

Sermon outline and notes:

© Dr. Stephen Felker, Pastor

[Swift Creek Baptist Church.com](http://SwiftCreekBaptistChurch.com), 18510 Branders Bridge Rd., Colonial Heights, VA 23834

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Mark 11:1-11 “The Triumphal Entry into Jerusalem”

Intro. Our Lord’s entrance into Jerusalem is one of the comparatively few events which are recorded in all four Gospels. No Gospel writer felt his gospel was complete without this account included. So let’s follow Jesus as He begins the final week leading up to His death. From Jericho Jesus led His disciples up the winding road towards Jerusalem, ascending about 2000 feet.

Recently, He had warned His disciples that He was going up to Jerusalem to die. Before sunset on Friday, He & His disciples probably reached Bethany, which was located on the eastern slopes of the Mount of Olives. Then, He enjoyed a Sabbath rest with His friends in Bethany, including Simon the leper, Lazarus, Mary, and Martha. On Saturday evening a supper was given in His honor. Sometime Sunday morning Jesus and a group with Him started out from Bethany to head to Jerusalem, which was just a few miles away. Somewhere along the way, He stopped and sent two disciples to borrow a young donkey for Him to ride. Then, the triumphal entry into Jerusalem began. This event was so significant, that it is probable that there was not a house in Jerusalem in which the entry of the prophet of Nazareth was not known and talked of that night.

What happened during this event is very revealing about who Jesus is and what He came to do. If Jesus is Who He claimed to be, and if His death on the cross is our only hope of salvation, but there is nothing more important than learning about Jesus, and placing your faith in Him. And so this morning I will be preaching mainly about Jesus. I want to lift up Jesus, and let you see Him in His glory. Jesus said, “If I be lifted up, I will draw all men unto me.”

What we have here was very unusual for Jesus. Up to this time, He almost always shunned much publicity.¹ For example, often He would try to keep the people He healed from giving praise & publicity about it. But here, He openly presents Himself to Jerusalem, the city of David. Let’s see what this Scripture passage tells us about Jesus. The first truth we see from this story is this:

I. JESUS IS THE KING

From this story we see strong evidence that Jesus is the Son of David, who was promised to rule on the throne of Israel, as well as the whole world. We see this truth affirmed in two different ways:

A. Jesus Affirmed He Is King – In v.7 we read, “Then they brought the colt to Jesus and threw their clothes on it, and He sat on it.” What is significant about the action of Jesus? Well He deliberately fulfilled a prophecy from Zechariah 9:9, “Behold, your King is coming to you... humble, and mounted on a donkey...” With unusual consistency, the Talmud and the ancient rabbinic authorities have applied this prophecy to the Messiah, the promised King. By His action on that Sunday, Jesus said in a way more plain than words, “Behold, I am your King, your Messiah.” A certain divine decorum required that at least once He should enter the city as its King. And note it is “your” King in the prophecy. He is not a foreign king. He “is coming to you,” that is, to benefit you.

¹ Thus He fulfilled the prophecy that he would "not shout or cry out, or raise his voice in the streets" (Isaiah 42:2).

B. The People Affirmed Jesus Is King – Though most of the Jews ultimately rejected Jesus as their king, a significant number acknowledged Jesus as the King that God promised to raise up to be their Messiah. Remember, this was during a feast time. It was the week of Unleavened Bread, which culminated in the Feast of Passover. There could have been over a million people around Jerusalem during this feast time. Now I want you to understand that the people affirmed Jesus is King:

1. In Their Actions – I see their actions indicating that Jesus is king in two different ways. First of all, in the way the crowds came out to meet Him. V.9 mentions a crowd in front of and a crowd behind Jesus. Probably, the people behind him included some of His disciples and some pilgrims from Bethphage, which was about 2 miles from Jerusalem. Some pilgrims would spend the night there because of a lack of accommodations in Jerusalem. The people in front of Jesus would have included those meeting Him from Jerusalem. According to John 12:1, 12, 13a, 17-18, the caravan of pilgrims that had arrived in Jerusalem previously had heard that Jesus had raised Lazarus from the dead. What a mighty miracle! Surely many thought, “He is the Messiah!” And so, as Jesus was on His way toward the city, they came pouring out of the eastern gate to meet the One whom they hoped would be their King. In ancient times, it was customary for a large delegation from a city to go out to meet a king as he approached the city. In fact, this is almost certainly what Paul had in mind in 1 Thess. 4:17 when he said regarding the return of Christ, “Then we who are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet² the Lord in the air.” When they met Him, they turned around and walked ahead of Jesus. They were probably mostly pilgrims from Galilee. Hopefully, it was not this same group who cried, “Crucify Him, Crucify Him!” only 5 days later.

