

# Christ Reformation Church

Tillamook, Oregon

## *You Must be Born Again!*

*“I am a Christian solely and entirely because of the grace of God and not because of anything that I have thought or said or done. He brought me to know that I was dead, ‘dead in trespasses and sins’, a slave to the world, and the flesh, and the devil, that in me ‘dwelleth no good thing’, and that I was under the wrath of God and heading for eternal punishment.*

*He brought me to see that the real cause of all my troubles and ills, and that of all men, was an evil and fallen nature which hated God and loved sin. My trouble was not only that I did things that were wrong, but that I myself was wrong at the very center of my being.”*

[Martyn Lloyd-Jones testimony to Iain Murray, p. 64, D. Martyn Lloyd-Jones, *The First Forty Years, 1899-1939, Banner of Truth*]

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## *Behold Your King – the Triumphal Entry*

*April 13th, 2025 – Palm Sunday*

**Sermon Text:** Matthew 21:1-11

**Scripture Reading:** Matthew 21

Today is what the church calendar calls Palm Sunday, the Sunday one

week prior to Easter. What does this tell us about the chronology of events which we are looking at this morning in Matthew 21? It tells us that *just days after the Lord Jesus entered Jerusalem to the acclaim and praise of adoring crowds, that same crowd would murder him!* How can that be? One of our purposes this morning is to answer that question.

In the 9<sup>th</sup> verse of this 21<sup>st</sup> chapter, Matthew tells us that the crowds were doing this:

Matthew 21:9 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!”

Their words were drawn from Psalm 118, which I am going to read now. Follow along as I do:

Psalms 118:1-29 Oh give thanks to the LORD, for he is good; for his steadfast love endures forever! (2) Let Israel say, “His steadfast love endures forever.” (3) Let the house of Aaron say, “His steadfast love endures forever.” (4) Let those who fear the LORD say, “His steadfast love endures forever.” (5) Out of my distress I called on the LORD; the LORD answered me and set me free. (6) The LORD is on my side; I will not fear. What can man do to me? (7) The LORD is on my side as my helper; I shall look in

triumph on those who hate me. (8) It is better to take refuge in the LORD than to trust in man. (9) It is better to take refuge in the LORD than to trust in princes.

(10) All nations surrounded me; in the name of the LORD I cut them off! (11) They surrounded me, surrounded me on every side; in the name of the LORD I cut them off! (12) They surrounded me like bees; they went out like a fire among thorns; in the name of the LORD I cut them off! (13) I was pushed hard, so that I was falling, but the LORD helped me.

(14) The LORD is my strength and my song; he has become my salvation. (15) Glad songs of salvation are in the tents of the righteous: “The right hand of the LORD does valiantly, (16) the right hand of the LORD exalts, the right hand of the LORD does valiantly!” (17) I shall not die, but I shall live, and recount the deeds of the LORD. (18) The LORD has disciplined me severely, but he has not given me over to death.

(19) Open to me the gates of righteousness, that I may enter through them and give thanks to the LORD. (20) **This is the gate of the LORD; the righteous shall enter through it.** (21) I thank you that you have answered me and have become my salvation.

(22) **The stone that the builders rejected has become the cornerstone.** (23) This is the LORD's doing; it is marvelous in our eyes. (24) This is the day that the LORD has made; let us rejoice and be glad in it.

(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.

(27) The LORD is God, and he has made his light to shine upon us. Bind the festal sacrifice with cords, up to the horns of the altar! (28) You are my God, and I will give thanks to you; you are my God; I will extol you. (29) Oh give thanks to the LORD, for he is

good; for his steadfast love endures forever!

Of course to truly understand all that is in this Psalm would require far more than a few minutes. But we are just going to note a couple of things to help us understand Matthew 21 more fully.

1. It is clearly a *messianic* Psalm. It speaks of the Messiah, the Lord Jesus Christ. We know this most plainly from verse 22 – *The stone that the builders rejected has become the cornerstone.* Take careful notice that in this same 21st chapter of Matthew, Jesus actually quotes this very passage in confronting His enemies:

21:42 Jesus said to them, “Have you never read in the Scriptures: “‘The stone that the builders rejected has become the cornerstone; this was the Lord's doing, and it is marvelous in our eyes’?”

2. The second point to notice in regard to Psalm 118 is that the crowds were shouting the words from Psalm 118 -

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.’”

Psalms 118:25-26 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.

Alright then, with that background information, let’s read the account right through once more:

Matthew 21:9 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!”

Matthew 21:1-11 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.”

Hosanna is a kind of Greek rendition of the Hebrew word meaning “O Save!” and is a phrase expressing adoration.

(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

What does all of this tell us? It tells us that in one respect the crowd was correct – *The Messiah had come, just as Matthew notes:*

Matthew 21:4-5 This took place to fulfill what was spoken by the prophet, saying, (5) “Say to the

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."

