

JESUS: THE SERVANT AT WORK

VOLUME THREE

STUDY TWO

What's a King Doing on a Donkey?

Mark 10:46–11:11

He comes as the Servant, “not to be served but to serve, and to give His life as a ransom for many.” That’s Jesus. This is so disarming; it’s so unpredictable that some said, “Ah! You’re telling me He’s the Messiah?” What they didn’t see was the truth of how God’s plan would unfold. There must be a Lamb of God before there is the majestic Son of God returning in power.

—Pastor Charles R. Swindoll

Jesus’ words amazed His listeners and touched their hearts. His message was so unlike the scolding lectures from other rabbis. Jesus truly loved people, even those whom society tossed aside. He offered compassion like cups of cool water to outcasts thirsting for acceptance. He tenderly touched the untouchables, healing their bodies *and* their souls. His miracles mesmerized those who witnessed them and drew thousands wherever He went.

Jesus was—and still is—alluring, spellbinding, irresistibly attractive. In a word, He is *fascinating*.

Jesus fascinates us not just because He did incredible feats but because He did them in such an unpredictable manner. He did the unexpected on purpose—to shake up norms and uproot embedded traditions.

His mission was to launch the kingdom of God, which could no more fit into conventional religious structures than new wine could be contained in old wineskins. Jesus purposefully split the seams of the status quo to show sinners what *real life* looks like—life with God, under His rule, and in His care.

So far in Mark, we’ve watched Jesus bring healing and restoration (Mark 1:40–45), rebuke the wind to calm a storm (4:35–41), and use children to teach kingdom principles (9:36–37). Now in the passage for this *Searching the Scriptures* Bible study, we’ll see Him perform two more acts that defied expectations. Jesus did the *unpredictable* to accomplish the *incredible*, and we’re so thankful He did!



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SEARCHING
THE
SCRIPTURES
BIBLE STUDIES

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PREPARE YOUR HEART

Communicate your heart to the Lord. Do not worry about how it sounds or whether your thoughts are organized. Share your struggles, your shortcomings, your disappointments—even your forgotten dreams. Ask Him to help. Then, thank Him for listening to the cry of your heart and for doing what will honor His great name.



TURN TO THE SCRIPTURES

Jesus' final steps to Jerusalem and the cross took Him through Jericho. Called "the most fruitful country of Judea," this oasis sat on one of the busiest trade routes of the ancient world.¹ Joshua led the Israelites into the promised land through Jericho—which was considered unconquerable until, with the blast of trumpets and shouts of God's people, God caused the thick walls to crumble (Joshua 6:1–27).

Like Joshua leading the twelve tribes of Israel, Jesus was leading His twelve disciples as God's new people into the promised land of His kingdom. Few realized the significance of Jesus' march through Jericho. In the spiritual realm, the walls of Satan's kingdom were collapsing like Jericho's ancient walls. Only those with eyes of faith could see Jesus as the conquering Savior He was—only those like the blind man Bartimaeus.



Observation: Jesus Heals a Blind Man and Enters Jerusalem

Observe the two scenes in the passage by reading it in various translations and noting the who, what, where, when, why, and how to see what the passage says.²

How Jesus Treats a Blind Beggar—Mark 10:46–52

Read [Mark 10:46–52](#). Describe the scene in 10:46 by noticing where Jesus was, who He was with, and what He encountered. Join the boisterous crowd abuzz about Jesus' teachings and miracles.

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Imagine Jesus—less than a week from His torturous death—at the center of the procession, jostled and pushed along. Hear the cry of Bartimaeus in Mark 10:47–48. What did Bartimaeus shout when he heard that Jesus was nearby? How did he respond when many told him to be quiet?

Most people followed unspoken rules when approaching beggars—avoid eye contact, don't pause or stop, don't speak to them. How *unpredictable* was Jesus' response in 10:49? See the beggar throw aside his tattered outer garment, jump to his feet, and come to Jesus in 10:50–52. What *incredible* thing happened?

Jesus does the unpredictable. He doesn't keep walking. He stopped. Remember the rule? He broke it. He stopped. He said, "Call him here." He says the most unpredictable thing, "What would you like Me to do for you?" The response of Jesus is wonderful, "Go." I think at that moment his eyes were opened.
—Pastor Chuck Swindoll

How Jesus Enters an Important City—Mark 11:1–11

Read [Mark 11:1–11](#). Jesus and His disciples approached Jerusalem and prepared for Jesus' entry. Now would be the time for Him to show off His power and authority. But Jesus did the opposite! What did Jesus ask two of His disciples to do? What did He do when they brought the colt to Him?

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Feel the movement in the crowd as they spread their garments and leafy branches on the road in Mark 11:7–11. What were all those around Him shouting? What was Jesus' response to His fulfillment of Holy Scripture?

