

HE CAME ON A DONKEY

*by Rev. John W. Mingus, Sr.,
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He Came on a Donkey

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REV. CHARLES MACLAGAN, and
REV. PETER O'HARA

- 1 **CAST:** Crowd member (man or woman), A Pharisee, A Disciple
2
3
- 4 **CROWD MEMBER:** Hey . . . did you hear the miracle worker
5 is coming? You know who I mean, don't you? You know,
6 the one that all the pilgrims have been talking about; the
7 one they call Jesus of Nazareth. I just heard that he and
8 his Galilean disciples have been seen coming down the
9 trail from Bethany. I want to see him, don't you? My
10 cousin tells me that last week he raised a man named
11 Lazarus from death and there are all kinds of stories
12 floating around about the many miracles he has
13 performed. Let's go see him . . . he's entering by the east
14 gate, they tell me. Look, he's on a donkey . . . a young
15 donkey. You there — you're a Pharisee — someone who
16 knows these things. Tell me — who is he?
- 17 **PHARISEE:** Who is he? No one that you should listen to, or
18 follow. What do you and this crowd think you're doing?
19 Go home — no one should be praised except God.
- 20 **DISCIPLE:** Come and greet him — Jesus of Nazareth!
- 21 **PHARISEE:** Who are you?
- 22 **DISCIPLE:** I am a disciple of the miracle worker, Jesus of
23 Nazareth!
- 24 **PHARISEE:** Hah! Nazareth. What good ever came out of
25 Nazareth? Look at him! The man is an imposter and you
26 are a fool.
- 27 **CROWD MEMBER:** Hosanna to the son of David, who comes
28 in the name of the Lord. Hosanna in the highest.
- 29 **PHARISEE:** Who? Him? The son of David? We must put a
30 stop to this rabble. Go home — end this demonstration.
31 If you don't stop, the whole city will be in a riot. Stop
32 your shouting!
- 33 **CROWD MEMBER:** Praise God . . . Hosanna.
- 34 **DISCIPLE:** Come and greet him. Greet him with palms, lay
35 your coats before him. Your savior comes. Hosanna!

1 **PHARISEE:** Hosannas are praise only for the Lord. This man
 2 is no one! He is a mockery. Look at him ... is that your
 3 Messiah? A peasant man on a little donkey? My Messiah
 4 comes on a war horse! As God's own, he will come with
 5 might to destroy our enemies. Officers ... silence this
 6 crowd ... arrest them if you must; stop this unholy
 7 demonstration.

8 **CROWD MEMBER:** Blessed is he who comes in the name of
 9 the Lord! Who comes to restore the Kingdom of David!

10 **PHARISEE:** (*To DISCIPLE.*) Hey, you, come over here. Silence
 11 them! Who do you think this man is that he can bring
 12 back the Kingdom of David? Only the Messiah will do
 13 that. This man is not the Messiah. Why does he let you
 14 and this crowd say these things? He disturbs the peace.
 15 You must stop the "Hosannas"! (*Turning toward imaginary*
 16 *CHRIST figure*) Jesus, they may think you're a great
 17 teacher, but this is too much. You will not get away with
 18 this, I promise you. Command your disciples to be quiet!

19 **DISCIPLE:** If we will keep quiet, it will do no good. The very
 20 stones would shout his praise. We and these people have
 21 seen his works, we've heard his preaching and we've felt
 22 his love, and if we're silenced, the very hills would cry
 23 out his praise.

24 **PHARISEE:** But can't you see what you are doing? You
 25 threaten our peace. The Romans will not stand for this.

26 **CROWD MEMBER:** Hosanna in the highest. Peace in heaven
 27 and glory in the highest. Blessed is the kingdom of our
 28 father David that is coming!

29 **PHARISEE:** Stop it! You make a mockery of law and order.
 30 You can't bring back the Kingdom of David this way.
 31 You'll just bring Pilate's army down on us. Stop this
 32 parade at once! Go home now! For God's sake, let's have
 33 peace!

34 **DISCIPLE:** We have heard him say: "Would that even today
 35 you knew the things that make for peace! But now they

1 are hidden from your eyes. For the days shall come upon
 2 you, when your enemies will cast a rampart against you
 3 and your children within you and they will not leave one
 4 stone upon another; because you did not know the time
 5 of your visitation."

6 PHARISEE: Is that a threat?

7 DISCIPLE: It is what he said.

8 PHARISEE: He speaks of insurrection then. And by what
 9 authority? He would not dare to destroy the temple! We
 10 are the leaders here; we are trained to deal with these
 11 times. We know how to deal with Rome and any who
 12 threaten us. He (*Pointing at Christ*) does not know what
 13 he is doing. Now silence this crowd and leave the streets!

14 CROWD MEMBER: He is the King of Israel! He will be our
 15 king. We don't fear these so-called authorities. Before
 16 him they have no power. That donkey is all the proof
 17 that I need . . . he comes even as the prophet Zechariah
 18 foretold.