And yet in just a few days, these same people would be shouting another demand:

Matthew 27:20-26 Now the chief priests and the elders persuaded the crowd to ask for Barabbas and destroy Jesus. (21) The governor again said to them, "Which of the two do you want me to release for

you?" And they said, "Barabbas." (22) Pilate said to them, "Then what shall I do with Jesus who is called Christ?" They all said, "Let him be crucified!" (23) And he said, "Why? What evil has he done?" But they shouted all the more, "Let him be crucified!" (24) So when Pilate saw that he was gaining nothing, but rather that a riot was beginning, he took water and washed his hands before the crowd, saying, "I am innocent of this man's blood; see to it yourselves." (25) And all the people answered, "His blood be on us and on our children!" (26) Then he released for them Barabbas, and having scourged Jesus, delivered him to be crucified.

Why? How is this to be explained? That is the question we need to answer because *the very same thing is present among many today who claim to be Christians.*

**Give us the Messiah WE Want**

We know from Scripture that the Jerusalem, the nation of Israel, which the Jews of Jesus' day wanted, was an earthly one. Their idea of the Messiah was someone who would come in power and strength to defeat the Romans and restore Israel to the glory days of Solomon. Who would make Israel chief among all other nations. MIGA – Make Israel Great Again. Jerusalem would be the capital of the world. **NOTE:** That same idea is rampant within the evangelical church today!

Israel's religion had become so distorted that it was another creature entirely than that which is taught in Scripture. Worship in the Temple was false. The priesthood, the scribes, the pharisees – were a corrupted clergy. And most grievous was the erroneous thinking about *the nature of the kingdom of God*. Jesus said the kingdom of God is not of this present world – something the Jews had no idea of.

So the entire religious system in Israel had become corrupt. The Hosannas being shouted on that

day were not the Hosannas the Psalmist had in mind. That is to say, *the very definition of the Messiah's salvation according to the Jews, was wrong*. They didn't need to be saved from Rome, they needed salvation and a Savior to deliver them from their own sin. *That is exactly what Israel today needs!*

### **An Odd Thing – a Messiah Riding a Donkey**

Matthew took pains to give us quite a lot of emphasis upon Jesus' choice of transport as He entered Jerusalem. One Day He will come in a very different manner:

Revelation 19:11-16 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. (12) His eyes are like a flame of fire, and on his head are many diadems, and he has a name written that no one knows but himself. (13) He is clothed in a robe dipped in blood, and the name by which he is called is The Word

of God. (14) And the armies of heaven, arrayed in fine linen, white and pure, were following him on white horses. (15) From his mouth comes a sharp sword with which to strike down the nations, and he will rule them with a rod of iron. He will tread the winepress of the fury of the wrath of God the Almighty. (16) On his robe and on his thigh he has a name written, King of kings and Lord of lords.

But not that time – not that day in Jerusalem 2,000 years ago. Listen once more to

Matthew 21:4-5 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.’”

This is from Zechariah 9 –

Zechariah 9:9 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.

Just a few verses later, Zechariah announced:

Zechariah 9:14-17 Then the LORD will appear over them, and his arrow will go forth like lightning; the Lord GOD will sound the trumpet and will march forth in the whirlwinds of the south. (15) The LORD of hosts will protect them, and they shall devour, and tread down the sling stones, and they shall drink and roar as if drunk with wine, and be full like a bowl, drenched like the corners of the altar. (16) On that day the LORD their God will save them, as the flock of his people; for like the jewels of a crown they shall shine on his land. (17) For how great is his goodness, and how great his beauty! Grain shall make the young men flourish, and new wine the young women.

But what the Jews ignored and failed to see was that FIRST the King would come humble,

mounted on a donkey, the foal of a beast of burden. *In other words, Messiah would first come to go to the cross and shed His blood for the salvation of His people.*

### **What Happens When Sinners Don't Get What they Want from God?**

Is it difficult to think of examples? What did Jesus say to Jerusalem –

Matthew 23:37-39 “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.’”

Wait a minute! I thought they had just been shouting “Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord”!? But no, their shouts did not fulfill what Psalm 118 announced – those words looked to the Day

when Christ comes once and for all in glory.

***When the true Son of God, the true Savior and Messiah, is preached, when the true good news – the gospel which is really the power of God to salvation, is proclaimed, it is not what sinners want. He is not who sinners want. Because His first order of business is ALWAYS to confront and convict sinners of their sin. To show them they are under God's condemnation – that unless they repent they will end in hell.***

Look at what else the crowds were saying about Him –

Matthew 21:10-11 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.”

They ACKNOWLEDGED that He was a prophet (the prophet Jesus). Everyone knew. The entire city. And they just knew that He was



going to do and say just what they expected. But...

Look again at what Jesus said and did upon arrival in Jerusalem humble and mounted on a colt –

Matthew 21:12-13 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.”

