

During our evening Lenten season, we have been having those special Lenten services on Wednesday evenings. The theme of those special services was, “*It Must Happen This Way.*” Really, all of Jesus’ life was a lesson in what must happen to save us. It was necessary that he be born as a man, he must live perfectly for and die. These things must happen as they were written.

We begin Holy Week this week, with Palm Sunday. We see one of the Old Testament sign posts that pointed out what Jesus must do to save us. Jesus must fulfill all of the Scriptures exactly as they were written to follow the plan that God laid out.

1: It Must Happen This Way: As the Scriptures Say, He Must Be Humble

Zechariah 9: 9,10. Rejoice greatly, O Daughter of Zion! Shout, Daughter of Jerusalem! See, your king comes to you, righteous and having salvation, gentle and riding on a donkey, on a colt, the foal of a donkey.

¹⁰I 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

I have some friends who play the game of pool. The game with the table and the balls and the cue sticks. When I play pool, I hit the cue ball really hard and hope that one of my kind of ball goes in the pocket. Then I get another turn.

The game that my friends play is very different because they are very good at the game. They can’t just hit the cue ball really hard, they have to call their shot. They have to tell what they are planning to do and which ball they are planning to hit in, before they ever take the shot. The only way they get another turn is if what they say actually happens.

Now I’ve known my friends since high school, but one thing that I have never seen is for them to call their shots, say what is going to happen before the game starts. It would be even more amazing if they called their shots the day before. But what if someone else called every single shot of their game before they were even born? That would be something unbelievable, wouldn’t it?

This unbelievable thing is what God did in the Old Testament. Before it ever happened God gave specific prophecies of how he would save the world. Long before Jesus was ever born, God told the world exactly what the Messiah would do. He left detailed prophecies like this one from Zechariah so that the people would know who the Messiah was when he did these things that were written in the Old Testament.

These things must happen just as God said they would. This prophecy from Zechariah shows Jesus entering into Jerusalem like a victorious king. Jesus will not sneak into Jerusalem and die secretly. He must ride into Jerusalem for all to see. Yet, he will be different and the people will know it. He is not a king who is draped in royal robes, surrounded by his kingly court or riding in a golden war chariot. Instead he comes humbly, gently, riding on a donkey. His message would be different too. He would declare a victory for Israel or Jerusalem, he would be declaring something that would extend for the whole world.

Long before it ever happened, God wrote down his plan of salvation. He invites us to come and see what must happen. This is our Messiah who will bring us victory over sin, death and the devil.

Sermonette #2: It Must Happen This Way: He Must Ride Into Jerusalem The Gospel for Palm Sunday: Mark 11:1-10

Even though my friends are good at pool, they don't win every game and they don't make every shot. Still, there are times that they call a shot that is so amazing you don't really think it's going to happen. They are going to play all the angles, go off a bunch of rails, hit a number of balls and then that one ball is going to go in. You think to yourself, that's never going to happen. But it does. It's really cool when something when you see something like that.

It seems unbelievable that God laid out his plan to save the world in the Old Testament for the whole world to see. It is amazing that God would love the world enough to send a Messiah to save the world. It is even more amazing that God would be willing to send his own Son to do this work for us. A part of that work would be fulfilling the Scriptures, the prophecies, just as God said they would happen.

Jesus entered Jerusalem many times. There were times that he went in when people would know who he was and others where no one noticed him. Yet, the prophecy said that there would be a time that people would see this king of peace and mercy ride into Jerusalem and be hailed as a victorious king. Yet, he would be different. The people would know his message is one of mercy and forgiveness.

That's exactly what happened. Early that morning, Jesus sends his disciples to go find this colt so that the Scripture would be fulfilled as it must happen. Jesus would enter Jerusalem so that everyone would see.

As the crowds begin to gather, excitement builds, and the news spreads. Here comes Jesus just like the prophecy says. He was welcomed with shouts and cheers, with waving palm branches, just as the conquering kings were welcomed.

This type of celebration usually happens after the victory has been won or at least when it is clear who will win. But this happening at a different time, Jesus had not yet fought his battle.

This entrance stands in contrast. As Jesus stands before Pilate he should have had this kind praise and thanks. As he hung on the cross the people should have been singing hymns to him.

Yet, we know instead of this praise, at the end of the week there was only mocking and abuse, no shouts and cheers only yells of Crucify.

