

# The Triumphal Entry

📖 Matthew 20:29–21:11

👤 Pastor Jeremy Thomas

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📍 Fredericksburg Bible Church

107 East Austin Street

Fredericksburg, Texas 78624

(830) 997-8834

We are in the fifth section of Matthew's Gospel, chapter 19:2-25:46. We titled it *The Formal Rejection of the King*. In this section Matthew is doing three things. First, he is tracing the increased opposition of the Jewish leadership to Jesus. Second, he is recording Jesus' continued training of His disciples for ministry during the interadvent age. Third, he reports on Jesus' predictions of His death and resurrection soon to occur at Jerusalem.

Last time we saw in Matt 20:17-19 Jesus further fulfilling His prophetic office by predicting His betrayal, trials, death and resurrection which also served to prepare His apostles for these events. They had been travelling from the Galilee to Jerusalem for Passover. In 20:17 they were in residential Jericho, about 800 feet below sea level and they were about to go up to Jerusalem at 2,500 feet above sea level over the course of a 13-mile trek along the *Ascent of Adummim*. Before going up He took the twelve aside. In 20:18 He tells them several things that will happen to the Son of Man in Jerusalem. First, He will be delivered or betrayed. That occurs by Judas Iscariot. The second thing is who He would be betrayed to: the chief priests and scribes who make up the Sanhedrin, the body of 71 men that served as the ruling counsel of Israel. They were the ones who wanted to get rid of Him. The third thing is that the Sanhedrin will condemn Him to death, a foregone conclusion. In 20:19 the fourth thing revealed and something revealed for the very first time, the Sanhedrin will hand Him over to the Gentiles. The Sanhedrin couldn't crucify Him but the Romans could so they will turn Him over to them. The fifth thing is the Roman soldiers will mock and scourge Him. The sixth thing is another new revelation, the mode of execution is here revealed to be crucifixion. The seventh and final thing mentioned here is He will be raised on the third day. So another prediction of His death and resurrection and this is the substance of the gospel.

In 20:20-28, as if they didn't even hear a word He said, the mother of James and John came to Jesus with her sons and in 20:21 changes the subject to making requests for position in the kingdom. Her request is for Him to command that her two sons sit in the most privileged positions, one on His right and the other on His left, when He comes in His kingdom. The kingdom was still a future reality. It was not a present reality, spiritually or otherwise. The kingdom is future and theocratic and Davidic, not a spiritual reign of Christ in the heart. People enter the kingdom; the kingdom does not enter people. But as important as these kingdom issues are what is more important is that access into the kingdom is through the cross but this mother and her sons do not want to

think about the suffering of the cross. They only want to think about reigning in the kingdom. It is evident that they still did not understand that the route to reigning in the kingdom is through the suffering of the cross. In 20:22 Jesus said they didn't have a clue what they were asking for and then He asks a question to the two sons who instigated the whole discussion anyway. Are you able to drink the cup that I am about to drink? That is, are you able to suffer the judgmental wrath of God? They said, "We are able." Of course, they did not really know what they were saying but He said to them in 20:23 "My cup you will drink," meaning, they will end up suffering martyrdom because of their connection with Him, which they did in time, "but to sit on My right and My left," He says, "this is not Mine to give." This was something only the Father could give and He would give it not because of a request but because of faithful service. All position and privilege in the kingdom is a reflection of the Father's goodness and the believers faithful service. In 20:24 the ten became indignant with the two. Why? Because they wanted the privileged positions and they felt that the two were trying to get an advantage over them. So we see that all twelve still did not understand the principle that suffering precedes greatness. So, in 20:25 Jesus explains to them moving from something they do know, namely that the rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them and their great men exercise authority over them. This is a Gentile desire to seek position and privilege in order to exercise authority over others. But in 20:26 He says, it is not to be this way among you. If you want to become great you must be a *διακονος*, the word describing a temporary servant; one who actively serves here and there as occasion arises. In 20:27, if you want to be first, if you want to have primacy, you must be a *δουλος*, the word describing a permanent slave, one who is permanently in the service of others. In 20:28 Jesus gives Himself as the ultimate example. He does not ask us to do before He has first done for us. He asks us to do by following His example. He says that "the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, (this is the path to greatness as He said in verse 26, but what He said next is infinitely more), and to give His life a ransom for many." He would "give His life," it would not be taken from Him. He was sinless and no one could take it from Him. But He would give His life, and 20:19 said He would give it by way of the crucifixion at the hands of the Romans. He would give it as "a ransom." The word "ransom" refers to the manumission price for a slave. Because He had life He could pay the redemption price to set us free from slavery to the sin nature. The connection in the NT is to Romans 6 where the master-slave analogy is used to describe when a person believes they are set free from the power of the sin nature. The sin nature is no longer master from the moment we believe. Though it does still reside in us, it has no legal right to exert its authority over us, we are not its slave, we are set free from its power and therefore we no longer have to obey its lusts. So this is what Jesus says He came to achieve. And this was an example, for if the Son of Man who is the rightful King and heir of the throne of David and who knew no sin and yet came not to be served but to serve and even to give His life for the many, then how much more should we seek not to be served but to serve and even to become the slave of others. Jesus taught that following Him was the way to become great in the kingdom and these lessons are very pertinent to us today. Service and even permanent slavery to others is sacrifice.

