

# The Greatest Week.

## INTRODUCTION

I have set myself a formidable task in this short document. My intention is to conduct you through no less than 25 chapters of the four Gospels,<sup>1</sup> through well over a quarter of the Gospels.<sup>2</sup>

Our journey will take us from (i) our Lord's last entry to Jerusalem to (ii) His agony and death at Golgotha (the place known to many as Calvary<sup>3</sup>). And I plan to focus mainly on those two bookends, namely, on our Lord's entry to the city of Jerusalem and His suffering on the cross of Golgotha.<sup>4</sup>

Many years ago, my wife, Linda, drew my attention to a page from the publication, 'Our Daily Bread'.<sup>5</sup> The main section of that page read as follows:

*'One spring day, Jordan began asking questions about Jesus' resurrection as his mom was taking him to preschool. Realizing he thought Jesus was rising from the dead for the first time this Easter, she tried to correct him. She pulled the car over and told him all about Jesus' death and resurrection. She concluded, "Jesus rose from the dead a long time ago, and now He wants to live in our hearts". But Jordan still didn't understand.*

*'Unsure how she could make it any clearer, she said, "How about if we stop by the bookstore? I saw some books about Easter when I was there last week. We'll get one and read through it together".'*

*'With a wisdom beyond his years, Jordan responded, "Can't we just read the Bible?"'*

'Can't we just read the Bible?' Well said, Jordan, and that, in the main, is just what I intend to do ... to let the text of Scripture speak for itself.

## SCRIPTURE READING 1

First, then, we turn to the biblical account of what is often referred to as 'The Triumphal Entry'.

Now when they drew near to Jerusalem and came to Bethphage, to the Mount of Olives, then Jesus sent two disciples, saying to them, 'Go into the village in front of you, and immediately you will find a donkey tied, and a colt with her. Untie them and bring them to me. If anyone says anything to you, you shall say, "The Lord needs them", and he will send them at once'.

This took place to fulfil what was spoken by the prophet, saying, 'Say to the daughter of Zion, "Behold, your King is coming to you, humble, and mounted on a donkey, on a colt,<sup>6</sup> the foal of a beast of burden"'.<sup>7</sup>

The disciples went and did as Jesus had directed them.

They brought the donkey and the colt and put on them their cloaks, and He sat on them.<sup>7</sup>

Most of the crowd spread their cloaks on the road, and others cut branches from the trees and spread them on the road. And the crowds that went before Him and that followed Him were shouting, 'Hosanna to the Son of David! Blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord!<sup>8</sup> Hosanna in the highest!'

And when He entered Jerusalem, the whole city was stirred up, saying, 'Who is this?' And the crowds said, 'This is the prophet Jesus, from Nazareth of Galilee'.<sup>9</sup>

And He entered Jerusalem and went into the temple. And when He had looked around at everything, as it was already late, He went out to Bethany with the twelve.

On the following day ... they came to Jerusalem.

And He entered the temple and began to drive out those who sold and those who bought in the temple, and He overturned the tables of the money-changers and the seats of those who sold pigeons. And He would not allow anyone to carry anything through the temple.<sup>10</sup>

And He was teaching them and saying to them, 'Is it not written, "My house shall be called a house of prayer for all the nations"? But you have made it a den of robbers'.<sup>11</sup>

And the chief priests and the scribes heard it and were seeking a way to destroy Him, for they feared Him, because all the crowd was astonished at His teaching.<sup>12</sup>

## A SUMMARY OF EVENTS

Let me now attempt a summary of the crowded events of the following few days.

The Lord Jesus spent several days of the week (through to Thursday), teaching in the Temple.<sup>13</sup>

On the same day that He entered the city, His keen and searching eye conducted a survey of all that was going on in the Temple, and then, 'when He had looked around at everything, as it was already late, He went out to Bethany'.<sup>14</sup>

He returned the next day, when He sprang into action and purged the Temple.<sup>15</sup> There was certainly nothing impulsive or rash about the Saviour's action!

The following day, He replied to the Jewish leaders when they challenged His authority ... His 'authority', that is, to teach, to heal, and, of course, to cleanse *their* Temple!<sup>16</sup>

During the main part of the week, the Lord Jesus:

(i) spoke at least nine parables;<sup>17</sup> and

(ii) disputed on many subjects with the Jewish leaders, evading in each case the traps they had carefully laid for Him. These discussions ranged through the subjects (a) of the payment of tribute to Caesar (by means of which they hoped to get Him into trouble with the civil authorities),<sup>18</sup> (b) of the doctrine of the Resurrection (which doctrine some of them sought to belittle),<sup>19</sup> and (c) of the Greatest Commandment.<sup>20</sup>

Finally, He silenced His opponents with a question of His own.

