

# Who is this Man?

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Date: 10 April 2022

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- [ 0 : 00 ] But I think the hand gestures are harder than memorizing the words.! So she's giving double work to those who are going to memorize those hand gestures.
- ! Palm Sunday is what you may call the orphan of the three days.
- It's the day that we all celebrate, but so few understand. On Friday is Good Friday, and we know that that was when Jesus was crucified.
- Then on Sunday next week is Resurrection Sunday. We know that's when Jesus was raised. But when it comes to Palm Sunday, beyond remembering that Jesus rode into Jerusalem on a donkey, it gets fuzzy after that for many people.
- And that's you this morning. My prayer is that as we consider again this morning, that first Palm Sunday, that your understanding of what that day really means will be broadened.
- [ 1 : 21 ] And so I'm going to ask you, if you have not yet done so, to turn in your Bible to Matthew chapter 21. We're going to be considering Matthew's account.
- And this is the first time that I'm actually preaching from Matthew's account. I've traditionally preached from John's account. But this is our first time considering Matthew's account.
- And if you're using a church Bible, it's on page 826. We're going to be reading verses 1 through 11. Please follow along as I read.
- Now when they drew near to Jerusalem and came to Bethphage, to the Mount of Olives, then Jesus sent two disciples, saying to them, Go into the village in front of you, and immediately you will find a donkey tied and a colt with her.
- Untie them and bring them to me. If anyone says anything to you, you shall say, The Lord needs them. And he will send them at once.
- [ 2 : 35 ] This took place to fulfill 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. And just to stick a pin, that he sat on them speaks more to sitting on the cloaks rather than on the two donkeys at the same time.
- Verse 8. Most of the crowd spread their cloaks on the road, and others cut branches from the trees and spread them on the ground, 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!
- [ 3 : 50 ] Hosanna in the highest! 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. Let's pray. Father, we are so grateful this morning that we can gather in this place in the name of your Son, who you sent to this earth to live a perfect life that none of us could live, and then to die a substitutionary death on the cross on behalf of sinners like us, so that all who believe in him will be reconciled to you and can have eternal life.

Lord, thank you that we are in the season of our calendar where we commemorate the Savior's final days on this earth.

Lord, we begin this morning with this first momentous event of him riding into Jerusalem on a colt.

And Father, we pray that you would speak to our hearts. I pray, Lord, that you would help us to grasp what happened some 2,000 years ago when Jesus deliberately rode into Jerusalem on a donkey because, Lord, we know that it will inform the rest of our commemoration of the Savior's death and of his resurrection.

[ 5 : 46 ] So would you speak to our hearts now? I ask, Lord, that you would pour out your grace upon us for me to proclaim and for all of us to hear what you would say to us.

We ask these things in Jesus' name. Amen. Well, in verse 10 of the passage that we just read, Matthew tells us that when Jesus rode into Jerusalem some 2,000 years ago, the whole city was stirred up.

And they asked the question, Who is this? And Matthew tells us that the crowds that ushered Jesus in, those behind him and those in front of him, they answered and said, this is the prophet Jesus from Nazareth of Galilee.

And while the answer to the question is factually correct, when we really consider this account that Matthew gives us, we're able to see that the crowds flocking and praising Jesus did not know who he really was.

and so this morning, I want us to consider the same question that the stirred up city asked 2,000 years ago.

[ 7 : 07 ] Who is this man who rode into Jerusalem on a donkey? in this morning's sermon, I want to answer the question by providing two answers.

One is explicit in the text and the other is implicit. And those two answers to the question are the two points of the sermon.

So the first answer, the explicit answer, who is the man who rode into Jerusalem on a donkey and stood up the whole city? He is God's king.

Matthew tells us in verses 1 to 3 that when Jesus drew near to Jerusalem, he does something that on the face of it was unusual.

He instructed two of his disciples to go into the village and he told them that they were going to find a donkey with its colt tied next to it and they were to bring them to him.

[ 8 : 16 ] Now Matthew's account is a little different from the other accounts. The other accounts tell us that he simply went and got a donkey. But Matthew says he not only brought the donkey, but he brought this colt with the donkey.

And what we know from all the accounts is that Jesus rode the colt. He didn't ride the donkey, rode the colt. But this colt was a very young colt and the fact that it was tied to its mother was an indication that it had not yet been weaned from the mother.

And the whole idea is that Jesus rode into Jerusalem on this young, clumsy colt who was being ridden on for the first time. And Jesus instructs them.

He says, if anyone asks you anything, just tell them the Lord needs this donkey and her colt. And something that is very easy to read over is that Jesus identifies himself as the sovereign Lord.