Tonight we come to the prelude to the Triumphal Entry which is Jesus' healing of the two blind men. Many consider this to be a Bible difficulty because both Matthew 20:29 and Mark 10:46 say that they were "leaving Jericho" whereas the parallel in Luke 18:35 says they were "approaching Jericho." The liberal critics have relentlessly pointed to this so-called contradiction in the Bible. Many attempts to reconcile this have been offered by conservative commentators but archaeology comes into the service of the Bible at this point through its discovery of two Jerichos. In the journal *Bible and Spade* D. James Kennedy notes, "There were two Jerichos in Jesus' day: the Roman Jericho that was built a mile away from the original site, and which is closer to the Roman road that leads up to Jerusalem. Then there is the old Israelite Jericho, the site Joshua marched around... It is fascinating, I think that Matthew and Mark, writing to a Jewish audience, made reference to the Jewish Jericho; while Luke, the Gentile, writing to a Roman audience, made reference to the Roman Jericho. But where, then, was blind Bartimaeus? Quite evidently, he was between the two. And Jesus healed him as he was coming out of old (or Jewish) Jericho going into the new (or Roman) Jericho on his way to Jerusalem."<sup>1</sup> So then, once again, archaeology has not been the friend of the liberal critic, but rather the foe, and one by one their critical interpretations have themselves been left in the dust. The event of the healing of the blind men occurred in the region highlighted here between the Jewish and the Roman Jericho.

Observe in 20:29 **As they were leaving** Jewish **Jericho**, old Jericho, that **a large crowd followed Him**. There were **large crowds** because they were going up to Jerusalem for Passover. Passover was the memorial of the Exodus and was mandatory for all Jewish males. So they are going up for Passover, but the notice is that they are following **Him**.

And in 20:30, **two blind men sitting by the road, hearing that Jesus was passing by, cried out, Lord, have mercy on us, Son of David!**" Here we are told there is another contradiction because the parallels in Luke 18:35 and Mark 10:46 mention only one blind man whereas Matthew mentioned **two**. The parallel in Mark 10:46 even refers to him by name as "a blind beggar named Bartimaeus, son of Timaeus." Yet, as Figart notes, "...blind Bartimaeus could easily have been the spokesman for himself and a friend."<sup>2</sup> Or, as Pentecost said, "Mark and Luke single out the more prominent blind man and develop the narrative around him." They "did not deny the existence of the second blind man..."<sup>3</sup> Toussaint offers a compelling explanation for why Matthew mentioned two blind men rather than just one; "It is evident that Matthew, writing for a Jewish reader, would emphasize two since this number was the minimum required to establish the truth of a testimony (Deuteronomy 17:6)."<sup>4</sup> It is important to understand that when you see differences in the gospels it is because each author has his own audience and own argument. They are not all trying to prove the same things. Their arguments supplement one another to form a bigger overall picture. Therefore, if each is making a distinct argument it is obvious that it is not necessary for each to cite all the same details. The only thing that is necessary is to show that the details cited do not conflict with one another.