19 DISCIPLE: Come and greet him whose kingdom is not of this
 20 world. Come with trumpets and palms, come with your
 21 hearts and your lives. Come, follow him as we have done.

22 CROWD MEMBER: We heard about the raising of Lazarus in
 23 Bethany and some of the great things he has done. No
 24 one does such things but God.

25 PHARISEE: How stupid is this crowd! They will not be silent.
 26 My God, the whole city comes out to join the clamor. We
 27 must put a stop to this! (*He points.*) Look, he's going into
 28 the temple . . . let's follow him. (*PHARISEE, DISCIPLE and*
 29 *CROWD MEMBER exit or sit. There is a brief musical interlude*
 30 *or a congregational hymn.*)

31 DISCIPLE: (*Presents a monologue from pulpit or center of chancel*
 32 *area.*) What a day this has been. What am I to make of it?
 33 Perhaps you can help me sort it out. Our lives have been
 34 very different than we expected that they would be. I'll
 35 never forget that time three years ago when Jesus asked

1 me to join him. How could I not go? He's asked so much
 2 of me. He's asked me to leave behind my family . . . he's
 3 called me to spend my days with him serving the needs
 4 of the people . . . and evenings listening and learning
 5 from him about the Kingdom of God. Sometimes I've
 6 wanted to leave. Sometimes I've been very confused. But
 7 I must stay with him. Here is the purpose of my life. With
 8 him I am most the person that I can be. With him I've
 9 found a hope that I thought had been lost forever . . . a
 10 hope of God acting in the midst of us . . . a hope of God
 11 loving us. He's brought meaning and purpose to my life.

12 At times there have been hundreds of folk in our
 13 company. But many are unwilling to make the kind of
 14 commitment that I have. I understand this life is not for
 15 everyone. But we are such a small group. There's Peter.
 16 Jesus picked him to be our leader. Sometimes he's
 17 blustery and over-confident, but he's given up as much,
 18 if not more, than most of us to follow Jesus. He's got a
 19 big heart. And with Peter, as usual, I see James and John.
 20 They're the inner circle, so to speak. He once took them
 21 up Mount Tabor and they've been starry-eyed ever since.
 22 John's mother even asked if they could have the right
 23 and left hand seats with God in the kingdom. I was hurt.
 24 But Jesus moved us all to see that he came not to be
 25 served, but to serve, and that the greatest in his kingdom
 26 serves the needs of the least. He sure doesn't make it easy.

27 Philip, so much the realist! He had to know if Jesus
 28 was for real. I mean really the Son of God. I remember
 29 the time when he said to Jesus, "Lord, show us the Father
 30 and it is enough for us," and Jesus turned to him and
 31 said, "Philip, he who sees me sees the Father." I wonder
 32 how Philip felt about today — that was praise worthy of
 33 a king, wasn't it, and should have been reassuring to him.

34 There's Judas. Poor Judas. Can it be that he wants
 35 to conquer Jerusalem and drive out Rome. Sometimes he

1 speaks very radically of changing the condition of the
2 poor. He was angry the other evening when Mary washed
3 Jesus' feet with that expensive ointment. I think that he's
4 really not concerned about the poor, but how he can make
5 something of himself. Oh, and there's Matthew. He was
6 hard to accept at first because he's not like the rest of
7 us. He was a tax collector, and used to work for the
8 Romans. Jesus had to convince us that he had a place in
9 our community, reminding us that he came not for the
10 self-righteous, but sinners, and it's not the healthy, but
11 those who are ill, who need a physician.

12 And John. Sometimes he is more philosophical and
13 hard to understand than the rest of us. Jesus likes him
14 close-by and often shares some pretty heavy stuff with
15 him. I've heard him speak of Jesus as the Word of God
16 made flesh in our midst. But I'm not as sure. Jesus has
17 to be the most powerful person I've ever known, but can
18 that be true? But there's no disputing it, John is very
19 special to Jesus, and I only wish that I could be as close
20 and as strong in my faith as John.

21 And speaking of faith...there's Thomas just
22 coming in. He's really struggling with his. The others are
23 not here at the moment. It's strange, but none of us really
24 wanted to get together this evening. Frankly, we're not
25 too sure what to think of the day, remembering how Jesus
26 spoke of coming to Jerusalem to suffer and die.

27 That scene on the way into Jerusalem. Now I tell
28 you, that was beautiful! The coats and palms and that
29 donkey... why it absolutely drove the Pharisees wild! A
30 real authentic tribute of the people. Perhaps many in the
31 crowd will join our company. And the temple... I wish
32 you could have been there. It's about time we threw the
33 thieves out and replaced their buying and selling with
34 the joy of worship and good news of the Kingdom of God.

35 What a leader! He really showed the crowd a thing or



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