

Coat Sunday

Very loosely based on Luke 19 2-44 & Mark 11 1-11!

Intro: Picture, if you will, our scene. We're in a small rented office at the cheap end of a rather run down industrial estate in Bethany; a few miles south east of Jerusalem. It's about 5pm on Sunday the 8th of April; AD 33. Business has not been good recently for Daniel son of Amos – Owner and Executive Sales Manager of “Amos & Sons – Purveyors of Quality Used Chariots”. Things may, however, be about to improve...

<Phone starts ringing >

<Daniel enters at a run and sits at the desk, composes himself and then answers the phone>

Amos & Sons – Purveyors of Quality Used Chariots. If you require Sales press 1, if you require a mechanic press 2 or if you require a **vet** press 3. For all other enquiries please hold.

<Short pause> Oh hello Zacchaeus. Yes it's me Daniel. Sorry I'm a bit out of breath. I've only just got back from Jerusalem. No I've not been to the auctions today. Actually it's been at a bit of a religious do. Ended up at the temple. Pardon? You'll have to speak up. It's a bit noisy here; some of the lads are still celebrating out in the yard.

<Shouts off stage> **Jeroboam!** Put the donkey back in the stable before you go off to your mothers will you! And take that ridiculous party hat off, yes, **and** the one off the donkey.

<Back to his call> What was that you were saying Zacchaeus?

<Puzzled> You're calling about the loan?

<Suspicious and guilty> What loan would that be?

<Relief> Ohhh **THAT** loan.

No I very much doubt I'll be needing to take you up on your very generous offer. Business could be about to really pick up. Yes it is good news. The Quality Used Chariot Business has had it very hard since the Romans flooded the market with all those cheap imports from Britannia.

<Pause> No I don't think much of them either. I read a road test of the Roverium 2 in "What Chariot?". It was only doing about 100 stadia an hour and one of the wheels fell off!

Still. Where was I? Oh yes. Business could be about to pick up. Have you got a few minutes? You have? Oh good. Well it started earlier this afternoon, about 1:30. I was just closing a sale with a nice young couple out to buy their first horse and cart. I was hoping to finally get rid of that Absolom Mark III and the old nag that came with it. Oh yes, you saw the condition old Mrs. Jonah had left it in – terrible. Covered in grease and dust, bodywork rotting away in parts – the cart wasn't much better eh? Geddit? Eh?

<Coughs> Please yourself. Anyway I'd started the haggling at 12 Greek drachmas (you've got to use a hard currency – the shekel's fluctuating too much at the moment) and I look out my window and there's two blokes leading my best colt off up the street without a "by your leave"! You know the one – yes the brand new one I got to use for test-drives. Well I've not even ridden it yet and there they go bold as brass, off up the street. I don't know what my sister's lad, Jeroboam, was thinking of. I was out of my office faster than stone from a sling I can tell you. And there's my so-called "Head Of Security" all misty eyed and dreamy getting his coat and about to go off and follow them.

<Pause> No. **Not** to stop 'em to actually go **with** them!

We'll soon put a stop to that I thought. So I sent my brother Samuel in to close the deal. (Be prepared to go down to 6 Drachmas I told him but no lower than that.) I couldn't afford to loose that sale now could I, the horse is eating me out of house and home!

So I catch up with them and I say "What are you doing untying my Colt and wandering off with it?" And do you know what they say? Go on guess.

<Pause> No it wasn't a message from Big Lazarus about my gambling debts. How'd you find out about that? No the taller one says, "The Lord needs it." Just like that. As if that explained everything.

<Pause. Wistful voice> S'funny the look on his face was so sincere I couldn't bring myself to thump him so I just said "OK Mate" and off they went.

<Pause> No that **wasn't** it. Jeroboam and I followed them, didn't we. At a discreet distance. They took the colt to some fella who had a crowd of people all around him. I didn't recognise him at first, you know I don't have much time for these media celebrities – unless they're out to buy a new chariot. So I ask Jeroboam if he recognises him and it's only **Jesus** isn't it. That prophet from Nazareth, up in the North.

