



THE CRUCIFIXION, PART 1

The Road to the Cross

Author: Ruth B. Greiner

Illustrator: Frances H. Hertzler Computer Graphic Artists: Ed Olson, Melody Mayer

PowerPoint Presentation, Interface and Download: LaRue and Mark Bowser

Proofreaders: Audrey Brubaker, Sharon Neal, Dr. Charles Piepgrass, Elinor Rogers

Typesetting and Layout: Patricia Pope

© 2012 Bible Visuals International, PO Box 153, Akron, PA 17501-0153

Phone: (717) 859-1131 Web: www.biblevisuals.org

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NOTE TO THE TEACHER

Display each illustration where indicated in text, laying volume aside when the story line continues beyond the picture.

Lesson #1

THE ENTRY INTO JERUSALEM

Scripture to be studied: Matthew 21:1-17; Mark 11:1-11; Luke 19:28-44; John 12:12-19; Psalm 118:26; Zechariah 9:9.

The aim of the lesson: Seek to lead your students to understand that the Lord Jesus Christ waits for each individual to recognize and receive Him as Saviour and King.

What your students should know: Someday the Lord Jesus will return to earth and reign as King. Until then He desires to rule the heart of each believer.

What your students should feel: A desire to let the Lord Jesus Christ rule their hearts and minds.

What your students should do: Give the Lord Jesus the right to control their lives.

Lesson outline (for the teacher's and students' notebooks):

1. Jesus prepares to enter Jerusalem (Matthew 21:1-6; Mark 11:1-6; Luke 19:28-34).
2. Crowds of people praise Jesus (Matthew 21:7-9; Mark 11:7-10; Luke 19:35-40; John 12:12-19).
3. Jesus weeps over Jerusalem (Luke 19:41-44; Matthew 21:10-11).
4. Jesus rebukes the Jewish leaders (Matthew 21:12-17; Mark 11:11).

The verse to be memorized:

For even the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give His life a ransom for many. (Mark 10:45)

THE LESSON

For hundreds of years the people of Israel (known as Israelites or Jews) had been waiting for One to come from God—One who would be their King. God had caused the prophet Isaiah to predict that the coming One would sit upon the throne and rule the kingdom of Israel. (See Isaiah 9:6-7.) God had the Psalmist write another prophecy about the One who would come: “He will have dominion also from sea to sea . . . Yea, all kings will fall down before Him: all nations will serve Him” (Psalm 72:8, 11).

The Jewish people knew that God would keep His promise. What they did not grasp was that before the promised One would rule His Kingdom, He had to suffer and die as a sacrifice

NOTE TO THE TEACHER

It is interesting to observe that about one-third of all that is recorded in the first four books of the New Testament has to do with the events surrounding the death of Christ. While we cannot completely cover all the details, we shall use this volume and the next to try to be as thorough as possible.

One of the fascinating studies of Scripture is fulfilled prophecy. Many of the details up to and including the death of Christ were clearly foretold in the Old Testament. We shall see how some of those prophecies were fulfilled.

In this lesson we see a prophecy fulfilled when Jesus entered into Jerusalem riding on a donkey colt. Although Jesus offered Himself as King of Israel that day, He was rejected. Because He had known His people would reject Him, He told them they would be punished. Their beautiful capital city (Jerusalem), He said, would be completely destroyed. (See Luke 19:43-44.) And it was! (Titus and his Roman army destroyed it in the year AD 70.)

As Jerusalem was punished for rejecting Him, so there is punishment for the sinner who rejects Him: eternal separation from God.

for the sins of all people everywhere. It seems strange they did not understand this, for that He should suffer was foretold as clearly as the fact that He would be King. In the next volume of lessons we shall learn some of the Scriptures that prophesied His suffering. (*Teacher:* You may want to discuss briefly two of these prophecies: Psalm 22:1-21; Isaiah 53:7-9.)

Because God has all knowledge, He knew exactly how the Jewish people would respond to the Lord Jesus when He offered Himself to be their King. Here is what happened:

1. JESUS PREPARES TO ENTER JERUSALEM

Matthew 21:1-6; Mark 11:1-6; Luke 19:28-34

The Lord Jesus and His disciples left the town of Bethany where they had been visiting. They walked along the road that

led over the Mount of Olives to Jerusalem. When they reached a small town (Bethphage) on the mountain slope, Jesus said to two of His disciples, “Go into the village. As you enter you will find a donkey and a colt upon which no one has ever ridden. Untie them and bring them to Me.”

The disciples wondered: *What will the people in the village say when they see us untie a donkey and a colt which do not belong to us?*

Because He knew their thoughts, Jesus said, “If anyone asks why you are untying them, simply say, ‘The Lord needs them.’ And they will let you take them.”

The two disciples may have had questions: Why does Jesus want a donkey? He has always walked before. Why does He want to ride now? But they immediately obeyed the command of the Lord Jesus.

At the crossroads, one of the disciples exclaimed, “There are the donkey and the colt tied at that house just as Jesus said!” They hurried to untie the animals.



Show Illustration #1

“Why are you untying them?” the men standing nearby demanded.

“The Lord needs them,” one disciple answered.

Surprisingly the men let the disciples take the donkey and colt—as Jesus had said they would! Then the disciples realized what was about to happen. The Lord Jesus was going to ride into Jerusalem, as kings (of Israel) had done in days gone by. He would not ride elegantly (as kings usually did) on a white horse. He chose to ride simply on a donkey colt, a beast of burden. (*Teacher:* You may wish to explain that because horses were used in war, a horse would have caused the people to think of war. Donkeys were used for peaceful journeys—so the donkey colt would help them to think of peace.)