So **two blind men** were **sitting by the road** between the two Jericho's and they heard **that Jesus was passing by**. The parallel in Luke 18:36 says that one of them heard a crowd passing by and inquired what was going on. Evidently the passers-by usually did not come by in crowds so he wondered what all the commotion was about. When he inquired he was told **that Jesus was passing by**. At that point the **two blind men...cried out, "Lord, have mercy on us, Son of David!** It is the identification of **Jesus** as the **Son of David** that is the key to this pericope. This title will also be used during the Triumphal Entry.

The title **Son of David** is a reference to Jesus as the descendant of David who is the rightful heir to the throne of David. Morison writes, "It was a current appellation of the Messiah."<sup>5</sup> We have seen it used on three prior occasions in Matthew, first in Matt 9:27 two different blind men referred to Him as the Son of David and requested that He give them sight. On that occasion Jesus touched their eyes and they were given sight. Second, in Matt 12:23 Jesus healed a demon-possessed man who was blind and mute and the crowds were amazed and said, "This man cannot be the Son of David, can he?" They recognized He had done a Messianic miracle and were looking to the Pharisees to affirm that He was the Son of David but they argued that the work was not that of the Son of David but Beelzebul, the ruler of the demons. Finally, in Matt 15:22 the Canaanite woman of Syrophenicia cried out, "Have mercy on me, Lord, Son of David" requesting that her demon-possessed daughter be released from the torment." This was a correct identification of Jesus. He is the **Son of David** and thereby the rightful heir of the throne of David.

What is the significance of its use here? The significance is shown by its use by the two blind men in contrast to the seeing crowds. The seeing crowds followed Jesus but did not recognize Him as the Son of David whereas the two blind men did recognize Him as the Son of David. Toussaint says, "The blind men, in contrast to the masses of Israel, have spiritual sight and genuine faith in Jesus as the Messiah and King."<sup>6</sup> In short then we have divine irony; those who could physically see Jesus were spiritually blind to His true identity whereas those who could not see physically had spiritual insight into His true identity.

In 20:31 **The crowd sternly told them to be quiet**. In other words, they did not agree with the blind men identifying Him as the **Son of David**. **But** despite their attempts to shut them up **the two blind men cried out all the more, "Lord, Son of David, have mercy on us!"** By requesting **mercy** they were saying that they had no merit residing in themselves that deserved anything from Him. In 20:32 **Jesus stopped and called them, and said, "What do you want Me to do for you?"** McGee noted, "Why did the Lord ask what He could do for them? My friend, when you come to the Lord Jesus Christ, you must tell Him your need."<sup>7</sup> In other words, while Jesus does know all our needs it is our responsibility to make our needs known to Him. James 4 says, you do not have because you do not ask. It is our responsibility to make our needs known to Him and Jesus is making that point right here. In 20:33 **They said to Him, "Lord, we want our eyes to be opened."** I love the way they request it with the expression **our eyes to be opened**. It is a concrete way of describing blindness. Blindness is like the eyes being closed. Of course, the blindness may not be due to the eyes being closed but also to the lens being

corrupted or the rods and cones or the retina in the back of our eye or to the optic nerve or some combination of all of these intricate parts that combine into one of the most remarkably complex and beautiful organs God created. In 20:34, **Moved with compassion, Jesus touched their eyes; and immediately they regained their sight and followed Him.** The emphasis is on the immediacy upon which they were able to see. They suffered no delay. Jesus in a moment of time restored their sight. He is the all-powerful creator. He made the first eye and He can easily restore sight to an eye fallen under the curse of sin. The parallel passages in Mark and Luke both record that Jesus said, "Your faith has saved you." That is to say that the reason He restored their sight was because they believed that He was able to. It does not mean that they were saved from their sin at that point in time. They were already believers as indicated by their identification of Him as the Son of David, which is to say the Messiah. So their faith had saved them from their blindness. To be saved from blindness is a great deliverance and something all of us with eye trouble will experience in the resurrection. The NASB says they **regained their sight** and that English translation implies that they had once seen before and now were able to see again, but the Greek word means to either regain one's sight or to receive sight for the first time.<sup>8</sup> We can't tell one way or the other. This may have been the first time they saw anything besides the darkness.