Second, notice what else this crowd did to show their faith in Jesus as King. In v.8 we read, “And many spread their clothes on the road, and others cut down leafy branches from the trees and spread them on the road.” In that day, when welcoming a king, it was customary for people to lay their outer garments on the road, and then add festal branches. For example, when Jehu was to be anointed king over Israel, we read in 2 Kings 9:13, “Then each man hastened to take his garment and put it under him on the top of the steps....” So by their actions they were recognizing & acknowledging Jesus as King. Furthermore, the people affirmed Jesus is King:

2. In Their Words - Next, notice what they said in the last of v.9, “Hosanna!” “Hosanna” means “save now,” or “save, we pray.” Essentially, it was a people’s cry for deliverance. They expected the Messiah to deliver them, & save them. In fact, that prophecy in Zechariah said that when the Messiah would ride to them on a donkey, He would be “just and having salvation.” We can imagine it all, how the fire of hope would leap from heart to heart. He was the promised Son of David, and the Kingdom was at hand! Many felt He would soon save them from the Romans.

Notice that the people also proclaimed, “Blessed is He who comes in the name of the LORD!” (v.9b). This is a quotation from Psa. 118:26. Psa. 118 was commonly recognized as a Messianic Psalm. So the people who knew Old Testament prophecy were giving further recognition to Jesus as the Messiah.

Then they continued to give affirmation that Jesus is the Messiah in v.10. They said, “Blessed is the kingdom of our father David that comes in the name of the Lord! Hosanna in the highest!” The Messiah had to be a descendant of David (cf. 2 Sam. 7:12-14). That’s why they referred to “the kingdom of our father David.” However, they also recognized that the Messiah was

² Literally, “for a meeting.”

not just from the loins of David, but also a gift from God. "Hosanna in the highest" shows that the Messiah was regarded as a gift from God, the One who dwells in the highest heaven.

According to Lk. 19:39-40, we see that the Pharisees clearly understand the significance of what was happening. Full of envy, they appealed to Jesus to stop their word of praise and hope. If Jesus had not been Messiah & King, He would have refused their recognition and praise, as John the Baptist did. But He didn't! He acknowledged that He is a King saying, "I tell you that if these should keep silent, the stones would immediately cry out."

So we see from prophecy, the actions of Jesus, and actions & words of the multitude that Jesus is indeed the King. This was confirmed when Jesus was raised from the dead. In Acts 2:36 Peter concluded his Pentecostal sermon saying, "Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly that God has made this Jesus, whom you crucified, both Lord and Christ." He is not only the King of Israel, but prophecy indicates that the Messiah is the King of the world! Now I ask you this. Is Jesus your King? Is He Lord of your life? The question is best answered by another question, "Are you living in obedience to Christ?" Jesus said in Luke 6:46, "But why do you call Me 'Lord, Lord,' and do not do the things which I say?" Do you obey Jesus regarding church attendance? Do you obey Jesus by spending time in prayer each day? Do you obey Jesus in how you treat your fellow man? Are you obeying Jesus in regard to participation in His great commission to make disciples of all nations?

You may be hesitant to yield your life to Jesus as Lord & King. So let's also see from this story:

C. The Type of King He Is – I believe when you find out the kind of King He is, you will be more willing to yield your life to His Lordship. He is not a self-centered, sinful king. He is not an arrogant, abusive king. Instead, we see from this passage of Scripture that:

1. He Was a Poor King - We read in vv.1-6 that he borrowed the colt of a donkey for the occasion, and sat on His disciples' clothing for a saddle. This was in perfect keeping with all the tenor of his ministry. He never had any of the riches of this world. When He crossed the Sea of Galilee, it was in a borrowed boat. When he rode into the holy city, it was on a borrowed beast, & borrowed clothes for a saddle. When he was buried, it was in a borrowed tomb.

