

A STIR—AND WHAT CAME OF IT

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“And when he was come into Jerusalem, all the city was moved, saying, Who is this?”
Matthew 21:10

MANY things make a stir in a city, and sometimes, these stirs are full of evil. I always think, each time I read Carlyle's history of the French Revolution, how thankful we ought to be that the city of London has not been excited, from end to end, by political storms as the unhappy city of Paris was at that time, and has been many times since.

We are not grateful enough, I fear, for the social order and quiet which reign in our midst. There are other countries where the people, when they go to bed at night, cannot tell what will be the form of government when they wake in the morning—whether they will still be free nations or beneath a tyrant's heel.

I heard an excellent man—one highly esteemed among us—prophesy that before long the streets of London will run with blood. He was afraid of the power of the democracy of whom he stood in great terror. I confess that I have never participated in his fears for a single moment, for I fully believe that, by God's grace, our country will continue for many years to enjoy the blessing which results from having a form of government which, with all its faults and imperfections, is so satisfactory on the whole.

May God grant that we may not, on some future day, have to remember with regret our ingratitude for the peace we now possess—when we have lost it—and may we all do our best to cement the various classes of society together and to promote that Christian love, that spirit of justice, and that spirit of philanthropy, which will tend to hold together the whole nation in bonds that cannot easily be broken.

Let us not be envious. Let us not be proud. Let us not oppress one another and let us not demand too much from one another. Let the golden rule be the rule of life to all with whom we are brought into contact. Let us do to others as we would they should do to us, and so may our country and its capital never be stirred by those terrific senses of strife which would make the pavements run with blood, but may our land enjoy, for many a century, unless Christ should come, the same peace which we have seen in our day!

But there are such things as good stirs—stirs for the better—stirs which help to remove the evil consequences of stagnation. There are, at certain times and seasons, blessed blowings of the sacred wind from heaven through the garden of mankind. And I think, at this period, London is, to a large extent, enjoying just such a stir as that.

At this moment I might almost say, concerning this city, what was said concerning Jerusalem at the time mentioned in our text, “All the city was moved, saying, Who is this?” There is a great religious excitement at the present time—and a spirit of inquiry and an unusual desire to hear the Word. There is more than this, for there is a divine power going forth to convert the people—and thousands have of late have been converted to the knowledge of Jesus Christ our Lord. For one, I am devoutly thankful for this stir, and pray God long to continue it, and to bring the richest possible results out of it.

Concerning the stir mentioned in our text, I want to, ask, first, *what caused this stir?* Secondly, *what was the inquiry, “Who is this?”* And *how do we answer it?* And then, lastly, *what came of this stir?*

I. First, WHAT CAUSED THIS STIR? “All the city was moved.”

The first cause of this moving of the city was that *Jesus was proclaimed King*. True, the proclamation was uttered by children and by the common people, and not by the officers of the state, yet He was proclaimed—and wherever Jesus Christ is proclaimed as King and Lord, there is sure to be a stir.

Even if it be nothing but opposition to Him, there must be some movement, for Christ is never without influence either one way or another. He is never savorless—He is always either a savor of life unto life, or of death unto death. It matters very little who it is that proclaims Jesus as King, for the power is not in the voice that utters the proclamation, but in the truth which is uttered.

If God is pleased to call men of humble birth and small education to preach Jesus Christ, He will get all the more glory because of the feebleness of the instruments He uses. If He should call little children to tell out the Gospel—out of the mouths of babes and sucklings would He perfect His praise. It is what is said, not who says it, that is the important matter. If it be the Gospel, that Gospel will shake the world.

Let Luther's preaching bear witness to that fact. The Gospel preached by a tinker will have an everlasting effect upon those who hear it—let Bunyan's preaching be the witness to that fact. The Gospel preached by one who had been a servant at an inn may influence the entire nation, as witness the case of George Whitefield. It is the Gospel, not the man—the truth, not the mere utterer of it—which is the more important.

Now, dear brethren, at this time we have Jesus Christ very widely proclaimed in London. I believe that most ministers are preaching more about Jesus Christ than they ever did before. Some of our brethren have become very philosophical—they have given way a great deal to modern thought and have lost power thereby—but I believe there is a pretty general return to the lifting up of the brazen serpent on the pole—the preaching of Jesus Christ and Him crucified. And whenever this is the case, if He is proclaimed, the village, the town, the city must be moved thereby.

