

A Colt Tied and Let Loose

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During his earthly ministry, Jesus Christ fulfilled many prophecies mentioned in the writings of the First Covenant. This fact alone confirms that the Bible is the inspired Word of God, with the exception of errors introduced by copyists and translators.

One of these prophecies used symbolic language to confirm that Christ was indeed the promised Messiah, and son of Almighty God. The meaning behind this symbolism presented a problem for the Jewish religious leaders, who denied that Christ had any authority to represent Almighty God,

Now when he (Christ) came into the temple, the chief priests and the elders of the people confronted him as he was teaching, and said, 'By what authority are you doing these things? And who gave you this authority?' (Mt. 21:23; Ed. note in parenthesis; NKJV used throughout unless otherwise noted).

At one point, these religious leaders demanded that Christ give them a sign proving that he was the Messiah,

Then some of the scribes and Pharisees answered, saying, 'Teacher, we want to see a sign from you' (Mt.12:38).

Christ said the only sign that would be given was the sign of Jonah, who died and was brought back to life after three days and nights in the belly of the great fish (Mt. 12:39-40). This was very important because it would identify the true Messiah who died and remained in the grave for the same period of time. In the event Christ failed to complete the task he was given, this sign would mean nothing. A very short time before his death, Christ fulfilled a prophecy that involved a number of symbols proving he was sent to provide the means through which every sinner can be forgiven and restored in their relationship with Almighty God. Whether or not some of the Jewish religious leaders understood this symbolism, is speculative. In the chronology of this prophecy, a colt was bound prior to the section dealing with "wine" that symbolized Christ's shed blood,

Binding his donkey (SHD 5895) to the vine, and his donkey's colt (SHD 1121) to the choice vine, he washed his garments in wine (symbolic of Christ's shed blood), and his clothes in the blood of grapes (Gen. 49:11; Ed. note in parenthesis; emphasis added).

One reason a donkey was used in this prophecy is to symbolize the hard work that Christ and his heavenly Father endured on behalf of every sinner. This work cannot be measured only in physical terms, but also in emotional hardship (<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Donkey>),

But Jesus answered them, 'My Father has been working until now, and I have been working' (Jn. 5:17; cf. Heb. 5:8; 13:12; 1Pet. 2:21, 23; 3:18; 4:1; emphasis added).

Genesis 49:11 confirms that both God the Father and Jesus Christ are bound together with the same goal of providing the way for sinners to inherit everlasting life. Therefore, using the word *bind* (SHD 631) is not a coincidence. It denotes a serious commitment,

If a man vows a vow to the Lord, or swears an oath to *bind* (SHD 631) himself by some agreement, he shall not break his word; he shall do according to all that proceeds out of his mouth (Nu. 30:2; Ed. note in parenthesis; emphasis added).

Both the donkey (SHD 5895) in Genesis 49:11 and the donkey's colt (SHD 1121) are bound to a vine. As the word colt is used elsewhere in scripture to represent the work of Christ (Lk. 19:29-35), the first donkey (SHD 5895) represents the preeminent work of Almighty God,

Give the king Your judgments, O God, and Your righteousness to *the king's Son* (SHD 1121) (Ps. 72:1; cf. Jer. 20:15; emphasis added).

Both God the Father and Jesus Christ bound themselves to serve the physical nation of Israel, which is often pictured symbolically as a "vine",

You have brought a vine (SHD 1612) out of Egypt; you have cast out the nations (Gentiles), and planted it (Ps. 80:8; cf. 80:14; Ed. notes in parentheses).

However, when Israel rejected God's law and commandments, they were regarded as a degenerate vine,

Yet I (Almighty God's representative; Jer. 2:13a; cf. Jn. 4:14) had planted you a noble vine, a seed of highest quality. How then have you turned before me into the degenerate plant of an alien vine? (Jer. 2:21; cf. Eze. 17:8; Ed. note in parenthesis; emphasis added).

At the end of his earthly ministry, Jesus Christ loosened himself once and for all from the degenerate vine that represented the physical nation of Israel. This would be his last journey with a people that rejected him, and his Father's law and commandments,

(Christ said), 'Go into the village opposite you, where as you enter you will find a colt tied, on which no one has ever sat. Loose him and bring him here (Lk. 19:30; Ed. note in parenthesis).

