

1 **The Quirky Truth**

- A Messiah riding on a donkey . . . how quirky is that!

2 **Introduction**

- The closer we look at the world, the more we realize just how crazy, just how "quirky," of a place it really is.
- This is the premise of a new book entitled Quirkology: How We Discover Big Truths in Small Things by psychologist Richard Wiseman.

3 **Introduction**

- Quirkology is filled with all kinds of crazy insights.
- Your last name has an incredible impact on one's career path. This is why, as Wiseman points out, there's a disproportionate number of marine biologists named Dr. Fish.
- Here's another: According to Wiseman, the best way to spot a liar is not with our eyes -- as we've been taught -- but with our ears.
- When one is lying, they'll give much less detail and almost never use the pronoun "I."

4 **Introduction**

- Wiseman is driven by the belief that in life there's a reason for everything and a quirky cause behind every real world effect that we're forced to live with.
- The more quirks we know, the better equipped we are to navigate life, Wiseman asserts.
- Plus, it makes us really interesting at dinner parties.

5 **At first glance, you could think that Palm Sunday is a bit "quirky."**

6 **Riding on a Donkey**

- One could argue that Palm Sunday is one of the quirkiest moments in the earthly life and ministry of Jesus.
- What weird about this event is not that Jesus was riding a donkey—as riding a donkey was a common form of transportation.
- In fact, in several places of the world today, riding a donkey is common place.
- But what made this event weird was that it is a bit strange for someone purporting to be a king to enter the capital city on a donkey instead of a war horse.

7 **Riding on a Donkey**

- According to the Gospels, Jesus rode a donkey into Jerusalem, and the celebrating people there laid down their cloaks in front of him, and also laid down small branches of trees. The people also sang part of Psalm 118:25-26.

- O LORD, save us; O LORD, grant us success. Blessed is he who comes in the name of the LORD. From the house of the LORD we bless you. (Psa 118:25–26 NIV)
- Because of his earlier rejection, Jesus had told the crowds, "For I tell you, you will not see me again until you say, 'Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord.'" (Matt 23:39 NIV).
- Now his followers were making sure, Jesus was treated with honor and respect.

8 Imperial Power

- Interestingly enough, there were actually two processions that entered Jerusalem that day.
- Pontius Pilate, the Roman governor of Idumea, Judea, and Samaria, entered the city at the head of a column of imperial cavalry and soldiers.
- He was there for Passover week and if needed, he was there to put down any and all unrest.
- Pilate's military procession was a demonstration of Roman imperial power and came with symbols of military power:
 - cavalry on horses, foot soldiers, leather armor, helmets, weapons, banners, golden eagles mounted on poles, sun glinting on metal and gold.
 - the marching of feet, the creaking of leather, the clinking of bridles, the beating of drums.

9 Imperial Theology

- Pilate's procession displayed not only imperial power, but also Roman imperial theology.
- According to this theology, the emperor was not simply the ruler of Rome, but the Son of God.
- This concept began with the greatest of the emperors, Augustus, who ruled Rome from 31 BC to 14 AD.
- So successful was Augustus' reign, people concluded he was divinely inspired and upon his death, he was seen ascending into heaven to take his permanent place among the gods.
- His successors continued to bear divine titles, including Tiberius the current Roman Emperor.
- So then, among Rome's Jewish subjects, Pilate's procession embodied not only a rival social order, but also a rival theology.

10 Messianic Expectations

- Against this backdrop, many Jews were eagerly waiting for their Messiah, who would cast off their humiliation and the oppression of the Romans.
- However, this occupation of Palestine wasn't all the Romans' fault.

- For years the Jews had been fighting among themselves—and intrigue among the Hasmonean Dynasty opened the door for Roman involvement and the rise of Herod the Great and his sons.
- Nevertheless, in the Old Testament book of Zechariah, there's a prediction concerning the world's one true king and how he would make himself known.
- This king would not enter Jerusalem as a conquering ruler riding on a war horse, but on donkey.

11 Irony

- Thomas Long, writing in *The Christian Century* (April 4, 2006, 18), sees irony in the fact that the disciples, who had been disputing among themselves as to who would be the greatest in the kingdom, were now in the position of accompanying their "king" into the city, a king riding on a donkey.
- Long says,
 - "Though no one knows what these disciples were thinking, I am fairly confident that they had imagined for themselves a grander and nobler role on this day than being on donkey detail."
 - "Mucking around a stable, looking suspiciously like horse thieves, and trying to wrestle an untamed and no doubt balky animal toward the olive groves wasn't something they left their fishing nets for."

