

# Son of David; Son of God

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Preacher: Dave Bott

[ 0 : 00 ] Today's Bible reading will be from Matthew, reading from chapter 21, verses 1-17.!

This took place to fulfil what was spoken by the prophet, saying, 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.

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

Most of the crowd spread their cloaks on the road, and others cut branches from the trees and spread them on the road. 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!

And when he entered Jerusalem, the whole city was stirred up, saying, Who is this? And the crowd said, This is the prophet Jesus from Nazareth of Galilee.

[ 2 : 04 ] And Jesus entered the temple and drove out all who sold and bought in the temple. And he overturned the tables of the money changers and the seats of those who sold pigeons.

He said to them, It is written, My house shall be called a house of prayer, but you make it a den of robbers.

And the blinds and the lame came to him in the temple, and he healed them. But when the chief priests and the scribes saw the wonderful things that he did, and the children crying out in the temple, Hosanna to the Son of David!

They were indignant. And they said to him, Do you hear what these are saying? And Jesus said to them, Yes.

Have you never read? Out of the mouth of infants and nursing babies, you have prepared praise. And leaving them, he went out of the city to Bethany and lodged there.

[ 3 : 18 ] This is God's word to us today. May we be blessed by listening to it. Well, good morning, everyone.

Will you pray with me as we come to God's word? Our Father, as we just sang, I pray that through your word and by your spirit, you would convince our hearts to crown you the Lord of peace.

Lord, convince our hearts to crown you. I pray this in Jesus' name. Amen. Amen. Well, when leaders start their time in power, how they begin often isn't an accident.

It's often very careful. So there's a new coach. I'm so sorry, another sport illustration. I've got to find better illustrations. But there's this new coach for a soccer team in England.

And every coach would start their leadership by calling a meeting, the players, the coaching staff, the owners of the club.

[ 4 : 39 ] But this guy's done something different. And everyone noticed it. He also invited the kitchen staff. He invites the groundskeepers.

He invited the bus drivers. He invited everyone. And everyone, before he said a word, just in that one act, he has symbolised what his leadership wants to be about.

It's a clear message. He's going to be honouring the contribution of all. Or if you want to read another example, read the official webpage for President Trump's first 100 hours in his second term in office to kick off America's golden age.

It's very intentional what he did first. There's investment in American business. There's tearing down what his predecessor built up.

There's securing the American border. There's deportation flights immediately. What a leader does first really characterises what their rule is going to be about.

[ 5 : 55 ] Matthew has spent 20 chapters so far trying to convince us, persuade us, Jesus is the greatest king history has ever known. Fulfilling all the Old Testament hopes.

But until now, Jesus has been very, very careful not to go public. When we re-looked at chapter 16, as soon as the disciples confess, you are the king, his immediate words is, he strictly charged the disciples to tell no one that he was the Christ.

Why? Because he won't let people's expectations define him. He won't let your expectations define him.

My expectations. He's going to define himself. Now as we enter Jerusalem, he's chosen this time to go very public.

He's very intentionally orchestrating this event to define what his rule is about. He's picked the most important time in the Jewish calendar, the most religious significance.

[ 7 : 12 ] There's crowds coming to Jerusalem for Passover, God's deliverance, salvation. He's picked the most important place. We're on the Mount of Olives, which was a bit higher than Jerusalem.

You could see the city, the capital. You could see the temple. Two centuries earlier, Simon Maccabees had defeated foreign armies to secure Israel's independence.

He defeated the armies and he rode into Jerusalem riding his war horse and people, there was a parade. There was cheering, like the end of World War II.

There was cheering in the street. There was people putting palm branches down on the ground. What does Jesus do? He doesn't come in on a war horse.

A donkey. Not only a donkey, this small baby, well, kid donkey.

[ 8 : 17 ] It's never been ridden, Mark's gospel says. If you saw it, it's like, it's almost laughable.

It's like a huge man riding this little motorbike. Why did he choose that? What is this symbolic act telling us?

He's defining his rule. What's he telling us by doing this? Well, it emphasises his lowliness, his weakness, his humility, even humiliation.

But he's also making the greatest claim a human being has ever made about himself. It wasn't the early church who just misinterpreted Jesus' sayings and go, we're going to give him the title Lord. He is taking that title for himself. He is ascribing the title Lord to himself. When he sends his disciples, go get these donkeys, and if anyone asks you, why are you taking our donkeys?