But there was more than that when all the city of Jerusalem was moved, *for Jesus Christ Himself was present*. He was not proclaimed in His absence. He was riding through the streets in that humble pomp which well suited His character, as well as fulfilled the ancient prophecy concerning Him. But He was there and I warrant you that, if the proclamation of the Gospel be a power, much more a power is the presence of Jesus Christ, who is the sum and substance of the Gospel, a power.

There must be a stir wherever He is. When He goes where demons make their haunts, they flee before Him. When He stands amid the raging elements and says, "Peace: be still," immediately there is a great calm. All nature and all created beings feel the majesty of the presence of the Crucified. The wicked tremble when they perceive Him, but the saints of God, when Jesus comes to them, are stirred in a very different fashion, for they grow strong in His presence.

Some of our troops, in one of the battles in the Peninsula War, seemed likely to give way, the assault of the French upon them being so terrible. But just then, the Duke of Wellington rode up into the center of them, and one man said to his fellow, "Here comes the Duke. How glad I am to see his face! He is worth more to us than ten thousand men—we will soon drive those Frenchmen to the winds now." And so they did, for the presence of their leader seemed to make each man grow into a giant.

The shout of a King is in our midst at this time, for our Lord Jesus Christ has come, in the power of His Spirit, into this city. He has come with His ministers who preach the Gospel simply and faithfully, and He is scattering His foes, and putting them to rout, and is saving souls, and so magnifying His holy name. Where Jesus is proclaimed, and where Jesus Himself is, there must be a stir, as there was in Jerusalem when "all the city was moved, saying, Who is this is?"

I do not wonder that there was a stir in Jerusalem when we reflect that *all Christ's disciples were that day in a very lively state*. They were often inclined to be sleepy or sluggish, as we are. Oh, how idle some Christians are and how readily do we slumber! And if the church of Christ is not itself thoroughly awake, it cannot be expected to arouse the world.

Some preaching is a kind of articulate snoring in which the preacher does not appear to be certain whether he is himself awake and therefore it is not very likely that he will be able to awaken others. But

that day in Jerusalem, Christ's disciples were all full of joy and full of praise to God for all the mighty works that they had seen. Every man's eyes shone with delight. They were, as we say, "all there," all alive, and all in earnest.

That day, too, they were all generous, for they took off their outer garments and laid them on the colt, or strewed them in the way where Jesus was to ride. There was not one of Christ's disciples who was niggardly that day—they were all ready to give what they could to grace His triumph. We shall never see the world converted while the church is so stingy as it often is. There are Christian people who will sing that—

***"They love their God with zeal so great
That they would give Him all,"***

but they never go even to the verge of giving Him all. They seem to have a "saving" faith, in a very bad meaning of that term.

But when Christ's church once brings all her tithes into the storehouse, then will God fulfill His ancient declaration, "Prove me now herewith, saith the Lord of hosts, if I will not open you the windows of heaven, and pour you out a blessing that there shall not be room enough to receive it."

That day, too, *Christ's disciples were all obedient to His orders*. They did as their Master commanded them concerning the fetching of the ass and the colt. You sometimes wonder that the Gospel does not spread more rapidly in the earth. But are disobedient servants likely to do their Master's work well?

If there are commands of Jesus which we persistently ignore—if there are precepts of the Savior which, year after year, we forget—if there are doctrines and other parts of His teaching to which we turn a deaf ear, can we expect Him to bless us? O servants of the Lord, obedience within the church will be sure to bring power outside the church. And the church, moving according to the orders of the great Captain of our salvation, step by step and rank by rank, in Gospel order, will be certain to march on to victory. God will be sure to send a stir when His people are in a right state of heart and life.

A further reason for the stir in Jerusalem was that *multitudes were thronging around Christ*. There is something that stirs one in the sight of a crowd, and oftentimes, we gather power in our preaching by the very sight of the multitude of those who have come to listen to our message. And certainly there is a great charm in that mighty volume of praise which we heard just now, which seemed to roll like the waves of the sea in glory and grandeur.

A preacher is delighted to see crowds coming to hear the Gospel, for he knows that it is good fishing where there is an abundance of fish. So there was a stir in Jerusalem because there were such crowds of people thronging around Christ. I am glad to hear that crowds are going to listen to the Gospel preached and sung by our two American brethren, Moody and Sankey. God grant that, in their services, there may not be merely the excitement of multitudes gathering together, but the power of the Spirit of God working upon the hearts and consciences of the hearers, for where that is felt, there is sure to be a stir in the city.