'How is it', He asked, 'that David, in the Spirit, calls Him Lord, saying, "The Lord said to my Lord, "Sit at my right hand, until I put your enemies under your feet"'? If then David calls Him Lord, how is He his son?'<sup>21</sup>

That stumped them! For they knew nothing of what we know as 'the incarnation', when He who was God (and therefore very much David's 'Lord') became man (and, because as such He was descended of David's line,<sup>22</sup> was both David's 'seed' {'offspring'} and 'son').

'Behold your King is coming', 'the prophet' (Zechariah) had said.<sup>23</sup> And, on this day of debates, His foes had chosen (if I may use the imagery of the game of chess) to make the first move against the King (with their question about the payment of tribute money), which He had successfully blocked. They had then made their second move (with their question about the Resurrection), which He had also successfully blocked. They had then made their third move (with their question about the Greatest Commandment), which, again, He had successfully blocked.

And then He made *His* move (with His question about David's 'Lord' and 'son'), following which, we are told, 'no one was able to answer Him a word, nor from that day did anyone dare to ask Him any more questions'.

They had been well-and-truly ...



... checkmated by the King!

(iii) He then denounced the hypocritical religious rulers, both the teachers of the law and the Pharisees, pronouncing a series of eight woes on these proud and hypocritical leaders,<sup>24</sup> who were blind to the wickedness of their own hearts and who inflicted untold spiritual harm on others.

(iv) He spoke at length of future events. 'As He came out of the Temple, one of his disciples', overawed by the grandeur of the Temple, exclaimed, 'Teacher, what huge stones! what beautiful buildings!'<sup>25</sup> 'They're all coming down!', Jesus responded,<sup>26</sup> and then proceeded to prophesy, not only the fall of Jerusalem to the Romans 40 years later, but also His coming as the Son of man in the end times;<sup>27</sup>

(v) He predicted His Passion, for the fifth and last time, telling His disciples, "You know that after two days the Passover is coming and the Son of Man will be delivered up to be crucified".<sup>28</sup>

(vi) He celebrated the Jewish Passover and instituted the remembrance supper for His disciples.

(vii) He proceeded to teach His disciples privately and extensively<sup>29</sup> in the 'upper room',<sup>30</sup> preparing *them* for His imminent death and departure.

It isn't difficult to imagine how they felt. To a man, He had won their hearts. They had left all to be with Him and, in forsaking all for Him (father and mother, wife and children, home and employment), they had found in Him a hundred-fold compensation.

They had now been with Him for over three years and had continued with Him through all His temptations and trials.<sup>31</sup> Yes, true, He had sent them out from Him on previous occasions to preach, heal and cast out demons,<sup>32</sup> but He had always been there for them to come back to and tell Him all they had done.<sup>33</sup> And He had always been there to shelter them when they came under fire from their foes.<sup>34</sup>

I read some time ago of a little boy who, during the days of the blitz in the Second World War, was removed from London into the country. When going to bed on his first night away from home, he prayed, 'Now I lay me down to sleep', and then added, 'Lord, please take care of my Mummy and Daddy. And please, Lord, take good care of yourself, because *if anything happens to you, we're sunk*'.

I cannot vouch for the truth of that story, but I do know that in the 'upper room' the disciples finally came to recognize that something (to their minds) appalling was about to happen to Him ... that He was about to leave them because He was going to die.<sup>35</sup> And, as they saw it at that moment, they were 'sunk'. Well and truly 'sunk'.

And, with characteristic thoughtfulness and consideration, He sought to impart something of His own peace to their troubled hearts. I say 'troubled hearts' deliberately, because that image both opens and closes His words to them in John 14:

(a) at the outset, 'Let not your heart be troubled; you believe in God, believe also in me. In my Father's house are many mansions ('abiding places') ... I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you to myself; that where I am, there you may be also',<sup>36</sup> and

(b) at the close, 'Peace I leave with you, my peace I give to you; not as the world gives do I give to you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid'.<sup>37</sup>

In this way, Jesus began the section with the promise of a *future hope*, and ended it with the promise of a *present peace*.

