

Jesus enters Jerusalem

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Date: 10 April 2020

Preacher: Philip Wells

[0:00] Well, good morning everybody and welcome to this Good Friday time. ! Greetings and love to all. Normally we would be meeting with Ebenezer Reformed Baptist Church! and our friend Tony Bicki. We would be leading us, but that's all been dislocated. And this morning instead we will have this time which I'll be leading a meditation with some music and readings and thoughts reflecting on what happened all those years ago when our Saviour entered Jerusalem, entered into debate with the Jewish leaders and ended up condemned as a guilty man to die upon the cross.

Three days later he rose again from the dead. That's what Easter is all about. May God help us as we think about that together.

I'm going to try and juggle these various bits of technology. There's a link there on the screen about what's going to be happening on Easter Sunday and you can access various media.

[1:35] And have a look at that if you'd like to. This is what we're going to be doing or this is how we're going to lead off and allow me to pray. It's my prayer again, Lord, that this technology would work and that beyond that we would be enabled to review and be reminded of and see freshly what our Saviour did all those years ago.

The facts and truth and meaning and significance of what Jesus of Nazareth suffered as he entered Jerusalem.

He spoke to those people, spoke to those people, was betrayed into the hands of sinners, was tried, condemned, crucified and rose again from the dead.

We pray that the facts and their interpretation would move us deeply, would change us from glory into glory as we behold this wondrous story.

So whether we are believers of many years or young believers or not yet believers at all, will you speak to us? We ask it in Jesus name. Amen.

[3:18] I'm going to read from Matthew's Gospel, chapter 21, which says, As they approached Jerusalem and came to Bethphage on the Mount of Olives, Jesus sent two disciples, saying to them, Go into the village ahead of you, and at once you will find a donkey tied there with a colt by her.

Untie them and bring them to me. If anyone says anything to you, tell him that the Lord needs them, and he will send them right away.

This took place to fulfil what was spoken through the prophet. Say to the daughter of Zion, Your king comes to you, gentle and riding on a donkey, on a colt, the foal of a donkey.

The disciples went and did as Jesus had instructed them. They brought the donkey and the colt, placed their cloaks on them, and Jesus sat on them.

A very large crowd spread their cloaks on the road, while others cut branches from the trees and spread them on the road. The crowds that went ahead of him and those that followed shouted, Hosanna to the son of David.

[4:37] Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord. Hosanna in the highest. When Jesus entered Jerusalem, the whole city was stirred and asked, Who is this?

The crowds answered, This is Jesus, the prophet from Nazareth in Galilee. Well, that's not actually an adequate answer, but it's on the right lines.

Who is this? Who is this riding in on the donkey? Jesus has previously been quite modest in his explanation of himself.

He's used enigmatic phrases like the son of man. He's told people not to say who he is. But now nothing is hidden.

He deliberately enters Jerusalem riding on a donkey. Who could see this without making the connection that the Galilean prophet is staking a claim to be the king prophesied of old?

[5:48] The subject of the ancient prophecies. See, daughter of Zion, your king comes to you. Riding on a donkey.

He does come riding on a donkey. We're going to have that music which says, Ride on in majesty. The words are on the screen.

And the music is just coming. Ride on, ride on in majesty.

In lowly qualms. Ride on, ride on in majesty. Ride on to die. Ride on to die. A price to kill and kill again.

With that chick and kill again. I'm hungry. To be crucified. To be crucified. Ride on, ride on in majesty. Ride on in majesty.

[6:58] Ride on in majesty. Oh, it won't ride on to die. Oh, Christ, you can't kill again.

With that chick, dear, and comfort soon. Ride on, ride on in majesty.

The angel of the top of the sky. The daddy said in the night.

To sing their proche's sacrifice. Ride on, ride on in majesty.

The lost and fears will be dry. The father, when you're so good through.

[8:01] The light says, oh, I'm going to shine. Ride on, ride on in majesty.

The lost and fears will be dry. Bowed on in majesty.

To molted rain. Then take our God. To molted rain. So the King comes.

Jesus comes to Jerusalem, which is the city of the great King, the joy of the whole earth. God's headquarters on earth, if you like.

And on this day, as it were, the King comes to his city. And what will he find? And how will he be received?

[9:13] What will he find there and what will people make of him? Now, as Matthew tells us this in chapter 21, verse 16, he's looking for fruit.

I think that ought to be verse 18. Early in the morning, he was on his way back to the city. He was hungry and seeing a fig tree by the road. He went up to it, but he found nothing on it but leaves.

