

## **The Triumphal Entry**

**Mark 11:1-11**

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Many of us remember back on April 29, 2011. There was a worldwide, huge event, a royal event that took place. It was the wedding of William and Katherine, the Duke and Duchess of Cambridge. Really a remarkable event. A worldwide event, because it's estimated that 2 billion people in more than an 180 countries around the world either watched the event live or saw and read reports and photos of the royal wedding. More than 8,000 journalists were in London to cover the event. And 2,000 people were invited to Westminster Abbey to attend the service itself. Of course, many of those were relatives and friends, but there were 50 members of the royal family, 40 foreign dignitaries and royalty, 200 politicians and diplomats. It was a huge celebration. It's estimated that London stores sold 1,000 miles of bunting in order to decorate for the 5,000 plus parties that were held across the city. More than a million people lined the streets of London to celebrate the event and to watch this royal occurrence unfold.

It's interesting if you contrast that event with the entrance of the rightful King of Israel, the rightful King of everyone, as He entered into His capital city Jerusalem in what we call the Triumphal Entry. This is Palm Sunday. It is the 1,987<sup>th</sup> anniversary of that Sunday on which Jesus entered the City of Jerusalem. His royal entrance really accomplished two things. It established His credentials as King, but it also illustrated the gracious character of His reign and of His rule.

I want us to look at this event together, as this is the day that we commemorate it, and I want to do so from Mark's account in Mark 11 that we read just a few moments ago. Let me give you the context. Mark 11 begins the second half of Mark's gospel and the events of the Passion Week. It's fascinating to me that Mark spent 10 chapters of his gospel on three-and-half years of Jesus' ministry, and then he spends six chapters on one week. Clearly that week, the Passion Week, defines the essence of Jesus' ministry and explains to us why He came.

Now during the last six months of Jesus' earthly ministry, He came to Jerusalem several times, including three times to celebrate various Jewish feasts. But His last trip to Jerusalem, before this final Passover, had been about 6-8 weeks before. He had come to Bethany, which was just over the hill from Jerusalem, in order to raise Lazarus, an event that's recorded in John 11. Keep your finger here in Mark 11, but turn to John 11. The events of John 11 would've happened around February of the year 30 AD. It was in Bethany. Now Bethany was just over the Mount of Olives from Jerusalem about two miles' distance. Jesus, you remember, carefully calculated this miracle, the raising of Lazarus, to give the nation one great, final proof of His claims. You remember He waited until Lazarus had been clearly dead in order to come. He, for the very first time in His ministry, arranged the circumstances to create the greatest possible spectacle. And that wasn't of Himself. That was to present His claims to the people. The raising of Lazarus occurred about 6-8 weeks before Passover and just next door to Jerusalem.

As a result of the raising of Lazarus, the Sanhedrin met secretly in official council and decided that Jesus had to die. In fact, if you look at verse 50, Caiaphas, the wicked high priest, makes a politically expedient comment. He says, "Do you [not] take into account that it is expedient for you that one man die for the people, and that the whole nation not perish." He's talking politically: better for us to write this one guy off than for us to lose our nation. But because he was high priest, the Holy Spirit intended for him to say more than that. Verse 51, "He did not say this on his own initiative, but being high priest that year, he prophesied that Jesus was going to die for [the sins of] the nation." But not just for people in Israel, but also, verse 52, for others "who are scattered abroad." That's us. This was the reason Jesus had to die. So the Sanhedrin decides Jesus must go.

Now on the heels of that, Jesus leaves Jerusalem and travels just barely north. You see it in verse 54: "Therefore Jesus no longer continued to walk publicly among the Jews, but went away from there to the country near the wilderness, into a city called Ephraim; and there He stayed with the disciples." Jesus left the Bethany area there near Jerusalem, went just few miles north, and

stayed in a little town called Ephraim with His disciples until it was close to Passover. So for several weeks Jesus stayed in that little town.

Now as the Feast of Passover drew near, a couple things happened. First of all, the Jewish leaders demanded that if anyone knew where Jesus was, they were legally required to turn Him in to the authorities. Notice verse 57: “The chief priests... the Pharisees had given orders that if anyone knew where [Jesus] was, he was to report it, so that they might seize Him.” Now in light of that, the people, all the people of the land were debating about whether or not Jesus would actually show up for the Feast of Passover. You’ll notice verse 55:

Now the Passover of the Jews was near, and many went up to Jerusalem out of the country before the Passover to purify themselves. So they were seeking for Jesus, and [they] were saying to one another as they stood in the temple, “What do you think; that He will not come to the feast at all?”