It was there in that upper room that He washed the feet of His disciples, setting them an example of humility for them to follow,<sup>38</sup> and concluded by praying for Himself, for them and for all who would later become His followers as a result of their witness.<sup>39</sup>

(viii) He entered the garden<sup>40</sup> 'named Gethsemane'<sup>41</sup> (the place of 'the olive-press'), where, in anticipation of that which He was to endure on the following day, He became exceedingly sorrowful and distressed, and where, in spite of the fearful cost to Himself, He bowed to His Father's will for Him.<sup>42</sup>

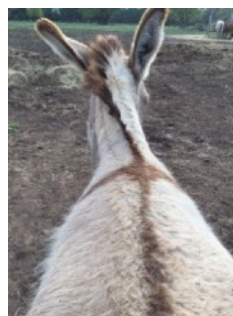
(ix) From Gethsemane, He was taken (by way of a series of so-called 'trials', before Annas, Caiaphas, the Jewish Council, Herod and Pilate) to Golgotha, the place of execution.

I said at the outset that, together with the records of (a) His last entry to Jerusalem and (b) His suffering and death at Golgotha, these events occupy 'no less than 25 chapters of the four Gospels'. And when I repeat this fact again, I am mindful of the fact that the record of the creation (a) of two trillion galaxies<sup>43</sup> of stars, (b) of the earth and (c) of mankind occupies less than two chapters in our Bibles!

#### **'IN LOWLY POMP RIDE ON TO DIE'**

In 1820, the English historian, poet and (then) vicar of St. Mary's, Reading, Henry Milman, wrote an outstanding hymn about the Triumphal Entry.<sup>44</sup> The second and last verses of that hymn begin, 'Ride on! ride on, in majesty! In lowly pomp ride on to die!' 'In lowly pomp' ... what a magnificent expression!

If you look closely at the backs of the vast majority of donkeys, you will discover a dark patch of hair that goes the length of the back (from behind the head right to the tail) and another dark patch of hair that runs over the shoulders. Together, these patches form a recognizable cross.<sup>45</sup>



It goes without saying that I am unable to prove that the particular colt on which Jesus rode had this cross of dark hair, or that the dark cross was clearly visible. But, suffice it to say, it *may* have been that, as the Lord Jesus looked down that day, He saw a cross of dark hair on the back of the young donkey. Certainly, He knew that shortly He would have a real cross on *His own* back.

For we know that already there was the shadow of a cross on His soul, hence His last prediction of His passion ('the Son of Man will be delivered up *to be crucified*'), when He revealed to His disciples for the first time that He was to suffer death *by crucifixion*.<sup>46</sup>

Over (i) His earlier celebration of the Passover, (ii) His institution of 'the Lord's supper'<sup>47</sup> and (iii) all His teaching in the Upper Room, there loomed the dark and ominous shadow of His cross.

Which brings us, via the Mount of Olives and the Kidron Valley, to the Garden of Gethsemane, and, from there, by way of our Lord's so-called trials, to the place of His suffering and death.

## SCRIPTURE READING 2

In his Gospel, Luke provides us with the following account:

Two others, who were criminals, were led away to be put to death with Him. And when they came to the place that is called The Skull, there they crucified Him, and the criminals, one on His right and one on His left.

And Jesus said, 'Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do'. And they cast lots to divide His garments.

And the people stood by, watching, but the rulers scoffed at Him, saying, 'He saved others; let Him save Himself, if He is the Christ of God, His Chosen One!'

The soldiers also mocked Him, coming up and offering Him sour wine and saying, 'If you are the King of the Jews, save yourself!'

There was also an inscription over Him, 'This is the King of the Jews'.

One of the criminals who were hanged railed at Him, saying, 'Are you not the Christ? Save yourself and us!' But the other rebuked him, saying, 'Do you not fear God, since you are under the same sentence of condemnation? And we indeed justly, for we are receiving the due reward of our deeds; but this man has done nothing wrong'.

And he said, 'Jesus, remember me when you come into your kingdom'.

And He said to him, 'Truly, I say to you, today you will be with me in Paradise'.

It was now about the sixth hour, and there was darkness over the whole land until the ninth hour, while the sun's light failed. And the curtain of the temple was torn in two.

Then Jesus, calling out with a loud voice, said, 'Father, into your hands I commit my spirit!' And having said this He breathed His last.<sup>48</sup>

For his part, Matthew tells us in his Gospel that ...

'those who passed by derided him, wagging their heads and saying, 'You who would destroy the temple and rebuild it in three days, save yourself! If you are the Son of God, come down from the cross''.<sup>49</sup>

## NOT 'SAVE', BUT 'GAVE'

Taking these two Gospel accounts together, we find that ...

(i) The passers-by reviled Him, saying, 'You who would destroy the temple and rebuild it in three days, **save yourself**'.

(ii) The rulers sneered at Him, saying, 'He saved others; let Him **save Himself**'.

