

- *Three attitudes to Jesus*

1. Jesus is loved by God

- *The colt – miraculous guidance*

- *Special help*

- *Supernatural help*

2. Jesus is misunderstood by His disciples

- *Honoured but full of misunderstanding*

- *A hero for the common people and rejected by the leaders*

- *The disciples have a misguided idea of Messiahship – political and earthly*

Luke's story now reaches Jesus' final approach to the city of Jerusalem. Still He is striding ahead of the disciples^{□1}. He comes now to Bethphage and Bethany, two villages side by side on the outskirts of Jerusalem^{□2}. Three attitudes to Jesus are visible in the story of His entry into Jerusalem.

1. **Jesus is loved by God.** God provides for Jesus' needs. Jesus sends two disciples to the nearest village, Bethphage, to fetch a colt for Him to ride^{□1}. The story of the colt has been interpreted in various ways. Has some kind of prior arrangement been made, with the words 'The Lord has need of it' as a kind of password? No; the fact that the story receives special attention suggests that something miraculous is happening here. It seems that both Jesus and the colt's owners have been given miraculous guidance from God. 'The Lord' refers to God the Father (Jesus was not generally called 'the Lord' during His lifetime). It is like the story of Peter and Cornelius who both received divine guidance^{□2} and so were miraculously brought together by God. The implication is that God is giving Jesus special help at this crucial time of His life. He needs an ass's colt to fulfil prophecy^{□3}. God provides what is needed, giving miraculous guidance both to Jesus and to some sympathisers in the suburbs of Jerusalem.

What is also unusual here is that no one has ever ridden the colt before^{□1} and, therefore, it is likely to be badly behaved with its first rider. This means that Jesus will be getting supernatural help as He rides into Jerusalem on an untrained colt. The disciples put cloaks on the colt and Jesus rides into Jerusalem^{□2}.

2. **Jesus is misunderstood by His disciples.** Jesus' disciples honour Him as He enters Jerusalem, but as they do so they are full of misunderstanding. Jesus rides into Jerusalem in a very public way. The leaders of Israel will never have an opportunity to claim that they had no chance to receive Jesus. Jesus had often avoided publicity but now He knows that the time for avoiding publicity has finished. The common people claim to be Jesus' disciples and receive Him as a hero. They throw their cloaks on the ground making a kind of royal carpet for Him to ride along^{□1}. The leaders of Israel will reject Jesus but He has many disciples and supporters among the ordinary people of Jerusalem. The common people think Jesus is some kind of Messiah, and it is clear that the leaders of Israel believe that Jesus is claiming to be Israel's king and messiah.

The disciples have a rather misguided idea of Messiahship. They still think that Jesus will be a political Messiah, who will save Israel from their colonial oppressors, the Romans. The people love the idea that Jesus is the Messiah but they have a completely wrong idea of what the 'Messiah' is. However, many of these people are true disciples. Even the twelve apostles thought that Jesus' Messiahship was political and earthly. James and John wanted to be leading personalities in the new state of Israel that they believed was coming^{□1}. Even after the resurrection Peter was still hoping for

□1 19:28

□2 19:29

□1 19:30-34

□2 Acts 10:3-6; 9-16

□3 see Zechariah 9:9

□1 19:30

□2 19:35

□1 19:36

□1 Mark 10:35-37

something very political^{□2}.

□2 see Acts 1:6

• True today also

It still happens. People think that Jesus will be a social reformer or a moral advisor or even a prayer-answerer who will help them pay the rent. Jesus can be all of these things but we have not seen Jesus rightly if this is all we see.

• Many admirers who changed their view within a few days

Many of these admirers of Jesus would be deluded by the religious leaders of Jerusalem within a few days. Now they were praising God for His miracles^{□1} and crying out, 'Blessed is the king who comes in the name of the Lord.' They thought He would bring 'Peace in heaven and glory in the highest!' God Himself is at peace because His King comes to Jerusalem. However, we must not try to interpret these words too exactly. They are not being used by scholars but by the ordinary people of Jerusalem. In a few days' time these same people would be crying, 'Crucify him! Crucify him!'

□1 19:37

• However we see Jesus at first, we must come to see Him as Saviour from our sins

It does not matter why we first come to Jesus, but as time goes on it must become clear to us that Jesus comes to save us from our sins. It is only **this** Jesus of the Bible who is the Saviour. 'Jesus' the rescuer of Israel from Roman colonial oppression was not the real Jesus at all. If, as Jesus makes it clear who He is, we accept Him for who He is, all is well. But if, when we find out more about Jesus, we do not want Him after all, then the Jesus we claimed to believe in never was the Jesus of the Bible. In times of testing many fall from what at first seemed to be faith in Jesus.



• Many fall away from seeming faith

3. Jesus is rejected by the leaders of Israel

3. Jesus is rejected by the leaders of Israel. If the common people misunderstand Jesus but (for the moment) welcome Him, the leaders of Israel misunderstand Jesus and reject Him. The Pharisees are filled with jealousy. They hate the idea of Jesus receiving such honour. They want Jesus to rebuke His disciples, but He will not do it^{□1}. The disciples' praise might be misinformed but their heart is right. He is indeed the Messiah. He has arrived in Jerusalem as its Saviour. Jesus uses a proverbial expression taken from Habakkuk 2:11. If men and women will not praise the Saviour as He arrives in Jerusalem, the city of salvation, then the very stones will cry out in protest.

□1 19:39

• Filled with jealousy

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|  | <p>Dr Michael Eaton is highly respected internationally as a theologian, author, preacher and teacher. He lives in Kenya where he is one of the leaders of the Chrisco Fellowship. His <i>Preaching Through The Bible (PTTB)</i> books are highly popular worldwide. Michael Eaton puts the theological and practical meaning of the Bible in a clear and down-to-earth way so that what is written can be easily understood by the reader.</p> |  |
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