[ 9 : 36 ] Tell them the Lord. He hasn't used that phrase before now. Tell him the Lord. He knows exactly what he's doing.

The symbolism, the crowds don't miss it. We might misunderstand it, but the crowds don't miss it. Solomon, David's son, when he was crowned king, that was done by David giving instructions, saying, get him to ride on my donkey.

And that declared that succession. And Zachariah, the prophet Zachariah, picks this up. The true son of David, who will have an eternal kingdom, behold, your king is coming to you, humble and mounted on a donkey.

He is ascribing himself as fulfilling all the Old Testament hopes. There is a frenzy.

There's a parade. People understand what he's doing. There's messianic hopes. There's fever pitch. This is an exciting time.

[ 10 : 41 ] They are crying out, Hosanna, which apparently transliterates the Hebrew, save us. They're praising God, finally. You've sent your Messiah, save us.

This is an exciting scene. Ordinary clothes, ordinary followers, a ridiculous donkey, and ordinary followers still today, I'm sorry to say.

Despite appearances, he is saying, I'm the greatest king. I am that king. It's not others saying it to him.

He's claiming it. That's what this little donkey says. So are you willing to join the parade and the celebration of this donkey-riding king?

There's graffiti. Graffiti in Rome, on a wall in Rome, dated to about 200 AD, and it's this sketch.

[ 11 : 55 ] It looks like a children's drawing, but it's probably a sketch of a man worshipping what looks like the figure of a man on a cross with a donkey's head.

And the inscription says, Alex, I can't even say it. I'm just going to say Alex. Alex worships his God. Roman Empire, they worship power. This is ridiculous. You Christians, worshipping this donkey-riding king.

His weakness, it's not attractive. It's not attractive to this world. But then, but then, other people find him not attractive for a different reason, like Ricky Gervais, comedian.

He wrote an article, and Jesus, he says, Jesus was a man. And if you forget all that rubbish about being half God, and forget that, believe the non-super, if you just believe the non-supernatural acts accredited to him, he was a man whose wise words many other men would still follow.

[13:03] His message was usually one of forgiveness and kindness. But this donkey-riding king, he's declaring himself, flawed, of the entire world.

This world doesn't like his great claims. He's offensive. He's ridiculous. He doesn't fit what this world finds attractive, and that's exactly why he's worth following.

Because he's so different from the rest of the world. So are we willing to follow this? Are we willing to celebrate, or are we embarrassed?

The second thing this leader is declaring by this carefully chosen act is that he's not going to conquer through force, and power, and threat.

It hints at how he's going to conquer the world. Not as every other kingdom of this world conquers. When our military showed our strength with the talisman saver exhibition, I didn't see us showing off our donkey collection.

[14:30] There's not an AUKUS agreement for producing more donkeys. Peace. This king is going to conquer by peace.

I'm not saying countries can't have military. That's part of the country's job to protect its citizens. But I'm just saying this kingdom is very, very, very different. He's going to be characterised by peace. Not by taking power and killing, but by losing power and dying. He's going to be humiliated. That's how he's going to conquer.

This peace, he's going against the expectations of the crowd. They thought he was going to come in and destroy the nations, make Israel great again.

He's going against that expectation. No, I'm going to conquer through peace. And the kind of peace I'm bringing is a greater peace than you're asking for.

[15:43] Now, Don Carson says something about this peace. I think he's on to something, but see what you think. If you were on holidays in the countryside and you thought, a fun activity for today, let's go horse riding.

And just before you get on the horse, the instructor says, hey, by the way, no one's ever ridden this horse before. Would you go, what a privilege.

I get to be first. Now, you're laughing because we all know common sense, you do not get on an animal that has never been ridden before.

But that's exactly, and now put that animal in a parade of people screaming. And yet, it's just this little hint, I think Carson is on to something here, that under the hand of its Lord, this little animal is calm.

The peace he's bringing is to the entire world. He's going to put the whole world, even nature, right. I think it's this little hint.

[17:07] He's fulfilling Old Testament hopes, and he's bringing peace, putting everything, he's going to put everything right by becoming last, by being humiliated, not by taking power, by losing it.

That's his rule. And what he does next, we see the enemy he's come to save us from. The crowds thought, bring judgment on the Romans, but where does he attack?

He doesn't attack the governor's palace. He attacks the worship at the temple. Verses 12 to 16, all happen in the temple.