(iii) The soldiers mocked Him, saying, 'If you are the King of the Jews, **save yourself**'.

(iv) And the malefactor blasphemed Him, saying, 'Are you not the Christ? **save yourself and us**'.

Their taunts rang loud and clear. From every direction the Lord Jesus was bombarded with the one, single challenge, 'Save yourself'.

And how these words must have stung Him! Because He knew what those around did not, that, in one sense at least, He could have done just that! That He *could* have 'saved' Himself! Oh yes, whether or not He chose to appeal to His Father for the help of more than twelve legions of angels with their mighty destructive force,<sup>50</sup> He most certainly could have saved Himself!

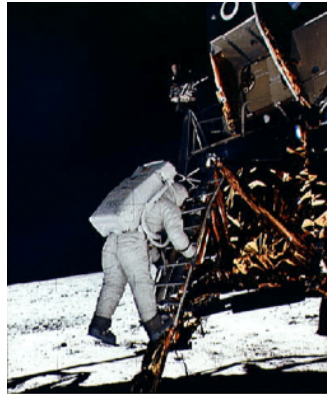
But **He didn't**. He refused to 'save' Himself.

Indeed, you and I can rejoice in the knowledge that, if the Gospel accounts make it clear that, during His passion, four times over our Saviour steadfastly refused to 'save' Himself,<sup>51</sup> the Epistles make it clear on no less than six occasions that He 'gave' Himself!<sup>52</sup>

Oh yes, even apart from the day of our Lord's glorious resurrection, which concluded the first so-called 'Passion Week',<sup>53</sup> the days of that week were incredibly full.<sup>54</sup>

## THE GREATEST WEEK

It is now almost 52 years since the American astronauts Neil Armstrong and Buzz Aldrin stepped down from their Apollo 11 Lunar Module on 21st July 1969 to put the first human footprints on the surface of the moon.



It was three and a half days later (on 24<sup>th</sup> July 1969) that the Apollo 11 spacecraft splashed down in the Pacific Ocean, 825 nautical miles



Two hours after splashdown, the then President of the United States, Richard Nixon, greeted the newly arrived astronauts.<sup>55</sup>



In his own words:

'When I talked with them through the window of their quarantine chamber, it was hard to contain my enthusiasm or my awe at the thought that the three men on the other side of the glass had just returned from the moon. I said impulsively, "This is the greatest week in the history of the world since the Creation"'.<sup>56</sup>

This 'impulsive' statement earned the President a gentle word of rebuke from his friend, Billy Graham:

'Mr President, I know exactly how you felt, and I understand exactly what you meant, but, even so, *I think you may have been a little excessive*'.<sup>57</sup>



You and I can safely say that it was *more* than 'a *little excessive*'!

But I am *not* going to claim that the events of the first 'Passion Week' (or 'Holy Week', as some know it) made it (to borrow Richard Nixon's words), 'the greatest week in the history of the world since the Creation'.

I am going to claim that the events of that first 'Passion Week' made it the greatest week ever, eclipsing by far even the first week, which included, *inter alia*, the creation of two trillion galaxies.

Greater than the week of Genesis 1?

Most certainly!

It would be hard to miss that, according to revelation chapter 5, the innumerable company of angels around heaven's throne are said to ascribe their *seven-fold* tribute of praise<sup>58</sup> to Him who had once experienced that which none of them could ever experience (namely, death),<sup>59</sup> whereas, at the close of the previous chapter, a *three-fold* ascription of praise is addressed to the Throne-sitter in consequence of His immense creatorial achievement.<sup>60</sup>

That we read of a fuller acclamation of praise addressed to 'the Lamb who was slain' strongly suggests that greater glory accrues to God and the Lamb (i) on account of the work of purchasing men for God, than it does (ii) on account of the work of creating the vast cosmos.

For you and I know well that what God achieved in 'creation week' cost Him only His word and the exercise of His power, but what the Lord Jesus achieved during 'Passion Week' cost Him everything ... His blood, His life, Himself ... everything!

And, wonder of wonders, it was all for me.

**And, if that isn't love ... !<sup>61</sup>**

(Supplement: 'Absalom and Christ'.<sup>62</sup>)



## Notes

<sup>1</sup> Matthew 21-27 (7); Mark 11-15 (5); Luke 19-23 (5); John 12-19 (8) ... a total of 25 chapters.

<sup>2</sup> The total number of chapters in the four Gospels is 89. 25/89 chapters = 28%.

<sup>3</sup> The word 'Calvary' came into our KJV from the Latin Vulgate 'Calvaria'. 'Calvaria' is the Latin form of 'Golgotha', and means 'a skull' (as the same Greek word, *Κράνιον*, is rendered in Matt. 27. 33).

