



St. Stephen's Traditional Episcopal Church

11856 Mays Chapel Rd., Timonium, MD 21093

Palm Sunday, March 28th, 2010

✠ **In the Name of the Father and of the Son
and of the Holy Ghost. AMEN** ✠

Thank heavens the Internet wasn't around at the time they were writing the Bible! They would have been so busy wading through all the junk mail, the spam, they would never have had time to get the work done. You don't think so? You'd be *AMAZED* at the stuff folks send to stuffy old clergymen – or perhaps you wouldn't.

Some of it is quite shocking – including scads of “God jokes, some blasphemous, some rude, and most as old as the hills. One I was sent last week reads: "Have you read my #1 Best Seller? There will be a test – God." It's inspired by the notion that salvation depends on obtaining an encyclopedic knowledge of the complex mind of the Most High. This, when you come think about it, is a rather disturbing notion.

After all, virtually everybody who cheered

Jesus when He rode his donkey through the gates of Jerusalem had read the Bible from cover to cover. They had absolutely no doubt about whom Jesus was and what he was doing.

Hosanna – Save now! – was by the prophets as a greeting for the Messiah. To use it in any other context would have been blasphemy. "Hosanna was the cry to God when worshippers carried palm leaves in procession around the Temple altar. Thus strewing palm leaves at his donkey's feet would also have been blasphemy.

And it should not be at all surprising that they reacted in this manner, because Jesus was fulfilling – before their very eyes – one of the best-known messianic prophecies in the Bible. It is found in Verse 9 of the 9th Chapter of the Book of Zechariah: "Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion; shout, O

daughter of Jerusalem: behold, thy King cometh unto thee: he is just, and having salvation; lowly, and riding upon an ass, and upon a colt, the foal of an ass."

In the 1st Century AD, kings didn't ride donkeys as they had back in King David's day. They rode horses or in chariots. Israel's Messiah was the only king expected to turn up on the back of a donkey. On Palm Sunday, much to everyone's surprise, prophecy was literally fulfilled, but then virtually everything Jesus did during his ministry involved the literal fulfillment of one prophecy or another.

He was born into the right family, at the right place He made the lame walk, the blind see, the deaf hear, the dumb speak, and raised up the dead. He fed four thousand people on a few loaves and a couple of smoked fish, and then repeated the trick for an audience of five thousand. On top of all that, he had bested some of the finest minds in the land in legal and theological debate.

Nobody in Jerusalem, not even Pontius Pilate, was ignorant of who Jesus was. But the enthusiastic welcome notwithstanding, a mere five days later everybody – with the exception his disciples and possibly Pontius Pilate – wanted him dead. And the reason they wanted him dead is that he didn't do what they wanted him to do.

The moral is that it's not merely important to know the Scriptures. What's really important is to accept their authority; to accept that God knows best. The bad news is that we, today, are no different from the citizens of Jerusalem 2,000 years ago.

We're just as apt to reject God will when it runs contrary to our own. This means if God really did give us a test, we'd fail it. The good news is there's no need for us to take that test. Jesus has taken it for us. That's what Easter is all about. The only smarts we'll ever need is to sign on to his program.
AMEN

To the Only Wise God, Our Saviour, be Glory and Majesty, Dominion and Power, Both Now and Forever. AMEN.