Then they brought him to Jesus. And they threw their own garments on the colt, and they set Jesus on him (Lk. 19:35).

Now as he drew near (Jerusalem), he saw the city and wept over it. ⁴² saying, 'If you had known, even you, especially in this your day (cf. Ps. 95:7-8), the things that make for your peace! But now they are hidden from your eyes (Lk. 19:41-42; Ed. notes in parentheses).

Christ then prophesied about the destruction that would come upon Jerusalem in 70 CE (Lk. 19:43-44). In a parable that followed, the responsibility for this destruction was laid at the feet of the Jewish religious leaders. Again, a vine is used symbolically to represent the nation of Israel,

Then he began to tell the people this parable: "A certain man planted a vineyard, leased it to vinedressers (symbolically representing caretakers; cf. Isa. 26:13), and went into a far country for a long time. ¹⁰Now at vintage-time he sent a servant (referring to a faithful and obedient prophet) to the vinedressers, that they might give him some of the fruit of the vineyard. But the vinedressers beat him and sent him away empty-handed. ¹¹Again he sent another servant; and they beat him also, treated him shamefully, and sent him away empty-handed. ¹²And again he sent a third; and they wounded him also and cast him out. ¹³Then the owner of the vineyard said, 'What shall I do? I will send my beloved son (referring to Jesus Christ). Probably they will respect him when they see him.' ¹⁴But when the vinedressers saw him, they reasoned among themselves, saying, 'this is the heir, come, let us kill him that the inheritance may be ours.' ¹⁵So they cast him out of the vineyard and killed him. Therefore what will the *owner of the vineyard* (Almighty God) do to them? ¹⁶He will come and destroy those vinedressers and give the vineyard to others. And when they heard it they said, "Certainly not!" ¹⁷Then He looked at them and said, What then is this that is written: 'The stone which the builders rejected has become the chief cornerstone' ¹⁸:"Whoever falls on that stone will be broken; but on whomever it falls, it will grind him to powder (cf. Rom. 16:20)." ¹⁹And the chief priests and the scribes that very hour sought to lay hands on Him, but they feared the people—for they knew he had spoken this parable against them.

This parable is a correction of every religious system created by man, not just that of the Jews. None of them truly assist the people they claim to serve in matters related to spiritual growth. When Almighty God looks for this growth, it is absent. This is confirmed by the rejection of God's faithful servants when they point out errors to the "vinedressers" who should know better. Spiritual growth is a direct result of God's Holy Spirit working in the lives of individuals, but it is impeded by those in positions of authority in all of man's religious systems,

I (Paul) planted, Apollos watered, but God gave the increase. ⁷ So then neither he who plants is anything, nor he who waters, but God who gives the increase (1Cor. 3:6-7; Ed. note in parenthesis; emphasis added).

Christ untied himself from his responsibility to a degenerate vine, pictured by a colt being untied from a vine representing the rebellious nation of Israel. As every other religious organization devised by man is also in a state of rebellion against God's law and commandments, Christ is not associated with them either. Instead of riding a colt, Christ is now ready to ride a white horse into battle against the architect of all these false religious systems,

Then I (John) saw heaven opened, and behold, a white horse. And he who sat on him was called Faithful and True, and in righteousness he judges and makes war (Rev. 19:11; Ed. note in parenthesis).

And the armies in heaven, clothed in fine linen, white and clean, followed him on white horses. ¹⁵Now out of his mouth goes a sharp two-edged sword, that with it he should strike the nations. And he himself will rule them with a rod of iron. He himself treads the winepress of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God. ¹⁶And he has on his robe and on his thigh a name written: KING OF KINGS AND LORD OF LORDS (Rev. 19:14-16).

God's faithful servants are to pray for the fulfillment of the scenario mentioned above (Mt. 6:10). Once this occurs there will be one legal and religious system under the

leadership of Jesus Christ (Isa. 2:2-4; Jer. 31:31-34).

This document is the collaborative work of individuals who believe God's truth should be given freely (Mt. 10:8; 1Cor. 2:12; 2Cor.11:7; Rom. 10:14-21) and the message of the one true God should be made available to all nations (Mt. 24:14) as a prerequisite to the return of Jesus Christ as King of kings (Mt. 17:10; 19:17; Mk. 9:11; Lk. 1:17; Rev. 19:11-16).

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