A few observations are in order before giving the big lesson. First, it is wonderful to observe that Jesus, knowing that He was going up to Jerusalem to suffer and die for the sins of the world, still demonstrates **compassion** to others. He had a great weight to carry and yet He did not allow that weight to obscure the needs of others. This is the picture of the Servant *par excellence* who puts His burdens aside to relieve the burdens of others.

Second, entrance into the kingdom was still possible, but only by means of resurrection. Toussaint rightly capitalized on this point when he said, "...this is the last public miracle which the Lord performs. Though rejected, He still manifests Himself as the Son of David, the Messiah. This is important. The kingdom was no longer near, but entrance was still possible in the future if they would trust in Jesus as their King. These would enter the kingdom by means of the resurrection."<sup>9</sup> His point here is that the kingdom offer was off the table but any who comes to Him in faith would eventually be raised to enter the Messianic kingdom when it arrives. After the death, resurrection and ascension this promise comes to include you and me and all Church saints.

Third, the big lesson is a spiritual lesson. What Jesus did for the two physically blind men He could do for the whole nation Israel. What did Jesus do for the two blind men? He gave them physical sight. What was the state of the nation Israel at this time? They were spiritually blind. What could He do for them? He could give them spiritual sight. All they needed to do was come to Him in faith requesting their need for Him to open their eyes. Pentecost said, "The nation Israel was spiritually blind and did not recognize their need. That being the case, they saw no reason to turn to Christ for help. Christ could not remove the blindness from a nation what would not acknowledge their need and come to Him to have that need met. Christ helped those who recognized their need and turned to Him for help."<sup>10</sup> With that incident as a prelude we now come to the Triumphal Entry in Matt 21.

This is the final week of Jesus and I've given you a handout with a map and explanation. You will want to keep this with you for the duration of Matthew. Schlegel says, "Jesus knew that by the end of the week he would be put to death (Luke 22:15; Matt. 26:1-2, 20:17-19). For the last time, he climbed the **Jericho to Jerusalem** road, arriving in **Bethany** six days before the Passover."<sup>11</sup> John 12:1-10 records His arrival at Bethany where Lazarus was, whom He had raised from the dead a few weeks before. He ate supper there with Martha serving and Mary pouring the costly perfume and anointing Him for burial which Judas objected too. There were visitors to see not only Jesus but Lazarus. It was a time of great commotion and the chief priests had decided not only to put Jesus to death but Lazarus as well, because many were going away from them and believing in Jesus because of him.

Matt 20:1 reports the events of Monday morning, the day of the Triumphal Entry. **When they had approached Jerusalem and had come to Bethphage, at the Mount of Olives.** The exact location of **Bethphage** is unknown but it was on the eastern slope of **the Mount of Olives** just west of Bethany and so on the way to Jerusalem. They will descend from the Mount of Olives into the Kidron Valley and up into the city through the Sheep Gate. The map suggests the southern Hulda gates but I'm more inclined to think the Sheep Gate which was north of the Temple Mount along the eastern wall. Today it is St. Stephen's Gate which is named for the martyrdom of Stephen which traditionally occurred at that location. Ellicot describes the scene as it would have been. "It is now hardly possible to form a just conception of the appearance which Jerusalem and its vicinity would have presented at the season of the Passover. All of the open ground near the city and perhaps the sides of the very hill down which our Lord had recently passed were now...being covered with the tents and temporarily erected structures of the gathering multitudes...We are not left without some data of the actual amount of the gathered numbers, as we have a calculation of Josephus based upon the number of lambs sacrificed (265,000), according to which it would appear that even at the very low estimate of 10 persons to each lamb the number of people assembled must have been little short of 2,700,000... half of the probable population of Judaea and Galilee..."<sup>12</sup> A great many will be present for these events which begin with the great Triumphal Entry from Bethany to Jerusalem. Toussaint referred to the entry as the "formal presentation of the King..."<sup>13</sup> because the King is being presented to the leadership as the heir to the throne of David in every conceivable fashion.