In Jerusalem there were not only multitudes thronging around Christ, but *miracles were being wrought by Christ*. The lame were leaping, the blind were seeing, the deaf were hearing, the dumb were speaking, and not long before that, a man who had been dead four days had been raised from the grave by the voice of Jesus calling to him, "Lazarus, come forth." No wonder, then, that the whole city was moved.

And nothing moves a family like the salvation of a soul in it. Nothing moves a parish like the conversion of some gross vagabond, some outrageous rebel against his God. If the Lord will but go on saving people in London, we need have no fear about London being moved. Soul-saving work—life to the dead in sin, sight to the spiritually blind, leaping to the spiritually lame—this is what will stir London more than anything else. Therefore pray for it, O you people of God, and you shall see more and more of it.

Hence it was that crowds in Jerusalem were crying, “Hosanna!” How could they help it when Christ was distributing His royal favors on the right hand and on the left? My own heart is ready to cry, “Hosanna,” even over the hope that many have been converted to Jesus. And if it be really so, the angels are rejoicing over those who have repented and returned to the Lord.

They must have been having a grand time of it for the last two or three months at least. Heaven’s music has them constantly increasing in volume as Christ has called together His friends and neighbors, and has said to them, “Rejoice with me; for I have found my sheep which was lost.” Have the angels been rejoicing with Christ over the finding of any of you, dear friends? If they have not, God grant that they soon may do so!

II. Secondly, WHAT WAS THE INQUIRY IN JERUSALEM AND HOW DO WE ANSWER IT? “Who is this?”

They could all see that this movement was around a person, so they did not ask, “What is this?” but “Who is this?” And any preaching that is worth anything tells of the person of Jesus Christ. You cannot enkindle enthusiasm about a mere doctrine. You may lay down certain theses as logically as you will, but they will not stir the soul—you must rally men around a person. It is the presence of his sovereign that makes the soldier brave in the day of battle and it is the preaching of Christ—telling about the person of Christ—lifting Him up in our preaching even as once He was lifted up upon the cross—that is sure to stir the hearts of men. So the crowd asked, “Who is this?” because the personality of Christ had come to the front.

Some probably asked the question in a scoffing, contemptuous fashion—“‘Who is *this*?’ Oh, the son of a carpenter of Nazareth! A pretty thing this, for him to be riding thus through the city! We may expect next to see fishermen and sailors, and tinkers and tailors, riding in triumph through our streets.” I have heard that kind of remark many a time, have not you? Christ will give His own answer to that one of these days, so I bid every scoffer here to prepare for what my Master will say to him at the last. You will talk in quite another tone then, sir—would God that you might change your note now!

There were others, no doubt, who asked this question in some such style as this, “‘Who is this?’ The crowd, which is mostly composed of fools is always running after some novelty or other. ‘Who is this?’” And there are plenty of persons, nowadays, who ask questions about great religious movements in that supercilious, offhand kind of way. “I wonder what is up now? What can all this stir be about?”

And there the inquiry ends, as far as they are concerned, but a dying Savior, a risen Redeemer, is not to be treated in that style. He may be saying to some of you at this very moment, “Is it nothing to you, all you that pass by? Behold, and see if there be any sorrow like unto my sorrow, which is done unto me, wherewith the Lord hath afflicted me in the day of his fierce anger?”

I feel sure, however, that there were others who asked this question in quite another spirit. They said, “‘Who *is* this?’” There was a blind man in Jerusalem and his friends told him of a great Miracle-Worker who had opened the eyes of the blind. So he cried out eagerly, “‘Who is this?’ Tell me where I can find Him, that I may go to Him and have my eyes opened.”

And there was a poor lame man lying at home, who could not rise from his bed and he said, “What did you say?—that So-and-do, who has been paralyzed for so many years, has been restored to health and strength? Oh, ‘who is this?’ Who is performing such miracles of mercy as this? Could you not carry me to Him, that I might ask Him to heal me also?”

Doubtless there were many other sufferers in Jerusalem whose hearts leaped within them as they heard of what Christ had done, and said, “Who is this?” And I do hope that among you who are not yet saved, there are some who long to be, and that each one of you is saying, “‘Who is this?’ If other people are being saved, why should not I be? Tell me how I can be saved. ‘Tell me the old, old story.’ Let me know the good news about Jesus, the Savior of sinners. Let me understand how Christ is able to save the guilty, that I also may be saved and that, in my case, salvation to the uttermost may be displayed.”