2. CROWDS OF PEOPLE PRAISE JESUS

Matthew 21:7-9; Mark 11:7-10; Luke 19:35-40; John 12:12-19



Show Illustration #2

After the disciples placed their outer robes on the colt, Jesus sat upon it. Strangely enough the colt did not kick or balk as colts ordinarily do when being ridden for the first time. Instead, that colt yielded to the control of its Creator (see John 1:3; Colossians 1:16) and willingly carried Him—the Son of God—upon its back. The disciples did not understand all that was happening. (See John 12:16.)

But later they remembered that this very occasion had been foretold by the prophet Zechariah about 500 years before: “Tell Jerusalem, your King is coming to you riding humbly upon the colt of a donkey” (Zechariah 9:9).

Crowds of people gathered. Many wanted to honor Jesus. Some put their robes on the road. They cut down branches of trees and spread them as a royal carpet for Him. Others waved palms in the air.

Some walked joyfully in front of Jesus; others followed. They exclaimed: “Blessed is the King who comes in the name of the Lord! Peace in Heaven and glory in the highest! Hosanna [save now]!” Men, women and children shouted joyously for all the mighty works they had seen Jesus do—especially for having brought a dead man back to life. (See John 12:17-18.)

What other king could do this? Again and again they exclaimed: “Blessed is the King who comes in the name of the Lord!”

Some of the Jewish religious leaders (the Pharisees) disliked what they heard and saw. “Master, rebuke Your followers for saying such things!” they commanded Jesus.

But Jesus answered. “I tell you that if these people would stop shouting, the stones would cry out.” The Pharisees had never heard stones talk, but by now they should have known that Jesus could do anything. However, the stones did not cry out because the people kept calling out loudly.

3. JESUS WEEPS OVER JERUSALEM

Luke 19:41-44; Matthew 21:10-11



Show Illustration #3

When the procession reached the top of the Mount of Olives, the people could see before them the magnificent city of Jerusalem. Jerusalem, with its beautiful marble, stone, silver and choice wood, was regarded as one of the wonders of the world. The golden roof of the temple glittered in the sunlight. What a sight! But Jesus was not glad when He saw Jerusalem. No! Tears rolled down His cheeks even though the people around Him joyfully shouted His praises. Why did Jesus weep? Because He knew that many people in Jerusalem hated Him. They did not want Him to be their King. They would soon reject Him. Because of their rejection, God the Father would punish that city.

Looking at Jerusalem, Jesus cried, “If only you knew the peace which could be yours! But you’ve turned it down.” He then made this prophecy: “The day [of punishment] is coming when your enemies will come upon you to destroy your city. They will not leave one stone upon another. You and your children will be punished because you rejected the opportunity God has given you” (the opportunity of receiving their King, God the Son—John 1:11).

The people waving the palm branches did not feel the sadness Jesus felt. They did not understand that their beautiful city would be destroyed. Nor did they understand that within only a few days the Lord Jesus would suffer and die, bearing upon Himself the sins of the people in Jerusalem—and the sins of all the world. So the shouting continued, “Hosanna! Blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord, even the King of Israel.”

The crowd pushed up and into Jerusalem, causing all the city to be stirred. “Who is this?” the city people demanded.

The multitude with Christ answered, “It is Jesus, the prophet from Nazareth of Galilee.”

Moments before they had declared He was King. Now they called Him a prophet. They did not believe their own words! No, they did not truly accept Him as King—they believed Him to be only one more prophet. He was rejected by His own people.

4. JESUS REBUKES THE JEWISH LEADERS

Matthew 21:12-17; Mark 11:11



The Lord Jesus went to the temple. To Him, that temple was His Father’s house. More and more people followed Him. The blind and lame found their way to Him and He healed them!

Show Illustration #4

More loudly than ever the children called out, “Hosanna to the Son of David!”

When the chief priests and other

Jewish leaders saw the wonderful things Jesus did and when they heard the words of the children, they were angry. "Do you hear what they are saying?" they asked Jesus.

He answered, "Have you never read [in Psalm 8:2] that God brings praise out of the mouths of children?" What could the leaders say to that? Nothing!

Finally, when evening came, the Lord Jesus left the temple and returned to Bethany with His 12 disciples. What a day it had been! And, oh, what was ahead!

Some of that same crowd would shout again within a few days. But as we shall see in a later lesson, they would shout much differently.

The day of which we have studied is known in some parts of the world as Palm Sunday. The events of that day took place almost 2,000 years ago. The prophecy which said One would ride into the city of Jerusalem on a donkey colt (Zechariah 9:9) was perfectly fulfilled.

The prophecy Jesus made regarding the destruction of the city of Jerusalem was fulfilled later. For in the year AD 70, Titus and his Roman army ruined it so completely that not one stone was left upon another.

What about the prophecies which said Jesus would be King? When were they fulfilled? They were not fulfilled. Why? Because not every prophecy in the Bible has been fulfilled. And this is one of those. The day is even yet in the future when the Lord Jesus Christ will be King over the world. One day He will come from Heaven, sitting upon a white horse. On His head will be many crowns. Then He will be owned by the Jews as King. (See Revelation 19:11-16.)

Just as other prophecies have been fulfilled, this too will be fulfilled. Much more must happen before that day. We shall be studying about those events in the months ahead.

Christ came to earth the first time to be the Saviour of the world. He accomplished that purpose when He died on the cross. Today those who believe Him to be the Son of God and place their trust in Him, receive new natures. And as the donkey colt was tamed by its Creator, so the heart of a true believer is tamed by Him. (See 2 Corinthians 5:17.)

Even though we must wait for the day when He will return to earth and reign as King, today we who trust in Him may allow Him to rule our hearts and minds. Will *you* give Him that privilege?