And he demonstrates that he's the sovereign Lord by telling his disciples to do this most unusual thing, to go into the city. They're going to find this donkey with its colt.

[ 9 : 30 ] They're going to ask for it and they're going to receive it. He demonstrates that he's the sovereign Lord who's orchestrating all of these events. Now, why would Jesus do this?

He certainly had been on a long journey and did he do it because he was tired? And if he did it because he was tired, the others who were with him would also be tired, so why would he not be concerned about them?

But Jesus wasn't tired. Matthew tells us why Jesus did what he did in verse 4.

He says this. He says, this took place to fulfill what was spoken by the prophet. And he goes on in verse 5 and he quotes what the prophet, the prophet Zechariah, actually said in Zechariah 9, verse 9.

There's this prophecy that God spoke through the mouth of Zechariah. And he told Zechariah to tell the children of Israel, to tell the daughter of Zion, which was the name used for Israel, that their king is going to be a different king, that their king is coming to them.

[ 11 : 00 ] But he's going to be different from the kings around them. He tells them that their king was going to come to them humble and mounted on a colt, on a young donkey.

And this is one of the many prophecies we find in the Old Testament about this coming king, about this Messiah, this anointed king, whom God promised to send to save his people.

Zechariah uttered this prophecy about the Messiah coming in this way some 500 years before Jesus was born. And on that first Palm Sunday, as Jesus was days away from his crucifixion, he rode into Jerusalem and that was the hour of the fulfillment of this prophecy of some 520 years.

What Matthew tells us is that Jesus demonstrated that he was the fulfillment of that prophecy, that he was this king that God had promised to his people who would come differently from the kings around them.

And he was deliberately fulfilling this prophecy as he was headed towards Jerusalem at the time of the Feast of Passover.

[ 12 : 32 ] Now this was, this promise was a big deal in Israel. This in a sense was the promise of all the promises. God had promised as early as Genesis chapter 3 that he was going to send one who was going to crush the head of the serpent.

He was going to send the seed of the woman who would triumph. The one who would triumph over the enemy of God's people. And this promise was repeated again and again.

And so there was any of the promises that the people of Israel knew, they knew that one day the Messiah is going to come. And because the Israelites lived under oppression of foreign nations for so many years, this promise of a coming Messiah began to take on a shape in their minds that he would be one who is a political and military leader like all those around in the other nations.

And he would be one to deliver them from their oppression. Over time in their waiting and in their despair of the domination and exploitation of other nations, they began to see in the Messiah this hope of deliverance.

During the time of the ministry of Jesus, they were under Roman oppression. The Romans ruled them. They occupied their land. And they saw in Jesus, many of them saw in Jesus this hope of deliverance that they longed for.

[ 14 : 28 ] And so they wanted a political military leader who could deliver them from it all and who would place their hopes and dreams and make them into reality. But this was a false view of the Messiah who was promised as we see from the words of Zechariah that he would look nothing like the leaders around.

He would come humble and lowly on a donkey. he would be on a beast of burden not on a beast of war.

As Jesus rode into Jerusalem on that first Palm Sunday, Matthew tells us that he had crowds in front of him and behind him and he said the people took off their cloaks and they laid it on the road and some took branches from trees and spread it on the ground.

And in essence, what they were really doing was they were treating Jesus as a king riding on to ride on the bare street. So they rolled out their red carpet for Jesus, taking off their outer garments, putting it on the road and putting branches on the road for him.

Jesus was indeed a king but he was a different king. He was not the political military king that they had in mind.

[ 16 : 09 ] Instead, he was God's king. He was this king that Zechariah prophesied would come. Not on the horse of war with all the pomp and pageantry of worldly kings and worldly kingdoms, but instead he would come in humility on this beast of burden, in peace and with the absence of fanfare.

He came out of this clumsy cold that no one had ever ridden on before. And a few days, Jesus, when he would be standing before Pilate, he would say to Pilate what those who were present needed to hear.

My kingdom is not of this world. If it were, my disciples would be fighting. But Matthew tells us that not only did the people put their clothes on the road and put branches of trees on the road, he tells us that they also, in verse 9, he tells us that they began to shout to him, Hosanna to the son of David.

Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord. Hosanna in the highest. The word Hosanna means give salvation now. And they identified Jesus with the messianic rule and title of David.

They called him the son of David. And they saw him as the one who was coming in the name of the Lord. And so they were demanding that Jesus would immediately show that he is the Messiah by bringing salvation, bringing it the way they wanted it, by freeing them from Roman oppression and rule.

[ 18 : 07 ] I think the best description that we can give of what was happening on that day is it was like a political rally. And Jesus was their candidate.