Blessed are all of you who ask the question in that way. “Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you.” Look to Jesus by simple faith and He will work wonders of grace and mercy for you.

Now I want, briefly, to speak about how we answer this inquiry—“Who is this?” How shall we answer it? Who is this Jesus, about whom we are always preaching? We have really only one answer to that question, but it takes two or three forms. Our one answer to the sons of men is—Jesus, whom we preach, very God of very God, who deigned, more than eighteen hundred years ago, to descend to this earth, and to take upon Himself our nature, and so to be both God and man in one person, and in that dual nature, suffered and died upon the cross in the place of all who believe in Him.

We preach this Jesus to the sons and daughters of men as able to cleanse them from sin, to give them pardon, to change their natures, and to lift them up from the degradation into which their transgressions have sunk them. Nay, we do not only preach Him as One who *can* save, but as the One who has been sent into this world on purpose to save the lost, the One whom God has set forth to be the propitiation for sin.

And more than that, God has sent Christ with this authority, that whosoever will accept Him and trust in Him shall be eternally saved, but that whosoever rejects Him shall, beyond all hope of mercy, perish forever. The message we have to deliver to you is not this—“Here is Christ and you may have Him or leave Him, as you please—and it is left to your own choice which you will do.”

But it is this—“In the name of God, we command you to believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and it will be at your peril that you will reject Him, for He is soon to come to be your Judge. And if you reject Him as your Savior, He will certainly destroy you in that day. “Kiss the Son, lest he be angry, and ye perish from the way, when his wrath is kindled but a little.”

O sirs, we, who preach to you, are men of like passions with yourselves, with no priestly authority or power to pardon sin. But we are sent to you, in the name of God, lovingly and earnestly to tell you the truth revealed in His Word, and in the name of JEHOVAH—the Creator of the heavens and the earth, at whose absolute disposal your breath is—to urge you to be at peace with Him. And you cannot be at peace with Him unless you accept Christ, whom He Himself, in infinite grace, has given to bleed that you might not suffer—and to die that you might not perish.

There is Christ on the cross—refuse Him and you irrevocably seal your destruction. There is Christ on the cross—look to Him. Lovingly trust Him and you are at once and forever saved. This is God’s plan of salvation and this is the answer to the question, “Who is this?” It is no common person whom we preach, no stranger to whom you have no relation, but we preach Jesus Christ, by whom alone you can be saved—and without whom you must perish forever. Oh, I implore you, give good heed to our solemn message, and since it so intimately concerns you, give it your most earnest attention. Lay hold on eternal life, I do beseech you. May the Spirit of God lead you so to do!

But while our answer to the question, “Who is this?” is always the same in substance, it takes different forms according to the person who puts the inquiry to us, “Who is this?” I think I see here a member of a Christian church, who is no credit to that church and I hear him saying, ““Who is this?” What is the meaning of all this stir? I have always gone to a place of worship where I could hear quiet preaching and where everything was conducted in an orderly, decorous fashion. But what is the reason for all this excitement, all this enthusiasm? ‘Who is this?’”

Brother, it is your Lord and Master who has caused this stir. Unless your profession has been a false one, it is your Savior’s presence which has stirred up this excitement. It is He who bought you with His blood who has come here and He finds you asleep! His power to save is being displayed all over this city, yet you, who ought to be helping Him—who ought to be pleading with sinners and praying for them, are fast asleep!

Look at that lamp of yours, my sister! Do you not see that there is smoke, instead of light, coming from it? It is almost out. Does that mean that you are one of the foolish virgins? Have you no oil in your vessel with your lamp? If you have, trim your lamp and be ready to go forth to meet the Bridegroom, for

the call is even now sounding through London, “Behold, the Bridegroom cometh. Go ye out to meet him.”

Up, you sluggards. Arouse yourselves. Behold, Jesus is coming—will you not be found enlisted beneath His banner and fighting His battles? Remember that ancient message to David, “When thou hearest the sound of a going in the tops of the mulberry trees, then thou shalt bestir thyself, for then shall the LORD go out before thee, to smite the host of the Philistines.”

When the angels’ feet trod lightly over the green leaves at the tops of the trees, then were David and his warriors to march onward to victory. It seems to me that the angels’ wings are rustling all round us just now and better still, that JEHOVAH Himself has come riding upon the wings of the wind to save the multitudes that are perishing.