We are reminded repeatedly, the blind and lame came to him in the temple. The children are crying out Hosanna in the temple.

That's where he attacks. So the scene here where he gets angry and drives out all who sold and bought, worshipers, pilgrims, they're coming for Passover festival, they need animals to sacrifice, they need to exchange their currency for God required a temple tax for the upkeep of the temple.

[18:30] You could easily see how this would be justified as this is what God wants us to do, to worship him. But they're in the outer court of the temple, which is where the nations were allowed to come in, where the lame and the sick and crippled priests even were allowed to come into that area to worship.

They've turned a place of worship into a place to make money and have driven out the nations and the sick.

He first quotes Isaiah, my house shall be called a house of prayer, and the end of that quote, for all nations. the immediate context of a lot of these Old Testament passages is he's claiming to be king of all nations.

He's going to bring worship to God for all nations. He then quotes Jeremiah 7, the den of robbers. Instead of being a house of prayer, proper worship, let me read a bit from Jeremiah 7. will you steal, murder, commit adultery, swear falsely, make offerings to Baal, and go after other gods that you have not known, and then come and stand before me in this house, which is called by my name, and say, we are delivered, only to go on doing all these abominations?

[ 20 : 05 ] Has this house which is called by my name become a den of robbers in your eyes? Now, because you have done all these things, declares the Lord, and when I spoke to you persistently, you did not listen, and when I called you, you did not answer, I will cast you out of my sight.

They had a false security in their religious deeds, but they weren't listening to what God is saying. our greatest problem is our worship problem.

It's not external, someone outside of us, or something happening to us. Our greatest problem is our worship problem. He's come to put us at peace with God, right with God.

He's come to bring the whole world right with God. peace with God, and we get a glimpse of how he brings peace with God.

He doesn't help the worshipers coming to the temple in offering sacrifices. He inserts himself as greater than the temple.

[ 21 : 27 ] That's how he's going to bring peace, not by helping you worship at the temple, but he inserts himself. Now, where am I getting this from?

You don't have the right to walk into my house and move my lounges around if you think I've got it in the wrong spot. You don't have the right. If you think my cling wrap is in the wrong drawer, I don't care.

It's my house. Or our house. Him going in there, do you see the claim he's making?

The only person who has the right to walk into a house and rearrange stuff is its owner. He's inserting himself.

The blind and the lame come to him. They don't go to the chief priest. Chief priest, intercede for us for God. No.

[ 22 : 36 ] They come to him. I watched this documentary biography, Notes on Blindness.

It was on Netflix. I haven't checked it recently. This was a couple of years ago. This guy used to be able to fully see but his eyes degenerated quickly to the point of total blindness and Christmas Day was agony for him because he could hear his children opening in the presents but he couldn't see their smiles.

eyes. He felt so cut off from his family. He couldn't see his newborn daughter's face. These guys or girls, whoever, these blind and lame coming would have felt so cut off from God and under curse, punished by him.

this is a little word. If you're feeling unworthy, look, they come to him and he receives them, he heals them, he welcomes, he gives all the blessing of God to them, he restores them.

I think the bodily restoration is just an image of the spiritual restoration, the whole restoration he brings. He's inserting himself. Don't get right with God through the temple, but through me.

[ 24 : 20 ] And these little children are praising him. They're not wise enough to probably know the significance of all that was happening that day, but they're these little dependent children without skepticism, without worrying what others think.

They're just echoing the crowds in the street, unashamedly joyfully chanting in the temple. Save us, Hosanna, to the son of David.

But the first, those thinking they are strong, those thinking they have something to offer God, that God needs them somehow, the so-called expert, the irony is they see the wonderful things he's doing, but they remain willfully blind and they're offended by him, they're angry, they're questioned. Don't you hear what these little children are saying? I think it's, everyone in the streets yelling it, I think, I suspect the problem is they're in the temple, they're in the temple and they're praising you. You know when you ask a question, like if a parent in the room today is like, don't you know we're in church? That's an instruction.

[ 25 : 53 ] That's not a question, it's really going, Jesus, do you hear what they're saying? You better do something about this. They are praising you here in this place when they should be praising

God.

If you keep accepting this here, you are really blaspheming. You better do something about this, Jesus. And he could not have poured more fuel on the fire at this point.

I love his response. Do you hear what they're saying? Yes? I thought you were experts.