At the end of verse 1 He sets in motion the preparations for His Triumphal Entry, **Jesus sent two disciples, saying to them, "Go into the village opposite you and immediately you will find a donkey tied there and a colt with her; untie them and bring them to Me. 3If anyone says anything to you, you shall say, 'The Lord has need of them,' and immediately he will send them."** **4This took place to fulfill what was spoken through the prophet, 5"Say to the daughter of Zion, 'Behold your King is coming to you, Gentle, and mounted on a donkey, Even on a colt, the foal of a beast of burden.'"** The statement in verse 1 says **Jesus sent two disciples.** None of the gospel writers indicate which two disciples, though some have speculated Peter and John. Jesus instructed them to enter a nearby village, evidently **Bethphage**. When they entered the **village** Jesus said they would **immediately...find a donkey tied there and a colt with her.** This demonstrates Jesus'

omniscience. He knew exactly what they would find and where they would find it. Mark 11:2 and Luke 19:30 mention only the colt, whereas Matthew mentions both **a donkey and a colt with her**. Jesus would ride the **colt**. When they found the two, Jesus said untie **them and bring them to me**. And **if anyone says anything to you, you shall say, 'The Lord has need of them,' and immediately he will send them.**" Matthew does not record anyone stopping them but the parallel in Mark 11:5 says that "bystanders were saying to them, "What are you doing, untying the colt?" And they told them just what Jesus had said, "and they gave them permission." The parallel in Luke 19 also records the conversation and permission granted. The significance of these preparations, the knowledge of the animals, the conversation that would have happened about the animals and the words needed to secure their release show that Jesus is sovereign over the events that transpired. Fittingly then, the title **the Lord** (ο κυριος) is used of Christ here. Toussaint says, "...this is the only place in Matthew's Gospel where the expression "the Lord" (ο κυριος) is used of Christ, and here He applies it to Himself."<sup>14</sup> The title denotes His sovereign authority so we are to know that every statement and phrase in this section is purposeful and it all occurs at His command.

In 21:4 Matthew inserted the comment, **This took place to fulfill what was spoken through the prophet**. Matthew customarily cites prophecy and fulfillment of prophecy by Jesus to prove to Jews that He is the Messiah. The quotation in verse 5 comes from two prophets. In your margin where do they come from? Isaiah 62:11 and Zechariah 9:9. The two are put together so that the introduction, **SAY TO THE DAUGHTER OF ZION**, comes from Isaiah and the body, **'BEHOLD YOUR KING IS COMING TO YOU, GENTLE, AND MOUNTED ON A DONKEY, EVEN ON A COLT, THE FOAL OF A BEAST OF BURDEN.'** is from Zechariah. There are two critical differences between the original Zechariah and the Isaiah-Zechariah amalgam written by Matthew. First, Matthew did not introduce the prophecy of Zechariah with the original words of Zechariah but replaced them with words from Isaiah.

Original Zechariah 9:9	Isaiah-Zechariah Amalgam in Matt 21:5
<p>"Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion! Shout in triumph, O daughter of Jerusalem! Behold, your king is coming to you; <u>He is just and endowed with salvation</u>, Humble, and mounted on a donkey, Even on a colt, the foal of a donkey."</p>	<p>"Say to the daughter of Zion, 'Behold your King is coming to you, Gentle, and mounted on a donkey, Even on a colt, the foal of a beast of burden.'"</p>

Note that Zechariah told his audience to "Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion! Shout in triumph, O daughter of Jerusalem" whereas Matthew said, "Say to the daughter of Zion." The difference is that Zechariah envisioned the King entering Jerusalem to rule and reign, but this was not appropriate since that generation of Israel did not recognize Jesus as their King and so Matthew replaced this with Isaiah 62:11, which indicated they still needed to have their King pointed out. Toussaint says, "...Jerusalem failed to recognize its King. Jerusalem had to have its King pointed out; therefore the Evangelist substitutes the words of Isaiah to give the passage more meaning."<sup>15</sup>

The second difference is that Zechariah included the words “He is just and endowed with salvation” whereas Matthew left those words out entirely. The reason is because the leadership would certainly reject Him in the days to come. Therefore, He was not coming with national salvation for Israel at that time.