So, what’s your opinion? Is He coming or is He not coming? They decided to kill Him, they’ve issued orders for His arrest, will He come or will He not? No one knew where Jesus was, but He was the topic of conversation in all the market places, in the temple (as we read there) and among all of the political pundits of the nation.

When the time for the Passover came, Jesus decided to attend. And of course, He had to. This was the Passover. This was when He would offer Himself as the Passover Lamb. He had already decided. He set His face like flint. He had to go to Jerusalem. He had to die for the sins of His people, and so He decides to go.

But here’s what’s interesting. Jesus decides to go to Jerusalem in a most unusual route. Remember now, He’s just a few miles north of Jerusalem. Instead of simply taking His disciples and heading straight to the city a few miles’ journey, less than a day’s journey, Jesus does

something remarkable. He heads north, away from Jerusalem. He passes through Samaria, and He goes all the way up back to Galilee, according to Matthew 19:1-2. And there in Galilee He joins a large group of Galilean pilgrims who are coming south for the Feast of Passover.

Now on the way to Passover, as they traveled down through the country, Jesus was highly visible. We have a number of examples of His teaching. We have examples of miracles that He performed. We even read of His confronting the religious leaders of the nation on the way to Passover. He and His disciples traveled down the Jordan Rift Valley from Galilee into Perea. Perea is just across the Jordan on the eastern side toward the desert. And there they spent the night. Then they cross the Jordan and they came to Jericho. Now two things happen in Jericho. One of them is that Jesus heals Bartimaeus and his blind friend. The other is that Jesus encounters a notorious tax collector by the name of Zacchaeus. And Jesus decides to spend the night with Zacchaeus and to have an outreach into the life of his friends, and He stayed there in his home after Zacchaeus' conversion. Now Jericho, where Zacchaeus lived, is some 20 miles from Jerusalem. It's one very long, hard day's walk through a dry riverbed called the Wadi Qelt. If you've ever been there, it's notorious. It's still notorious to this day. Very difficult journey. You're going up several thousand feet. You're going through rocky terrain. It was a place where there were robbers and thieves. It was a brutal day's journey.

As they approach Jerusalem with this band, this large band of Galilean pilgrims, Jesus didn't enter the City of Jerusalem with the rest of the travelers. Instead, we're told, He stopped at Bethany. Throughout the Passion Week we learn that He and the disciples sleep in Bethany. They stay in Bethany at the home of Mary and Martha and, of course, Lazarus. Now likely they stopped at Bethany late Friday afternoon. John 12:1 says that Jesus arrived with His disciples in Bethany six days before Passover. There were two different ways of accounting days in that period of time: one in Galilee and one in Judea. If we use the Galilean method, which is likely the one they used, Passover began at sunrise on Thursday. That allows for six days being a

Friday arrival. So they likely arrived Friday evening at the end of a long, hard day's journey from Jericho, just before sunset and before the Sabbath began at sundown on Friday.

Undoubtedly, the group that Jesus had traveled with from Galilee hurried on into Jerusalem to make sure they got to their lodging before Sabbath began. And as they arrived in Jerusalem—think about this. As they arrived in Jerusalem late on Friday, they brought two very important news items with them. One, Jesus is definitely coming to the Passover; we traveled with Him down the Jordan Valley. And secondly, He stopped at Bethany. Now this is brilliant on our Lord's part, because, remember, they arrive in the City of Jerusalem just as the Sabbath is about to begin. Sabbath travel restrictions would have kept the people in Jerusalem from traveling the two miles out to Bethany during the Sabbath, and it would have kept Jesus from arriving in Jerusalem on the Sabbath. That meant that Jesus would enter Jerusalem on Sunday morning. As this news spread like wildfire through the City of Jerusalem, it created great excitement and anticipation among the people. He's coming! And He's coming Sunday morning!

On Sunday morning, Jesus entered the City of Jerusalem in what has historically been called the Triumphal Entry, and He presents Himself as Israel's Messiah and rightful King. That's what we have read about back in Mark 11, where I invite you to turn with me again. Now the event we call, this dramatic event we call the Triumphal Entry really unfolds for us here in this passage in three great acts. I want us to see them together.

The first act is this, in verses 1-6: the King orchestrates His royal entrance. Now, I've chosen the word *orchestrate* carefully, because that is exactly what Jesus does here. He orchestrates this intentionally in verses 1-6. And you can see this even in the orders He gives in the first three verses. Notice verse 1: "As they approached Jerusalem, at Bethphage in Bethany near the Mount of Olives, He sent two of His disciples." Now the two disciples are unnamed, and we can't be absolutely sure, but I think it's very likely they're Peter and John. Later in this same week, Jesus

sends Peter and John by name to prepare for the Passover celebration that they will all enjoy together on Thursday night. And so probably the two of them.

