



## Sermon Notes

US N°. 53

Date: April 1<sup>st</sup>, 2012

Title: Palm Sunday

1. The Context and the Pretext
  - a. Amy Carmichael's Jesus story
  - b. First Century Judaism
    - i. Roman oppression; rebellion seething under the surface. Taxation upon land and people implied Roman ownership of both land and people, something the Jews found as an abomination. The land, as given to Abraham and his descendants, and the people, as a special nation set aside, were the sole property of YHWH and not Caesar.
      1. Jesus' life is bookended by Roman rule and taxation. The census of Caesar Augustus was intended to determine what taxes could be imposed, and Jesus is crucified as a threat to Caesar. No accident that there is tax discussion in the Temple His last week.
    - ii. Israel yearning for the return of Davidic kingdom; feasts were particularly dangerous and merited additional Roman troops.
    - iii. Today's parallels
  - c. Salvation looks like what? God's and man's idea of what the problem is and how to solve it are significantly different.
2. The Text (cf. Mt. 21:1-11, Mark 11:1-11, Luke 19:29-44, Jn. 12:12-19)
  - a. The foal and the joyful prophetic fulfillment. Jn. 12:14-16, *"Then Jesus, when He had found a young donkey, sat on it; as it is written: 'FEAR NOT, DAUGHTER OF ZION; BEHOLD, YOUR KING IS COMING, SITTING ON A DONKEY'S COLT.' His disciples did not understand these things at first; but when Jesus was glorified, then they remembered that these things were written about Him and that they had done these things to Him."*
    - i. Zec. 9:9, *"Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion! Shout, O daughter of Jerusalem! Behold, your King is coming to you; He is just and having salvation, lowly and riding on a donkey, a colt, the foal of a donkey."*
    - ii. Meekness & Majesty
    - iii. Talmudists themselves interpreted it as a sign of lowliness. *"For the ass is not a more peaceful animal than the horse, but a more vicious one."*
  - b. The people, and parallels with the return of the Ark of the Covenant. Jn. 12:12-13, 17-18, *"The next day a great multitude that had come to the feast, when they heard that Jesus was coming to Jerusalem, took branches of palm trees and went out to meet Him, and cried out: 'Hosanna! 'BLESSED IS HE WHO COMES IN THE NAME OF THE LORD!' The King of Israel!' ...Therefore the people, who were with Him when He called Lazarus out of his tomb and raised him from the dead, bore witness. For this reason the people also met Him, because they heard that He had done this sign."*
    - i. The crowds are desperate for deliverance, following Jesus for His works & wonders.
      1. Hosanna – *"Save now, we pray you."*
      2. Son of David – c-a-d Messiah
      3. Palm branches – symbolic of peace and rest after suffering (cf. Rev. 7:9)

- ii. The religious leaders are fearful of Roman retribution. Jn. 12:19, *"The Pharisees therefore said among themselves, 'You see that you are accomplishing nothing. Look, the world has gone after Him!'"* Luke 19:39-40, *"And some of the Pharisees called to Him from the crowd, 'Teacher, rebuke Your disciples.' But He answered and said to them, 'I tell you that if these should keep silent, the stones would immediately cry out.'"*
- c. The tears and the grievous prophecy. Luke 19:42-44, *"If you had known, even you, especially in this your day, the things that make for your peace! But now they are hidden from your eyes. For days will come upon you when your enemies will build an embankment around you, surround you and close you in on every side, and level you, and your children within you, to the ground; and they will not leave in you one stone upon another, because you did not know the time of your visitation."* Fulfilled in 70AD by the Roman armies led by General Titus.
- d. The Fig tree. Mark 11:11-14, 20-26, *"And Jesus went into Jerusalem and into the temple. So when He had looked around at all things, as the hour was already late, He went out to Bethany with the twelve. Now the next day, when they had come out from Bethany, He was hungry. And seeing from afar a fig tree having leaves, He went to see if perhaps He would find something on it. When He came to it, He found nothing but leaves, for it was not the season for figs. In response Jesus said to it, 'Let no one eat fruit from you ever again.' And His disciples heard it. Now in the morning, as they passed by, they saw the fig tree dried up from the roots. ...And Peter, remembering, said to Him, 'Rabbi, look! The fig tree which You cursed has withered away.' So Jesus answered and said to them, 'Have faith in God. For assuredly, I say to you, whoever says to this mountain, 'Be removed and be cast into the sea,' and does not doubt in his heart, but believes that those things he says will be done, he will have whatever he says. Therefore I say to you, whatever things you ask when you pray, believe that you receive them, and you will have them. 'And whenever you stand praying, if you have anything against anyone, forgive him, that your Father in heaven may also forgive you your trespasses. But if you do not forgive, neither will your Father in heaven forgive your trespasses.'"*
  - i. Jesus sees the leaves from afar but there was no fruit. Fig trees produce fruit then leaves, thus to see leaves suggested that there should be fruit even if it was not the usual season for fig fruit.<sup>1</sup> Symbolic of Israel as a polity, not a people, having become worthless (fruitless and now withering) in sacred scheme of things.
  - ii. "The other miracle is the cursing of the barren fig tree (Mk. xi 12 ff.), a stumbling block to many. They feel that it is unlike Jesus, and so someone must have misunderstood what actually happened, or turned a spoken parable into an acted miracle, or something like that. Some, on the other hand, welcome the story because it shows that Jesus was human enough to get unreasonably annoyed on occasion. It appears, however, that a closer acquaintance with fig trees would have prevented such misunderstandings. 'The time of the fig is not yet,' says Mark, for it was just before Passover, about six weeks before the fully-formed fig appears. The fact that Mark adds these words shows that he knew what he was talking about. When the fig leaves appear about the end of March, they are accompanied by a crop of small knobs, called taqsh by the Arabs, a sort of fore-runner of the real figs. These taqsh are eaten by peasants and others when hungry. They drop off before the real fig is formed. But if the leaves appear unaccompanied by taqsh, there will be no figs that year. So it was evident to our Lord, when He turned aside to see if there were any of these taqsh on the fig-tree to assuage His hunger for the time being, that the absence of the taqsh meant that there would be no figs when the time of figs came. For all its fair foliage, it was a fruitless and a hopeless tree." (Bruce, *Are The New Testament Documents*