They still needed someone to point out to them who their King was. Thus, Isaiah says **Say to the daughter of Zion**. The daughters of Zion were the inhabitants of Jerusalem. What would be said to them is **Behold your King is coming to you**. Stanley Toussaint aptly titled his commentary on Matthew *Behold the King* because he saw this as the theme of this Jewish Gospel. He points out that in Matthew Jerusalem was told three times that their King was present and yet they did not recognize Him. The first time was in Matt 2:2 when the magi came to Jerusalem and asked “Where is He who was born King of the Jews?” The second time was Matt 5:35 where Jesus mentioned Jerusalem, “the city of the great King.” The third time is here; Jerusalem is going to see her King but they are not going to recognize Him as their King and will fail to enthrone Him as their King (a grave failure, cf Deut 17:15).

They will be able to identify Him by the fact that He is **mounted on a donkey, Even on a colt**. The significance of a king riding on a **colt** is two-fold. First, a donkey is a lowly animal that serves by carrying the burdens of others. That is what Jesus was coming to do. In this vein Constable writes, “This was a sign of their humble service of the people. Warriors rode horses. Jesus was preparing to declare His messiahship by fulfilling this messianic prophecy. By coming in peace He was extending grace rather than judgment to the city. He was coming as a servant now. He would return as a king on a horse later (cf. Rev. 19:11).”<sup>16</sup> A reference to the second coming. Second, a colt was an unbroken animal. Riding it with its mother alongside would demonstrate that Jesus was who He claimed to be and that He could bring peace to Israel if they would receive Him. Constable says, “Jesus rode on the colt (a young male donkey), not on its mother, the donkey (Mark 11:2; Luke 19:30). It would have been remarkable that Jesus was able to control a presumably unbroken animal moving through an excited crowd with an unfamiliar burden on its back. This was just one more demonstration that Jesus was the Messiah who was the master of nature (cf. 8:23–27; 14:22–32). Certainly He could bring peace to Israel if He could calm the young colt (Isa. 11:1–10).”<sup>17</sup> Shadows of the original Eden and the first Adam’s dominion mandate are in this passage. The last Adam could accomplish that mandate.

With this presentation before the nation the Messiahship of Jesus was completely out in the open. This is a major shift from what we have seen from Matthew 13 until this time. When the leadership rejected Him in Matthew 12 saying that His healing of the demon-possessed man who was blind and mute was done by the Beelzebul, the ruler of the demons, Jesus began to withdraw into privacy in order to avoid being arrested prematurely by the leadership of Israel and executed before His time. The fact that He now comes directly out into the open is therefore a marked shift. Now is the time for Him to die for the sins of the world. Accordingly, He will be paraded into Jerusalem in a striking display that could not be missed by the leadership. A thing to keep in mind is that He is in total control of the events that led up to His death, not only the death.

In 21:6 **The disciples went and did just as Jesus had instructed them, and brought the donkey and the colt, and laid their coats on them; and He sat on the coats.** From the parallels we know that while they may have **laid their coats on** both of them, presumably allowing Jesus to choose His mount, Jesus chose **the colt**. The **donkey** was the mother of **the colt** and she would walk alongside Jesus who was riding her **colt**. Further, as mentioned before, **the colt** was unbroken. Under natural circumstances the mother would not allow this, nor would **the colt**. It would require the supernatural power of the King to control both **the colt** and the mother throughout the entire entry. If He could do this, He could bring peace to Jerusalem.