Verse 2 says, “And [He] said to them, ‘Go into the village opposite you.’” Now remember, they’re staying in Bethany, and the Sabbath has passed (on Saturday, of course, the Sabbath). Saturday night likely is when the dinner at the home of Simon the Leper occurred where Jesus’ feet are anointed by Mary. And now it’s Sunday morning. And so they’re in Bethany, and He says I want you to go to the village opposite. That’s probably the nearby village of Bethphage.

Verse 2 says, “And immediately as you enter it, you will find a colt tied there, on which no one yet has ever sat; untie it and bring it here.” Now the Greek word for “colt” here simply refers to a young animal. But Matthew in his account is much more specific. Matthew 21:2, “Go into the village opposite you, and immediately you will find a donkey tied there and a colt with her; untie them and bring them to Me.” Now, the mother donkey isn’t important to the story; in fact is probably just there as a point of calmness for this colt on which no one has ever ridden before. In fact, several of the gospel records don’t even mention the second animal. The key is the colt. And we’ll find out why in just a moment.

But when we read that Jesus rode into Jerusalem on a donkey, we are tempted to sort of look at that disparagingly because of the sort of opinion we generally have of donkeys. But there was no stigma like that attached to them in the ancient world. In fact, Abraham, in Old Testament days, was a very, very wealthy man, and yet when he traveled with Isaac to sacrifice his son, he rode on a donkey. The reason is they offered a very smooth ride. And again, there was no stigma attached to them at all.

So Jesus sent two disciples to a nearby village telling them that as soon as they entered that village, they would find a young donkey with its mother, and they would both be tied on a public street. And notice the key point Jesus makes: the young donkey had never been ridden. Now

why is that important? For two reasons. First of all, because the Old Testament makes it clear that only animals that have never been used can be used for sacred purposes. You see this in Numbers 19, Deuteronomy 21, 1 Samuel 6. But there's another reason as well. The Jewish Talmud makes the point that no one but a king can ride on a king's animal. Jesus says, one on which a person has never ridden.

Now, my father-in-law used to say (who taught theology for 50 years), when you read the Scripture, read it with a sanctified imagination. Try to think about what's really happening here. Jesus tells two of His disciples to go to a village nearby that they're not that familiar with, and as they walk into that village, they will see two animals that don't belong to them. They are to walk up to those two animals, untie them and bring them back to Him.

How did Jesus know? How did He know about these animals? Well, there're only two possibilities. One is that He prearranged it with one of His disciples. And the other is that He knew this by His omniscience. And I think that's the real issue that's going on here, because remember, the owners are going to be surprised when the disciples try to take the animals. So I think it's Jesus' omniscience. Jesus didn't cheat. Do you understand that Jesus lived as a real human, He lived like you and I live? He didn't use His divine powers just on a whim to make His life more comfortable. He only used them under the direction of the Spirit. And this appears to be one of those times, when under the direction of the Spirit He understands and sees what's happening. In His omniscience He knows, and He sends the disciples to arrange this. The point is Jesus is clearly orchestrating these events.

Verse 3, "If anyone says to you, 'Why are you doing this?' you say, 'The Lord has need of it'; and immediately he will send it back here." The owners would be the ones most likely to raise this question. So Jesus anticipated that, and He prepares His disciples to respond. The disciples, He says, are to respond to the owners in two ways. First of all, "You say, 'The Lord had need of it.'" Clearly, He's referring to Himself. He's saying, listen, you should say the Lord Jesus needs

it. Now obviously, that means one of Jesus' followers lived in that little village of Bethphage, owned a donkey and its colt, and in God's providence had tied them out on the public street. And when the owner asks the disciples what they're doing, Jesus says, you just tell them the Lord Jesus needs them.

Now, I cannot read that without thinking about and applying that to us. Do you understand that this is a powerful reminder that everything we call our own is not ours? It is ultimately His. It doesn't really belong to us, and it must be at His disposal. It must be invested for His cause. He says you just tell my follower I need it, and he'll give it to you. Is that how you think about the things that belong to you? Do you think of them as under the disposal of Jesus Christ, and all He has to say is I need it and you're willing to let it go?

The disciples were also to say to the owners, notice verse 3, say this too, "And immediately he [that is, Jesus] will send it back here." That's fascinating to me, because, essentially, Jesus says I want you to assure the owner that as soon as I'm done with these animals, I'll return them. So although Jesus has just reminded us that everything we own belongs to Him, He's also affirmed the principle of private ownership. As William Hendriksen, the great Presbyterian commentator, said, "Just like our Lord, when we borrow what belongs to others, we must be just as committed to returning it." So Jesus, then, plans to use these animals and when He's done to return them, probably later that evening as He and the disciples come back to Bethany from the City of Jerusalem.