*Reliable?* [Intervarsity Press; Downers Grove, Ill, fifth revised edition 1992], pp. 73-74; bold emphasis ours)

- e. The Temple. Mt. 21:12-16, *"Then Jesus went into the temple of God and drove out all those who bought and sold in the temple, and overturned the tables of the money changers and the seats of those who sold doves. And He said to them, 'It is written, 'MY HOUSE SHALL BE CALLED A HOUSE OF PRAYER,' but you have made it a 'DEN OF THIEVES.'"* Then the blind and the lame came to Him in the temple, and He healed them. But when the chief priests and scribes saw the wonderful things that He did, and the children crying out in the temple and saying, "Hosanna to the Son of David!" they were indignant and said to Him, "Do You hear what these are saying?" And Jesus said to them, *"Yes. Have you never read, 'OUT OF THE MOUTH OF BABES AND NURSING INFANTS YOU HAVE PERFECTED PRAISE'?"*
  - i. The money in use was Roman coin, yet Jewish law required that every man should pay a tribute to the service of the sanctuary of *"half a shekel."* (cf. Ex. 30:11-16) As the tribute had to be paid in Jewish coin it became, therefore, a matter of convenience to have a place where the Roman coin might be exchanged for the Jewish half shekel. This was the *"professed"* business of these men. Of course, they would demand a small sum for the exchange; and, among so many thousands as came up to the great feasts, it would be a very profitable employment, and one easily giving rise to much fraud and oppression. The sacrifices also had to be of a standard that the priests would find acceptable...
  - ii. Is. 56:7, *"Even them I will bring to My holy mountain, and make them joyful in My house of prayer. Their burnt offerings and their sacrifices will be accepted on My altar; for My house shall be called a house of prayer for all nations."*
  - iii. Jer. 7:9-12, *"Will you steal, murder, commit adultery, swear falsely, burn incense to Baal, and walk after other gods whom you do not know, and then come and stand before Me in this house which is called by My name, and say, 'We are delivered to do all these abominations'? Has this house, which is called by My name, become a den of thieves in your eyes? Behold, I, even I, have seen it," says the LORD. "But go now to My place which was in Shiloh, where I set My name at the first, and see what I did to it because of the wickedness of My people Israel."*
  - iv. Ps. 8:2, *"Out of the mouth of babes and nursing infants You have ordained strength, because of Your enemies, that You may silence the enemy and the avenger."*
3. The Passion Week's calendar of events
- a. Friday/Saturday – Jesus arrives in Bethany
  - b. Sunday –
    - i. Triumphal Entry
  - c. Monday –
    - i. The fig tree (cf. Mark 11:12-14, 20-25)
    - ii. Cleansing the Temple (a 2<sup>nd</sup> time)
  - d. Tuesday –
    - i. Teaching in the Temple and questioned about His authority (cf. Mt. 21:23-46) which resulted in the religious leaders decision to kill Jesus.
    - ii. Olivet discourse
    - iii. Anointed with oil by Mary at Simon's feast (cf. Mark 14:1-9, Jn. 12:1-3)
    - iv. Judas agrees to betray Jesus (cf. Mark 14:10-11)
  - e. Wednesday – Teaching in the Temple
  - f. Thursday –

- i. Passover preparations (*cf.* Mt. 26:17-19, Mark 14:12-16)
  - ii. Last Supper (*cf.* Mt. 26:20, Mark 14:17, Luke 22:14-16, 24-30)
  - iii. Gethsemane (*cf.* Mt. 26:30, 36-46, Luke 22:39-46)
- g. Friday – (*cf.* Mt. 26:47–27:66, Luke 22:39-23:56)
  - i. Jesus before Annas & Caiaphas, Peter denies Jesus – sunrise
  - ii. Jesus before Pilate
  - iii. Jesus before Herod
  - iv. Jesus before Pilate a 2<sup>nd</sup> time and flogged – 8am
  - v. Simon of Cyrene carries Jesus’ cross
  - vi. Jesus crucified – 9am
  - vii. Tearing of the Temple curtain and darkness – 12pm
  - viii. Jesus’ death and burial – 3pm to sunset
- h. Saturday – Pilate orders the tomb sealed (*cf.* Mt. 27:61-66, Mark 15:47)
- i. Sunday – Jesus’ resurrection (*cf.* Mt. 28, Luke 23)
- 4. Triumphal entry, passionate week, and a Risen Lord.
  - a. Not all things are as they appear.
  - b. God is able to do more than we can even imagine