And he said, may you never bear fruit again. And the tree withered. He said, no, no, no, no. He said, no, no, no, no. He said, no, no, no, no. Even though it wasn't the season for figs.

He wouldn't have expected to find any. But he had a look. and that is followed through in a parable that Jesus tells in verse 33 where he says once he's in Jerusalem the parable says there was a landowner who planted a vineyard he put a wall around it dug a wine press in it and built a watchtower then he rented out the vineyard to some farmers and went away on a journey when the harvest time approached he sent his servants to the tenants to collect fruit the tenant seized his servants they beat one killed another stoned a third and he sent other servants to them more than the first time and the tenants treated them in this same way last of all he sent his son to them they will respect my son he said but when the tenants saw the son they said to each other this is the heir come let's kill him and take his inheritance so they took him and threw him out of the vineyard and killed him therefore when the owner of the vineyard comes what will he do to those tenants and his audience reply he'll bring those wretches to a wretched end and he will rent the vineyard to other tenants who will give him his share of the crop at harvest time and Jesus said to them have you never read in the scriptures the stone the builders rejected has become the capstone the Lord has done this and it is marvelous in our eyes therefore I tell you that the kingdom of God will be taken away from you and given to a people who will produce its fruit he who falls on this stone will be broken to pieces and he on whom it falls will be crushed and when the chief priests and the pharisees heard Jesus parables they knew he was talking about them they looked for a way to arrest him but they were afraid of the crowd because the people held he was a prophet so he's looking for fruit and in this parable is very incendiary parable the the lack of fruit leads to the tenants being thrown out and the vineyard being opened up to others the Jewish areas couldn't help but make the connection that the vineyard is them and the vineyard of the Lord is the is the house of Israel as it says in Isaiah chapter 6 so things are set in motion now Jesus has already indicated

predicted how this will end up he's done this in let's see if I got this right 16 verse 21 from that time on Jesus began to explain to his disciples he must go to Jerusalem and suffer many things at the hands of the elders chief priests teachers of the law he must be killed and on the third day be raised to life he says the same thing in 17 22 the son of man is going to be betrayed into the hands of men they will kill him and on the third day he will be raised to life and the disciples were filled with grief and 20 17 to 19 as Jesus was going up to

Jerusalem he took the 12 disciples aside and said we're going up to Jerusalem the son of man will be betrayed to the chief priests and the teachers of the law they will condemn him to death and turn him over to the Gentiles to be flogged and crucified and on the third day he will be raised to life so he's predicted it very very clearly so there's a prediction there and he's also asserted the meaning of his impending death in chapter 20 verse 27 28 he's he has shown the disciples the quality of self-assessment that his disciples are to have the way they're to think of themselves the rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them their high officials exercise authority over them not so with you instead whoever wants to become great among you must be your servant whoever wants to be first must be your slave just as the son of man did not come to be served but to serve and to give his life as a ransom for many very significant words he came not to be served but to serve and to give his life as a ransom for many what's a ransom it's a like the word redeem ransom redeem uh to pay a great price or expend great effort to set slaves free that's what god did in the exodus he redeemed redeemed his people he is the redeemer of his people and Jesus says that's why i come to die to give my life as a payment of a great price the expenditure of great effort to set slaves free we're going to sing from heaven you came helpless babe this is the servant king our god the servant king from heaven here came helpless babe from heaven here came helpless babe

[16:15] And that I hold your glory there Not to be served but to serve
And give your life that we might live This is our God, the servant king
He calls a child to follow him To bring our lives to daily offering A
blessing to the servant king There in the garden of tears My heavy love
he chose to bear

His heart when sorrow was torn Yet not quite well but yours he said To serve our God, the servant king
He calls us now to follow him To bring our lives as an enemy offering Of worship to the servant king
Come see his stars and his feet The stars that speak of sacred voice And stand from stars into space
To who else surrendered

This is our God, the servant king He calls us now to follow him To bring our lives to daily offering Of
worship to the servant king So let us know how to serve And when our lives enthrone him Each
other's needs to prefer For it is Christ For it is Christ The servant king The servant king The servant
king He calls us now to follow him

To bring our lives to daily offering Of worship to the servant king The servant king So the city of the
king now has its last chance to recognize him and to turn back to him.

And as the days go on, Jesus is tested by the religious leaders. They ask him questions. He asks them questions.

[20:17] They think perhaps they're testing him, but really he's testing them. And as the week goes on, it's clear that Jesus finds them completely lacking.

Matthew chapter 23, which I remember Steve took us through quite a while ago. Jesus pronounces woe to the teachers of the law and the Pharisees.

