

Scripture: Zechariah 9:9-10; Mark 11:1-11

Jesus Enters Jerusalem to Be Our King

Beloved in Christ, the scene opens before us: Jesus enters Jerusalem to become King! To celebrate the entry of a king into a city with great fanfare was common in those days.

Here it's the time of the feast, likely the feast of the Passover. Jews from all regions of Israel are gathering to celebrate this yearly festival. It's at this time, Jesus chooses to enter Jerusalem. Jerusalem was the capital city. It had a special place in the history of God's people. This city was chosen by God to be His dwelling place. Here also was the temple, the special place of God's presence.

In this scene before us, Jesus enters Jerusalem to be our King. But the question is, 'how does He become King?' The crowds have something totally different in mind than Jesus. But in humility Jesus receives their praise.

In light of Mark 11:1-11, we hear God's Word, Jesus enters Jerusalem on a donkey to be our King. May God open our eyes by faith so that we may see what kind of King He truly is and rightly praise Him. We see

1. He makes the plans
2. He receives the praise
3. He visits the temple

1. Jesus makes the plans (vv.1-6)

It's Sunday, the final week before His arrest and crucifixion on the cross. Jesus knows what is at hand. The time has come for Him to accomplish this work the Father has given Him to do for the salvation of His people. Jesus is with His disciples, making way to Jerusalem. They come near to Bethphage (near Bethany) on the Mount of Olives.

On the Mount of Olives, one could see the beauty of Jerusalem from a distance (2 km), with a valley in-between. But more importantly, the Mount of Olives speaks of the glory of the Messiah. The prophecy of Zechariah speaks of this coming glory (14:4). And it's from this hill He spends His final week, teaching His disciples. It's also from this hill that the risen Lord Jesus ascends to the throne at the right hand of God the Father.

From this hill, Jesus reveals His plan. He sends two of His disciples to go into the village opposite of them. This may have been Bethany or Bethphage. He tells them that as soon as they enter the village, they would find a colt tied, on which no one had ever sat. He instructs them, "*Loose it and bring it. And if anyone says to you, 'Why are you doing this?' say, 'The Lord has need of it,' and immediately he will send it here*" (vv.2-3).

What is clear is that this King is truly man, but also truly God. He not only knows all things precisely. As the sovereign King He directs everything just as He would have it. See verses 4-6, "*So they went their way, and found the colt tied by the door outside on the street, and they loosed it. But some of those who stood there said to them, 'What are you doing, loosing the colt?' And they spoke to them just as Jesus had commanded. So they let them go.*" Every detail was as Jesus had said. You hear the call – trust and obey His Word! In His grace, He bends the hearts of His followers to obey.

He reveals His Kingly majesty and glory in a quiet way – so that everything serves His plan. He even bends the will of men so that they serve Him. Though Mark does not mention it, Jesus is quietly fulfilling prophecy

concerning Himself and showing why He needs a donkey. He is the coming King announced by Zechariah 500 years before, *“Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion! Shout, O daughter of Jerusalem! Behold, your King is coming to you; He is just and having salvation, lowly and riding on a donkey, a colt, the foal of a donkey”* (Zechariah 9:9).

He is the ultimate King, *“just and having salvation . . . He shall speak peace to the nations, His dominion shall be from sea to sea.”* He makes plans fulfilling prophecy about Himself. Furthermore, He’s the one who brings about (elicits) the praises of His people – also fulfilling the prophecy of Zechariah 9:9.

2. He receives praise (vv.7-10)

You see that here in verses 7-10. Jesus lets Himself be recognized as King. The disciples bring the colt to Jesus. They throw their clothes on it as a saddle. *“And Jesus sat on it.”*

Many years before, Solomon, as the new king, entered Jerusalem on David’s colt. Now a greater is here, Jesus, entering Jerusalem on the colt of a donkey. Truly, God is returning to Jerusalem to become king over Israel and the nations! Jesus is laying claim to David’s throne! This one brings salvation unlike any other king. He reverses the curse of sin. He raises the dead to life (Lazarus), the deaf to hear and the eyes to see. He forgives sin, brings joy and peace to the broken-hearted.

The multitudes of people show honor to Him. How? By spreading their clothes on the road like a royal red carpet. Others cut down leafy branches from the trees and spread them on the road.

The wonderful works of Jesus stir up the expectations of the multitudes: now He is their King. Here is the Messiah! They welcome Him with the call *“Hosanna!”* (meaning, “save us, now, we beg”). They welcome Him with shouts and praise. With the words of Psalm 118, Jerusalem is called upon to receive this King, *“Hosanna! Blessed is He who comes in the name of the LORD!”* Then they add, *“Blessed is the kingdom of our father David that comes in the name of the Lord! Hosanna in the highest!”* (vv.9-10). He is the King. Indeed, the kingdom comes in Him, the kingdom of life and peace.