Awake, you slumbering professors! Oh, that I had a voice of thunder that could pierce through ear and heart at once, and make the whole church arouse itself! This should be sufficient to arouse you, that He who has come is your Lord and Master. Therefore, go you forth to meet Him.

I know also that there are in this congregation, as there are in all congregations, backsliders. You used to be in fellowship with the church of Christ, but you disgraced your profession, you dishonored your Lord and Master, you oppressed the spirit of your minister, you made the whole church sorrowful, and you filled the mouths of the wicked with scoffing because of your backsliding.

And this Christ who has come into our midst is He whom you have crucified afresh and put to an open shame. He has not yet come to execute judgment—He has come to display yet more of His mercy. Where are you, backslider? Do you feel as if you must run away from Him? Oh, do not so, but stay, my brother, and look up into the face of Jesus. He is looking down upon you and may that glance of His be like the look which He gave to Peter, who went out and wept bitterly at the remembrance of his backsliding.

Your Lord loves you still. Come back to Him. He has redeemed you—yield your whole soul to Him. Come, backslider, and kiss the feet which were pierced for you and give yourself again to Jesus. You have wandered away from the good pasture and from the rest of the sheep, but Jesus, the good Shepherd, is seeking you, so wander no longer, but return unto Him who waits to welcome you. God bless this message to you and make you know that this is a special time of grace for backsliders!

There is a young man, who has lately come up from the country, and who has heard of this stir and excitement, and he has been asking, “What is this? ‘I must have a word or two with him. Young man, I will tell you who is the cause of all this stir—it is your mother’s Savior! That kiss which she gave you when you left home is still warm upon your cheek. She begged you to read the Scriptures every day, but you have done nothing of the kind.

There are some of you who have a father and mother in glory, but you are not following in their footsteps. Now that Christ is saving sinners on the right hand and on the left, will He not save the children who have been the subjects of so many anxieties and so many intercessions? Young man, young man, may the Lord save you before you leave this building! Prayer has come up to heaven on your behalf and it is not lost—may it bring salvation down to you even now!

There is one who asks, “Who is this?” who is really seeking the Savior, but cannot find Him. You say that you have been praying a long time, but have not yet found peace? Do you not know that this is not the way to find peace? The way to obtain peace with God is not by praying, but by believing. “Who is this” who is being preached as the one hope of lost mankind? It is Jesus Christ who says, “Believe on Me, and you shall be saved.”

O you guiltiest of the guilty, you hardest of the hard, you most careless of the careless, and you most despairing of the despairing—there is salvation in Jesus Christ even for you if you will only trust Him. Look unto Him and be you saved—and look unto Him just now. This is the glorious One who has come into our midst, the almighty Savior who is able to save unto the uttermost all them that come unto God by Him.

If there are any here who despise Christ, I beseech them to remember that He who has come, and whom we preach unto you as the Savior of all who believe in Him, will, if you refuse Him, assuredly come with a rod of iron to break His adversaries in pieces. I cannot too often remind you that the Lord shall surely come to judge both the quick and the dead—and every one of us must appear before Him.

Let me ask you, you who scoff at Him now—will you scoff at Him then, when the Lamb of God shall come as the Lion of the tribe of Judah—and the meek and lowly Jesus, who was once crucified on Calvary, shall come in all the glory of His Father and of the holy angels? Will you utter your infidelities and your mockeries then?

No. I can tell you what you will do—you will want to fly from His presence, and you will cry to the rocks and to the hills to hide you from the face of Him that sits upon the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb—the wrath of Him who wept over Jerusalem and who laid down His life for sinners. Ah, yes! it will be from *His* wrath that you will want to hide and you will cry, “What fools we were ever to be at enmity against infinite love, to rebel against such marvelous mercy, to fight against such amazing tenderness, and to show spite against Him who is and always was surpassingly lovely.”

May the God of mercy and grace forbid that any one of you should ever have to utter such a lament as that. Yet you will, some of you, as surely as you now live, unless you turn to God. And it may be that some of you will not have many days, or even hours, in which you will be able to turn to Him.

III. I must speak only very briefly upon the last question I mentioned, WHAT CAME OF THIS STIR? I have talked about the stir, the inquiry, and the answer to it. Now, what came of this stir?