John gives this account of an earlier cleansing. NOTE: this was a separate cleansing of the temple. John has it early on here in his second chapter. William Hendriksen notes that some have tried to equate both accounts into once temple cleansing, but with no satisfactory success. How quickly these fickle crowds forget-

John 2:13-16 The Passover of the Jews was at hand, and Jesus went up to Jerusalem. (14) In the

temple he found those who were selling oxen and sheep and pigeons, and the money-changers sitting there. (15) And making a whip of cords, he drove them all out of the temple, with the sheep and oxen. And he poured out the coins of the money-changers and overturned their tables. (16) And he told those who sold the pigeons, “Take these things away; do not make my Father's house a house of trade.”

So they had *resumed* this evil practice!

But here is the point – Just after entering Jerusalem and being acclaimed by adoring crowds, the Lord Jesus confronted *the entire false religious system which the Jews now practiced*. And he kept hammering on this same theme:

Matthew 21:18-19 In the morning, as he was returning to the city, he became hungry. (19) And seeing a fig tree by the wayside, he went to it and found nothing on it but only leaves. And he said to it, “May no fruit ever come from you

again!” And the fig tree withered at once.

What did the Lord Jesus mean? He was condemning fruitless Israel. A vine the Lord had planted and yet it bore no fruit.

And more:

Matthew 21:28-32 “What do you think? A man had two sons. And he went to the first and said, ‘Son, go and work in the vineyard today.’ (29) And he answered, ‘I will not,’ but afterward he changed his mind and went. (30) And he went to the other son and said the same. And he answered, ‘I go, sir,’ but did not go. (31) Which of the two did the will of his father?” They said, “The first.” Jesus said to them, “Truly, I say to you, the tax collectors and the prostitutes go into the kingdom of God before you. (32) For John came to you in the way of righteousness, and you did not believe him, but the tax collectors and the prostitutes believed him. And even when you saw it, you did not afterward

change your minds and believe him.

And he just kept on. He told the parable of the tenants which rebuked the Jews for killing the prophets and ultimately killing God’s Son. Recall how he ended that parable:

Matthew 21:42-46 Jesus said to them, “Have you never read in the Scriptures: “‘The stone that the builders rejected has become the cornerstone; this was the Lord’s doing, and it is marvelous in our eyes’? (43) Therefore I tell you, the kingdom of God will be taken away from you and given to a people producing its fruits. (44) And the one who falls on this stone will be broken to pieces; and when it falls on anyone, it will crush him.” (45) **When the chief priests and the Pharisees heard his parables, they perceived that he was speaking about them.** (46) And although they were seeking to arrest him, they feared the crowds, because they held him to be a prophet.

Shortly thereafter the chief priests and Pharisees would have the crowds turned against Him as well.

Why did the crowds turn from crying out Hosannas to screaming for Jesus' blood? Because He was not the Savior they wanted. He was not going to make salvation just for the Jews. He was offering a salvation to all the nations. He was not going to make Israel the greatest nation on this earth. No, He came to expose man's sin, to show that the sinner can never obey God's Law and thereby be righteous, to go to the cross to pay for the sins of all who trust in Him. That kind of a Savior, man in his sin does not want.

And religious people do NOT want a Christ who exposes their religion as false! If you study church history, you will find this scenario played out over and over again. Why did Rome kill and persecute the Reformers? Why did Rome want to murder Luther and so many others? *Because their faithful preaching of God's Word was Light, exposing the corruption and evil of Rome.* Jesus told the

disciples that the entire temple was going to come down. Why? Because a new and true Temple was under construction. And whenever truth, whenever a divine Whistleblower comes on the scene, exposing evil and corruption and fake religion, a murderous rage will arise.

THAT is why those same adoring crowds turned into a lynching mob. The Lord Jesus, the real Messiah, God Himself, was a threat to their evil and fake status quo.

Now, it is not at all difficult to think of many modern day parallels, is it? What happens in a visible church filled with counterfeit "christians" when suddenly the real Word of God is proclaimed? The Lord could surely say of so many visible churches today, "O church, O church, who kills the preachers and stones those who are sent to it!"

Because in so many so-called churches today, it is the buildings, the crowds, the programs, the charismatic preachers, the money – these are the cherished holy of holies which must never be

touched or threatened. Would not the Lord Jesus make a whip today and drive these things out of His church?

But let's not close without bringing these things even closer to ourselves. To what degree might WE be fashioning Jesus into a Savior that we want, rather than the Savior He is? Do we really love the Lord of the Bible? Do we love His church – His people? Are we glad to follow a Lord who is humble, mounted on a burro, hated and despised by the world? Or do we believe and understand what Peter did:

John 6:66-68 After this many of his disciples turned back and no longer walked with him. (67) So Jesus said to the twelve, "Do you want to go away as well?" (68) Simon Peter answered him, "Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life,