Are you struggling each day just to make ends meet? Are you must a common person without a drop of royal blood in you? Well I want you to know that common, poor people can identify with this King, for when He came to earth, He accepted poverty as His lot in life. Thus, Christ wants anyone to feel they can approach Him, and receive salvation & blessing from His gracious hand. He is able to sympathize with the poorest & lowliest among us. Furthermore,

2. He Was a Meek King – He was not a warring King, for according to v.7, He was riding on a young donkey. He was not riding on a mighty white stallion, or upon a mighty chariot. Thus, He is not a worldly king, who wages war against an earthly oppressor. At times a king would enter a city upon a donkey as a symbol of peace and good will. And in the case of Jesus, riding on a donkey demonstrates the fact that this king, true to prophecy, is meek, gentle, peaceful, and gracious. He is the Prince of Peace. His attendants are not warriors bearing spears, but peasants with palm branches.

Zechariah meant that Zion's King would not reign at first by brute force, but loyalty to Him would be won by His lowly meekness and love. Christ's triumph would be the victory of love over hatred, truth over error, and life over death. The kingdom that is established in meekness and rules by gentleness, that is the kingdom which shall be eternal and universal. The rule of Christ over the hearts of men has continued for almost 2,000 years now. Where are all the ancient kingdoms which

were established through might and force and bloodshed? They have all come to an end without exception. But the reign of Christ continues into the ages! The love and goodness of God (Rom. 2:4) has led many to repentance and faith in Christ as Lord of their lives.

By the way, as instruments of the advance of the Kingdom of God on earth, we must rely upon His love and grace to win the hearts of men. We cannot win the world by becoming like the world, using force, or the power of the State. God says in Zech. 4:6, "Not by might, nor by power, but by My Spirit...." Islam seeks to advance by the power of the sword & bloodshed, but the followers of Christ seek to advance God's kingdom by the power of love.

And this says something to you who have not yet accepted Christ as Savior. In this present age, Jesus will not force His rule over your life. You must willingly accept Him as Savior. Romans 10:9 says, "that if you confess with your mouth the Lord Jesus and believe in your heart that God has raised Him from the dead, you will be saved." In Luke's account we read that Jesus paused & wept over the city that rejected Him. But He would not force His way into their lives. However:

D. Prophecy Reveals the Type of King He Will Be - The book of Revelation says that Jesus will come again in great power and glory. Rev. 19:11 says, "Behold, a white horse, and He that sat thereon, called Faithful and True; and in righteousness He doth judge and make war." Then v.16 says, "And He has on His robe and on His thigh a name written: KING OF KINGS AND LORD OF LORDS." Jesus is not just a king of a small nation. He is the King of kings! And some day Jesus will come again and destroy all opposition to His rule upon this earth. Then there will finally be peace on earth!

If you do not make Jesus your King in this life, you will not want to meet Him when He comes again. Once again, I call upon you to make sure Jesus is your Lord & King. You should be willing to do that in light of the second main truth of our story today, and it is this:

II. JESUS CAME TO DIE FOR OUR SINS

Contrary to the expectation of the crowd, I will show that even this passage shows that the purpose of the coming of Jesus was not to conquer Rome and rule Israel by force, but He came to die for our sins. He came not only to be presented as Lord & King, but also to be our Savior. Our greatest need is not for a military deliverance, or for political reform. Our greatest need is for the forgiveness of sin. All of us have sinned, & the Bible says, "The wages of sin is death" (Rom. 6:23). How is forgiveness possible? Hebrews 9:22 says, "Without the shedding of blood there is no forgiveness of sin." So Jesus knew He had to shed His blood as a sacrifice for sin there in Jerusalem, on the very mount where Abraham said, "God will provide for Himself the lamb..." (Gen. 22:8).

So Jesus knew full well that He would come into Jerusalem, not for His coronation as King, but to die for our sins. He had no grand illusions that He would soon be placed on the throne of David. Instead, I can prove that Jesus planned to die for our sins due to four reasons:

A. Because of Prophecy - People were quoting from Psa. 118, saying, "Blessed is He who comes in the name of the LORD!" But note the context of Psa. 118. This Psalm includes a prophecy that says, "The stone which the builders rejected has become the chief cornerstone" (v.22). That prophecy predicted that the leaders of Israel would reject the chief corner stone. In other words, God said that the Messiah would be rejected by the leaders. Isa. 53 adds, "He was despised and rejected of men."