Well, *there were some who entered very heartily into this movement* and nobody has ever heard that any of them regretted doing so. As for this present stir in the city of London, I urge every Christian to have a share in it. Even if you do not agree with all that is said, and the way it is said, or the way the work is being done, never mind, brethren—go and do God’s work in your own way. If your way of doing the Lord’s work is really so much better than the plans that others have adopted, that is all the more reason why you should press forward and help all you can.

We never had a better opportunity of seeking to extend the Redeemer’s kingdom than we have just now. And if the church of God does not bestir herself now, it may be that she will have a long and dreary winter and remain for years without the spiritual harvest which now seems ripe for reaping. I do not say, “Join this revivalist or that,” but I do urge you all to do something and to do all that you can to bring honor to the Lord Jesus out of the present stir. As some of Christ’s disciples cut down branches of trees, and others took their garments and placed them at His disposal, so let each of you, in your own way, do something to honor the Savior now that so many are moved to ask, “Who is this?”

There were *other people who were opposed to that movement*. Some of them even went to Christ to complain about the children crying in the temple, “Hosanna to the Son of David!” They said, “Hearst thou what these say?” A pack of boys and girls—“hearst thou what *these* say?” Yes, the chief priests and scribes did not approve of that stir, and there are some who say, nowadays, “We do not want all this excitement. We can go on very well in our own quiet way.”

My reply to that remark is that there have been far too many already damned on the quiet, and I think it is high time that more souls were saved, even if the work is done in an unusual fashion. But after all, this talk about excitement in religion has not much in it. About three weeks ago, I stood in the Bourse at Paris, and looked down from the gallery upon a mass of men all shouting together, and endeavoring to sell their various stocks and shares.

I thought to myself, “We are sometimes charged with being excited at our services, but we never made such a noise as this.” The din could be heard outside even above the roar of Paris and I felt that I was never before in a place so much like Bedlam. There was a terrible row all about making money, yet, if some poor souls get excited under conviction of sin, or finding salvation through the Savior, somebody is sure to talk about “hair-brained fanaticism.”

I have told you before what good old Rowland Hill said upon this matter, “People say, when I preach the Gospel very earnestly, ‘How excited Mr. Hill gets!’ Why,” said he, “I was walking through Wotton-

Under-Edge, the other day, and saw some men digging gravel. All of a sudden, the earth gave way and buried two or three of the men. I ran off, as fast as my old legs would carry me, and I shouted, ‘Help! Help! Help!’ but people did not say, ‘Poor old Mr. Hill is getting dreadfully excited.’”

Oh, no. He might be as excited as he pleased when men’s lives were in danger, but when a man’s soul was in danger, the proper thing would be to say to him, very quietly and calmly, “My dear friend, unless something shall interpose and you shall, one of these days, become somewhat different from what you now are, it will not be quite so well for you in another world as, perhaps, you might desire.” No, we have had far too much of that sort of preaching already, and we must talk to men in a very different fashion from that if we would impress them with the solemn truths that we are commanded to preach in the name of Jesus.

There is one sad fact of which I want to remind you ere I finish my discourse. Within a few days from the time when all that stir was made about Christ, there was quite another kind of stir concerning Him, and instead of, “Hosanna! Hosanna!” there was heard the cruel cry, “Crucify him, crucify him, crucify him!” They were as eager on that occasion as they had been on the previous one—but what a revulsion of sentiment was thus manifested!

Yes, and if this present stir does not lead to decision, to vital godliness, to real faith in Jesus, it will make you worse than you are now, and it will make London worse than it is—and the last end of our city will be worse than the first. And under God, it depends upon Christians whether it shall be so or not. If you get metal up to a certain heat many times, it is harder to heat afterwards. You cannot readily melt cast iron and so is it with people who have been stirred up by religious excitement. If it does not lead to real conversion, they will be worse than they were before. Skepticism and every form of irreligiousness will be more rampant than ever in this city unless we take this opportunity of calling in the arm of the Lord to make real work of it and not to let it be sham.

Anyhow, God’s purpose was fulfilled in Jerusalem, even though some did reject the Savior, and so will it be fulfilled in this city, whether men are lost or saved, for God is not dependent upon men for the accomplishment of His purposes or the glory of His throne. He will be magnified in His justice, if He is not in His mercy. That it may be the latter rather than the former, come you to Jesus, lay hold upon Him by faith, and live for evermore. Amen.

