

THE GOSPEL PROJECT – CHRONOLOGICAL

JESUS SAVES

JESUS THE SAVIOR

Jesus in Jerusalem

Matthew 21:1-17, Mark 11:1-10, Luke 19:28-38, John 12:12-19

It was the last week – the last week of the earthly life of Jesus, the Son of God. Since it was Passover, there might have been as many as two million people in and around Jerusalem. The air was filled with expectancy as the people yearned for their promised Messiah to appear. The masses looked for a coming warrior king riding upon a horse of war and yet the King of kings rode into the city of Jerusalem upon a donkey – a symbol of peace.

This was the only time in His ministry that Jesus actually planned a public demonstration. Up until now, the record reflects that He had cautioned people not to tell who He was and He had deliberately avoided public scenes. He would soon tell His disciples in **John 12:23-24 (ESV)** ²³ ... “*The hour has come for the Son of Man to be glorified.*” ²⁴ *Truly, truly, I say to you, unless a grain of wheat falls into the earth and dies, it remains alone; but if it dies, it bears much fruit.* They were expecting Him to be glorified by man but Jesus was to be glorified by God Himself.

Jesus is the Savior who comes to redeem His people.

Read Matthew 21:1-11 (ESV) ¹ *Now when they drew near to Jerusalem and came to Bethphage, to the Mount of Olives, then Jesus sent two disciples, ² 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. ³ If anyone says anything to you, you shall say, ‘The Lord needs them,’ and he will send them at once.” ⁴ This took place to fulfill what was spoken by the prophet, saying, ⁵ “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.’” ⁶ The disciples went and did as Jesus had directed them. ⁷ They brought the donkey and the colt and put on them their cloaks, and he sat on them. ⁸ Most of the crowd spread their cloaks on the road, and others cut branches from the trees and spread them on the road. ⁹ 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!” ¹⁰ And when he entered Jerusalem, the whole city was stirred up, saying, “Who is this?” ¹¹ And the crowds said, “This is the prophet Jesus, from Nazareth of Galilee.”*

Bethphage was a small village located on the Mount of Olives near Bethany, the home of Mary, Martha, and Lazarus.

Matthew mentions a donkey and her colt, while the other Gospels mention only the colt. This was the same event, but Matthew focuses on the prophecy in **Zechariah 9:9**, where both a donkey and a colt are mentioned – the prophecy was falling into place! Practically speaking, it would have been the best way to ride a young colt in a crowd – that is – having the mother with it. However, we also must never forget that the colt's Rider had dominion over all! Jesus was poor in all aspects of His earthly life – He had not even an animal to carry Himself about – He was a Man of Sorrows.

Let's read the Old Testament prophecy that Matthew quoted.

Read Zechariah 9:9 (ESV) ⁹ *Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion! Shout aloud, O daughter of Jerusalem! Behold, your king is coming to you; righteous and having salvation is he, humble and mounted on a donkey, on a colt, the foal of a donkey.*

When we compare this passage with how Matthew reported it, we notice that Zechariah opens with: *Rejoice greatly* while Matthew omitted this phrase since this entry of Jesus into Jerusalem would not be the time of rejoicing. Rejoicing will take place at His second coming. When Jesus approached the city, Luke tells us in **Luke 19:41**, that Jesus wept over the future of the unrepentant city of Jerusalem. A little later in His journey to the cross, we read Jesus' own words concerning His sorrow over Jerusalem in **Matthew 23:37-39 (ESV)** ³⁷ *"O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, the city that kills the prophets and stones those who are sent to it! How often would I have gathered your children together as a hen gathers her brood under her wings, and you were not willing!"* ³⁸ *See, your house is left to you desolate.* ³⁹ *For I tell you, you will not see me again, until you say, 'Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord.'*"

Matthew also omitted *righteous and having salvation is he*. Jesus' entrance into Jerusalem was an act of mercy and grace, not an act of justice or judgment. He did have salvation for them, but they refused to accept it. **John 1:11 (ESV)** ¹¹ *He came to his own, and his own people did not receive him.* The next time Israel sees the King, He will be riding in great power and glory. **Revelation 19:11 (ESV)** ¹¹ *Then I saw heaven opened, and behold, a white horse! The one sitting on it is called Faithful and True, and in righteousness he judges and makes war.*

Keep in mind when connecting the First and Second Comings of the Messiah, the Old Testament prophets were looking across the mountain peaks of time as through a telescope and often saw those events as one. **2 Peter 3:8 (ESV)** ⁸ *But do not overlook this one fact, beloved, that with the Lord one day is as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day.* The Old Testament prophets did not see how human time separated events in the life of the Messiah.

Can you hear the words ringing in the crowd that day? *Hosanna to the Son of David!" "Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord!" "Hosanna in the highest!"* Hosanna is Aramaic meaning 'save now'. They were quoting from a psalm that was messianic in character: **Psalms 118:25-26 (ESV)** ²⁵ *Save us, we pray, O LORD! O LORD, we pray, give us success!* ²⁶ *Blessed is he who comes in the name of the LORD! We bless you from the house of the LORD.* Those who welcomed Jesus were acting according to the Word of God when they

acclaimed Him as the true Son of David, who is yet to reign in Zion. However, as on so many other occasions, the chief priests and scribes, though familiar with the prophetic scriptures, would again prove themselves altogether out of touch with this worshipful occasion concerning their coming King.