*After all the activities and all the miracles and all the words, there's silence.
—Pastor Chuck Swindoll*



Interpretation: Jesus Does the Unpredictable to Accomplish the Incredible

In Mark 10:46–48, blind Bartimaeus saw what highly trained Pharisees kept missing: Jesus as the son of David. Explore the section titled “Son of David” in the article “[Name and Titles of Jesus Christ](#),” in *Baker's Evangelical Dictionary of Biblical Theology*. Also look up 10:46–52 in [Constable's Notes](#) at netbible.org. What does this title for Jesus mean? What is the significance of a blind beggar shouting it and asking for mercy?

What did this miracle teach the disciples and the crowd about Jesus?

Bartimaeus “is sitting by the road,” and then he is following Him down the road. All he knows is that this one remarkable man . . . has given him sight. Jesus is more than a mere man. —Pastor Chuck Swindoll

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Jesus rode into town on a small donkey—not on a majestic steed or in a sumptuous carriage. How did Jesus' entry into Jerusalem fulfill [Zechariah 9:9–10](#), written around 500 years earlier?

If God will fulfill this detail—not only a donkey but the foal of a donkey—believe me, those promises that have been given regarding our future are just as sure. —Pastor Chuck Swindoll

In the article "[Hosanna](#)" in the *Encyclopedia of the Bible* at [biblegateway.com](#), explore the meaning of the word shouted by the crowd. How important is this scene as a fulfillment of [Psalm 118:25–26](#)?

How unpredictable was Jesus' and the disciples' silence after such a remarkable event? What lessons can modern-day readers learn from these verses about doing the unpredictable to accomplish the incredible?



Correlation: Values in the Kingdom of God

Kingdom values—such as being vulnerable by confessing our needs, hearing the cry of the outcast, or wearing the apron of humility—rub against society's norms. Compare Bartimaeus with the tax collector in [Luke 18:9–14](#). What makes humility a kingdom principle?

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Compare the triumphal entry of the eternal Son of God on a donkey with His nativity in a manger in Bethlehem in Judea and His crucifixion between two criminals on the hill of Calvary in [Mark 11:1–11](#); [Luke 2:1–20](#); and [23:26–46](#). What common themes emerge from all three events? Which one impresses you the most and why?

Jesus threw that leg over that little donkey and His feet dragged into the city just exactly as was prophesied. —Pastor Chuck Swindoll

What can we learn about the wisdom of silence in moving moments as we compare our passage with [Proverbs 10:19](#) and [Job 13:1–5](#)?

There's something about the sounds of silence when you stand in front of a memorial or you read the etchings in stone. There's something about that moment that words can ruin. —Pastor Chuck Swindoll



Application: Be Vulnerable, Be Humble, Be Quiet

Pastor Chuck communicates three memorable lessons from the events in our passage. First, *in terrifying times when we're blinded by bitterness, vulnerable confession is far more helpful*. Think of the blind beggar's cry for mercy as he realized the darkness that enveloped his life. Express your own plea for God to be merciful to you.

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We saw Jesus' profound humility as a King when He rode on a donkey. Second, *in significant settings when we're prompted to be proud (which is predictable), genuine humility is far more impressive.* Note some practical ways you can wear the apron of humility everywhere you go.

Ask God to bring you to the place where you can see beyond the crowds, the applause, and all the public approbation. —Pastor Chuck Swindoll

Third, *in moving moments when we're tempted to talk, total silence is far more appropriate.* Think of all that Jesus could have said when the people were shouting "Hosanna!" Yet He didn't give acceptance speeches or hold a press conference. How will you embrace the wisdom of silence when you might be tempted to speak?

Jesus entered Jerusalem, the city of peace, to bring God's kingdom of peace on earth. We await Christ's return, this time riding "a white horse" and leading "the armies of heaven" to victory over evil (Revelation 19:11, 14). Until then, experience the quiet *shalom* of His kingdom today as you live under His rule and in His care.



A FINAL PRAYER

Heavenly Father, I can see the Son of God in a manger. I can shout with the crowd for Him as He rides on a donkey. I can feel the sting of the Roman spikes as they pierce His hands and feet. I have only Your grace to claim. May that be a reminder over and over, lest any hint of pride mark my life. Grant me the wisdom of silence. In Jesus' name, I pray. Amen.

ENDNOTES

1. Josephus, *The Wars of the Jews*, Book 1, in *The Works of Flavius Josephus*, trans. William Whiston (New York: Armstrong, 1889), 337.
2. To learn more about Pastor Chuck Swindoll's *Searching the Scriptures* Bible-study method, go to the web page "*How Does Pastor Chuck Swindoll Study the Bible?*" at insight.org.

For the 2027 broadcasts, this *Searching the Scriptures* Bible study was developed by Mirlenda Noëlliste in collaboration with Bryce Klabunde, vice president of *Searching the Scriptures* Ministries, based upon the original outlines, charts, and transcripts of Charles R. Swindoll's messages. Copyright © 2011, 2026 by Charles R. Swindoll, Inc. All rights are reserved worldwide. Duplication of copyrighted material for commercial use is strictly prohibited.

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