<sup>4</sup> I have deliberately avoided any attempt to pin down days and dates. For those who want to pursue these matters further, I recommend starting with Harold W. Hoehner, '*Chronological Aspects of the Life of Christ*'. This is available in printed book form, on Kindle, and in the *Bibliotheca Sacra* theological journal 131: 520-525.

(Professor Hoehner comes out in favour of Friday, 3 April A.D. 33 for the day and date of Jesus' crucifixion and, in the context of the Triumphal Entry, has updated the calculations of Sir Robert Anderson in his book 'The Coming prince', concerning the fulfilment of Daniel's prophecy of the 69 weeks in Dan. 9. 26.)

Separately, I have benefited from reading (i) Andreas J. Köstenberger and Justin Taylor, 'APRIL 3, AD 33' – freely available at <https://www.firstthings.com/web-exclusives/2014/04/april-3-ad-33>; (ii) Paul L. Maier, '*The Date of the Nativity and Chronology of Jesus*'; and (iii) John K. Fotheringham, '*The Evidence of Astronomy and Technical Chronology for the Date of the Crucifixion*' – freely available at [https://www.biblicalstudies.org.uk/pdf/jts/035\\_146.pdf](https://www.biblicalstudies.org.uk/pdf/jts/035_146.pdf).

<sup>5</sup> Anne Cetas, '*Jordan's Idea*', Our Daily Bread, 6 February 2006.

<sup>6</sup> Cf. 'You will find a colt tied, *on which no one has ever sat*. Untie it and bring it', Mark 11. 2. 'The Mosaic Law specified that an animal devoted to a sacred purpose had to be one that had not been used for ordinary purposes (Num. 19. 2; Deut. 21. 3) ... The colt was unbroken, and Jesus was able to ride on it comfortably. These facts suggested that Jesus might be the sinless Man who was able to fulfil the Adamic Covenant mandate to subdue the animals (Gen. 1. 28) ... It would have been remarkable that Jesus was able to control an unbroken animal moving through an excited crowd with an unfamiliar burden on its back. This was just one more demonstration that Jesus was the Messiah who was the master of nature (cf. Matt. 8. 23-27; Matt. 14. 22-32)', Thomas Constable, '*Expository Notes*', on Matt. 21. 4-5 and Mark 11. 1-3.

<sup>7</sup> Note 62 below reproduces, with permission, a Precious Seed magazine article which suggests a series of contrasts between (i) our Lord, who then rode on an ass ('a donkey'), and (ii) another 'son of David', who, some thousand years previously, rode on a mule.

<sup>8</sup> This exclamation of the crowds walking before and behind Jesus was a quotation from Psalm 118. 26, and represented only a *partial* fulfilment of the words.

When Jesus later lamented the forthcoming desolation of the temple, city and land, He addressed His nation with the words, 'I tell you, you will not see me from now on (*ἀπ' ἄρτι*), until you say, "Blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord"', Matt. 23. 39. That is, the words of Psalm 118. 26 will receive their *complete* and *final* fulfilment when He (the Messiah) will return in glory to restore and bless His then repentant nation (Zech. 12. 10); cf. His later words to Caiaphas, 'I say to you, From now on (*ἀπ' ἄρτι*) you shall see the Son of man sitting at the right hand of power, and coming on the clouds of heaven', Matt. 26. 64.

Following the nation's rejection of their Messiah and refusal of His offer of salvation, they were to see Him no more until His return to establish His Messianic kingdom. Their meeting with Him then will be very different!

We can link Jesus' word '*until*' ('*until* you say, "Blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord"') with 'Jerusalem shall be trodden down of the nations *until* the times of the nations be fulfilled', Luke 21. 24, and 'blindness in part is happened to Israel, *until* the fullness of the nations be come in; and so all Israel shall be saved. According as it is written, "The deliverer shall come out of Zion"', Rom 11. 25-26.

The double fulfilment of Psalm 118. 26 suggests several contrasts. For example:

(i) For the Triumphal Entry during His first advent, the Lord Jesus came from the area of Bethphage seated on a donkey's colt, on His way to suffering and death, Matt. 21. 2, 5, 7; Mark 11. 7.

At His second advent He is pictured as coming from heaven seated on 'a white horse' (symbolizing victorious power) to 'judge and to make war', Rev. 19. 11.

(ii) At the time of His Triumphant Entry during His first advent, the question 'Who is this?' was answered by the accompanying crowds of pilgrims: 'This is the prophet Jesus, from Nazareth of Galilee', Matt. 21. 10-11.

