Is God on the side of the South or the North?” Previously agnostic, Lincoln read his Bible more and more as the war dragged on, feeling his *need*. He answered: “God is always on the side of right. It is my fervent prayer that we may always be on the side of God.”

On Palm Sunday we celebrate King Jesus whose **Final Steps Led to a Donkey**, not a prancing stallion. He rode humbly into Jerusalem to conquer death by dying, to end suffering by suffering the worst a human mind could imagine, to secure forgiveness for all sin by taking all sin on His sinless soul. **His Final Steps Led to a Donkey – To show us that Jesus is the greatest kind of King – we need!**

*“Hosanna!”* – *Save us now!* *“The Son of David”* and Son of God brings glory in the highest by suffering all our shame as humanity here below. He gave His life for you, for me, for all. God's own heart was broken with all our anxiety and fear, as our Substitute under God's wrath. Can you place your heart and all your longings, your doubts, your fears, even your hypocrisy in His hands? They still bear the nail marks from when He spread His arms on the cross to welcome you close to the heart of God.

He needs to be known more and more. Better yet, we need to know Him now before it's too late. *“Who is this?”* the stirred up crowd was asking. *“This is Jesus* (Savior), *the prophet* (Preacher for God in heaven), *from Nazareth in Galilee”* (a place so unimportant to the high and mighty with selfish desires and needs).

Whether you hear this message today or 100 years from now, *“Do this understanding the present time. The hour has come for you to wake up from your slumber, because our salvation is nearer now than when we first believed.”* (Romans 13:11 NIV84) Any day, any hour this King who came the first time to live and to die in our place, will come again in glory – the *Faithful and True*, rider on *a white horse* whom every eye will see and to whom every knee will bow. (Revelation 19:11) Today sing *Hosanna!* Then shout *Hallelujah!* in peace and bliss with God forevermore. This King so kind we need. Amen.