So don't reject Jesus just because the leaders of Israel rejected Him. After all, prophecy predicted this would happen!

Secondly, we know of Jesus' intent to die for us:

B. Because He Entered Jerusalem - The gospel of John reveals that the Sanhedrin came to a decision in recent days, that Jesus must die, supposedly to keep the Roman authorities from feeling threatened by Jesus' popularity. There were some secret disciples on the ruling council who no doubt sent word about that plot. However, Jesus knew about it even without their help. Yet, in spite of this, Jesus was determined to go to Jerusalem, and even to do so openly. Surely Jesus would have avoided Jerusalem if He did not intend to lay down His life.

Along the same lines, we see here His courage. Jesus knew full well that He was entering into a hostile city. Most would expect that, if He had come to Jerusalem at all, He would have slipped in under cover of night, and would have kept prudently to the back streets until He reached His shelter. But Jesus entered Jerusalem in a way that deliberately set Himself in the center of the stage, vulnerable to the hostile authorities. Would you have done that?

C. Because He Antagonized Israel's Leaders - Not only did He enter Jerusalem, but He openly antagonized Israel's leaders by the triumphal entry. When the multitude welcomed Him as King & sang His praises, they were more determined than ever to carry out their plot.

Up to this time He avoided situations which could lead to His death because "His hour was not yet come." Jesus typically shunned publicity because He did not want a premature crisis. But now He knew that His hour had come. So by the Triumphal Entry He precipitated the conflict which was to end in His death. And we can only understand this if we recognize in His actions the fixed resolve of One who knew that His mission was not only to live and to teach by word & life, but to die, and by death to deliver the world. Any other hypothesis, it seems, cannot account for His act here.

D. Because He Died on Passover - The intent of the leaders was to kill Him *after* the feast of Passover (Matt. 26:5). So Jesus forced the members of the Sanhedrin to change their timetable so that it would harmonize with His (and the Father's) timetable. You see, it was fitting that Jesus died on the Passover, for He was dying as the Lamb of God, suffering in your place the penalty of sin. If it had not been for the Triumphal Entry, they would not have been so desperate to kill Jesus, even if it be on the Passover. Jesus, the Sovereign King, was even in control of the day of His death!

believe the evidence is overwhelming that Jesus Christ went to Jerusalem to die for your sins, and for my sins. Do you believe that Jesus died for your sins? The great preacher Spurgeon said, "When I think of my sin, it seems impossible that any atonement should ever be adequate; but when I think of Christ's death, it seems impossible that any sin should ever be great enough to need such an atonement as that." Have you placed your faith in Jesus & accepted Him as Savior? Unless you do that, His death will have no benefit for you.

Conclusion and Appeal: After His death God raised Jesus from the dead & exalted Him to rule as King and Lord of the hearts of millions around the world (Acts 2:36). But at this time He is still a gentle King, not forcing His rule by might, but winning it by His love. Yield your life to Him as Savior & Lord! Now the first thing Jesus commands you to do is to confess Him publicly as your Lord and Savior (Rom. 10:9). Will you obey Him, & come forward today?

Sources: William Barclay, *The Daily Study Bible Series: Matthew* (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1975); Ronald A. Beers, ed., *Life Application Study Bible* (Tyndale House & Zondervan, 1991); Alfred Edersheim, *The Life and Times of Jesus the Messiah* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1971); William Hendriksen, *New Testament Commentary: Matthew* (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1973); Alexander Maclaren, *Expositions of Holy Scripture*, Vol. 7 (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1977 reprint); Larry Pierce, *Online Bible* [CD-ROM] (Ontario: Timnathserah Inc., 1996); J.C. Ryle (1816-1900), *Mark: Expository Thoughts on the Gospels* (Wheaton: Crossway Books, 1993); James S. Stewart, *The Life and Teaching of Jesus Christ* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, no date); Warren W. Wiersbe, *Be Diligent: Mark* (Wheaton: Victor Books, 1987). Other sources listed in the footnotes. Unless otherwise indicated, all Scripture quotations are from *The New King James Version* (Nashville: Thomas Nelson Publishers, 1982).