What a mess they've made of the deposit of truth and grace and saving knowledge God's given to them.

What a mess they've made of it. They've made it more difficult for people to find the kingdom of God. They've put hurdles in their way.

And they've chapter 23, verse 13. You shut the kingdom in the kingdom of heaven in men's faces.

[21:21] You yourselves do not enter, nor will you let those enter who are trying to order. Catastrophic failure. Catastrophic failure. And so Jesus, like a mighty Old Testament prophet announcing, say, the exile to Babylon or the destruction of the temple, Jesus, in that same tradition, now pronounces doom and destruction on the city and on the temple.

In chapter 24, that rather puzzling and visionary chapter, he gives them a short-term doom with a number of specific signs leading up to this act of power on behalf of the Son of Man.

When, in language like that of the destruction of Babylon or the destruction of Jerusalem in time past, he says that the Son of Man will do the same thing in the not-too-distant future.

24, verse 34. I tell you the truth. This generation will certainly not pass away until all these things have happened. Heaven and earth will pass away, says Jesus, but my words will never pass away. And then he gives a second horizon to this, this time with no surrounding signs and warnings.

[22:47] Chapter 24, verse 36. No one knows about that day or hour, not even the angels in heaven, nor the Son, but only the Father. As it was in the days of Noah, so it will be in the coming of the Son of Man.

He says, keep watch, because that great day is coming, that great day of final doom and destruction. So as the week moves on, things are reaching crisis point.

The Jewish leaders find his claims more and more threatening and unacceptable. And in chapter 6, verses 3 and 4, Jesus finished saying these things.

Chapter 26, he said to his disciples, As you know, the Passover is two days away. The Son of Man will be handed over to be crucified. And the chief priests and the elders of the people assembled in the palace of the high priest, whose name was Caiaphas.

And they plotted to arrest Jesus in some sly way and kill him. But not during the feast, they said, or they may be a riot among the people.

[23:56] So things are heading towards this conclusion. It's worth just stopping to think about what week it was. The week is no ordinary week. It's the week in which the Jewish people remember their own ransom, redemption from Egypt.

I was watching earlier a programme with Miles Cohen, I think it was, Miles Corrin, on current observance of the Passover by Jewish people.

Very interesting. It's still done. Remembering their ransom, redemption from Egypt. How God delivered them with a mighty hand from the power of Egypt.

And the key factor in that redemption was the death of a lamb. Every house had a lamb. Every Jewish house had a lamb. It was matched exactly to the needs of the people.

And the lamb was slain. In a special ritual way, it was killed. Its blood was painted on the doorposts. And that served as a sign to show a death had occurred.

[25:05] And when the angel of destruction, the angel of the Lord, went over each house looking to slay the eldest son, when the angel saw the blood, the angel of the Lord saw the blood, he passed over.

And the house was spared. The son was spared. God's people were spared by the death of the lamb. Instead, the lamb substituted for the household.

And in particular, the eldest son of the house. Otherwise, the son would have been doomed to death. But God provided a lamb to die in his place, in substitution, to die instead.

And that great act of redemption was celebrated by a meal, the Passover meal. And Jesus himself picks this exact time and this meal to announce his death in a most remarkable way.

He is the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world. A better lamb, a better sacrifice, a more powerful redemption.

[26:14] And he, as it were, hijacks that meal to inaugurate a meal of his own. The lamb is him. He hands out and distributes bread and wine.

Tells his disciples to partake of it. This bread, he says, is my body, broken for you. This blood is my blood. The blood of the covenant.

Or as we might say, the new covenant. So they're in chapter 26, verse 17, about preparing the Passover. And in verse 26, while they were eating, Jesus took the bread, gave thanks and offered it to them, saying, drink from it, all of you.

This is my blood of the covenant. Or the new covenant. Which is poured out for many. For the forgiveness of sins. That old lamb provided, at best, a political redemption.

If you like, a redemption from the sin of Pharaoh. But the true lamb, the perfect lamb, does far more than that. His blood poured out for the many.

[27:35] For the forgiveness of sins. Sins taken away. Guilt removed.

The conscience cleansed. How amazing. What a sacrifice. What Christ did for us. We're going to sing.

Or have sung. Or join in with. Come and see. Come and see. Come and see the king of love. See the purple robe and crown of thorn he wears.

Soldiers mock. Rulers sneer as he lifts the cruel cross. We worship at your feet where wrath and mercy meet. And a guilty world is washed by love's pure stream.

Let's go. Come and see, come and see, come and see the King of love.