Those are Jesus' orders. And the disciples do exactly what He said. In verses 4-6 we see the disciples' preparation. This is still part of Jesus orchestrating, the King orchestrating His royal entrance. And they carry out His orders precisely. Verse 4, "They went away and found a colt tied at the door, outside in the street." So here these two animals, the mother donkey and its colt, are tied at an exterior door on a public street. And notice, "They untied it." Imagine being them at this point. You're sort of looking over your shoulder hoping no one's watching. Verse 5,



“Some of the bystanders were saying to them, ‘What are you doing, untying the colt?’” Well, Luke 19:33 tells us these weren’t disinterested bystanders. The owners said this. What are you doing? Where are you going with our animals? Verse 6, “They spoke to them just as Jesus had told them.” They said the Lord Jesus needs them, and when He’s done He’ll return them. And it says, verse 6, “They gave them permission.”

Now does something strike you as strange about this account? I want you to notice that Mark takes six verses to describe how Jesus got the donkey and only four verses to describe the Triumphal Entry itself. Why did the gospel writers spend so much time with the setup? Why do they spend so much time dealing with how Jesus got the colt? And the answer is because even that speaks to the reality of who He is. In this process Jesus is exercising His omniscience. He’s exercising His sovereignty. He is staging and orchestrating all of these events, and that becomes especially important when we understand the message He intended this event to send.

And that bring us to the second act in this drama. Verses 7-10: the King enters His royal city. Notice verse 7: “They brought the colt to Jesus and put their coats on it; and He sat on it.” So the two disciples returned with the two animals. Jesus made it clear to them He intended to ride the younger of them, the colt, and so they placed their outer garments, their outer cloaks, on the colt. The two did; likely the other ten disciples did as well, as a kind of saddle for Jesus. And then Luke tells us they helped Jesus get up on the animal. So Jesus is now ready to enter the City of Jerusalem. It’s crucial that you understand, again, that Jesus had staged this event in order to make a point about Himself.

How do we know Jesus staged it? Well, there’re a couple of clues. We’ve seen it unfold already here in the story, but understand, this is the only time in Jesus’ ministry when we read of His riding an animal as opposed to walking (unless, of course, you think of His riding in the womb of Mary to Bethlehem). And in addition to that, there’s a very interesting little insight the Talmud gives us, the Jewish Talmud. The Jewish Talmud demanded that once pilgrims who were coming

to the feast could see the City of Jerusalem, they were to get off whatever animals they were riding, and they were to walk the rest of the way out of respect for God and His holy place. Not Jesus. He's making a point.

Verse 8, "And many spread their coats in the road, and others spread leafy branches which they had cut from the fields." Most of the crowd spread their coats on the ground. And some went and cut leafy branches from the nearby fields, and they spread them in the road. John mentions that some of these were from palm trees, the branches of the common date palms that you can still see all over Israel. What are they doing here? This is like an ancient version of the red carpet, but not for Hollywood's elite, not for entertainers. But rather, this was a red carpet designed especially for the welcome of a new king. You see this in the Old Testament. For example, in 2 Kings 9:13 about Jehu. Listen to what we read there: "They hurried and each man took his garment and placed it under him on the bare steps." In this case he's not riding, he's walking. But they put their garments before him so he can walk over them, and they "blew the trumpet, saying, 'Jehu is king!'" That's what going on here. That's the historical context. This is the way to welcome a king.

Verse 9, "Those who went in front and those who followed were shouting." Mark intends to give us the picture of a pressing crowd. There are people who are following behind Jesus. There are people who are in front of Him. The crowd is pressing in. This is a big parade. Now who are these people? Well, it's really important for you to understand, it's important to get the story to understand who's in the crowd. So let me remind you who's in this crowd.

The crowd that day consisted of four groups. First of all, Jesus' followers from Galilee. Those who'd come for the feast and were staying in Jerusalem. Again, this would've been some of Jesus' followers and others would not have been. John 12:12 says "On the next day the large crowd who had come to the feast... heard that Jesus was coming to Jerusalem." Remember, there were some of His disciples who came down with Him from Galilee. There were others who just

came for the feast. But those who had come for the feast, including many of His followers. Secondly, there were those who had seen Him raise Lazarus six to eight weeks before. John 12:17, “The people who were with Him when He called Lazarus out of the tomb and raised him from the dead, continued to testify about Him.” And you can bet they were there in the crowd. In addition, there were those who had heard about the raising of Lazarus through their testimony and wanted to see Jesus. They were there out of curiosity. John 12:18 says, “For this reason also the people went and met Him, because they had heard that He had performed this sign.” And the last group that was there were Jesus’ enemies. Luke 19:39 says, “Some of the Pharisees [were] in the crowd.”