At the time of His second advent, the question 'Who is this ...?' will be answered by the Lord Himself: 'It is I, speaking in righteousness, mighty to save ... I have trodden the winepress alone ... I trod them in my anger and trampled them in my wrath', Isa. 63. 1-4.

<sup>9</sup> Matt. 21. 1-11 ESV (2016).

Matthew clearly distinguishes (i) the enthusiastic crowds of pilgrims who accompanied Jesus on His way into Jerusalem, Matt. 21. 8-9, from (ii) the local Judeans who dwelt there, Matt. 21. 10. (i) The former knew who Jesus was, Matt. 21. 11, and were prepared to confess Him to be 'the Son of David', Matt. 21. 9. In all likelihood, many of these themselves came from Galilee, from where some in the past had wished even to 'make Him king', John 6. 15. As I understand it, these people form a different group from those who, on the following Friday, were 'persuaded' by the chief priests and elders to demand of Pilate that Jesus should be 'destroyed' by crucifixion, Matt. 27. 20-25; Mark 15. 11. (ii) These latter were probably locals of Jerusalem who were accustomed to complying with any instructions issued by the Jewish authorities there.

<sup>10</sup> This last comment is unique to Mark, and shows how far the Lord Jesus went in purifying the Temple.

<sup>11</sup> 'The court of the Gentiles should have been a place for *praying*, but it was instead a place for *preying* and *paying*', Warren Wiersbe, '*The Bible Exposition Commentary*', Vol. 1, page 150.

<sup>12</sup> Mark 11. 11-18 ESV.

<sup>13</sup> 'I was daily with you in the temple teaching', Mark 14. 49.

<sup>14</sup> Mark 11. 11.

<sup>15</sup> Mark 11. 12, 15.

<sup>16</sup> Mark 11. 27-33.

<sup>17</sup> The nine parables are: (i) Two sons, Matt. 21. 28-32; (ii) Wicked tenants, Matt. 21. 33-44// Mark 12. 1-11// Luke 20. 9-18; (iii) Wedding banquet, Matt. 22. 2-14; (iv) Fig tree, Matt. 24. 32-35// Mark 13. 28-29// Luke 21. 29-31; (v) Wise and foolish servants, Matt. 24. 45-51; (vi) Wise and foolish virgins, Matt. 25. 1-13; (vii) Watchful servants, Mark 13. 35-37; (viii) Talents, Matt. 25. 14-30; (ix) Sheep and goats, Matt. 25. 31-46).

<sup>18</sup> Matt. 22. 15-21. 'The Lord Jesus 'asked whose image and inscription (Greek: *epigraphē*) was on the *denarius*, and they replied that it was Caesar's (Mark 12. 16). But which Caesar was it? Numismatics has provided us with an answer. Kevin Butcher, an authority on Roman Syria, has discussed the "Jesus coin" in a podcast. He explains why the image on the coin could only be that of Augustus, contrary to some popular opinions. His research has shown that denarii of Tiberius, the emperor who lived during the time of Jesus, never circulated in Judea', Mark Wilson, '*Money Talks through Ancient Coins*', accessed at <https://www.biblicalarchaeology.org/daily/biblical-artifacts/artifacts-and-the-bible/money-talks-through-ancient-coins/>.

See [http://www2.warwick.ac.uk/fac/arts/classics/podcast/vodcast/?podcastItem=the\\_tribute\\_penny.mp4](http://www2.warwick.ac.uk/fac/arts/classics/podcast/vodcast/?podcastItem=the_tribute_penny.mp4).

<sup>19</sup> Matt. 22. 23-33.

<sup>20</sup> Matt. 22. 34-40.

<sup>21</sup> Matt. 22. 43-46.

<sup>22</sup> Rom. 1. 3; Acts 13. 23; 2 Tim. 2. 8.

<sup>23</sup> Matt. 21. 5, quoting Zech. 9. 9. This was the King's final and official offer of Himself to His nation.

<sup>24</sup> Matt. 23. 13-29.

<sup>25</sup> Mark 13. 1.

<sup>26</sup> Mark 13. 2.

<sup>27</sup> Luke 21 concentrates mainly on the destruction of Jerusalem by the Romans in AD 70; Matthew 24 concentrates mainly on events prior to the Lord's return 'on the clouds of heaven with power and great glory' to end the present age and to inaugurate His kingdom. See further, T. B. Baines, '*The Destruction of Jerusalem and the Abomination of Desolation*', *The Christian's Friend* (1880), pages 177-184; accessed at ...