12 The Prophecy

- Rejoice greatly, O Daughter of Zion! Shout, Daughter of Jerusalem! See, your king comes to you, righteous and having salvation, gentle and riding on a donkey, on a colt, the foal of a donkey. (Zech 9:9 NIV)
- I will take away the chariots from Ephraim and the war-horses from Jerusalem, and the battle bow will be broken. He will proclaim peace to the nations. His rule will extend from sea to sea and from the River to the ends of the earth. (Zech 9:10 NIV)
- When Jesus comes at His Second Coming, he will initially ride a white horse with the army of heaven following Him.
- Who is this coming from Edom, from Bozrah, with his garments stained crimson? Who is this, robed in splendor, striding forward in the greatness of his strength? "It is I, speaking in righteousness, mighty to save." (Is 63:1 NIV)
- For the day of vengeance was in my heart, and the year of my redemption has come. (Is 63:4 NIV)

13 The Messiah

- But after Jesus defeats the enemies of Israel at His Second Coming, He will not enter Jerusalem as a warrior, but as a man of peace who has come in righteousness.
- So when Jesus on Palm Sunday, enters Jerusalem, He is indirectly identifying Himself to be that man—Israel's Messiah who will come in peace to His people after He has defeated their enemies.
- This is why it says in the Gospel of John, "Do not be afraid, O Daughter of Zion; see, your king is coming, seated on a donkey's colt." (John 12:15 NIV)

- They took palm branches and went out to meet him, shouting, "Hosanna!" "Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord!" "Blessed is the King of Israel!" (John 12:13 NIV)

14 **The Messiah**

- So then, did everyone in Jerusalem rejoice when Jesus entered the city on Palm Sunday?
- "O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, you who kill the prophets and stone those sent to you, how often I have longed to gather your children together, as a hen gathers her chicks under her wings, but you were not willing!" (Luke 13:34 NIV)
- So then, why didn't Israel come to their Messiah?
- According to Jesus, "The world cannot hate you, but it hates me because I testify that what it does is evil." (John 7:7 NIV)
- What eventually happened to Israel when they took offense to Jesus' words?
- "'Look, your house is left to you desolate. I tell you, you will not see me again until you say, 'Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord.'" (Luke 13:35 NIV)

15 **Spiritual Discernment**

- It is an awful thing to reject the Word of God.
- Spiritual blindness is the result of hardening our hearts when the Holy Spirit convicts us or speaks to our conscience and we ignore Him.
- As Jesus told his disciples about Israel, "'For this people's heart has become calloused; they hardly hear with their ears, and they have closed their eyes. Otherwise they might see with their eyes, hear with their ears, understand with their hearts and turn, and I would heal them.'" (Matt 13:15 NIV)
- But to His disciples, Jesus says, "But blessed are your eyes because they see, and your ears because they hear. For I tell you the truth, many prophets and righteous men longed to see what you see but did not see it, and to hear what you hear but did not hear it." (Matt 13:16–17 NIV)
- People who have discerning hearts notice things that most people don't. They follow Jesus saying, "Hosanna!" "Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord!" "Blessed is the King of Israel!" (John 12:13)

16 **Spiritual Blindness**

- In talking with the Pharisees, Jesus asks them, Why is my language not clear to you? Because you are unable to hear what I say. . . . He who belongs to God hears what God says. The reason you do not hear is that you do not belong to God. (John 8:43, 47 NIV)
- The Jews answered him, "Aren't we right in saying that you are a Samaritan (heretic) and demon-possessed?" (John 8:48 NIV)

- Duh!

17 **Blessed are Your Eyes**

- When Jesus came the first time, the majority of the people were blind to the obvious and rejected Jesus' teachings and claims.
- They did this because of the hardness of their hearts—as they had already rejected the witness of the Holy Spirit in their consciences and were given over to a spirit of stupor.
- Thus when Jesus rode into Jerusalem on a young donkey, many failed to see symbolism and instead of accepting their savior they rejected Him—sealing their fate as well.
- This is why the Scripture says, Above all else, guard your heart, for it is the wellspring of life. (Prov 4:23 NIV)

18 **Significance**

- When Jesus rode into Jerusalem on a quirky donkey, it was a major statement to His messianic claims.
 - Riding on an unbroken colt was a sign in and of itself—somehow, Jesus had divine favor.
 - It was in a symbolic pre-fulfillment of Zechariah 9:9.
 - Showed that his intentions were peaceful. He did not come as a conqueror, but as a peacemaker.
 - And the rejection by the majority of people showed how hard the people's hearts had become.

19 **Conclusion**

- Therefore, since, we know that this humble man who rides a quirky donkey is the King of Glory, let us not fail to give Him glory.
 - Let us not let the world intimidate us to keep silent.
 - Let us stand for the truth and let the world know we put God first in our lives.
 - Let us show forth that we are His disciples and produce the fruit that brings God glory.
 - Let us glorify God's name together!

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