Now we can’t be certain of the exact makeup of this crowd, but, undoubtedly, many of those who put their coats in front of Jesus or who put tree branches in the road were genuine followers of Christ. There were those there who were genuinely praising and worshiping the biblical Jesus, the biblical Messiah. But there were others who weren’t. Regardless, they were all using messianic language, and the Pharisees are very upset about this. And they told Jesus to rebuke His followers for quoting Psalm 118 about Jesus. Notice what they were saying. Verse 9: “Those who went in front and those who followed were shouting: ‘Hosanna! Blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord!’” The word “hosanna” is actually a Hebrew word just transliterated into Greek and then transliterated over to English. Hosanna! Originally it was a prayer. In Psalm 118:25 it’s translated “save us now,” “deliver us now,” “rescue us now.” That’s what it means. And eventually it became a simple statement of praise. I think both of them are included here. Deliver us! Delivers us! You’re the Messiah, deliver us!

Notice the rest of verse 9 is a quote from the Old Testament, specifically from Psalm 118:26. Now Psalm 118 was part of a group of Psalms that was recited at the feasts, especially at Passover. It may have well been written by Moses. But it spoke of worshipers coming to Passover. But Jesus’ followers, in reciting it here, meant more than simply welcoming Him as a pilgrim to Passover. As we’ll see in a moment, they meant far more.

But notice, they also added in verse 10, “Blessed is the coming kingdom of our father David. Hosanna in the highest!” So here is this crowd around Jesus as He rides down the side of the Mount of Olives toward the City of Jerusalem on this colt, and they are affirming Jesus to be the Messiah. And they are anticipating that He will establish the kingdom that God promised David. Now some of these people are true followers of Jesus Christ who don’t understand everything that Jesus is going to accomplish. His disciples were often clueless. And aren’t we thankful for that, because it makes us feel better about our cluelessness. But they didn’t get all that was going on, but they were truly praising Him as the genuine Messiah, the Messiah who would bring both spiritual and physical deliverance. But there are others in this crowd who are there simply because of the anticipation that maybe this is the political messiah who will deliver us from Roman oppression and establish a new kingdom in Israel. “Hosanna in the highest!” means “May our cry for deliverance be heard in the highest heaven! Deliver us!”

So this crowd is affirming Jesus is Messiah. Some of them in a legitimate way; others of them in an illegitimate way. But regardless, the Pharisees cannot stand it. In Luke 19:39-40, “Some of the Pharisees in the crowd said to Him, ‘Teacher, rebuke Your disciples.’” How can You let them call you Messiah? How can You let them speak of You as if You were the fulfillment of those Old Testament passages? Stop them! To which Jesus replies, “I tell you, if these become silent, the stones will cry out!” I am everything they said, and if it isn’t said by them, the creation itself will have to speak. What an amazing event.

But this raises the question of why? What was the purpose behind the Triumphal Entry? Jesus orchestrated it, but to what end? There were three primary purposes for the Triumphal Entry. Let me remind you of them. First of all, number one, Jesus orchestrated all of this to present Himself as Israel’s King. Clearly, He intended to present Himself as King. One of the texts we’ll look at in a moment presents Him as King in this context. But—and let me hasten to follow up that and say this. Jesus never intended to present Himself to Israel as King in a way

that if they accepted Him on the spot, He would halt everything and establish His earthly kingdom then, as classic dispensationalism teaches. That's not what Jesus intended. How do we know that? Well we know that, because the chapter before, in Mark 10:45 we read, He says I came to give My life as a ransom in the place of many. That's why He came. Nothing is going to change that. In addition, on His way to Jerusalem for the Passover He had taught the parable of the minas. M-I-N-A, a unit of money in the first century. And the lesson behind that parable, according to Luke 19:11, was to correct the idea that the kingdom of God would appear immediately. So that isn't what He was doing. He was presenting Himself as the King of Israel, but He was not presenting Himself in such a way that if they accepted him on the spot, He'd blow the whistle, the play is done, I'm going to establish My kingdom. That's not why He came.