[https://stempublishing.com/authors/baines/Destruction\\_of\\_Jerusalem\\_and\\_the\\_Abomination\\_of\\_Desolation.html](https://stempublishing.com/authors/baines/Destruction_of_Jerusalem_and_the_Abomination_of_Desolation.html).

<sup>28</sup> Matt. 26. 2; cf. Matt. 16. 21; 17. 12, 22-23; 20. 17-19.

<sup>29</sup> Recorded mainly in John 13 and onwards.

<sup>30</sup> Mark 14. 15// Luke 22. 12.

<sup>31</sup> Luke 22.28.

<sup>32</sup> Luke 9. 1-2.

<sup>33</sup> Mark 6. 30.

<sup>34</sup> For example, Mark 2. 23-28.

<sup>35</sup> It seems that emotionally the disciples viewed His leaving them much as children view the loss of their parents; hence, 'I will not leave you as orphans; I will come to you', John 14. 18.

<sup>36</sup> John 14. 1-3.

<sup>37</sup> John 14. 27.

<sup>38</sup> John 13. 4-17.

<sup>39</sup> John 17. 1-26.

<sup>40</sup> John 18. 1. Gethsemane was one of two gardens mentioned by John in his Gospel; cf. John 19. 41.

<sup>41</sup> Mark 14. 32.

<sup>42</sup> Mark 14. 32-42.

<sup>43</sup> See ... <https://skyandtelescope.org/astronomy-resources/how-many-stars-are-there/> and ... <https://www.livescience.com/56634-how-many-stars-are-in-the-universe.html>.

44

Ride on! ride on in majesty!  
Hark! all the tribes Hosanna cry!  
Thine humble beast pursues his road,  
With palms and scatter'd garments strew'd!

Ride on! ride on in majesty!  
In lowly pomp ride on to die!  
Oh Christ! Thy triumphs now begin  
O'er captive Death and conquer'd Sin!

Ride on! ride on in majesty!  
The wingéd squadrons of the sky  
Look down with sad and wondering eyes,  
To see the approaching sacrifice!

Ride on! ride on in majesty!  
Thy last and fiercest strife is nigh;  
The Father on His sapphire throne  
Expects His own anointed Son!

Ride on! ride on in majesty!  
In lowly pomp ride on to die!  
Bow thy meek head to mortal pain!  
Then take, oh God! Thy power and reign!

*Henry Hart Milman (1791-1868)*

This version is taken from <https://tosingistoprayer.wordpress.com/2012/08/18/ride-on-ride-on-in-majesty/>: 'This is the text as it originally appeared in (Anglican) Bishop Reginald Heber's "Hymns Written and Adapted to the Weekly Church Service of the Year" (1827)'.

The story behind the writing of the hymn is set out at <https://www.hymnologyarchive.com/ride-on-ride-on-in-majesty>.

<sup>45</sup> This cross is most obvious of course in light brown and grey donkeys, but almost all donkeys have some form of the marking. The exceptions are the Mammoth donkeys, which have been bred away from this marking, and true black animals, where the cross is not visible.

<sup>46</sup> Matt. 26. 2.

<sup>47</sup> 1 Cor. 11. 20.

<sup>48</sup> Luke 23. 32-46 ESV.

<sup>49</sup> Matt. 27. 39 ESV.

<sup>50</sup> Matt. 26. 53. See page 7 of the document 'Gethsemane', attached to 'Malcolm's Monday Musings : 25 January 2021'.

<sup>51</sup> Matt. 27. 40; Luke 23. 35, 37, 39.

<sup>52</sup> Gal. 1. 4; 2. 20; Eph. 5. 2, 25; 1 Tim. 2. 6; Tit. 2. 14.

<sup>53</sup> The Lord Jesus foretold in summary the events of the whole of Passion Week (from His going to Jerusalem, through His sufferings and death, to His resurrection) in His declaration at Caesarea Philippi, Matt. 16. 21; cf. Matt. 20. 18-19; Mark 10. 33-34; Luke 18. 31-33

<sup>54</sup> The last day of 'Passion Week' (namely, the day of our Lord's resurrection), was certainly a full day for the Lord Jesus. Following His resurrection very early that day, He appeared on at least five separate occasions:

(i) To Mary Magdalene, John 20. 14-18.

(ii) To the other women who visited the empty tomb, Matt. 28. 8-10.

(iii) To the apostle Peter, Luke 24. 34; 1 Cor. 15. 5.

(iv) To two disciples who travelled the road to Emmaus, Luke 24. 13-31.

