*Introduction*

I am well aware that Palm Sunday is not until next week, but next week is a sharing service, which will have a theme all of its own, and therefore we are going to look at this great event this morning.

The triumphal entry, as it is described, is one of those events that is found in all of the Gospels, which means that, if we had any doubts, we have a good account of what was happening.

This is one of those events that we cover once a year, because of the festival, and yet can miss so much of the relevance, the symbolism, the fulfilment of Scripture and the prophetic nature of the event.

As you might expect, there is a great deal of Jewish context in this event.

So, for a short time this morning we are going to look at certain things in this event to hopefully get a fuller understanding AND a complete picture of what id happening here and its significance to us as believers today.

We will, God willing, look at:

The Colt - not just a stubborn animal?

The Crowd - not a rabble

The Cloaks - not an ordinary garment.

Lets first of all set the scene, because it is important that we get the event in the proper context, because it is in the proper setting that we see the real meaning of what is happening and its relevance to us today.

It was the time of the Passover celebration, the first feast of the LORD. A time where Jews from all over the known world would return to Jerusalem to sacrifice a lamb and partake of this remembrance of the passing over of the Angel of death and their fleeing from Egypt.

It would have been a time when the population of this great City would have greatly increased.

Jesus and his disciples were on their way there, we read:

***LUKE 9:51 As the time approached for him to be taken up to heaven, Jesus resolutely set out for Jerusalem***

Jesus was on his way, not only to celebrate Passover but to become THE Passover LAMB.

The Passover feast is still celebrated today, wherever they live. Of course they no longer sacrifice a lamb because there is no temple, and it is a celebration in the home.

The Passover is just one of the 7 feasts that God told the Israelites to keep. These feasts were not merely celebrations of remembrance or thanksgiving, but were ***Mikra Kodesh*** (Holy Gatherings or rehearsals)

So what is the significance of these three things - the colt, the crowd and the cloak?

***The Colt***

Its quite interesting that in all the Gospel accounts, the emphasis is on the colt, not the donkey.

They also quote from Zechariah 9:9

***Zech 9:9 Rejoice greatly, Daughter Zion! Shout, Daughter Jerusalem! See, your king comes to you, righteous and victorious, lowly and riding on a donkey, on a colt, the foal of a donkey.***

When written, Zechariah was talking of an event in the future, but he speaks in the here and now!

"Your King comes to you, righteous and victorious".

If we take this to its fullest understanding, Zechariah was prophesying that the King that was coming was 'righteous', in order for that to be true, the King would have to be sinless!

He then states 'and victorious', but if the king is Jesus, he has no army, he has not fought and won a victory. So therefore we need to go back to the original to get the original meaning which for 'victory' is *nosha* which means 'salvation'.

It is not that the translators have got it wrong, but that they have chosen a part of the meaning and not the whole meaning.

So when we look at this properly we see that the King has won the victory and brings salvation.

Therefore we see in this verse that the King mentioned can only be Jesus for He is the One who is righteous and the only name by which man can be saved.

But the story does not start here in Zechariah, but goes back even further to Genesis 49.

***Gen 49:10-12 The scepter will not depart from Judah, nor the ruler’s staff from between his feet, until he to whom it belongs (Shiloh) shall come and the obedience of the nations shall be his.
He will tether his donkey to a vine, his colt to the choicest branch; he will wash his garments in wine, his robes in the blood of grapes. His eyes will be darker than wine, his teeth whiter than milk.***

(Shiloh means 'a Gift to him' a reference to the King Messiah)

***Rev 5:5 Then one of the elders said to me, “Do not weep! See, the Lion of the tribe of Judah, the Root of David, has triumphed. He is able to open the scroll and its seven seals.”***

The triumphal entry into Jerusalem is a clear fulfilment of prophecy that shows the Messiah coming on a colt. The references can speak of no one else but Jesus.

**The Crowd**

We have already stated that Jerusalem would have been bursting at the seams because of Passover.

They were not a rabble. These were people from all over the known world and throughout Israel who had witnessed the miracles of Jesus, they were also people who had heard about him and wanted to see him, according to John.

Interestingly, according to Luke, he describes

***Luke 19:37 the whole crowd of disciples began joyfully to praise God in loud voices for all the miracles they had seen:***

When Jesus was coming to Jerusalem, there were only 12 disciples, now we have a whole crowd of them.