Second purpose for the Triumphal Entry, to make the unequivocal claim that He was the long awaited, long promised Messiah. Remember, Jesus carefully staged this whole event. Without saying a single word, He was proclaiming that He was Israel's Messiah. How do we know that? Because in the Old Testament, in a passage that the rabbis recognized as Messianic, this very event was predicted. In fact, the other gospel writers tell us that on that day of the Triumphal Entry, Jesus' disciples quoted that Old Testament passage. According to Matthew 21:5 and John 12:14-15, the disciples quoted a prophecy in Zachariah. Four hundred years before Jesus, the prophet Zachariah had predicted that these exact events would unfold in the life of the Messiah. Listen to Zachariah 9:9: "Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion! Shout in triumph, O daughter of Jerusalem! Behold, your king is coming to you; He is just and endowed with salvation, humble, and mounted on a donkey, even on a colt, the foal of a donkey." Four hundred years before it happened, it was described exactly this way. Jesus knew that. He knew this prophecy was about Him. He orchestrated all of the events to make it clear that this is exactly who He was, this is exactly what He was claiming.

And some in the crowd got it. Matthew tells us that some in the crowd added this: "Hosanna to the son of David." That's a Messianic title, a Messianic expression. Luke and John tell us that

some in the crowd changed the quotation from Psalm 118. Luke 19:38 says instead of “Blessed is the One who comes,” “Blessed is the King who comes in the name of the Lord.” John 12:13, “Hosanna! Blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord!” And then they added this: “Even the King of Israel!” Some in the crowd got it. Of course, again, I love the disciples, because they didn’t. John 12:16 says, “These things His disciples did not understand at the first; but when Jesus was glorified, then they remembered that these things were written of Him, and that they had done these things to Him.” The point is the disciples weren’t the ones orchestrating this to make Jesus appear to be the Messiah. Jesus was the one orchestrating this to make the clear claim to be the Messiah.

Thirdly, the purpose of the Triumphal Entry was to claim to be the perfect fulfillment of the Passover. You see, all four gospels tell us that the crowds quoted from Psalm 118:26. Now why is that important? Because Psalm 118 is part of a group of Psalms called the Hallel Psalms: the praise Psalms, Psalm 113 to Psalm 118. Psalm 113 and Psalm 114 were sung before the Passover meal. Psalm 115 to 118 were sung after the Passover meal. In fact, when we read about Jesus before they went out to the Garden of Gethsemane they sang a hymn, it would’ve included these Psalms. And Psalm 118 is filled with Messianic illusions. It’s debatable (there’s a lot of argument about it), but it’s very possible that Moses himself wrote Psalm 118 as a commemoration of the first Passover. In verses 19-27 you have a picture of someone walking through the gates that lead into the courts of the temple. And then in Psalm 118:27 it says this, “[Yahweh] is God... He has given us light; bind the [festal] sacrifice with cords to the horn of the altar.” Tie the Passover lamb to the altar. This passage pointed forward to the great Passover Lamb. That’s why Paul, in 1 Corinthians 5:7, says, “Christ our Passover... has been sacrificed.” So Jesus was more than claiming to be King. He was claiming to be the perfect fulfillment of the Passover. He our King would become our Passover Lamb.

In the Triumphal Entry, Jesus really threw down the gauntlet. He made some astounding, extraordinary claims. He claimed to be the Messiah, Israel’s King. He declared His authority,

and He left the leaders of Israel with no choice. They have to respond. Now remember, they decided, let's arrest Jesus when we find Him, but let's not kill Him until after the feast, because that'll create too much stir with the people. Jesus is in charge of everything here. And He's not going to let that happen, because He must die at 3 pm on Friday as our Passover Lamb, as the other Passover lambs were being slain. He is in charge of everything.

There's one final act in the Triumphal Entry. Most of it's not in Mark's account, but rather in both Matthew and Luke. Let me just briefly mention it to you. This third great act is, the King responds to His royal subjects. First of all, He wept over the people. In Luke's account, Luke 19:41, we read this: "When He approached Jerusalem, He saw the city and wept over it." Now picture the scene. Jesus has just ridden down the Mount of Olives, surrounded by this throng of people all calling Him Messiah and Israel's King. If you're not Jesus, you're thinking, it doesn't get any better than this, it's all coming together. No, Jesus knew better. He knew better. And as He got to the base of the Mount of Olives, and He could see the whole City of Jerusalem before Him, He began to weep. You see, Jesus as God perfectly reflects the heart of God. And this is how God responds and how our Lord Jesus still responds to those who know about Him but who have not accepted His rule as King. In fact, if you're here this morning and you're just sort of a nominal Christian, not a Christian at all really, you've never really bowed your knee to Jesus as King, this is how Jesus still responds to you. He weeps over you. How tragic to know about Him, to know about His right to rule, and to ignore that right in your own life. This should be our response as well.