I'm sure if you've ever watched any of our local political rallies in particular, sometimes you would see crowds of people just take their candidate and seat the candidate on their shoulders and they would go marching in and they would be exuberant rallying around this person.

this is kind of what was happening on that first Palm Sunday. The only difference was their candidate was not playing into their hands.

Their candidate understood that it was something very different, that he was doing something very different from what they were understanding and from what they were doing.

the people were misguided. They knew what they wanted, but they did not know what they needed. But Jesus was not misguided.

[ 19 : 14 ] He knew what they wanted, but he also knew what they needed. They wanted someone to come and change the external circumstances. They wanted someone to come and give them a quick fix.

but Jesus recognized they needed more than external change. They needed more than a quick fix. They needed someone who could address their deepest need, which was the need of the soul.

It was their sinful condition. They needed someone who could transform their hearts. And so all the cloak spreading and the hosannaship shouting did not deter Jesus from that mission.

He was God's king. And he was a unique king. He was the only king who could address their deepest need. There were other kings who could address all the external things.

A more powerful king than Rome could have arisen and defeat Rome, but there was only one king who could address the condition of the human heart, and that was God's king.

[ 20 : 28 ] And that was the king who was riding on the donkey on that first Palm Sunday. I wonder this morning, as we are gathered here on this Palm Sunday, some 2,000 years removed from the first one, whether there might be some of us who are viewing Jesus very similar to where the crowd viewed him.

we know what we want, and we want Jesus to give it to us.

And what we want really is external. What we want is really circumstantial. We want someone who will improve our lot. I'm so sad today that that is not just the expectation of so many, but that is the proclamation of so many, that that is what Jesus has come to do.

He's come to give us a better life. He's come to give us a better this and a better that, a bigger this and a bigger that. He's come to help us with a better job or to find a job, to have more prosperous finances, to do well in our school studies, to have a better marriage or to have marriage itself.

And I think we all understand that these things are not bad in and of themselves, and we all desire them, but if we desire them as our end-all and be-all, then we don't understand who Jesus really is.

[ 22 : 12 ] And we don't understand that we need something more than what lasts for this life. Jesus said to those who are clamoring after me, he said, don't labor for the food that perishes, but labor for the food that endures to eternal life.

He has come to give us eternal life when this life is past. He did not come primarily to address our external circumstances, but to deal with our sinful condition, which is a heart issue.

Jesus came into this world as God's king. He came to sit on the throne of your heart and my heart. He didn't come to be a spiritual Santa.

He did not come to be an errand boy to do this and to do that and to do our bidding. He came as a king. And he came as one to be obeyed.

He came as one whose word is to mean something to those who claim to follow him. And since he is God's king, we are to do his bidding.

[ 23 : 30 ] Well, that's the explicit answer in the text to the question of the identity of Jesus. He is God's king. The second answer is implicit, and it is this.

He is God's lamb. That's implicit in the text. And it's a paradox because the one who is God's king, who came to rule God's people, is also God's lamb, who came to die for God's people.

Jesus entered Jerusalem as God's king, but he also entered as God's lamb, and he knew it. Jesus was not going to faithfully meet his death in a couple of days and be surprised by it.

No, he knew that he was headed to Jerusalem to die. He was going to offer his life willingly as a sacrifice for sin and for sinners.

When Jesus began his ministry, he went to John the Baptist to be baptized. And John the Baptist identified Jesus in a most unusual way.

[ 24 : 47 ] John the apostle records it in his gospel in John 1 29. He writes, the next day, he, meaning John the Baptist, saw Jesus coming toward him and said, behold the lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world.

God, John the Baptist identified Jesus as the lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world, pointing to his sacrificial death that he was going to die.

now listen to how Jesus himself, after he was resurrected, when he met two disciples on the road to Emmaus in Luke 24, verses 25 to 27, listen to what Jesus says to them in response to their sadness that they expressed, that the one they had hoped who would be their deliverer had been crucified.

Jesus says to them, O foolish ones, and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken.

Was it not necessary that the Christ should suffer these things and enter into his glory? And beginning with Moses and all the prophets, he interpreted to them in all the scriptures the things concerning himself.

[ 26 : 19 ] when Jesus refers to the Christ in verse 26, that's another word for Messiah. It's the word anointed king. And so Jesus is saying to them, these things were prophesied by the prophets about what would happen to the Messiah, that he was going to die.

He would suffer these things. And Jesus was pointing again to himself as that Messiah, as that anointed king.

He was God's king who would rule, but he was also God's lamb who would die. Listen finally to the apostle John.

In this vision, in Revelation 5, 1-7, John writes, And I saw at the right hand of him who was seated on the throne a scroll written within and on the back, sealed with seven seals.

