

More Than A Prophet?
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Matthew 21:1-11

Opening: Have you ever been in the crowd when a big celebrity or winning sports team came to town? Who was it? What was it like? Why were people so excited?

On the Sunday before His crucifixion Jesus rode into Jerusalem in a humble manner that caused a big commotion. His appearance fulfilled Old Testament prophecy; set in motion his death on the cross; and displayed His majesty as King of Kings, the promised Messiah!

Verse ten of our text today in the NLT says,
¹⁰ *The entire city of Jerusalem was in an uproar as [Jesus] entered. "Who is this?" they asked.*

Big Idea: When Jesus makes Himself known He cannot be ignored. When Jesus appears, everyone must answer two questions: Who IS this Jesus?; and how will I respond? Jesus always asks: *"Who do YOU say I AM?"* (Matt. 16:15)

Matthew 21:1–11 (ESV)

The Triumphal Entry

21 Now when they drew near to Jerusalem and came to Bethphage, to the Mount of Olives, then Jesus sent two disciples, ² saying to them, "Go into the village in front of you, and immediately you will find a donkey tied, and a colt with her. Untie them and bring them to me.

³ If anyone says anything to you, you shall say, 'The Lord needs them,' and he will send them at once." ⁴ This took place to fulfill what was spoken by the prophet, saying,

⁵ "Say to the daughter of Zion,
'Behold, your king is coming to you,
humble, and mounted on a donkey,
on a colt, the foal of a beast of burden.' "

⁶ The disciples went and did as Jesus had directed them. ⁷ They brought the donkey and the colt and put on them their cloaks, and he sat on them. ⁸ Most of the crowd spread their cloaks on the road, and

others cut branches from the trees and spread them on the road.
⁹ And the crowds that went before him and that followed him were shouting, “Hosanna to the Son of David! Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord! Hosanna in the highest!” ¹⁰ And when he entered Jerusalem, the whole city was stirred up, saying, “Who is this?” ¹¹ And the crowds said, “This is the prophet Jesus, from Nazareth of Galilee.”

- Jesus was on his way to Jerusalem for the Passover festival. There would probably be about 2 million people in and around the city.¹
- He stopped in the little town of Bethphage on the slopes of the Mount of Olives to arrange his ride into Jerusalem.
- *“Go into the village..., and immediately you will find a donkey tied, and a colt with her. Untie them and bring them to me. ³ If anyone says anything to you,...say, ‘The Lord needs them,’ and he will send them at once.”*
- Mark adds some additional details:
 - o A colt on which no one has ever sat.²
 - o ⁵ And some of those standing there said to them, “What are you doing, untying the colt?” ⁶ And they told them what Jesus had said, and they let them go.³
- Verses four and five: **WHY so specific? Why should we be amazed?**

Isaiah 62:11 (NLT)

¹¹ The Lord has sent this message to every land: “Tell the people of Israel,* [daughter of Zion] ‘Look, your Savior is coming. See, he brings his reward with him as he comes.’ ”

Zechariah 9:9 (NLT)

⁹ Rejoice, O people of Zion!* Shout in triumph, O people of Jerusalem! Look, your king is coming to you. He is righteous and victorious,* yet he is humble, riding on a donkey— riding on a donkey’s colt.

- Though all four Gospel accounts include the Triumphal Entry, only Matthew mentioned a donkey along with the colt.⁴ The prophecy called for the Messiah to ride a colt of a donkey. **Why bring mama donkey along?**

- Matthew's wording in verse seven has caused confusion. Riding both?
- **How would a king normally come riding into a city? What statement did how Jesus rode in make to the people?**
- Jesus' entry caused a big commotion. He knew it would. **Had He made this kind of display before in His ministry? Why not? Why now?**
- As we just saw, He was fulfilling Old Testament prophecy.
- *Wiersbe: "...a second reason for this public presentation: It forced the Jewish leaders to act. When they saw the spontaneous demonstration of the people, they concluded that Jesus had to be destroyed. The prophetic Scriptures required that the Lamb of God be crucified on Passover. This demonstration of Christ's popularity incited the rulers to act."*⁵
- **How did the people respond to Jesus' arrival? What was significant about the cloaks and the palm branches? What was significant about what they yelled in excitement?**

Bible Knowledge Commentary:

*"Matthew noted that they...shouted the words of Psalm 118:26, Blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord. To Him they shouted, Hosanna to the Son of David. "Hosanna" is from the Hebrew hōšî'âh nā', "Save (us), we pray," taken from Psalm 118:25. It came to be a note of praise as well as petition. While the crowd did not fully understand the significance of this event, they seemed to be acknowledging that this One is the promised Seed of David who had come to grant them salvation. Both their actions and words bestowed honor on this One coming into the city, at last presenting Himself publicly as their King."*⁶

- **What kind of king were they expecting? How do people make that mistake about Jesus today (spelling "savior" with a small "s.")?**
- When some people get in a jam they turn to Jesus looking for a savior from their trouble (spelled with a small "s.") The problem is they refuse to surrender to Him as Lord and Savior with a capital S!
- Not everyone was praising Him. **What does verse ten indicate? Why would some people ask this? How did**

others respond to their question? Was their response correct, incorrect, or a little of both?