But that's not Jesus' only response. He also prophesied future judgment. Right after the verse that says Jesus wept, we learn more about why He was weeping. Yes, compassion for the people, but also because of what He was going to do to this city. In Luke 19:42-44, Luke writes this. As He wept, as He rode down toward the city on the donkey, he says,

If you had known in this day, even you, the things which make for peace! But now they have been hidden from your eyes. [And then He says this.] For the days will come upon you when your enemies will throw up a barricade against you, and surround you and hem you in on every side, and they will level you to the ground and your children within you, and they will not leave in you one stone upon another.

What's Jesus talking about? He's looking forward 40 years to 70 AD when Titus the Roman general marches on the City of Jerusalem and utterly destroys it. Jesus is prophesying judgment on these people. Why? Listen to Jesus: "Because you did not recognize the time of your visitation." He wept, because He knew what He would do to them in judgment. This isn't the sickie-sweet, sentimental Jesus of most people. Yes, He weeps in tragedy over the lives of those who reject Him, but He will eventually destroy them who rebel against His authority.

There's a third response of the King. He entered the nation's temple. Back in Mark 11:11 it says, "Jesus entered Jerusalem and came into the temple." Now when we speak of the Triumphal Entry, we speak of Jesus entering the city. But His destination wasn't merely His capital city. It was the royal palace. And in Israel that was the temple. The temple was the palace of Yahweh, the Holy of Holies His throne room, and the Ark of the Covenant His throne. So Jesus came to the royal palace of His Father, He dismounted the colt on which He had ridden, and He entered the temple. And notice what verse 11 says: He "came into the temple," and He looked "around at everything." What's Jesus doing? Well, He's planning what He would do the next day. Because on Monday, the next day, for the second time in His ministry, He would cleanse the temple, showing the leaders of the nation that they had utterly corrupted the worship of the true God and of the temple itself.



And then verse 11 says, “He left for Bethany.” But not yet. There’s one more response of the King first. It’s in Matthew’s gospel. He healed the sick. On Sunday, at some point after the Triumphal Entry and after He arrived at the temple, this is what we read in Matthew 21:14-16:

And the blind 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 had done, and the children who were shouting in the temple, “Hosanna to the Son of David,” [a Messianic title] they became indignant and [they] said to Him, “Do You hear what these children are saying?” And Jesus said to them, “Yes; have you never read, ‘Out of the mouths of infants and nursing babies You have prepared praise for Yourself.’?”

Jesus publicly accepted the Messianic title Son of David, and He defended those children who used it of Him. He was saying I am the Messiah, I am Israel’s rightful King. And then He showed the kind of king He is, because He spent the rest of the afternoon healing His people. That’s the kind of king He is. He loves His people. He cares for His people. For those who truly acknowledge His kingship, His right to rule, He is a kind and gentle and gracious, compassionate ruler. And then Mark 11:11 says, “He left for Bethany with the twelve, since it was already late.”

What an amazing event. But what do we learn from it? Very briefly, let me give you what the Triumphal Entry says about Jesus. Number one, it says Jesus clearly, unequivocally claimed to be Israel’s long promised Messiah and King. You see, don’t miss the connection of the Triumphal Entry with the rest of the events of the Passion Week. On Sunday Jesus entered Jerusalem as Israel’s King. On Friday He was crucified as Israel’s King. You remember, the Jewish leaders rejected Jesus’ claims outright, as did many of the people even who welcomed Him on the day of the Triumphal Entry. The Romans acknowledged that it was His claim to be King that caused the Jewish leaders to want Him dead. Remember, Pilot posted a sign over

Jesus' head on the cross. What did it say? This is Jesus of Nazareth—what? “The King of the Jews.” That’s what got Him killed. It’s ironic, isn’t it? The true King dying for His people, dying for all of those who would ultimately believe in Him. Our King becomes our sacrifice. Our King becomes the Passover Lamb.

There’s another lesson about Jesus from the Triumphal Entry. And that is that our King will come again. You see, the Mount of Olives is mentioned just a few times in the Old Testament, and one of those has to do [with] when Jesus returns. Go back to Zachariah 14:1. Zachariah writes, “Behold, [the] day is coming for the Lord when the spoil taken from you will be divided among you.” In other words, He going to set things right. See if this sounds familiar, even from, like the Book of Revelation. Zachariah 14:2:

For I will gather all the nations against Jerusalem to battle, and the city will be captured, [and] the houses plundered, the women ravished and half of the city exiled, but the rest of the people will not be cut off from the city. Then [Yahweh] will go forth and fight against those nations, as when He fights on a day of battle. In that day His feet will stand on the Mount of Olives, which is in front of Jerusalem on the east; and the Mount of Olives will be split in its middle from east to west by a very large valley, so that half of the mountain will move toward the north and the other half toward the south. [There’ll be a huge earthquake that will change the topography of the land.] You will flee by the valley of My mountains, for the valley of the mountains will reach to Azel; yes, you will flee just as you fled before the earthquake in the days of Uzziah king of Judah. Then [Yahweh], my God, will come, and all the holy ones with Him!