Haven't you read Psalm 8? Out of the mouth of infants and nursing babies you have prepared praise. Now, Psalm 8 is children praising Yahweh.

Yahweh. they're praising me and they should keep praising me.

[ 27 : 11 ] I'm not only the son of David, I'm the son of God. He inserts himself. Someone greater than the temple is here. The Lord, as the prophet Malachi said, the Lord whom you seek will suddenly come to his temple.

He's pushing them to the point, crown me. Crown me. Or kill me. He's humble. Yes, he is so humble.

But he's come to fix our worship problem. I think the implication of this is there's no nook or cranny of your life where he won't stop inserting himself into my life and your life.

There is not a nook or cranny. There's nothing. Your spouse, your children, your dreams and aspirations, he is inserting himself saying, crown me. He's come to fix our worship problem.

There's no one like him. He's so humble and gentle and lowly that children are drawn to him, prostitutes are drawn to him, outcasts, foreigners are drawn to him, those feeling utterly unworthy are drawn to him.

[ 28 : 36 ] and received. There's no one like him and yet he inserts himself, crown me.

I think this passage is pushing us to the same point that he pushed the religious leaders and the crowd on that day, crown me. I will not just be liked.

I will not be your personal assistant. All your worship should be directed at me. There's a good quote by Reynolds Price that captures the offence of the Gospels.

He says, if 2,000 years of pious handling of this gospel, if 2,000 years of this pious handling had not dimmed our understanding of this story's demand, his gospel would still be seen as the burning outrage it really continues to be.

It is either a work of madness or a blinding revelation. The acts it portrays, the claims it advances from the very first paragraph, demand that we make a hard choice.

[ 30 : 04 ] If we take the gospel writer seriously, we must finally ask the question he thrusts so fragrantly towards us. Does he bring us a life transforming truth?

Or is this one gifted lunatic's tale of another lunatic wilder than he? He's saying, crown me.

many question why God doesn't end all evil. Why doesn't he end sickness?

Why doesn't he end war? Why doesn't he end the oppression of the vulnerable, all the injustice?

Why doesn't he end all that? And he promises he will.

A day is coming where he will be declared a second time and he will be riding a horse on that day and he will end all evil. But today he's ridden on a donkey because he's going to the cross to die in our place so that when he ends all evil he doesn't have to end you and me.

[ 31 : 19 ] Don't waste this brief, brief moment of his humiliation. confession. Come and find rest for your souls.

Feel the confrontation of this passage. He's saying crown me. Give yourself totally to me.

I am gentle and lowly in heart and you'll find rest for your souls. Crown me. I think the other thing we should take away from this passage is this king continues to conquer through weakness.

things. I keep trying to manage my life. I keep trying to be in control and make better plans and get ahead and boast in my abilities and my accomplishments.

I keep going back to that way of thinking. I think there's an imitation of the Christian life that says just just be self-controlled be generous be courageous be kind.

[ 32 : 42 ] This passage that's not far enough. It's not far enough to the kind of life that he's calling us to. We've got to follow this donkey riding king who conquers through humiliation.

I believe he's calling us to serve others by sharing in his weakness, in his humiliation.

Like Paul says in 2 Corinthians 4, we have this treasure in jars of clay to show that the surpassing power belongs to God and not to us.

So I wonder what you're facing in life at the moment. What would it look like for you not to try and conquer that through managing it, being strong?

What would it look like to follow this donkey king and lay down your life to show that your life is resting in him and you want others to find the peace that you've found in him?

[ 33 : 58 ] What would it look like to follow his example? I take great confidence that he loves to use weakness.

Our God, our donkey riding king loves to conquer through weakness. That is really good news because he can use someone like me. Well, let's crown him in our hearts and let's follow him. not in strength but in humiliation. Will you pray with me? Let's pray. Oh, Lord, thank you that you don't win our hearts through threat and fear but you win us over by serving us.

Lord, you are so humble that you would lower yourself to the very last. Forgive us for trying to make ourselves great as the world counts greatness.

Forgive us for that and help us worship you like those little children unashamed in the temple just praising you because of the peace you bring.

[ 35 : 23 ] Lord, please use us as a church not through us being clever or strong or successful. Use us through our weakness.

Lord, it's a dangerous prayer because I just want a comfortable life but use our pain and our loss to shine the peace that you've given us in Jesus.

Please use us as a church to declare the peace that you've brought. I pray this in Jesus' name. Amen.