- “Who is this? Since Jesus had usually avoided the city, its inhabitants did not know Him. Those accompanying Jesus from out of town kept answering, **This is Jesus, the Prophet from Nazareth in Galilee** (cf. v. 46). As *the* Prophet, He is the One promised by Moses.”⁷

Deuteronomy 18:15 (ESV)

¹⁵ “The Lord your God will raise up for you a prophet like me from among you, from your brothers—it is to him you shall listen—

- We know Jesus is not just a prophet. He is “Prophet, Priest, and King.”

Wiersbe: “...this Passover crowd was composed of at least three groups: the Jews who lived in Jerusalem, the crowd from Galilee, and the people who saw Jesus raise Lazarus from the dead (John 12:17–18). Sharing the news of this miracle undoubtedly helped to draw such a large crowd. The people wanted to see this miracle-worker for themselves.

But the Jews still did not recognize Jesus as their King.”⁸

- **What caused Israel’s spiritual blindness?**

John 12:37–42 (ESV)

³⁷ Though he had done so many signs before them, they still did not believe in him, ³⁸ so that the word spoken by the prophet Isaiah might be fulfilled:

“Lord, who has believed what he heard from us, and to whom has the arm of the Lord been revealed?”

³⁹ Therefore they could not believe. For again Isaiah said,

⁴⁰ “He has blinded their eyes and hardened their heart, lest they see with their eyes, and understand with their heart, and turn, and I would heal them.”

⁴¹ Isaiah said these things because he saw his glory and spoke of him. ⁴² Nevertheless, many even of the authorities believed in him, but for fear of the

Pharisees they did not confess it, so that they would not be put out of the synagogue;

- Wiersbe: *“When a person starts to resist the light, something begins to change within him; and he comes to the place where he cannot believe. There is “judicial blindness” that God permits to come over the eyes of people who do not take the truth seriously.”*⁹
- Some of these same people praising Him as king would be yelling “crucify Him!” just a few days later. The going got rough and they switched sides.

So, What’s the Takeaway?

- We said: Jesus rode into Jerusalem in a humble manner that caused a big commotion.
- His appearance fulfilled prophecy; set in motion his death on the cross; and displayed His majesty as King of Kings and the promised Messiah!
- He provoked several responses by the people in this text:
 - o Some saw Jesus as a king, but they misunderstood what kind of King He would be. They saw a savior (with a small “s”.)
 - o They wanted military might but Jesus came NOT to conquer Rome, but to conquer death – by HIS death, burial and resurrection.
 - o The religious leaders saw Jesus as a threat.

John 11:47–48 (ESV)

⁴⁷ So the chief priests and the Pharisees gathered the council and said, “What are we to do? For this man performs many signs. ⁴⁸ If we let him go on like this, everyone will believe in him, and the Romans will come and take away both our place and our nation.”

- o Then there were His closest followers who, though still somewhat confused, were beginning to see Jesus for who He is: Savior and Lord. The Lamb of God that was slain for your sins and mine.

As Ian Campbell writes:

*“Although this event is often referred to as the ‘triumphal entry’, it was by way of betrayal, crucifixion and death that this King was to triumph over death for his people.”*¹⁰

- When Jesus makes Himself known He cannot be ignored.
- When He appears, everyone must answer two questions: Who IS this Jesus; and how will I respond?
- Most of us in class have surrendered to Jesus as Lord and Savior.
- This text gives us reason to throw down our cloaks, raise our palm branches, and praise Him for His mercy and grace!
- By the way, I never assume everyone in the room has made that decision. If not, then TODAY is the day to accept Him for who He is.
- Those of us who ARE followers of Christ need to help others understand WHO Jesus is and HOW to respond to Him.
- Remember: Jesus always asks: Who do YOU say I am. Each person's own response to that question determines where we will spend eternity.
- Who do you know that needs to understand that?

¹ Wiersbe, W. W. (1996). *The Bible exposition commentary* (Vol. 1, p. 76). Wheaton, IL: Victor Books.

² *The Holy Bible: English Standard Version*. (2016). (Mk 11:2). Wheaton: Standard Bible Society.

³ *The Holy Bible: English Standard Version*. (2016). (Mk 11:5–6). Wheaton: Standard Bible Society.

⁴ Barbieri, L. A., Jr. (1985). Matthew. In J. F. Walvoord & R. B. Zuck (Eds.), *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures* (Vol. 2, p. 67). Wheaton, IL: Victor Books.

⁵ Wiersbe, W. W. (1996). *The Bible exposition commentary* (Vol. 1, p. 76). Wheaton, IL: Victor Books.

⁶ Barbieri, L. A., Jr. (1985). Matthew. In J. F. Walvoord & R. B. Zuck (Eds.), *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures* (Vol. 2, pp. 67–68). Wheaton, IL: Victor Books.

⁷ Barbieri, L. A., Jr. (1985). Matthew. In J. F. Walvoord & R. B. Zuck (Eds.), *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures* (Vol. 2, p. 68). Wheaton, IL: Victor Books.

⁸ Wiersbe, W. W. (1996). *The Bible exposition commentary* (Vol. 1, p. 76). Wheaton, IL: Victor Books.

⁹ Wiersbe, W. W. (1996). *The Bible exposition commentary* (Vol. 1, p. 343). Wheaton, IL: Victor Books.

¹⁰ Campbell, I. D. (2008). *Opening up Matthew* (p. 127). Leominster: Day One Publications.