<Comedy Yorkshire Accent> Oh eye. They're all right prophetic Oooop North like.

<Pause> Oh you've heard of him? Wouldn't have thought he was your sort at all Zacchaeus. What! You've had tea with him? Pull the other one...it's got bells on. You really have! Wow. You lucky so-and-so.

<Pause> Where was I? Oh yes. Watching Jesus. So all these followers put their cloaks on the Colt to make it a bit more comfy and on he gets and they head off up the road. By now I'm wondering what's going on so I took the afternoon off and tagged along.

We we're just getting near that steep bit of the road – overlooking Jerusalem. You know that accident black spot, going down by the Mount Of Olives and the whole crown bursts into song. They're shouting and singing and generally making an almighty racket.

<Pause> All sorts of religious stuff. Praise. Worship. Stuff like that.

<Pause> You want a for-instance?

<Pause> Erm. Well some was spontaneous made-up stuff but they did a few of the old classics like “Blessed is the king who comes in the name of the Lord” and “Peace in Heaven and glory in the highest” oh and your favourite one “Hosanna”.

<Pause> No I’m **not** going to sing them for you!

<Pause> Jeroboam and I are keeping to ourselves at the back when suddenly some Pharisees in the thick of it start kicking up a fuss. Apparently this singing isn’t proper, it isn’t “by the book”. Well you know me; I’m as faithful at the synagogue as the next man. I ask one of ‘em what’s wrong with it and this dinky little bearded fella shot me such a poisonous look. Gave me the chills. He pushes through the crowd, elbows flying leaving a trail of bruised ribs – well bruised hips anyway – he was *very* short. No offence, Zacchaeus – I know the Lord didn’t exactly giveth over abundantly to you in the legs department did he?

<Hold phone away from ears squinting in pain. Pause> Sorry. I’m really **really** sorry. I know you’re still rather sensitive about that.

<Pause> So he marches up to Jesus and says “Teacher, rebuke your disciples!” The sarcasm loaded into that word “Teacher”. Phew. Oh everyone heard it all right. You could’ve heard a pin drop suddenly. Everyone’s looking at Jesus wondering what he’s going to say – We all know he’s got a bit of a name for saying some outrageously rude things to them at times. So he looks at this angry little man, smiles as broad a smile as you could imagine and then says “If they keep quiet, the very stones will cry out.” That showed him I can tell you.

<Pause> Well of course the crowd roared! And started singing all the more! By now even I’m in the party mood. We’re all laying our cloaks on the road for him, and then when we’ve no cloaks left we’re putting palm branches down all the way to Jerusalem. The crowds just kept getting bigger and bigger.

<Pause> I wish I’d thought to call my cousin Zebedee, he’s got a mobile fish and bread stall, he’d have cleaned up selling to that lot.

<Pause> But you know what really convinced me that Jesus is the genuine article? Just as we got to Jerusalem he wept. He actually wept tears for that city and prayed for it! Quiet remarkable.

<Pause> By then it was getting late so I came back here to lock up. I'm going to hear him speak in the Temple in the week.

The bloke who *borrowed* my Colt said he's going to be there. He thanked me for the loan and said he'll bring it back tomorrow fed and watered. I said Jesus could use it anytime.

I gave the disciple my card. Just call and ask for Daniel I said.

<Pause> What do you mean what's this got to do with business picking up? Isn't it obvious?

<Pause> It isn't? Look this Colt's been ridden by a major celebrity, my dealership could advertise on the back of Jesus' endorsement.

You know the kind of thing "Amos & Sons. Purveyors of Quality Used Chariots – *by Royal Appointment.*" Plus I reckon the thing with the palm leaves and cloaks on the road will be a **huge** hit. It'll work great as an annual event.

<Pause> What do you mean how often. Every flippin' year! That's what annual means. I've even got a catchy name for it.

<Pause> We're gonna call it "**Coat Sunday**".

THE END