[29:23] See the purple robe and crowned a thorn he wears. So does Mark rule a snare as he lifts the cruel cross.

Lonely and friendless now he climbs towards the hill. We worship at your feet where wrath and mercy meet.

And a guilty world is washed by love's pure stream. For us he was made sin, oh help me take it in. Deep wounds of love cry out, Father forgive. I worship, I worship the Lamb who was blamed.

Amen. Come and see, come and mourn. For your sin that pissed him there.

[30:56] So much deeper than the wounds of thorn and nail. All our pride, all our greed, all our fallenness and shame.

And the Lord has laid the punishment on him. We worship at your feet where wrath and mercy meet.

And the guilty world is washed by love's pure stream. For us he was made sin, oh help me take it in. Deep wounds of love cry out, Father forgive. I worship, I worship the Lamb who was slain.

The man of heaven, born to earth, to restore us to your heaven.

[32:28] Here we bow in awe beneath your searching eyes. From your tears comes our joy.

From your death our life shall spring. By your resurrection power we shall rise.

We worship at your feet where wrath and mercy meet.

And the guilty world is washed by love's pure stream. For us he was made sin, oh help me take it in. Deep wounds of love cry out, Father forgive. I worship, I worship, I worship the Lamb who was slain.

[33:51] I worship the Lamb who was slain.

Well at this point we might pause to ask a question. What is the meaning of all this?

What is the motivation behind it? Sorry. What is it a story of?

What is it a story of? It's not just a piece of ancient history is it? It's full of significance, full of revelation, full of demonstration. What is it demonstrating? And the Christian answer has to be that it demonstrates the sort of God who really is God.

The sort of attitude that he has towards us, us human beings. The love of God for poor lost sinners.

[35:09] Well certainly the Apostle Paul saw it that way. And he would most certainly have us see it that way too. Romans chapter 5 he says in verse 6.

When we were still powerless, Christ died for the ungodly. Very rarely will anyone die for a righteous man, though for a good man someone might possibly dare to die.

But God demonstrates his own love for us in this. While we were still sinners, Christ died for us.

This substitution, this one-sided act, motivated by eternal, almost immeasurable love.

What a wonderful God we have. And what the cross shows. It's the sort of love that you could think, I've never come across this before.

[36:25] My song is love unknown. My Saviour's love for me. Love to the loveless shown that they might lovely be. But who am I that for my sake, my Lord should take frail flesh and die.

This beautiful song. Music's coming. Do look and appreciate the words as they're up in front of us. Music's coming.

My son is love unknown, my Saviour's love for me.

Love will, the love, the children they might love me be. But who am I, that for my sake, my Lord should take frail flesh and die.

[37:51] He came from heaven's throne, salvation to bestow.

But they refused and never longed for Christ. But now, this is my friend, my friend indeed, who at my need his life did spend.

Sometimes they shroud his way, and his sweet praises sing.

Praise and the Lord gave us a love to the King. Then crucify his all their bread, and for his death they thirst and cry.

Why, what has my Lord done to cause this rage and spite?

[39:16] He made the lame to come and gave the bride their side. What danger is, yet these are why the Lord was twice so cruelly dies.

With cries of rage they have, my dear Lord done away.

The murderer they save, the Prince of Life they slain. Yet steadfast he to suffering goes, that these his foes may be set free.

In life no house, no home, my Lord on earth might have.

In death no friendly tomb, but brought a stranger to death. What may I say, that he knows his home, but mind the tomb wherein he lays.

[40:52] He might not. He might not. He might not. He might not. He might not. He might not. He might not. He might not. He might not.

He might not. He might not. He might not. He might not. He might not. He might not. He might not. Days could badly spend Must remember to press the pause button Well, we've been reading through and following our Saviour on his road to the cross and we haven't taken time or had time to pause in the Garden of Gethsemane in Matthew 26 verse 36 where Jesus prays agonising over the fate that awaits him.

My soul, he says in verse 38, is overwhelmed with sorrow to the point of death. In verse 39 he prays to his father, If it is possible, may this cup be taken from me, yet not as I will, but as you will.

Jesus seeing more fully than any of us can see what it meant for him, the Holy One, to take away our sin. A cup would be a figure of speech used by the prophets, a cup of wrath, a cup which makes people drunk with the wrath of God.

And perhaps that's the cup that Jesus is referring to as he sees it. May this cup pass from me, but not as I will, but as you will. We haven't stopped to see the irony of the betrayer pointing out Jesus to the arresting party and betraying him with a kiss.

