

in Matthew 21:1-11 **was** / is ...

"All this was done that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophet, saying: "Tell the daughter of Zion, 'Behold, your King is coming to you, lowly, and sitting on a donkey, a colt, the foal of a donkey.' [Zech. 9:9] So the disciples went and did as Jesus commanded them. They brought the donkey and the colt, laid their clothes on them, and set Him on them." (Matthew 21:4-7)

The two donkeys (a mother and child) were so inseparable that they could be considered as one. Yet, the two “dumb animals” trusted the Lord Jesus and became a two-fold silent witness to him as the true Messiah.

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a key aspect
of the triumphal entry
(Agree? yes, no, partly)

* * *

a lowly
beast of burden
(Agree? yes, no, partly)

* * *

also in
Mk 11:1-10, Lk 19:29-40, Jn 12:12-19
(Agree? yes, no, partly)

* *

as predicted
in Zechariah 9:9
(Agree? yes, no, partly)

* * *

claimed
for the Lord's use (21:3)
(Agree? yes, no, partly)

* *

closely linked to
Jesus himself (21:5)
(Agree? yes, no, partly)

* * *

conscious of
Jesus' meekness (21:5)
(Agree? yes, no, partly)

Descriptive



Meditation

* * *

important
in multiple ways

(Agree? yes, no, partly)

* * *

limited but
not brainless or stupid
(Agree? yes, no, partly)

* * *

not afraid
of the meek Messiah
(Agree? yes, no, partly)

* *

not just
a means of transportation
(Agree? yes, no, partly)

* * *

perhaps the most
important special animal
(Agree? yes, no, partly)

* *

probably
owned by believers (21:3)
(Agree? yes, no, partly)

* *

somewhat like

(Fill in the blank.)

* * *

special but
also very ordinary
(Agree? yes, no, partly)

* * *

very different from
a war horse (Job 39:19-25)
(Agree? yes, no, partly)

Directions: after reading through **Matthew 21:1-11 and some articles on donkeys**, consider and discuss how the young donkey that Jesus rode into Jerusalem is described above. **Do you agree with the various points?** How would you fill in the bonus (pink) card? Was the young donkey and its mother somewhat like Balaam's donkey, the fish in Matthew 17:27, the two blind men in 20:30, or something or someone else? — **At the end of the study, discuss the most important descriptive phrases and make applications, thinking about how the two “dumb” donkeys were actually wiser than the chief priests (21:14-16).** — © 2022 by Jon F. Mahar, Hakusan City, Japan and Alexander, Maine, U.S.A.

How was the young domestic donkey important?

The most obvious reason is because Jesus rode on it when he entered Jerusalem, exactly as predicted in Zedekiah 9:9. Aside from prophetic fulfillment, however, the donkey and its mother bore silent witness to Jesus as the Messiah by accepting him. The two lowly but intelligent animals were conscious of the Lord's gentle spirit. Like our pets, they were sensitive to body language and speech tone.

Did Jesus need to “break” the young donkey in order to ride it?

Mark and Luke report that the younger donkey had never been ridden before, but this does not mean that the younger animal had never previously carried a weight on its back. (Donkeys are often pack animals.) Nevertheless, it required more trust to allow Jesus to ride. So some say that the Lord used his power as Creator to overcome its fear. Maybe so, but Jesus' non-threatening humility as the perfect man must have been a factor as well.

How is the young donkey perhaps the most important special animal?

Of all the animals in this series, the young donkey and its mother were the closest to Jesus. Others, such as Behemoth and Leviathan, testify to God's power, but these two lowly donkeys directly interacted with the Savior and experienced his special meekness.

Why is the young donkey's mother only included in Matthew?

Mark, Luke, and John went for simplicity, but it was normal for a young donkey to be with its mother. Matthew's account is more complete, as were his report on the healing of two blind men in 20:29-34 and two demoniacs in Matthew 8:28-34. All this may coincide with the need for two witnesses in Jewish trials and the fact that Matthew wrote to a Jewish audience.

Did Jesus ride on both donkeys?

The fact that garments were placed upon both animals (21:7) favors this possibility, but it is not certain what happened. If Jesus rode on both animals, it would have been one at a time, and Mark, Luke, and John all show that Jesus was sitting on the younger donkey when he neared and entered the city. Perhaps Jesus rode on the older donkey first and then switched to the colt as they approached the city.

Whom or what were the young donkey and its mother like?

By trusting Jesus, they were wiser than the priests who feared and rejected him (21:12-16). So they also were somewhat like Balaam's donkey which was wiser than its master. (See 2 Peter 2:16.) In addition, the two donkeys were somewhat like the fish with a coin in its mouth in Matthew 17:27. The Lord knew all about both the fish and the donkeys.

What are the applications?

First, we should believe in, trust, and love the Messiah who came exactly as predicted. Second, we should seek with God's help to be meek and humble like the Lord Jesus. (See Matthew 5:3 and Philippians 2:5-11.) Third, we should be willing to turn over our possessions to God like the owner(s) of the two donkeys apparently did, because everything belongs to the Lord.