Jesus who was born in a lowly stable was about to assert His power by reigning over sin and death on the cross and because of that we can truly shout: Hosanna – Save Now! **Romans 5:8 (ESV)**⁸ *but God shows his love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us.*

Luke adds an interesting element to the praise from the crowd.

Read Luke 19:37-38 (ESV)³⁷ *As he was drawing near—already on the way down the Mount of Olives—the whole multitude of his disciples began to rejoice and praise God with a loud voice for all the mighty works that they had seen,³⁸ saying, “Blessed is the King who comes in the name of the Lord! Peace in heaven and glory in the highest!”*

The theme of the celebration was *peace*. Luke opened his Gospel with the angel’s announcement: **Luke 2:14 (ESV)**¹⁴ *“Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace among those with whom he is pleased!”* It is interesting that the multitude was saying: *Blessed is the King who comes in the name of the Lord! Peace in heaven and glory in the highest!* Because the King was rejected, there could be no peace on earth. Never fear – because of Christ’s work on the cross we can be reconciled with God and find peace!

Jesus is the Savior who comes to restore true worship.

Read Matthew 21:12-13 (ESV)¹² *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.¹³ He said to them, “It is written, ‘My house shall be called a house of prayer,’ but you make it a den of robbers.”*

There were two separate occasions when Jesus cleansed the temple. The first cleansing recorded in **John 2** was at the beginning of His public ministry. The cleansing recorded here and in **Mark**, and **Luke** is the second time and occurred after His entry into Jerusalem shortly before He would be crucified. That Jesus was compelled to repeat this action twice in His ministry is a reminder to us that we must continually strive to keep our worship of the King pure.

It was as if Jesus was publicly saying to the religious leaders – not in my house! The Apostle Peter would later write in **1 Peter 4:17 (ESV)**¹⁷ *For it is time for judgment to begin at the household of God; and if it begins with us, what will be the outcome for those who do not obey the gospel of God?* When we long to ‘change the world’, we must start with our own heart!

There was a problem in His House which should have been the heart of worship! The problem was businessmen who ran the money tables, bought and sold sacrificial merchandise and had absolutely lost their reverence for

the temple as a holy place. They had turned something sacred and beautiful into a money-making scheme that took advantage of anyone who came into the temple area. The Old Testament ruled that only unblemished animals might be offered in sacrifice. The priests had set up a very lucrative trade in “approved” lambs and pigeons. Animals brought from the country for sacrifice might easily be disapproved by priestly inspectors, and worshipers forced to buy from the temple merchants. What had been set aside for prayer had become a “den of robbers.”

The Bible does not tell us what part of the temple they were in. It was probably the court of the Gentiles, the outermost court of the temple. This was the only area in which Gentiles could enter and worship the God of Israel and it was being turned into a marketplace. Even in the Old Testament, God revealed that His plan for salvation was for all nations not just Israel. **Isaiah 56:3,7 (ESV)** ³ *Let not the foreigner who has joined himself to the LORD say, “The LORD will surely separate me from his people” ... ⁷ these I will bring to my holy mountain, and make them joyful in my house of prayer; their burnt offerings and their sacrifices will be accepted on my altar; for my house shall be called a house of prayer for all peoples.”*

The ones who truly experienced true worship were not necessarily those you might think.

Read Matthew 21:14-17 (ESV) ¹⁴ *And the blind and the lame came to him in the temple, and he healed them. ¹⁵ 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, ¹⁶ 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?’” ¹⁷ And leaving them, he went out of the city to Bethany and lodged there.*

Cleansing the temple of its pollution opened the door for greater things: *the blind and the lame came to him in the temple, and he healed them.* When the chief priests and scribes heard the cry: “Hosanna to the Son of David!”, they were outraged. The spotless Lamb of God was destined to be sacrificed during the time of Passover. Jesus’ public entrance into Jerusalem encouraged the hostile Jewish leaders to act quickly while ignoring that their actions would literally fulfill prophecy. **John 1:29 (ESV)** ²⁹ *The next day he saw Jesus coming toward him, and said, “Behold, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world! When they saw the spontaneous demonstration of the people, the ‘religious left’ concluded that Jesus had to be destroyed.*

As I mentioned earlier, the entry of Jesus into Jerusalem before His crucifixion although often called The Triumphal Entry really was not. His triumphal entry is yet to come and Zechariah prophesied of the Messiah’s visible triumphal return in glory and the physical changes that will occur when He ascends from heaven onto the Mount of Olives. **Zechariah 14:4 (ESV)** ⁴ *On that day his feet shall stand on the Mount of Olives that lies before Jerusalem on the east, and the Mount of Olives shall be split in two from east to west by a very wide valley, so that one half of the Mount shall move northward, and the other half southward.* That, my friends, will be our King Jesus’ triumphal entry. He keeps His promises. **Revelation 22:20 (ESV)** ²⁰ *He who testifies to these things says, “Surely I am coming soon.” Amen. Come, Lord Jesus!*