In 21:8, **Most of the crowd spread their coats in the road.** This is a formal recognition of a king of Israel. It had been done in the days of Jehu (2 Kgs 9:13). **Others were cutting branches from the trees and spreading them in the road.** These were palm **branches**. They were the national emblem found on most of the coins of that period. **Spreading them in the road** was another way to formally recognize a king (1 Macc 13:51; 2 Macc 10:7). The parallel in Luke 19:37 says that “near the descent of the Mount of Olives, the whole crowd of the disciples began to praise God joyfully with a loud voice for all the miracles which they had seen.” Since the term **disciples** may refer to a number of learners I take it that it was a crowd mainly led by Jesus’ committed disciples but there may have been some convinced disciples as well as a large number of curious disciples following in their train, doubtless among them some who were just caught up in the existential moment. S. Lewis Johnson said, “...they were celebrating the epiphany of their Messianic King, although their understanding was severely limited.”<sup>18</sup> It was not the unbelieving masses of Israel that shouted the following words but the Galilean disciples, **“Hosanna to the Son of David; Blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord; Hosanna in the highest!”** **Hosanna** is a word that means “help,” or “save” and is an ascription of praise. It was familiar to everyone in Israel as it was a part of the Hallel or “praise” Psalms. The Hallel Psalms are 113-118. They were traditionally sung on the way up to Jerusalem. They are praising Him as **the Son of David**, the rightful heir to the throne of David and therefore Messiah and quoting from Psalm 118:26, **Blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord.** This is the Messianic greeting. The nation Israel must greet the Son of David with these words in order for Him to take the throne of David and reign. Later in Matt 23:39, when Jesus pronounces woe on the Pharisees for rejecting Him He will again weep over Jerusalem and say, “You will not see me until you say, “Blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord.” A group here said it but it was too late, the rejection was already in place and the judgment fixed.

In the parallel in Luke 19:39 “Some of the Pharisees in the crowd said to Him, “Teacher, rebuke Your disciples.” This was simply a manifestation of their rejection. “But Jesus answered, “I tell you, if these become silent, the stones will cry out!” As He drew nearer to Jerusalem Luke says “He saw the city and wept over it,<sup>42</sup>saying, “If you had known in this day, even you, the things which make for peace! But now they have been hidden from your eyes.<sup>43</sup>“For the days will come upon you when your enemies will throw up a barricade against you, and surround you and hem you in on every side,<sup>44</sup>and they will level you to the ground and your children within you, and they will not leave in you one stone upon another, because you did not recognize the time of your visitation.” Two

facts are important. First, because they had rejected Him they would come under divine judgment. This judgment was the destruction of Jerusalem and the Temple in AD70 by Titus and the Roman armies. Second, the phrase "you did not recognize the time of your visitation" most likely refers to the timing set in motion by the prophecy of Daniel's seventy sevens or 490 years. Therefore, they should have known to be looking for the Messiah. Harold Hoehner, riding on the back of prior work by Sir Robert Anderson, reckoned the first sixty-nine sevens as coming to a completion on the day of the Triumphal Entry. Hoehner wrote, "Using the 360-day year the calculation would be as follows. Multiplying the sixty-nine weeks by seven years for each week by 360 days gives a total of 173,880 days. The difference between 444 B. C. and A. D. 33, then, is 476 solar years. By multiplying 476 by 365.24219879 or by 365 days, 5 hours, 48 minutes, 45.975 seconds, one comes to 173,855.28662404 days or 173,885 days, 6 hours, 52 minutes, 44 seconds. This leaves only 25 days to be accounted for between 444 B. C. and A. D. 33. By adding the 25 days to March 5 (of 444 B. C.), one comes to March 30, (of A. D. 33) which was Nisan 10 in A.D. 33). This is the triumphal entry of Jesus into Jerusalem."<sup>19</sup> The important thing here is not to catch all the details but that this was the very day Daniel predicted. despite all the cries of Hosanna and recognition of Him as the Son of David by His disciples, He wept over Jerusalem because the vast majority of that generation did not recognize the time of their visitation as marked out with mathematical precision by Daniel's prophecy. As a consequence, they would go to destruction under the thunder of Rome in AD70. Furthermore, Jewish tradition teaches that this was the very day that they were selecting the Passover Lamb. They brought the Passover lambs through the Sheep Gate just north of the Temple Mount. Jesus entered through the same Sheep Gate. He was presenting Himself as the Passover Lamb. How ironic that as they were looking for the Passover lamb they passed over the Lamb of God!