EXPOSITION BY C. H. SPURGEON

[From *The Gospel of the Kingdom*. A popular exposition of the Gospel according to Matthew by C. H. Spurgeon]

MATTHEW 21:1-5

Verses 1-3. *And when they drew nigh unto Jerusalem, and were come to Bethphage, unto the mount of Olives, then sent Jesus two disciples, saying unto them, Go into the village over against you, and straightway ye shall find an ass tied, and a colt with her: loose them, and bring them unto me. And if any man say ought unto you, ye shall say, The Lord hath need of them; and straightway he will send them.*

The time was for our Lord to finish His great work on earth, and His going up to Jerusalem was with this intent. He now determines to enter the capital city openly and there to reveal Himself as King. To this end, when He came near to the city, *Jesus sent two disciples* to bring Him the foal of an ass whereon He would ride.

His orders to the two disciples whom He commissioned, *when they were come to Bethphage*, are worthy of our serious attention. He directed them as to the place where they would find the animal—“*Go into the village over against you.*” The Lord knows where that which He requires is to be found. Perhaps it is nearer to us than we dream—“over against you.” He told them that they would not have to search—“*straightway ye shall find.*”

When the Lord sends us on an errand, He will speed us on our way. He described the condition of the creatures—“*an ass tied, and a colt with her.*” Our Lord knows the position of every animal in the world and He counts no circumstances to be beneath His notice.

Nor did He leave the disciples without orders how they were to proceed—“*loose them, and bring them.*” Demur and debate there would be none—they might act at once. To stand questioning is not for the messengers of our King—it is their duty to obey their Lord’s orders and to fear nothing. The two animals would be willingly yielded up by their owner when the disciples said, “*The Lord hath need of them.*” Nay, he would not only give them up, but “*straightway he will send them.*” Either the owner was himself a secret disciple, or some awe of the Lord Jesus was on his mind, but he would right joyfully consent to lend the ass and its foal for the purpose for which they were required.

What a singular conjunction of words is here, “the Lord” and “hath need”! Jesus, without laying aside His sovereignty, had taken a nature full of needs, yet, being in need, He was still the Lord and could command His subjects and requisition their property. Whenever we have anything of which the Lord’s cause has need, how cheerfully should we hand it over to Him! The owner of the ass and her colt regarded it as an honor to furnish Jesus with a creature to ride upon. How great is the power of Jesus over human minds, so that by a word He quietly moves them to do His bidding!

We have here the record of two disciples being sent to fetch an ass—those who do little things for Jesus are honored thereby. Their errand appeared strange, for what they did might seem like robbery, but He who sent them took care to protect them from the least shade of suspicion. The messengers raised no question, offered no objection, and met with no difficulty. It is ours to do what Jesus bids us, just as He bids us, and because He bids us, for His command is our authority.

4-5. *All this was done that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophet, saying, tell ye the daughter of Sion, Behold, thy King cometh unto thee, meek and sitting upon an ass, and a colt the foal of an ass.*

Matthew is always reminding us of the Old Testament, as well, indeed, he may, for our Lord is always fulfilling it. Every point of detail is according to the prophetic model—*All this was done that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophet.* The Old and New Testaments dovetail into each other.

Men have written “Harmonies of the Gospels,” but God has given us a Harmony of the Old and New Testament. The passage referred to is in Zechariah 9:9. It represents Zion’s King as meek and lowly even in the hour of His triumphant entrance to His metropolis, riding, not upon a warhorse, but upon a young ass, whereon no man had sat.

He had before said of Himself, “I am meek and lowly in heart,” and now He gives one more proof of the truth of His own words and at the same time of the fulfillment of prophecy—“*Tell ye the daughter of Sion, Behold, thy King cometh unto you, meek and sitting upon an ass.*” He did not, like Solomon, fetch horses out of Egypt to minister to His pride, but He who was greater than Solomon was content with *a colt the foal of an ass*, and even that humble creature was borrowed, for He had none of His own.

The tenderness of Jesus comes out in the fact of His having the ass brought with her foal that they might not be parted. He was, as a King, all gentleness and mercy. His grandeur involved no pain, even for the meanest living thing. How blessed is it for us to be ruled by such a King!

Taken from The Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit C. H. Spurgeon Collection. Only necessary changes have been made, such as correcting spelling errors, some punctuation usage, capitalization of deity pronouns, and minimal updating of a few archaic words. The content is unabridged. Additional Bible-based resources are available at www.spurgeongems.org.