And I saw a strong angel proclaiming with a loud voice, Who is worthy to open the scroll and break its seals? And no one, in heaven or on earth or under the earth, was able to open the scroll or to look into it.

[ 27 : 45 ] And I began to weep loudly because no one was found worthy to open the scroll or to look into it. And one of the elders said to me, Weep no more.

Behold, the lion of the tribe of Judah, the root of David has conquered so that he can open the scroll and its seven seals. And between the throne and the four living creatures and among the elders, I saw a lamb standing as though it had been slain with seven horns and with seven eyes, which are the seven spirits of God sent out into all the earth.

And he went, and took the scroll from the right hand of him who was seated on the throne. The vision that John saw, the angel told him, don't weep.

The lion of Judah has prevailed. And he is able to open the scroll. He's able to remove the seals. angels. And then John looks and what he sees is not a lion but a lamb.

He sees a lamb that had been slain. And when we consider this, we see this is Jesus.

[ 29 : 21 ] He's being referred to in two different ways. This title, Lion of Judah, speaks to the royal rule, the messianic rule, that he was the son of God, he was the son of David, but then he's also the lamb of God.

And Jesus, when he sat on that colt that day, was sitting there both as the king and as the lamb.

He was God's king and he was God's lamb. In a couple of days after that Sunday, he was going to the cross as the lamb.

He rode on the donkey as God's king and in a couple of days he was going to be on the cross as God's lamb. You know, in a sense, when we think about that first Palm Sunday, it was kind of like an identification parade.

parade. It was God's divine identification parade. It was essential to know who this was entering into Jerusalem to die.

[ 30 : 39 ] He was God's king, but he was also God's lamb. God's lamb. God's love.

But the crowds did not recognize who he really was. And that's why some four days later, when Pilate brought Jesus out to them and he said to them, behold your king, they cried out, away with him, away with him, crucify him.

Because he did not meet their expectations. He fell far, far short of it. But Jesus was the certified son of God, who was God's king and he was God's lamb.

If all Jesus was, was who the crowd said he was, that he's this prophet from Nazareth of Galilee, if that's all who he was, if he's only this prophet, he would be no different from all the other prophets who were killed.

He'd be no different from Amos of Tekoa. He'd be no different from all the other prophets in the long line of prophets whose blood was spilled in Jerusalem.

[ 32 : 10 ] But he was more than a prophet. He was the prophet. He was the one that Moses said will come. And he said when he comes, you listen to him. he was the ultimate prophet.

He was God's king. And he was God's lamb. And brothers and sisters, there's no separating the two. There's no separating that Jesus is both our Lord and our Savior.

Savior. He is both God's king and God's lamb. As God's king, we must obey him. And as God's lamb, we must look to him alone for the salvation that he offers, that we need, not the salvation that we desire and we demand.

God's lamb. And the salvation that Jesus offers as God's lamb addresses our deepest need to the core of our very being and our existence, which is the need to be born again, which is the need to be begotten from above by the Spirit of God so that we might be made right with the holy God.

though our circumstances may not be right, our souls will be right, and only he can make it right.

[ 33 : 44 ] And so on this Palm Sunday, may we see and embrace Jesus afresh as God's king and as God's lamb.

And perhaps you're here or listening by live stream and you need to do this for the first time. Perhaps you need to take Jesus as he is offered in the gospel, as he is offered in scripture.

Not as we have made him out to be with our own imaginations, not as you may desire him to be based on your circumstances, but as he truly is.

and as he truly is, is he has come into this world to save sinners. And he has come into this world and called them to repent, to turn from sin and to turn to him and he promises that all who do, he will receive and he will never turn away.

come Sunday is the gateway to understanding Good Friday and understanding Resurrection Day because this is the one who died.

[ 35 : 07 ] God's king. The one who died is God's king and the one who died is God's lamb.

And so if you have not trusted in Jesus Christ as your Lord and your personal savior, I pray today that you would do that. I pray that you would bow your knees and bow your hearts to God's king.

and see him as the lamb who takes away the sin of the world.

Let's pray. Father, would you do your work in all of our hearts. Lord, where we need to see who Jesus truly is help us to see him as your king and as your lamb.

I especially pray, Lord, that you would speak to the hearts of those who do not know Christ. Would you convict them of sin and convict them, Lord, of righteousness and convict them of judgment to come.

[ 36 : 28 ] And Father, may they come to Jesus based on who he is, what he's come to do, and not who they desire him to be and what they want him to do.

But have your way by your spirit, we pray in Christ's name. Amen. Let's stand for our closing song. Thank you.

Please join. Yes. You want to like the name? Yes.