(v) To the gathered disciples when Thomas was absent, John 20. 19-24; Luke 24. 36-49.

<sup>55</sup> Neil Armstrong, Buzz Aldrin and Michael Collins.

<sup>56</sup> Richard Nixon's actual statement can be heard at 4 minutes 44 seconds of 'Nixon greets Apollo 11 astronauts after splashdown' (accessible at [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cml\\_rCEZVH8](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cml_rCEZVH8)).

A transcript of the conversation can be read at ... <https://www.nixonfoundation.org/2008/07/24-july-1969-home-from-the-moon/>.

<sup>57</sup> 'When I talked to Billy Graham a few days later, he said, "Mr. President, I know exactly how you felt, and I understand exactly what you meant, but, even so, I think you may have been a little excessive', Richard Nixon, 'RN: The Memoirs of Richard Nixon', 1978.

<sup>58</sup> The article 'την' is attached to only the first noun ('δυναμιν'), indicating that all seven substantives comprise a single notion. See '*Robertson's Word Pictures*' on Rev. 5. 12.

<sup>59</sup> Rev. 5. 11-12; cf. 'neither can they die any more: for they are equal to the angels', Luke 20. 36.

<sup>60</sup> Rev. 4 10-11.

<sup>61</sup> This is the title of a spiritual song written and copyrighted by Dottie Rambo in 1969. In 1999, George Beverly Shea sang the song as part of a recording of Billy Graham's 'Hour of Decision' favourites. He titled the recording, 'If That isn't Love', and his singing of the song can be heard at ... [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Gj8O\\_sm7p8M](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Gj8O_sm7p8M).

## Absalom and Christ

One of the key historical events associated with Easter time is that of our Lord's "triumphal entry" into Jerusalem.

The present article aims to identify several points of contrast between "the Son of David" who then rode on an ass and another son of David who, some thousand years previously, rode on a mule. This other son of David was Absalom and the relevant incident is recorded in 2 Samuel 18. 6-17.

**1.** Absalom "rode on a mule" in a "wood", after which the mule was left to wander "away", 2 Sam. 18. 7-9.

The Lord Jesus was "sitting upon an ass" as He approached and entered a 'city', Matt. 21, 5, 10. The ass would be returned immediately the Lord had no further need for it, Mark 11.3 (R.V).

**2.** When Absalom left Jerusalem, he left as a "king", 2 Sam. 15. 19. But he occupied David's throne only as a usurper. He "reigned", v. 10, only in consequence of his recent deceit and empty promises of "justice", vv. 1-6.

When the Lord Jesus entered Jerusalem, He entered as its true "King", Matt. 21. 5. He was destined to occupy David's throne and to reign in accordance with ancient prophecy, which included the specific promise that He should be "just", Zech. 9. 9.

**3.** Absalom was the rebellious son of an indulgent father. This father, for his own "sake", wanted Absalom spared from the consequences of his sinful actions, 2 Sam. 18. 5.

The Lord Jesus was the ever-obedient Son of a holy and loving Father. Yet this Father, for our sake, "spared not His own Son", Rom. 8. 32, from the consequences of our sinful actions.

**4.** Absalom rode the mule when fleeing from his foes. He had faced three distinct forces, namely, those under the leadership of Joab, Abishai and Ittai, 2 Sam. 18. 2.

The Lord Jesus rode the young ass when going to face His foes. He too faced three distinct foes, namely, the hatred of men, the power of darkness, Luke 22. 53, and the sins of His people (see Isaiah 53. 6, where "laid on" denotes a hostile and violent attack).

**5.** There was one man who knew where to find Absalom among the trees of the wood, 2 Sam. 19. 10. He would not have harmed the son of David even for "a thousand pieces of silver", v. 12 (R.V).

There was a man who knew where to find the Lord Jesus among the trees of the garden, John 18. 2. He betrayed Him for only "thirty pieces of silver", Matt. 26. 15.

**6.** Following his ride in the wood, Absalom was found "hanged in" a tree, 2 Sam. 18. 10.

In less than a week after His ride into Jerusalem, the Lord Jesus was "hanged on a tree". Acts 5. 30; 10. 39.

**7.** "While he was yet alive", Absalom's body was pierced by "darts" from the hand of one of the commanders of the army of Israel, 2 Sam. 18. 2, 14.

When the Lord Jesus "was dead already", His body was pierced by a spear in the hand of one of the soldiers of the army of Rome, John 19. 33-34.

**8.** Both Absalom and the Lord Jesus were "slain" by their foes, 2 Sam. 18. 15; Acts 2. 23. Even at the moment of death, however, there was one notable difference between the two.