They should have known, they had the Scriptures. But as Matt 21:10 indicates, **When He had entered Jerusalem, all the city was stirred, saying, "Who is this?"** They should have known. If they had been paying attention to the messianic profile of the OT they would have known that the Lamb had to be slain before He could conquer His enemies and establish His kingdom on earth. But instead they only saw the latter and said, **"Who is this?"** And verse 11, **the crowds were saying, "This is the prophet Jesus, from Nazareth in Galilee.** They did not recognize Him as the Christ, the Son of the living God, as Peter had, but merely as a **prophet**. This is a nothing more than a rejection of His Person. The Passover Lamb had presented Himself but they opted for another lamb and would go to destruction.

In conclusion, the significance of the Triumphal Entry in this Gospel is tremendous. To Matthew it is the final and ultimate presentation of Jesus to Israel as their Messiah. He had been pointed out as Messiah at His baptism, He had been authenticated as Messiah at His temptation. He had been revealed in glory as Messiah at His transfiguration. But it was His triumphal entry where He officially presented Himself as Messiah to the nation. At the entry He made His clearest claim to be Messiah. His careful preparations to present Himself as a Servant King riding humbly on a donkey offering peace to Jerusalem through Himself as the Passover Lamb on the very day predicted by the seventy sevens prophecy of Daniel. The failure to recognize Him not only confirmed their

rejection beyond a shadow of doubt but manifested tremendous blindness over which Jesus wept. This was something Jesus could fix, if they would merely come to Him admitting their need as the two blind men. S. Lewis Johnson, in his article on the Triumphal Entry concluded, "They stumbled at the Stone of stumbling. Expecting a king who would come "armed to the teeth or bestriding a war-horse," they failed to recognize the One who came upon the lowly ass, the symbol of peace. They did not know Him, nor did they know their own great need...They did not understand that He must do the work of the Servant of Jehovah in passion and blood before He sits in regal splendor and reigns. As He later chided His own disciples on the way to Emmaus: "Ought not Christ to have suffered these things, and [then] to enter into his glory?"<sup>20</sup> The way to the kingdom is through the cross. That generation of Israel rejected the cross and therefore forfeited the kingdom. A future generation will receive Him and through faith in the Passover Lamb will call upon Him with the Messianic greeting and will enter the kingdom to come.

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<sup>1</sup> *Bible and Spade* 2, no. 2 (1989): 59.

<sup>2</sup> Thomas O. Figart, *The King of the Kingdom of Heaven*, p 397.

<sup>3</sup> J. Dwight Pentecost, *The Words and Works of Jesus Christ*, p 364.

<sup>4</sup> Stanley Toussaint, *Behold the King*, p 236.

<sup>5</sup> James Morison cited by Stanley Toussaint, *Behold the King*, p 236.

<sup>6</sup> Stanley Toussaint, *Behold the King*, p 236.

<sup>7</sup> J. Vernon McGee, *Thru the Bible Commentary: The Gospels (Matthew 14-28)*, electronic ed., vol. 35 (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 1991), 91.

<sup>8</sup> BDAG entry for αναβλεπω, p 59.

<sup>9</sup> Stanley Toussaint, *Behold the King*, p 236.

<sup>10</sup> J. Dwight Pentecost, *The Words and Works of Jesus Christ*, p 364.

<sup>11</sup> William Schlegel, *Satellite Bible Atlas*, opposite 9-8.

<sup>12</sup> Ellicot cited by J. Dwight Pentecost, *The Words and Works of Jesus Christ*, p 372-3.

<sup>13</sup> Stanley Toussaint, *Behold the King*, p 237.

<sup>14</sup> Stanley Toussaint, *Behold the King*, p 237.

<sup>15</sup> Stanley Toussaint, *Behold the King*, p 238.

<sup>16</sup> Tom Constable, *Tom Constable's Expository Notes on the Bible* (Galaxie Software, 2003), Mt 21:4.

<sup>17</sup> Tom Constable, *Tom Constable's Expository Notes on the Bible* (Galaxie Software, 2003), Mt 21:4.

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<sup>18</sup> S. Lewis Johnson Jr., "The Triumphal Entry of Christ," *Bibliotheca Sacra* 124 (1967): 227.

<sup>19</sup> Harold Hoehner, *Chronological Aspects of the Life of Christ*, p 138.

<sup>20</sup> S. Lewis Johnson Jr., "The Triumphal Entry of Christ," *Bibliotheca Sacra* 124 (1967): 227–228.