But the multitudes do not understand what kind of King He is. They don’t see. They are spiritually blind. They are thinking that He, like David, is going to become king in Jerusalem. They are thinking about a temporal, physical, political king. They were looking for a strong fist, an armed force to free them from Rome. Many people think of salvation that way today. They think Jesus is like a Santa Claus who gives them everything they want. They don’t think any deeper than that He gives them a physical salvation: health, wealth and material prosperity. The praise they offer Him is shallow praise.

Yet Jesus receives their shallow (false) praise. Why? For Jesus, this praise points forward to the real jubilation He would receive! He would receive this praise eternally from His own people when He arose from the dead and ascended into heaven; when He would come to dwell in the hearts of His own by His Spirit, and when He would return in glory! But they do not recognize in Jesus, God’s coming to save His people from their sin. There is confusion in the crowd about His true mission (Matthew 1:21).

But Jesus does not enter Jerusalem on a warring horse. By contrast, we see Jesus’ humble entry into Jerusalem – on a donkey, a fitting image of humility and service. He is coming as a servant. His conquest will come in a servant-like way, in a sacrificial way.

He brings a very different kind of salvation, true salvation, salvation from sin, Satan, death and hell. Hell is where everyone is headed eternally . . . unless One saves us from sin; that is, One who is true God and true Man!

Jesus enters Jerusalem *“to serve and give His life as a ransom for many”* (Mark 10:45). Three times, Jesus said to His disciples that *“He must be betrayed into the hands of men, and they will kill Him. And after He is killed, He will rise the third day”* (9:31; also 8:31, 10:33-34). His glory is not outward. His glory is hidden in the cross! So is the salvation He offers. It’s not gold and silver, but His blood which covers sin in the sight of God!

Look back to Mark 10:46-52. Bartimaeus saw by faith. Bartimaeus called Jesus “Son of David” and begged for help, for mercy. Were these crowds doing the same? Unlike Bartimaeus, they remained blind. Bartimaeus, believed. He saw and followed Jesus on the way to the cross.

Judging by the praise of the crowds, this appears to be the moment for Jesus to receive the throne and the kingdom. But, ironically, nothing happens. He has no royal robes. He makes no speech. There is no feast in the city. The whole scene comes to nothing. The praise of the multitude suddenly fizzles out.

It’s like the seed in the parable of the sower that receives the Word with joy but has no root. It lasts for a short time. People are drawn by pomp and circumstance, but not by the King’s message. You see no faith; they are not real disciples. The crowds vanish. It is so anti-climactic. We come to verse 11

3. He visits the temple (v.11)

“And Jesus went into Jerusalem and into the temple. So when He had looked around at all things, as the hour was already late, He went out to Bethany with the twelve.” He goes into the temple alone – all alone.

Was Jesus at a loss? Did He fail in His mission? Does He now pray? Is that why He goes to the temple? No. Jesus did not fail in His mission. God’s people failed to understand. He is fulfilling His mission for our sakes! The scene comes to nothing precisely because the King must be rejected and die in our place first. He cannot be our king and we cannot enter His eternal kingdom unless He dies and rises from the dead.

What does He do in the temple? Verse 11 simply says that *“He had looked around at all things.”* The sense here is that He surveys the situation. He is in charge. He knows His purpose. He knows what He is going to do. He is the Lord who comes to His temple (Malachi 3:1).

The temple points to Him. He is the presence of God among men. Through His death and resurrection, He raises a new temple, the body of believers. He, our risen, ascended Lord and King, has poured out His Spirit on His church. Earthly kings may hand out money, provide health care and safety. But they cannot forgive sins. They can do nothing eternal: They cannot remove fear and anxiety; they cannot bring peace and joy or give eternal life. Only Jesus can.

Jesus might not be the King they want. But He is the King the world desperately needs! He gives life. He makes us whole. Trust and obey, for there is not other way. Seek Him! Make Him your King! Rest in Him in faith and repentance. There is no other king.

Outside of Christ and His reign, our lives come to nothing. Even the glory comes to nothing (1 Peter 1:24). Jesus entered Jerusalem on a donkey to be our King. Do you receive Him by faith? If so, He by His Spirit, moves us to truly praise Him. We join the multitudes, praising our King.

John says in Revelation 7:9-10, *“After these things I looked, and behold, a great multitude which no one could number, of all nations, tribes, peoples, and tongues, standing before the throne and before the Lamb, clothed with white robes, with palm branches in their hands, and crying out with a loud voice, saying, “Salvation belongs to our God who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb!”* Are you in that crowd shouting for joy?

One day His glory will be outward for all to see! Christ will return in the clouds of glory as triumphant and glorious King, in His royal attire! And a feast will follow. All who have not trusted in Him will be thrown into the lake of fire. And all who believe in Him will reign with Him forever and ever! Amen.