And in verse 6 and following he describes the events in the heavens that will accompany all of that. But I want you to notice verse 9. As a result, “[Yahweh] will be king over all the earth; in that day [Yahweh] will be the only one, and His name the only one.” The King will come. And

you remember what the angel said in Acts 1 as Jesus left the Mount of Olives returning into heaven? You'll see this same One come in like manner as you've seen Him go. He will come and stand on the Mount of Olives. Jesus our Lord will take the same route down the face of the Mount of Olives into His royal city that He took in 30 AD. And on that day every tongue will truly confess that He is King and Lord.

So what does the Triumphal Entry say about us? If it says that about Jesus, what does it say about us? Two things, very quickly. Number one, it reminds us of our desperate need of the cross. You see, there's a connection between the Triumphal Entry on Sunday and the cross on Friday. What's that connection? Well, the Triumphal Entry showed the rightful place of Jesus. He is the King. And yet what have all of us, without exception, before we came to Christ, how did we respond to Jesus as King? We rejected Him. We wanted to be king ourselves. We wanted self-rule. Autonomy is what we called for. We were rebels. We sinfully rejected Jesus' authority. John 1 describes it this way:

He was in the world, and the world was made through Him, and the world did not know Him. He came to His own, and those who were His own did not receive Him. But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, even to those who believe in His name.

The Triumphal Entry reminds us that Jesus is our rightful King, and yet for so many years we rejected Him as King. We lived in rebellion against Him, and only the cross could overcome that, when our King becomes the sacrifice, the Passover Lamb.

The second lesson it teaches us about us is that their responses to Jesus as King that day 2,000 years ago, those responses are mirrored in our responses to Jesus as King today. In fact, let me so boldly say it this way. Everybody in this room this morning, everyone listening to me, you find your counterpart in the crowd at the Triumphal Entry. There were those there that day who

were filled with animosity toward Jesus. The Pharisees hated Him. They wanted nothing to do with Him. It's possible there's someone like that here this morning. Maybe your parents have insisted you come, and there is [some] place you'd rather be. You're sick of hearing about Jesus. You want your own life your own way. Maybe you're like those who never showed up at the Triumphal Entry. Apathetic. There were a lot of people in Jerusalem who weren't there. Why? Because they had more important things to do. They had to prepare for family and festivals and meals and good times—sin. A lot of people respond to Jesus' kingship this way. Yawn. Don't really care. Got too many things to do, too many important things going on. Then there those who just showed up out of curiosity. They had heard He had raised Lazarus from the dead. They're born along by the crowd. "Jesus is popular! Let's go see what's happening!" That's kind of a North Texas thing. "Yeah, Jesus, church. Yeah, you need to do that. Otherwise you'll look like a louse." Until He's unpopular. Until He crosses what you want. And then there are those who are sincere in their worship. There were that day those who had already owned Him as Messiah and King, who from their hearts were worshipping.

Let me ask you this morning. What is your response to Jesus as King? He is King, and your response doesn't change that one way or the other. But what is your response to Jesus as King? Has there ever been a time in your life when you have come to acknowledge Jesus' personal right to rule you? That's faith, and if you've done anything but that, it wasn't faith. If you signed a card, prayed a prayer when you were a kid, if it was anything less than acknowledging Jesus' right to be your King for life, then you haven't really believed in Jesus Christ. So, let me ask you this morning, is that true of you? And if that is true, are you truly worshipping Jesus as your King from your heart? And even more so, are you submitting your will to His? On a daily basis, are you coming to His Word and saying, my God and King, what do You want me to do? What do You want me to think? How do You want me to behave in my marriage and in my relationships and in my family and in my work and in every aspect of my life? Yes Lord, that is what I want to do. Is that your heart? Is that how you think of Jesus? If it's not, then He may very well not be your true King. Jesus is your rightful King. Let's pray together.

Father, thank You for this magnificent account. Seal it to our hearts. Lord, may those of us by Your grace whom You brought to know Jesus as our King and Lord, Lord, remind us of that. Help us to renew our commitment to follow Him as Lord and King. And Father, for those who are here who have made some empty profession in the past, or perhaps who never have, may this be the day when they bow their knees to Jesus Christ and accept Him as their rightful King and Lord, as well as their Passover Lamb who provides for their sin, who pays the penalty so that You can extend forgiveness to them. We pray this would be the day, in Jesus' name, amen.