Jesus entry into Jerusalem stands in contrast to what happens at the end of the week. It must happen this way. He must ride in to the cheers of the same people who would turn on him during the week and put him to death.

As they approached Jerusalem and came to Bethphage and Bethany at the Mount of Olives, Jesus sent two of his disciples, ² saying to them, "Go to the village ahead of you, and just as you enter it, you will find a colt tied there, which no one has ever ridden. Untie it and bring it here. ³ If anyone asks you, 'Why are you doing this?' tell him, 'The Lord needs it and will send it back here shortly.' "

⁴ They went and found a colt outside in the street, tied at a doorway. As they untied it, ⁵ some people standing there asked, "What are you doing, untying that colt?" ⁶ They answered as Jesus had told them to, and the people let them go. ⁷ When they brought the colt to Jesus and threw their cloaks over it, he sat on it. ⁸ Many people spread their cloaks on the road, while others spread branches they had cut in the fields. ⁹ Those who went ahead and those who followed shouted,

"Hosanna!" "Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord!"

¹⁰ "Blessed is the coming kingdom of our father David!"

"Hosanna in the highest!"

**Sermonette #3. It Must Happen This Way: He Must Be Humble to Save Us
Philippians 2:5-11.**

⁵Your attitude should be the same as that of Christ Jesus: ⁶Who, being in very nature God, did not consider equality with God something to be grasped, ⁷but made himself nothing, taking the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness. ⁸And being found in appearance as a man, he humbled himself and became obedient to death— even death on a cross!

⁹Therefore God exalted him to the highest place and gave him the name that is above every name, ¹⁰that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, ¹¹and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

One of the least talked about parts of what Jesus did to save us is Jesus' humility in obeying all that his Father said needed to be done to save us. Jesus knew why he was on the earth and he did not turn from that purpose.

Think about that entrance into Jerusalem.... this is the equivalent of a ticker-tape parade. This celebration was being thrown in Jesus' honor. Who wouldn't want this kind of notoriety, this fame and fortune? Who wouldn't lose themselves even for a moment and join in with the fun? Who of us wouldn't think that this is something that we deserved.

This was praise and thanks that Jesus deserved as the Son of God, yet, he did not join in. He did not ask the crowd for more, he did not play to them so they would get louder. He did not do this because his way was clear. He must humble himself so that he could die for us.

The apostle Paul shows us a big contrast between the humility of Jesus and our own sinful pride and ego. Even though Jesus was God, he did not consider the praise and glory, the honor and respect, of his Godship something to take hold of, something to claim, while he was here on earth.

Most of the time if something in the Lost and Found is ours we claim it....because it's ours. But Jesus did not do claim what was rightfully his as God. He could have claimed his right as the Son of God and crown himself the king of Israel. But, instead, he set aside the full use of his heavenly power and glory while he was here on earth. He willingly submitted to the plan of his heavenly Father. Jesus humbled himself and became obedient to the same Law that we are born under, he became obedient to the natural laws that we live with, he even humbled himself and became obedient to death.

Contrast that to you and me. One of the deep desires of man's heart is to be God. This desire shows itself in many ways. The Pharaoh's and the Caesar's declared themselves gods on earth. The stars seem to think that they are above other people even the Law sometimes and do things that they want to do. Yet, this desire shows itself in smaller ways too. Maybe these are the ways that we understand.

We don't want to listen to God's Word and follow what he says. We think we have a more enlightened look at the world than God does, so we change his Word. We think that we deserve honor and praise for who we are and what we've done. Although, we are not perfect or wise, we want to grasp, we want to take hold of something that we do not deserve. We want to claim God's glory and honor for ourselves when it is not really ours.

Paul says, "Your attitude should be the same as Christ Jesus." Jesus knew who he was, he knew why he was here. He was willing to follow God's plan for us. He was willing to fulfill the Scriptures, to march into Jerusalem, even to die for us.

Our attitude should be the same, not grounded in our own actions and accomplishments. Rather we should be grounded, just as Jesus was in a loving God who has sent a loving Savior. Our attitude is found in what Jesus has done for us to make us part of his family. Then knowing who you are means that you can take that same attitude out into the world and put it into action, following God's plan wherever it leads. This is thanks to a Savior who has fulfilled the Scriptures for us so that we could be forgiven.

To save us, Jesus must be humble. He must follow and obey the plan that his Father laid out for him. That is what we see as Jesus rides into Jerusalem. He is the humble Savior marching on the cross. Amen