[43:32] Jesus, verse 49, the one eye kisses the man, arrest him. Jesus saying, friend, do what you came for.

Jesus, courage and compassion. We haven't stopped to overhear the shenanigans of the multiple court procedures that were rushed through in order to get the required verdict.

As the different court procedures take place, we have the Jewish court wrongly convened and wrongly reaching the conclusion that it reached.

We have the Gentiles, the Pontius Pilate, the representative of the most advanced civilization of his time. He's famous for law and order.

We see him caving in and condemning what he knew was an innocent man. So both the Jews and the Gentiles are shown to be blameworthy, the best human representatives, not up to the task, failing abominably.

[44:46] and murdering their maker. We don't have time to witness the punctured confidence of the disciples as Peter follows at a distance.

And while Christ is inside the house before Pontius Pilate, courageously not caving in, not deviating one inch from what he was meant to say, witnessing the good confession, Peter's outside wriggling out of allegiance to Christ and denying his Saviour.

Chapter 26, verse 72. The girl says, this fellow is with Jesus of Nazareth and he denied it with an oath.

I don't know this man. How awful. And we can move ahead and stop finally at the cross itself where Jesus goes to the place Golgotha.

Chapter 27, in verse 33, they came to a place called Golgotha, which means the place of the skull, otherwise known as Calvary.

[46:06] That's why we're called our church Calvary. It's named after the place where Jesus died. And we have this almost unbelievable scene where the king of justice, truth, goodness, kindness, everything that is right and proper is condemned and executed.

Verse 37, above his head, they placed the written charge against him. This is Jesus, the king of the Jews. And at that scene, verse 45, from the sixth hour until the ninth hour, darkness came over all the land.

And in the ninth hour, Jesus cried out in a loud voice, Eloi, Eloi, lama sabachthani, which means, my God, my God, why have you forsaken me?

In verse 50, when Jesus had cried out again with a loud voice, he gave up his spirit. And that's the end of the world, or in a sense, it's the end of the world, but that's the time when the earth shakes.

Verse 51, the tombs break open, the bodies of many holy people are raised to life. It's what happens at the end of the world. Jesus' cross is, in a sense, the end of the world.

[47:35] And the curtain of the temple is torn in two from top to bottom. And that ritual object, which under the old covenant divided God from people, people, is torn in two.

And the way is made open into the holiest place of all because of the blood of Jesus. It's an amazing sight.

It's an amazing sight. And the centurion, verse 54, those who are guarding Jesus saw the earthquake and all that had happened. They were terrified and exclaimed, surely he was the son of God.

If you're not sure who Jesus is, this is the place to look. Many people didn't see who he was, but the most unlikely people did.

Of all people, the Roman centurion, the one who had been in charge of his crucifixion, is the one who sees who he truly is.

[48:44] This man was the son of God. May God open all our eyes to see exactly who Jesus is, exactly what he has done, and to receive it with awe and wonder and gratitude and worship and joy.

Come and see. Come and see. My Lord, what love is this that pays so dearly that I, the guilty one, may go free.

Amazing love, oh what sacrifice, the son of God given for me. My debt he pays and my death he dies that I might live.

Let you into a secret. We tried ever so hard to get the high notes here. You'll have to join in and do better than we did as we sing. My debt he pays, my death he dies, that I might live.

Let me tell you. My Lord, what love is this That pays so dearly That I, the guilty one May go free
Amazing love, oh what sacrifice

[50:50] The Son of God can fall me My petty haste and my deadly lies That I might live That I might live And so they watched Him die Despised, rejected But oh, the blood He shed Float for me Amazing love, oh what sacrifice The Son of God can fall me

My deadly days And my deadly lies That I might live That I might live And so now This love of Christ Shall flow Like rivers Come wash your guilt away Live again Amazing love, oh what sacrifice The Son of God can fall me My deadly days

And my deadly lies That I might live That I might live We've come to the end of our time And what can we ask The Lord To do for us Teach us Lord To come to this scene Of crucifixion And genuinely see The awfulness of human sin To see the courage And steadfastness And beauty Of Jesus our Saviour

Teach us Lord To see the most powerful Moving Demonstration Of the love of God For sinners Teach us To see for sure The certainty Of sins forgiven Heaven opened Away to the holiest place Through the veil And teach us To respond in gratitude That holds nothing back From this one Who held nothing back For us This one Jesus Our Lord and Saviour Now may grace And mercy And peace Be with each one of us From God Who is Father Son And Holy Spirit Now and forevermore Amen Happy Easter

See you on Sunday Bye now Bye now Thank you.