*But what are they doing?*

Well, as w have just seen in Luke, they were singing praises, but they were also cutting palm branches down and laying them in front of him as he went into the City, they were laying their cloaks down as well.

*What is the significance of that?*

Well, let me take you to another feast - the feast of tabernacles or booths.

***Lev 23:40-42On the first day you are to take branches from luxuriant trees—from palms, willows and other leafy trees—and rejoice before the Lord your God for seven days. Celebrate this as a festival to the Lord for seven days each year. This is to be a lasting ordinance for the generations to come; celebrate it in the seventh month. Live in temporary shelters for seven days:***

As with all the feasts, there is a remembering part, and a future part.

The future part of this feast is that God, through Jesus Christ will one day 'tabernacle', that is live with, His people on earth.

The symbolism of this is amazing, by cutting down the branches and laying them before him, not only are they treating him as the victorious king, but they are portraying the fact that their King is 'among them' just as God was in the Wilderness tabernacle.

This crowd certainly knew who Jesus was and were treating him accordingly. John shows us the frustration of the Pharisees at this:

***John 12:19 So the Pharisees said to one another, "See, this is getting us nowhere. Look the whole world has gone after him!"***

**The Cloak**

We often think, when we read this, of a cloak like we see in the films, where it would be draped around the shoulders and secured at the neck. This would certainly be correct in the Greek and for those from Greece, Rome etc.

But for the Jews, the cloak was actually a 'prayer shawl'. This shawl was not like the thing you see Jewish men wearing today when they go to the 'Wailing Wall', but in Jesus' day it would have been a seamless garment similar to a poncho. A bit like a sheet with a hole in the middle for the head to go through.

Recent archaeological digs have found a number of these from the Biblical period.

***EX 22:26-27 If you take your neighbour’s cloak as a pledge, return it by sunset, 27 because that cloak is the only covering your neighbour has. What else can they sleep in?***

***Numbers 15:37-41 The Lord said to Moses, 38 ‘Speak to the Israelites and say to them: “Throughout the generations to come you are to make tassels on the corners of your garments, with a blue cord on each tassel. 39 You will have these tassels to look at and so you will remember all the commands of the Lord, that you may obey them and not prostitute yourselves by chasing after the lusts of your own hearts and eyes. 40 Then you will remember to obey all my commands and will be consecrated to your God. 41 I am the Lord your God, who brought you out of Egypt to be your God. I am the Lord your God.”’***

These tassles were called Tsitsit

The woman with the issue of blood for 12 years touched the tsitsit of Jesus and was healed

***Matt 9:20 Just then a woman who had been subject to bleeding for twelve years came up behind him and touched the edge of his cloak.***

***Matt 14:34-36 When they had crossed over, they landed at Gennesaret. 35 And when the men of that place recognized Jesus, they sent word to all the surrounding country. People brought all their sick to him 36 and begged him to let the sick just touch the edge of his cloak, and all who touched it were healed.***

The prayer shawl represents healing and the law of Moses. But there is another aspect to the prayer shawl, and we find it in the book of Ruth.

***RUTH 3:7When Boaz had finished eating and drinking and was in good spirits, he went over to lie down at the far end of the grain pile. Ruth approached quietly, uncovered his feet and lay down. 8In the middle of the night something startled the man; he turned—and there was a woman lying at his feet!***

***9“Who are you?” he asked.***

***“I am your servant Ruth,” she said. “Spread the corner of your garment over me, since you are a guardian-redeemer of our family.”***

***10“The Lord bless you, my daughter,” he replied. “This kindness is greater than that which you showed earlier: You have not run after the younger men, whether rich or poor.***

*Conclusion*

What does all this show us? how is it relevant for each of us as individuals today?

Simple this, This wonderful event that we often gloss over, is full of meaning and symbolism.

It shows us clearly that the people of the day, the ordinary folk, like you and I, could see that Jesus Christ was the long awaited Messiah that they had been looking for, he had showed himself to them through his miracles and his words.

The Colt shows us that He is the King who comes in peace, who is righteous and has salvation, He is the Lamb of God that takes away the sin of the world.

He comes draped in healing, His tsitsit is there for you to hold on to, to be healed from all that life throws at us, and he comes to make us his bride, He is our Kinsman Redeemer and He will return some day soon to take those who have asked him to be their Lord to be with himself.

Will you be one of those?

The King wants to be Lord of your life, He wants to reign in your heart and life.

But you have to open the door and ask Him in.

Amen